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Sociological Theory and Educational Reality
Education and Society in Australia Since 1949

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For Meg

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This kind of degenerate learning did chiefly reign amongst the Schoolmen; who having sharp and strong wits, and abundance of leisure, and small variety of reading; but their wits being shut up in the cells of a few authors (chiefly Aristotle their dictator) as their persons were shut up in the cells of monasteries and colleges; and knowing little history, either of nature or time, did out of no great quantity of matter, and infinite agitation of wit, spin out unto us those laborious webs of learning which are extant in their books. For the wit and mind of man, if it work upon matter . . . worketh according to the stuff, and is limited thereby; but if it work upon itself, as the spider worketh its web, then it is endless, and brings forth indeed cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit.

This same unprofitable subtilty or curiosity is of two sorts; either in the subject itself that they handle, when it is a fruitless speculation or controversy . . . or in the manner or method of handling of a knowledge, which amongst them was this; upon every particular position or assertion to frame objections, and to these objections, solutions; which solutions were for the most part not confutations but distinctions . . . breeding for the most part one question as fast as it solveth another.

Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, 1605, *The First Book*, Ch. IV, 56.

These subtle refinements of subtleties are made still more subtle by all the different lines of scholastic argument, so that you'd extricate yourself faster from a labyrinth than from the tortuous obscurities of realists, nominalists, Thomists, Albertists, Ockhamists and Scotists and I've not mentioned all the sects, only the main ones . . . They insist that it detracts from the grandeur of the holy scriptures if they're obliged to obey the rules of grammar. It seems a most peculiar prerogative of theologians, to be the only people permitted to speak ungrammatically; however, they share this privilege with a lot of working men.

Desiderius Erasmus, *Praise of Folly*, 1511, Ch. 53.

I won't beguile you by talking about the secrets of my art. The truth is that the teachers aren't to blame for these practices. They are in a mad-house and they must rave to be understood. Unless they catch the fancy of the students, as Cicero says, they have benches for audience . . . They consider first what is likely to gratify their listeners . . . Parents are the people to be reprov'd for refusing to let their children gain the advantage of a strict course of study. They at once devote their hopes like everything else to a career . . . If they'd only allow work to progress systematically so the earnest students might freshen their wits with steady reading, give their minds ballast with wisdom's aphorisms, dig out their technique with a sharp-edged point, listen long before they start copying, and convince themselves that what pleases boys can't be true grandeur . . . But nowadays boys play about at school, lads make fools of themselves in the Forum, and . . . no one admits in his old age the fallacies with which he was doped as a student.

Petronius, *Satyricon*, c. 66 AD

At present opinion is divided about the subjects of education. All do not take the same view about what should be learned by the young, either with a view to plain goodness or to a view to the best life possible; nor is opinion clear whether education should be directed mainly to the understanding, or mainly to moral character. If we look at actual practice, the result is sadly confusing; it throws no light on the problem whether the proper studies to be followed are those which are useful in life, or those which make for goodness, or those which advance the bounds of knowledge.

Aristotle, *Politics*, c. 330 BC, *Book VIII*, Ch. 2.

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PREFACE

Sociological Theory and Educational Reality provides two separate but intermeshed discussions. The first analyses the development of the sociology of education as an educational theory in Australia, putting this in its international context; the second presents a sociological view of Australian education over the last forty years. The book is the first extensive history of the sociology of Australian education; it is also a first example of historical sociology applied to Australian education over the same period. In both its aspects this study investigates the interplay of social, political, economic and educational developments.

To provide the benefits of a comparative analysis, *Sociological Theory and Educational Reality* considers three contrasting epochs in modern Australia that of the welfare state (from about 1949 to about 1967), that of the new pluralist society (about 1967 to about 1987), and that of contemporary Australia (since 1987). Three special features are: a preliminary survey of the evolution of sociology and of the sociology of education in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; an in-depth examination of the great changes of 1967/1974; and a broad examination of contemporary Australian education.

This investigation encompasses both state and non-state schools, and examines both primary and secondary levels of education. Some consideration is also given to 'tertiary' education. Particular attention is given to the curriculum. Readers who so wish can separate the chapters devoted to sociological theory (1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 9), which constitute a coherent analysis in themselves, from those which consider changes in the schools and other educational institutions (4, 5, 8 and 10) and which also can provide a self-contained survey.

My approach to the theory of the sociology of education differs from those popular in the 1970s and early 1980s. In recent years a better balance between the various theories of the sociology of education has emerged. My interpretation draws on elements from several streams from classical Marxism (as distinct from neo-Marxism), from Weberism, from liberal humanism, and from structural-functionalist sociology.

The book will appeal to those interested in the social structure of Australia; in the evolution of the theory and methodology of both sociology and the sociology of education; in the history of Australian education since 1950; and in contemporary Australian education.

I offer my thanks to the Department of Education of the University of Newcastle which, after my retirement as Associate Professor in December 1986, gave me the status of Honorary Associate and provided attendant facilities. I also wish to acknowledge the assistance of Ken Scott, technical officer of the Department, for his help with the illustrations. Finally, I express my thanks to Dr Ken Baker, Director of the Education Policy Unit, Institute of Public Affairs, Melbourne, for comments on the manuscript and for his encouragement in effecting its publication.

ALAN BARCAN

INTRODUCTION: NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

In recent years two catastrophes have shaken the foundations of the sociology of education. After some two decades in which the 'new' sociology of education had proliferated, offering a variety of perspectives, the major one being the radical or neo-Marxist, the credibility of these approaches to education came under challenge. One source of crisis was the decay and collapse of 'Marxism' in Eastern Europe in 1989/90. This swept away a major ideological and political prop of neo-Marxist sociology and its allies. Radical sociology was inevitably discredited by the collapse of communism, no matter how much effort was made to distance the theory in the West from the practice in the East.

The second shock to the sociology of education was the open recognition of the failure of radical and progressive education to sustain adequate academic, vocational and ideological standards in the schools. Throughout the 1980s concern at standards in the basic subjects, such as English, mathematics, and science, had grown. Concern over standards and moral education had encouraged many parents to transfer their children from state to non-state schools. The sociology of education had been involved in many of the educational innovations of the previous two decades.

The economic crisis of the late 1980s and the associated growth of unemployment precipitated change. The alarm of parents was reinforced by the concern of employers over the inadequate skills of many entering the labour market. The politicians responded primarily to the economic crisis but also to the ideological. The need to economise also undermined radical and progressive education, which tended to be expensive. Concern over problems of adolescent social and moral behaviour and alarm at growing public cynicism about democratic procedures directed the attention of politicians to the role of schools in civic and moral education. In 1989 and again in 1991 the Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training investigated the teaching of citizenship in Australian schools and, incidentally, the attention given it in teacher training courses. 1

In Australia widespread recognition of the economic crisis, which affected much of the English-speaking world, came in May 1986, when the federal Treasurer, Paul Keating, warned of the 'international hole' into which the country had fallen.² The foreign debt reached \$81 billion in 1986; by 1991 it was \$131 billion. By the latter year unemployment was slightly in excess of ten per cent of the workforce. Personal bankruptcies soared to 13 091 in the year ended June 1990, from 8636 a year earlier.³

The financial and wider economic crisis encouraged an instrumental and vocational orientation in education. Changes to the school curriculum and to methods of assessment were introduced in an effort to develop the mental and technical skills considered necessary for an effective workforce in a competitive world. Concern over the poor academic performance of many schools, coupled with an awareness of the increased difficulties which teachers faced in the classroom, also encouraged a more practical orientation in teacher-training courses. This practical orientation included a shift from sociological and philosophical theory to emphasis on classroom practice in the curriculum studies units of training courses.

By the late 1980s the ideological and theoretical bankruptcy of the 'new sociology' was apparent, its often negative impact on effective practical teaching widely recognised. The April 1989 Hobart meeting of the Australian Education Council (the State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education) adopted ten 'Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia', many of which were updated versions of earlier, pre-1967 educational aims.⁴ A Schools Council paper of December 1990, *Australia's Teachers*, emphasised that teachers should have a grasp of the content they were teaching and should keep a balance between process and content; lecturers in teacher training should

have closer contact with 'school realities'. 5

The reaction of the late 1980s and early 1990s against radical or neo-Marxist sociology marked the end of a phase which had opened in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the liberal humanist tradition in education and sociology disintegrated under the pressure of new intellectual and ideological currents, the strongest of which was neo-Marxism.

A period of eclecticism has arrived in the sociology of education, uncertainty has increased, and varying approaches are being adopted. A new conservatism has found a place alongside older radical and liberal theories. The mergers between universities and colleges of advanced education has increased doubt about the directions to be followed in the sociology of education, one stream of which had drawn strength from the practical teacher-training orientation of colleges, while another had drawn on the more theoretical and general interests of university academics.

Various theories have tried to fill the vacuum created by the collapse of the new sociology of education. Phenomenology and Foucault are two contenders, while some academics recommend the doctrines of earlier sociological writers. In 1991 Bob Petersen of the Sydney University Department of Education called for a return to the founding father of sociology, Auguste Comte.⁶ L. J. Saha of the Australian National University believes Durkheim's views are as relevant today as when he first formulated them.⁷ John Western of the University of Queensland and Peter Carpenter of the Institute of Catholic Education in Victoria see some merit in structural-functional and consensus interpretations.⁸ R. J. King and Robert Young of Sydney University have committed themselves to reflexive theory in the sociology of education, mentioning phenomenological Marxism, critical theory, and Christian humanism.⁹ Certainly the eclipse of Marx has restored the importance for the sociology of education of his two great rivals, Durkheim and Weber. The former was more closely intermeshed with education and schooling than the latter. However, the ideology of neo-Marxism lingers. Four Queensland sociologists proclaimed commitment to 'critical sociology', a refurbished neo-Marxism; but they gave their 1988 book the practice-oriented title, *Understanding Schooling*.¹⁰

The eclecticism of the age is reflected in the range of interpretations adopted in sociology of education courses. A mixture of approaches, old and new, is to be found. A survey of 58 lecturers in 1983 suggested that 40 per cent favoured an issues-centred and eclectic approach, 24 per cent used the structural-functionalist interpretation, 21 per cent an interpretative approach (interactionist, phenomenological, etc.), and 16 per cent a Marxist.¹¹

The problem of the sociology of education is not limited to the plurality of its offerings. It includes a challenge to its relevance in the training of teachers. This has been fostered by the manifest difficulties facing teachers in many school rooms, the desire of teachers-in-training for practical skills, techniques and devices to assist immediate survival, and the belief of many employers, parents and politicians that the inadequate standards of adolescents after ten or more years of schooling necessitate a different approach to teacher-training.

The impatience with theory, sociological or otherwise, amongst trainee students is matched by a slowing in the volume of sociological research and by a shift of interest to other educational studies. Between 1980 and 1988 total entries in the Australian Education Index increased by 65.75 per cent. However, the articles and books classified under the title of educational sociology increased by only 6.9 per cent, from 116 to 124. In the same period, successful theses in education increased by one third, from 276 to 368. Those in the sociology of education increased by the same proportion, from 20 to 27. 12

While sociology was in retreat in educational theory, it was finding a new outlet in the school curriculum. In the 1980s many former liberal subjects in the schools were given interpretations strongly oriented to social class, feminism and ethnic multiculturalism. Some strands in English literature became heavily concerned with social issues. New 'studies' developed with titles such as 'mathematics and society' or 'art and society' or other sociological designations.¹³ In some university departments, ranging from the humanities to law and economics, some lecturers adopted a heady cultural and theoretical approach. English has sometimes become cultural studies. Cultural Studies, a Macquarie University academic writes, 'has tried to reinvent the humanities as a vocation fit for the modern world . . . It has shrugged off many of the habits of thought in literature, fine arts, history and sociology'.¹⁴ And yet, particularly in the new, amalgamated, universities, some courses such as nurse education have adopted a strongly sociological line.

New theoretical-intellectual interpretations have multiplied. As the reputation of Marxism deteriorated, 'critical theory' surfaced as a replacement. There was, in fact, no unified critical theory 'critical theories' would be a more accurate label.¹⁵ Critical theory found fertile soil in English, but also in education, architecture, law, and other studies with a potential social orientation. The umbrella term 'postmodernism' is sometimes used to include not only critical theory but structuralism, post-structuralism, semiotics, deconstruction, hermeneutics, and cultural studies, and can embrace feminist and neo-Marxist ideologies.¹⁶ Contextualism

and interpretivism are other ideological blossoms.

These new currents are the product of a pluralist society, of an age of relativism rather than absolute beliefs, of a time when new but overlapping social groups are spreading diversity and confusion. Anyone acquainted with the intellectual life of the Hellenistic age, which flourished after Alexander the Great and Aristotle, will recognise similarities with our modern or postmodern era. These include a cosmopolitanism, the growth of relativism, a fascination with the individual and personal, and the vast expansion of education but an education significantly different from that of previous decades. New attitudes to the content and underlying values of the curriculum developed, as well as new attitudes to methods of examination and assessment. The alienation of many academics from the long-established intellectual tradition has affected many aspects of intellectual, academic, and theoretical activity, apart from the sociology of education.

Today we have reached a hiatus, a gap or a plurality of pathways. Our pluralist society has encouraged a pluralism in sociological interpretation. How is that in the 1990s the Western intellect is troubled by so many competing yet repetitive, overlapping theories? To what extent has the sociology of education been subsumed within these theories? Why are so many sociology books the products of groups of writers rather than a single author? And how was it possible for such vast changes to overtake the academic world of sociology in little more than 20 years?

This book examines the major classical sociological theories relevant to education and then analyses the rise and decline of the new sociology of education. Our gaze alternates between the dominant socio-educational theories and the current educational practice in schools. From this study of the development of the sociology of education, of society, and of education we may hope to achieve an understanding of sociological theories, of school practice, and of the likely evolution of Australian education.

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PART A
THE CLASSICAL MOULD

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Chapter One

The Foundations of the Sociology of Education

During the latter half of the twentieth century the sociology of education, previously a marginal aspect of sociology, became a major influence on the theory and practice of education in Australia. It was a very late arrival. In the opening decades of the century teacher training in Australia had been improved by the establishment or restructuring of six state teachers' colleges, one in each state. But their main activity was the training of teachers for the recently reformed state primary schools, and educational theory played only a minor part in this training. Alongside numerous content-oriented subjects, a course would be provided on the theory and practice of teaching or even the history of educational thought. In the six universities Education began to emerge from the Departments of Philosophy about the time of the First World War. Most universities limited themselves to a course in teacher training for Arts or Science graduates, which would include a strand in education theory, though Sydney provided educational theory and principles as a subject for undergraduates in the Faculty of Arts. Psychology also separated from Philosophy at this time. Here and there Sociology made a tentative appearance, but it remained under the rubric of Philosophy.

By the end of the Second World War the theoretical preparation of teachers in teachers' colleges and universities had broadened a little to include the philosophy of education and educational measurement alongside educational psychology and the history of education. However, it was only in the 1960s that the sociology of education found a place in universities and teacher-training colleges.

What Is the Sociology of Education?

While the sociology of education may be seen as a subdiscipline of sociology, it may also be considered one of the component subdisciplines of education. Some writers have elaborated this bipartite character into a distinction between 'the sociology of education' and 'educational sociology'. The first term suggests the primacy of sociology in providing a theoretical and methodological base for the examination of educational developments; the second emphasises education as providing the basis of a specialised sociological theory. While I see little profit in this distinction, the place of education within sociology, and of sociology within education, is well worth examining. But we must start by asking 'What is sociology?'

'Sociology is the study of society.' This dictionary definition, while brief and precise, is not very helpful, for it could apply to many other intellectual disciplines. History is a study of society, past society. Anthropology is a study of primitive societies. Geography, in the form of social geography, can be a study of society. To some degree economics is a study of society while concentrating on material aspects, it inevitably includes social and political correlates. All of these subjects are sometimes referred to as the social studies or the social sciences. But the growth of the sociological approach has been so great in recent decades that some contemporary academics even approach English as a sociological study, while many teachers and educationists incorporate a sociological element into a wide range of school subjects.

Sociology is not necessarily the study of contemporary society. It is possible to make a sociological study of past societies, as did Jacob Burckhardt in *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860) and Max Weber in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904). J. Huizinga's *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (1924) and Alfred von Martin's *Sociology of the Renaissance* (1932) are other examples. Such writings contribute equally to history and to sociology. In a complementary process, many sociologists have based their analyses of contemporary societies on principles derived from historical studies. We can conclude that sociology

may be considered the study of a recognisable phase in the evolution of society usually, but not necessarily, the contemporary stage.

The linguistic origins of a term can often assist attempts to define it. The word 'sociology' comes from the Latin *socii*, groups or allies. This suggests that sociology is the study of social groups; and, indeed, social groups form a major component of the content of sociology the family, the class, religious groups and institutions, the peer group, and so on. We have smuggled the word 'institution' into the discussion. Social institutions are important objects of sociological studies.

The word 'sociology' was first used by the Frenchman Auguste Comte in a series of lectures given in 1837 and later in his book *Positive Philosophy*.¹ Comte was particularly interested in the study of savage societies. Sociology was stimulated by the comparative studies encouraged both by more rapid evolution within Western societies and by contact between European and overseas societies. Both these phenomena marked the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the period of the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and the extension of European overseas trade and settlements. The economic and political development of industrial capitalism provided a strong stimulus to sociological investigations.

The second half of the twentieth century has seen the development of pluralist societies in much of the Western world. This infused a new energy into sociological studies. Sociologists identified new groups. Indeed, many of them became advocates for particular groups. Thus the definition in *The Encyclopedia of Education* (1971) becomes quite apt: 'Sociology is the study of the properties of groups their structures, processes and adaptation to changing circumstances'.²

In addition to considering the meaning of sociology, we must also consider the meaning of 'education'. This is an immense question. For our immediate purpose we will concentrate on features of education likely to come within the compass of the sociology of education. The definition of education has been shaped over 2500 years, since Plato first looked at educational theory and practice. Scanning the centuries, we can identify some persistent characteristics of education. It soon becomes obvious that a distinction exists between education and schooling. Schools are only one source of education. It is also apparent that what goes on in schools is not necessarily educational. We find that education is socially conditioned; its nature changes over time. However, a constant core may be discerned, despite the ups and downs, the periods of regression and recovery. From ancient Greece onwards the concept of liberal education influenced both

theory and practice. Liberal education was general education, in contrast with technical or vocational training. It could take a variety of forms, sometimes narrowly concentrating on mental development, sometimes studying both human and natural phenomena. In times when liberal education was concerned with both 'Man' and 'Nature' a composite curriculum existed, embracing both general or humanist studies and naturalistic or realist ones. Technical and vocational education was frequently provided through apprenticeship systems, though formal technical or commercial instruction also developed. Some subjects of the curriculum could serve several functions liberal or cultural, commercial or technical, or mental training.

But education is also a process involving individual growth in a social context. Some educational theorists, such as Rousseau, have studied both the individual (as in *Emile*) and society (as in *The Government of Poland*). Herbert Spencer was another who combined an interest in the individual and in society. In some periods theorists have emphasised education as the development of the talents of the individual for his or her own happiness, in others as moulding the individual in the interests of society. In happy times a balance of concerns has prevailed. Education was both a means by which society could ensure its survival and development and an agency by which the individual could develop his or her talents and find meaning and happiness in life.

Western civilisation has witnessed three great epochs in educational theory, in all of which humanism was strong the Graeco-Roman (Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, Plutarch, Cicero, Quintilian); the classical Renaissance (the rediscovered Graeco-Romans, Vergerio, Erasmus, Comenius, Locke); the nineteenth century renaissance, from the 1780s to 1914 (Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Herbart, Dewey). Today we live in an intermediate stage, producing a multiplicity of minor theorists. Theory has become technical, often the product of research groups or official committees of investigation.

In the past many educational theorists and commentators were motivated by religious, social or political interests rather than by essentially educational concerns. Their views were likely to have sociological overtones. Today, many are motivated by the concerns of special groups, also encouraging sociological leanings. Currently world society is experiencing economic problems which foster instrumental or utilitarian theories and override personal or group orientations. Yet theorists must remember that over the last two and a half millenia education has developed a certain autonomy of interests and values which need to be defended, even in a hostile environment.

Which Social Institutions Transmit Education?

The social institutions which carry the greatest responsibility in the transmission of education may be identified by a study of the history of education, comparative education, and contemporary education. Educational institutions, such as the school, the family, the Church, the workshop, even (at times) political parties, seek to change pupils both socially and individually through education and training.

1

The Family

The family is the prime educational institution, for it is solely responsible for the first five years (sometimes less, sometimes more) of instruction in both knowledge and values. The significance of the family remains strong thereafter, for family support is necessary for successful teaching in schools. At times, and for some social groups, family instruction is provided by tutors and/or governesses within the household. On occasions, particularly amongst the upper classes, families have helped each other by the interchange of children (e.g. in feudal times between the castle households of nobles). At times apprenticeship training has assumed a familial character the transmission of crafts from father to son in Asian societies; or in feudal Europe the master tradesman who took an apprentice youth into his home, giving him instruction in basic literacy and technical training, and providing moral education through family worship and punishment.

2

The Workplace/Employer

The apprenticeship system is one example of the role of the workplace and of employers in the provision of technical training. Direct work experience can provide direct skilling. Sometimes employers have set up special schools for vocational training.

3

The Church

For centuries the Church has provided education, in the form of inculcation of religious ideology from the pulpit or in church-maintained schools. The preparation of clergy and religious administrators has also involved the Churches in education. But Churches have also run study groups and other social groups for adolescents and adults, some of whose activities must be judged educational.

4

Political Parties

Sometimes political parties assume the role of secular churches, particularly if they are in opposition to the established order but

even when they are governing parties. Like Churches and some other sectarian groups, they have a philosophy to impart. Communist parties in their heyday provided remarkable examples, requiring their members to undertake 'educational' activities such as attending study classes and reading Marxist pamphlets.

5

The Media

The media includes newspapers (for those who can read); the theatre (for those who can or cannot read); and more recently television. The different components of the media provide entertainment and information, varying considerably in educational quality.

6

The State

The state has not always played a strong role in education. On occasions it has provided and controlled schools, but at times its responsibility has been limited to supervision. But because the state has always been interested in children as future citizens, it has been interested in schools. The state usually seeks to inculcate a dominant ideology in society, and this also gives it an interest in education. The state wishes to promote social cohesion. In the nineteenth century it often saw education as a means of diminishing crime. In the twentieth century it may seek an economic benefit in education. When the economy of the community is a major concern of the state it will be interested in technical education, but also in basic general education. Physical education and health education can also be a concern of a state worried about military strength or about the quality of life.

Two major principles in the above analysis must be emphasised. The first is that education is not the same thing as schooling. Education can take place outside the schools; on the other hand, not all that goes on within schools is necessarily educational. Secondly, education consists of more than general, academic knowledge. It can also include the skills of technical training, or various religious or other beliefs and values. At times some have argued that mental training, mastery of study processes, is more important than acquisition of knowledge. Another function of education can be the development of aesthetic appreciation. However, for a great deal of history, particularly that of Western civilisation, liberal or general studies have been central to the concept of education.

Sociology and Education:
Auguste Comte

The early sociologists had a strong historical/evolutionary approach. For Auguste Comte (1798-1857) sociology was 'history philosoph-

ically considered', being distinguished from history by its broad historical tendencies rather than concern for specific details. This evolutionary approach engendered a sense of optimism. In *The Course of Positive Philosophy* (1830/42) Comte argued that a study of the development of human intelligence, 'in all directions, and through all times' shows that each branch of knowledge passes through three theoretical conditions: the theological, or fictitious; the metaphysical, or abstract; and the scientific, or positive. Thus the human mind employs in its progress three methods of philosophising: theological, metaphysical and positive. The positive explanation is based on an objective examination of phenomena, using reasoning and observation. 3

Comte divided the study of human society into two essential parts: static and dynamic. Static sociology deals with the social order; dynamic with change and progress. The study of social statics, Comte said, was more simple, more general, and more abstract than that of social dynamics.⁴ But the dynamic part of social science was the most interesting, most intelligible, and fittest to disclose the laws of social connection.⁵

Comte, 'the father of sociology', provided not only a theory of sociology, but also a methodology. He set out his general methodology in his *Course of Positive Philosophy*, which he later elaborated in his *System of Positive Polity*. His methodology was based on historical comparisons. He set out the general direction of human development in relation to mankind's fundamental conceptions about the natural and social order. But all parts of human development were interconnected. Moreover, while one could distinguish a normal type, one must also allow for deviations from the type. Comte believed that the capacity of outstanding individuals to make radical changes in society was decreasing, while the capacity of society as a whole to make changes in accord with the laws of development was increasing. He identified three direct means of investigation in sociology: observation, experimentation and comparison and one indirect.⁶ The indirect arose from the connection of sociology with the other social sciences.

Comte did not write at length on education. But he made numerous passing references. He was particularly concerned with reforming the curriculum.

In his *Course of Positive Philosophy* Comte remarked that European education was still essentially theological, metaphysical and literary. It must be superseded 'by a positive training, conformable to our time and needs'. Governments were trying to encourage this. All subjects, including the sciences, were too specialised. For students the positive philosophy would provide a general instruction which the other three elements in the curriculum

could not. This would complete 'the vast intellectual operation begun by Bacon, Descartes, and Galileo'. 7 Comte identified five fundamental sciencesastronomy, physics, chemistry, physiology (biology), and social physics (sociology). Moreover, they should be studied in that order, since the later sciences depended on the earlier ones.8 But a sixth, mathematics, was the most important and should, therefore, be studied first.

Comte believed that what he called household education, or private education, should be given by the mother. Public education should be little more than the development of family education. Education had to be entrusted to 'the spiritual power, and in the family the spiritual power is represented by woman'. She was responsible for the training of the feelings. The male is destined for action; but he completes his moral education by voluntarily subordinating himself to his wife.9 Comte seems to be envisaging the middle class family.

In *The System of Positive Polity* Comte mentions, in a chapter entitled 'The action of positivism upon the working class', the general system of education which positivism would introduce. Catholicism had introduced a system of education common to all classes, its imperishable principle being that moral training was more important than scientific teaching. For the masses Catholic education taught almost passive resignation and provided no intellectual culture. Comte argued that up to puberty education should be spontaneous, carried out as far as possible in the family. In the second period of life education should be mainly a systematic course of scientific lectures on the essence of the basic phenomena. It would have a strong moral basis and be provided coincidentally with industrial apprenticeship. But this educational scheme would be impossible to implement immediately: 'Children cannot be brought up in convictions contrary to those of their parents, or indeed without their parents' assistance'. Thus only some individuals were ready for education; as their numbers increase they can educate the next generation. It is not the task of governments to organise education; indeed they should abandon what educational powers they already possessed. First the adults must be educated through popular lectures. This would open the door for the reform of education for the next generation.10

Le Play:
Case Studies, the Family and Education

Frederic Le Play (1806-1882), another Frenchman, undertook research into influences on the family and society, and developed the case study technique, studying individuals or groups in great detail. His major book, *European Workers* (1855) was based on

the study of 300 families in a variety of occupations and localities. Le Play, a devout Catholic and conservative, believed 'Place, Work and Family' were basic in social life and that religion was necessary for social order. 11 Le Play was the first to distinguish three main types of family. In *The Organisation of the Family* (1871) he identified the patriarchal (or joint) family, where the married sons remain under their father's roof; the 'stem' family, where only one married son remains; and the 'unstable' or nuclear family, where all the children leave on marriage.12

Le Play thought that children were subjected to formal education for far too long and artificially withheld from employment and engagement in social affairs. Education was not something to be handed over to the schools. Engagement in some work was positively good for children. Education for girls should differ from that for boys. It should focus on homemaking, but not in a narrow way it should broaden into scientific and cultural studies. In that way, when girls became wives and mothers they would exert a rich educative influence in the home. The home, Le Play believed, is the most important place not only for children but for women and, indeed, for men.13

Spencer:
A Sociology for Scientific Education

In England Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) advanced the study of both sociology and education. Like Comte, he used the comparative method. Spencer was particularly interested in biological evolution and sought to find similar principles in social evolution. His views on social evolution subsequently influenced Durkheim and Weber. He saw social evolution as gradual and cumulative, as determined from within society, and involving structural diversification a shift from simple to specialised and more formal models.14

Spencer regarded the state as a limited liability company formed by individuals to protect their mutual liberties. The state should not try to do things which free individuals could do better. Therefore, it should not concern itself with the postal service, sanitary services, education or religion. In the twentieth century the power of the state grew and Spencer's views fell out of fashion. But today a reaction against extreme state intervention, in education as elsewhere, gives his views renewed significance.

He accepted some of Comte's educational views. One of these became popular as the recapitulation theory. 'We agree with M. Comte in the belief that, rightly conducted, the education of the individual must have a certain correspondence with the evolution of the race'. In his *Social Statics* (1850) he took up Comte's view that the child was comparable to primitive man.15 This idea

harmonised with the recapitulation or culture-epoch theory which was popular in the later nineteenth century. It was taken up by the disciples of the educational theorist J. F. Herbart, and survived till the 1920s. This theory asserted that the mental or intellectual development of the child repeated, in abbreviated form, the intellectual evolution of the human race. In Australia the recapitulation theory influenced the organisation of the content in particular subjects, such as history, literature and even music and science, in the early twentieth century.

In his *Essays on Education* (1861) Spencer argued that successive systems of education were associated with the successive states with which they co-existed, and that they both underwent evolution. The importance Spencer gave to science in the curriculum was a natural consequence of the development of science in Britain during the Industrial Revolution. He believed that Latin and Greek did not deserve their paramount place in the liberal curriculum. Positive knowledgescienceshould prevail. One of the four articles in *Essays on Education* bears a title whose echoes resound even today 'What knowledge is of most worth?' This is a key question in the philosophy of education and in debates over the curriculum.

Spencer's interest, however, was more in the philosophy and aims of education than in the sociology of education. Three other major sociologistsMarx, Durkheim, and Weberhave had a significant impact on education in recent times. Yet in their own lifetimes only one, Durkheim, was directly concerned with education.

Marx:
A Class View of Education

The theory of society advanced by Karl Marx (18181883) put prime emphasis on material and political institutions and on the class struggle; education was subsidiary. In his preface to *The Critique of Political Economy* (1859) Marx summed up his 'base and superstructure' theory of society:

In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. 16

This suggests that education is part of the social superstructure. It

responds to changes in the materialist base. Thus it is relatively unimportant in influencing social development.

Marx's views on education (and those of his close collaborator, Frederick Engels) emerge incidentally from his writings. At least three major elements may be discerned in the Marxian approach to education. First, opposition to education in the home in favour of free education in public schools. Second, the need to associate mental and manual work. This harmonised with Marx's belief in the material basis of ideas, but also accommodated the fact that some people work with their hands and others with their minds. A third feature was ideologicalMarx's hostility to the inculcation of values, morality, and religion in schools. 17

In *The Communist Manifesto* of 1848 Marx and Engels proclaimed that communists sought 'to rescue education from the influence of the ruling class'. By contrast with Comte and Le Play, they condemn 'bourgeois claptrap about the family and education, about the hallowed correlation of parent and child'. Amongst the proletariat, they remark, family life was impossible. On achieving power the proletariat should include in their immediate program 'free education for all children in public schools. Abolition of children's factory labour in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production, etc.' Under communism, wrote Engels, the care and education of children is transferred from the family to become a public affair.18

Subsequently, Marx clarified his views on public schools. When the German Social-Democratic Party was being established a draft set of principles known as the Gotha Program was drawn up. This included the demand for: 'Universal and equal elementary education by the state. Universal compulsory school attendance. Free instruction'. Marx wrote a *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, which was circulated privately in 1875 and published in 1891. He disagreed that the state should provide elementary education. In contemporary society, he said, the state should provide the means to education, not education itself. For instance, it should define the qualifications of teachers, the subjects to be taught, and so on. It should employ inspectors to supervise the observance of its regulations. But government and church should alike be excluded from all influence on the school. Technical schools should be provided in combination with elementary schools.19

The French utopian, Fourier, was the first to suggest that, under socialism, education should be intimately associated with labour, while in England Robert Owen tried to develop a combination of school education with work. Marx took up the idea from Owen. Commenting on the Factory Act of 1864, which required some education for children working in factories, Marx stated:

From the Factory Act budded . . . the germ of the education of the future, an education that will, in the case of every child over a given age, combine productive labour with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of production but as the only method of producing fully developed human beings. 20

The 1867 Resolution of the Geneva Congress of the First International, written by Marx, is somewhat more comprehensive.

By education we mean three things: Firstly: *Mental education*.

Secondly: *Bodily education*, such as given in schools of gymnastics and by military exercise.

Thirdly: *Technological training*, which imparts the general principles of all processes of production, and, simultaneously initiates the child and young person in the practical use and handling of the elementary instruments of all trades.

A gradual and progressive course of mental, gymnastic, and technological training ought to correspond with the classification of the juvenile workers. The costs of the technological schools ought to be partly met by the sale of the products. The combination of paid productive labour, mental education, bodily exercise and polytechnic training, will raise the working class far above the level of the higher and middle classes.21

The undeveloped reference to 'mental education' might represent an acceptance of current faculty psychology, which argued that the purpose of academic study was to develop mental capacities (training the faculties of the mind), rather than mastery of knowledge. A variant of this theory, prevalent since the 1960s, says that the major purpose of education is to develop mental skills through the process of study rather than fill the mind with academic content. But Marx's general formulation also reasserted the interconnection of mind and hand. The 1867 Resolution shows that Marx was not concerned with providing equality of opportunity by giving lower class children access to middle and upper class schools or by providing the middle or upper class curriculum in working class schools. Schools were not regarded as avenues for social advancement. Rather, Marx wanted to give working-class children a special education, one better than that of the other classes.

A few years later Marx indicated clearly what he meant by 'mental education'. Reacting to a suggestion that children should be taught the laws that regulated the value of their labour, Marx told the General Council of the First International:

Nothing could be introduced either in primary or higher schools that admitted of party and class interpretation. Only subjects such as the physical sciences, grammar, etc., were fit matter for schools. The rules of grammar, for instance, could not differ, whether explained by a religious Tory or a free thinker. Subjects that admitted of different conclusions must be excluded and left for the adults . . .22

This suggests a wish to restrict the curriculum to the basic skills and to 'value-free' knowledge. It is a reminder that Marx

believed in the possibility of objective knowledge. This contrasts with the neo-Marxists of the 1970s and 1980s who argued that *all* knowledge is class knowledge. It also parallels contemporary emphasis on the basic skills and confusion over the place of the former 'humanist' or liberal subjects. But an educational sociologist might have told Marx that even if the school excluded value-laden subjects, the pupil would absorb values from the family, the church, the peer-group and other sources.

The same caution about teaching values underlay the hostility of Marx and Engels to religious and moral education. This also sprang from their view that religion was 'nothing but a fantastic reflection in the human brain of those external powers which dominate their daily existence'.²³ It gave relief to people in distress, but also served to keep them passive with promises of a better afterlife. Morality they regarded as a class phenomenon; morality endorsed the class interests of particular social classes. Yet Marx was not unaware of the importance of moral education and values. For instance, he attributed the introduction of education clauses into English factory acts to a realisation of 'the intellectual desolation artificially produced by converting immature human beings into mere machines'.²⁴ The writings of the young Marx on the phenomenon of alienation is also evidence of this awareness.

Marx's writings on capitalism and social classes influenced many later sociologists, such as Max Weber and Karl Mannheim. His specific suggestions on education were only occasionally accepted. The principle of merging education and labour was tried in the USSR in the 1920s and again in the late 1950s and early 1960s under the name of 'polytechnisation'. China, too, experimented with polytechnisation for a short time in the late 1950s. The writings of Marx and Engels on ideology provided the foundations on which the vast and ambitious edifice of the sociology of knowledge was constructed in the 1970s and after. However, their views on the relative unimportance of formal education, on the undesirability of state schools and the need to exclude value-associated subjects from the curriculum attracted no support.

Weber:
Bureaucratic Castes and Education

An outstanding sociologist whose ideas bear some affinities with those of Marx was Max Weber (1864-1920), a German scholar with an unusually wide range of learning. Weber studied law, but also became interested in economics, history and philosophy. His work is permeated with historical insights. He became a professor of economics at Freiberg in 1894, moving to Heidelberg in 1896 and later to the University of Munich.

Weber's main contributions to sociology were in the methodology of the social sciences, the relation of fact and values in teaching social science, and the concept of ideal types, such as bureaucracies and elites. 25 Like Marx, Weber believed that all economic life had a complementary ethic. But he believed politics or administration was more important than economics. He sought to compare various historical individuals (or ideal types) and periods (or abstract models). He was adept at making generalisations about social structures. Sociology, he said, in contrast to history, was not concerned with specific individuals.

Sociology seeks to formulate type concepts and generalized uniformities of empirical process. This distinguishes it from history, which is oriented to the causal analysis and explanation of individual actions, structures and personalities possessing cultural significance. The empirical material which underlies the concepts of sociology consists to a very large extent . . . of the same concrete processes of action which are dealt with by historians.26

Sociological concepts can help explain historical and cultural phenomena. But sociological concepts are more abstract than historical analysis.

As with Marx, Weber's approach to education has to be garnered from scattered references in various writings. In a major historical work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), Weber analysed the relation between religious beliefs and economic development. Unfortunately, this work was not translated into English until 1930. In the opening of his book Weber touches on the link between religion, social class and education. He asks why the percentage of Catholics in German higher education was less than the proportion of Protestants and why Catholics preferred the humanistic education provided in academic secondary schools (the *gymnasien*) to that in vocational secondary schools. He argues that mental and spiritual peculiarities acquired from the community, the Church or the home can often override economic and political influences.27 Ideas can sometimes be stronger than social forces.

Weber was particularly interested in examinations as they related to an administrative bureaucracy. He scrutinised not only the Prussian bureaucracy but also the bureaucracy of China and of feudal society. Amongst the means by which a social group or class will protect its conditions and restrict access to rewards and privileges were 'regulated curricula culminating in specialised examinations'. Positions could thus be monopolised by those who held 'educational patents'.28 Discussing bureaucracy, in essays written between 1911 and 1913, Weber notes how the private scholar becomes dependent on large institutions, such as university

libraries. Bureaucracy produces a social levelling, for the bureaucrat is usually an expert, not a talented amateur. Equal eligibility for administrative appointments is established by educational criteria. Educational diplomas replace privilege as the basis of administrative recruitment, just as scientific education and technical expertise replace the cultivation of the mind through classical literature and the cultivation of manners through competitive games. The expert, not the cultivated man, is the ideal of a bureaucratic age. 29

Weber was one of the first sociologists to consider the sociology of higher education. His writings were somewhat fragmented, but included such topics as university autonomy and academic freedom. He was particularly interested in the structure of higher education and the influence of industrial capitalism and the bureaucratic state on academic values.³⁰ The revival of interest in Weber's sociology after World War II was a natural concomitant of the great growth of bureaucracy in the era of the welfare state.

Weber and the other nineteenth century sociologists were men of broad learning, imbued with a historical awareness. They believed that social improvement could be facilitated through sociology. They were individual scholars, not organisers of research teams. But what little they had to say about education lacked immediate use to teachers or educational administrators.³¹ At the opening of the twentieth century, however, we encounter the first sociologist who was also an educationist.

Durkheim:

An Educationist's Sociology of Education

In France Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) initiated a new approach to sociology and the sociology of education. An Alsatian Jew who became an agnostic, he sought a new secular and scientific ethic which would bind France together after the establishment of the Third Republic and the weakening of traditional educational institutions dominated by the Church.

Durkheim was a general sociologist, but he always taught pedagogy as well as sociology. He taught in the Faculty of Letters at Bourdeaux from 1887 to 1902 and then at the Sorbonne from 1902 until his death in 1917. Living as he did in a time of educational reform, he paid considerable attention to education. He regarded sociology as a social science, seeing an analogy with the physical sciences. In both areas of knowledge it was possible to gain exactness through measurement and to discern laws. In *Le Suicide* (1897) Durkheim studied this phenomenon without reference to the individual intentions of those who commit suicide but used statistics indicating their social character. He assumes that very often men act under the logic of society, an inner dynamic of

which they are not fully aware. In doing so Durkheim helped found the functionalist school of sociology, which holds that the major question to be asked of social institutions and customs was: What social function does it serve? Durkheim's writings reflected the late nineteenth century ethos, harmonising his historical bent with his interest in the moral outlook motivating individuals.

Durkheim's first major contribution to the sociology of education was his article *Pedagogie et Sociologie*, written in 1903. This was reprinted with other lectures in his book *Education et Sociologie*, which appeared in 1922. But the book was not translated into English until 1956, thus limiting Durkheim's influence on American and English thought. The delay might partly be attributable to an Anglo-Saxon suspicion of theory. *Education et Sociologie* provides a major statement of Durkheim's concept of the relation between education and society. His views on the ideal type which a society promotes was echoed by Sir Frederick Clarke 40 years later. His distinction between the demands of society as a whole and of constituent groups within society is valuable. He likes to present his theory as arising logically from identified fact:

From these facts it follows that each society sets up a certain ideal of man, of what he should be, as much from the intellectual point of view as the physical and moral; that this ideal is, to a degree, the same for all the citizens; that beyond a certain point it becomes differentiated according to the specific milieu [groupings] that every society contains in its structure. It is this ideal, at the same time one and various, that is the focus of education. Its function, then, is to arouse in the child : (1) a certain number of physical and mental states that the society to which he belongs considers should not be lacking in any of its members; (2) certain physical and mental states that the particular social group (caste, class, family, profession) considers, equally, ought to be found among all those who make it up. Thus it is society as a whole and each particular social milieu [grouping] that determine the ideal that education realizes.

Thus Durkheim accommodates the operation both of society as a whole and its constituent groups on the education of citizens. But he also considers the conditions under which the educational pattern will change:

If the society has reached a degree of development such that the old divisions into castes and classes can no longer be maintained, it will prescribe an education more uniform at its base. If at the same time there is more division of labour, it will arouse among children, on the underlying set of common ideas and sentiments, a richer diversity of occupational aptitudes. If it lives in a state of war with the surrounding societies, it tries to shape people according to a strongly nationalistic model; if international competition takes a more peaceful form, the type that it tries to realize is more general and more humanistic. Education is, then, only the means by which society prepares, within the children, the essential conditions of its very existence. 32

This was an adept analysis appropriate to the socio-educational situation in Western Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Economic growth and the growth of the professional middle class was producing a new differentiation in society and hence in education. Thus, in state systems advanced or continuation schools were being established for lower or lower middle-class children and academic high schools for future members of the professions. Durkheim's analysis recognised the existence of nationalistic tensions between industrial countries. It reflected the anti-clericalism of contemporary France both negatively and positively. He makes no mention of religious purposes in education, but he evinces a concern for moral education. Durkheim accepted the contemporary neo-Herbartian approach that the aim of education was moral, the development of character. This is essentially a humanist aim. But his analysis did not conceive the possibility of a 'failure of nerve', of a society becoming unsure whether it wished to reproduce 'the essential conditions of its own existence'. Today this possibility has become real.

In English-speaking countries, such as America, Britain and Australia, much of the writings of the Continental sociologists remained untranslated and their work little known (especially their work in education) until the 1930s and in some cases until the 1960s. And yet the United States very quickly took the lead in promoting the study of the sociology of education.

Emergence of Educational Sociology in the United States, 1880-1930

In the United States sociology developed in response to the social changes which followed the Civil War of 1861-65, the growth of industrialisation in the 1870s and 1880s, and the contact with new ethnic groups immigrants and the American Indians. Lester Frank Ward, who published *Dynamic Sociology* in 1883, was one of the founders of American sociology. He borrowed his ideas from Comte and Spencer. Like Comte he distinguished between social statics (the structure) and social dynamics (processes). However, he had little contemporary influence his anti-individualistic outlook and his belief in state intervention to reform society contradicted the dominating spirit in America.

Sociology established a foothold in American universities in the depression of the 1890s. In 1892 A. W. Small founded the first Sociology Department in an American university in the newly established University of Chicago. He started the *American Journal of Sociology* in 1895. Columbia followed in 1894 with F. H. Giddings, who lectured there until 1931 on sociology and the

history of civilisation. The presence of sociology in universities generated a need for textbooks. Small's *Introduction to the Study of Society*, which appeared in 1894, proposed that sociology concern itself with the study of social structures and functions. Giddings' *Principles of Sociology*, published in 1896, was dominated by evolutionism. It emphasised the importance of social pressure and the necessity of an elite, but also included psychological theories and quantitative methods. 33

American sociology was already developing a distinctive tradition of debunking and radicalism. Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929) was an economist, who taught in many institutions. His academic career was beset with troubles, both because of his radicalism and his sexual adventures. He published *The Theory of the Leisure Class* in 1899. A scholarly and satirical protest against the false values and social waste of the upper classes, this was his most influential work. *The Theory of Business Enterprise* followed in 1904. In both cases Veblen used the word 'theory' to mean the values or ideology of those in power. But Veblen was not a good lecturer; he was often incoherent, even inaudible. He made it a standard practice never to give a grade higher than C as a protest against invidious distinctions. His books were, to some degree, a product of his academic maladjustment. *The Higher Learning in America*, (1918) had the subtitle 'a memorandum on the conduct of universities by businessmen'. It was 'one of the most bitter sociological treatises ever written, literally dripping venom on every page, an eloquent testimony to Veblen's savage disillusionment with American university life'.³⁴ It retains its prestige, partly because it is an example of the recently popular method of 'participant observation', partly because the description of the erosion of scholarly values and of universities as places of socialisation has become more relevant as Britain and Australia belatedly follow the American model.³⁵

Veblen's work, however, was marginal to formal education in schools, and only incidentally concerned with higher education. A forerunner of the sociology of education was William T. Harris, an educational administrator, an adherent of Hegel's philosophy, a Congregationalist and an opponent of the determinism of Herbert Spencer and the materialism of Karl Marx. Harris lived in a time of rapid social change, when industrialism and immigration were helping transform America.

Harris distinguished himself as superintendent of the St Louis public schools (1868-80) and subsequently as United States Commissioner of Education (1889-1906). He believed that the common or public schools increased opportunity, taught morality and citizenship, encouraged a talented leadership, maintained

social mobility, and promoted popular acceptance of social evolution. But he recognised that the school was only one of several educational institutions and, as he wrote in 1881, was less important in the educative process than the family, the church, the civil community and the state. 36 The school was an agent for preserving the past and adjusting the individual to society. It could not contribute to changing society. Harris told the National Education Association in 1896 that education should be based on sociology, which was 'the science of a combination of men into social wholes'. Through education, which included not only the school, but the family, church, civil community and state, the child could contribute as an individual to society and could receive the benefits of society.³⁷

The depression of the 1890s and the 'closing of the frontier' changed American society and increased the importance of education. The number of free public high schools increased; fee-charging academies declined. Comprehensive high schools developed after 1910. The consequent expansion of teacher training encouraged a more wide-ranging sociology of education. Many sociologists of education were supporters of comprehensive high schools. John Dewey, head of the Department of Philosophy and Education at the University of Chicago from 1894, analysed the implications of social change for American education in *School and Society* (1899). He argued that the current ferment in education was the consequence of industrialism. The school would have to assume all the educative aspects of traditional agrarian life. Each school had to be an embryonic community. His *magnum opus*, *Democracy and Education* (1916), examined the educational meaning of democracy, science, evolution and industrialism. Dewey was now regarded as the leading advocate of progressive education.³⁸ After Dewey, sociologists of education were inclined to support both comprehensive high schools and progressive, child-centred education.

The first university course in the sociology of education appeared in 1901. In 1916 the first department of educational sociology was established at Columbia University. W. R. Smith's *An Introduction to Educational Sociology*, published in 1917, was the first textbook to use the term 'educational sociology'. Between 1910 and 1926 university courses in this field increased from 40 to 194.³⁹

The 1920s were years of transition and confusion as the concept of sociology and of educational sociology changed. Until the First World War the exponents of academic sociology retained the belief that the laws of social evolution could be derived from historical studies on the broadest scale. Sociologists believed society was evolving and improving. Humanist ideology sustained a moral tradition in sociology. Now came a greater interest in making sociology an objective, scientific and neutral study. An empirical

approach was coming into favour. W. F. Ogburn's *Social Change with Respect to Culture and Original Nature* (1922) substituted a functional analysis of society for historical and evolutionary analyses. His enumeration of the family's functions—economic, educational, religious, protective, recreational—encouraged similar analyses by others. Ogburn also called for more rigorous empirical work. Sociology began to retreat from history, from theory, even from generalisation. 40 Statistical techniques were refined, narrow empirical studies increased. Sociology started to reflect the influence of psychology.

These changes were not unconnected with the greater prominence of sociology in teacher-training courses. Up until this time undergraduate courses in sociology relied upon clergymen and social workers for much of their enrolment. Now trainee teachers were becoming important. The undergraduate curriculum was becoming fragmented as electives permitted greater specialisation. The growth of graduate schools also encouraged specialisation. Grand theory was undermined.

In 1927 an American sociologist, surveying the status of educational sociology in teachers' colleges and universities, remarked on the 'disheartening lack of unity in the conception of educational sociology' and on 'the absence of agreement among educational sociologists as to the aim and content of their subject'.⁴¹ But academic proliferation brought some benefits. In 1927 E. George Payne and others founded *The Journal of Educational Sociology*.⁴² In 1928 Payne presented a more elaborate definition of educational sociology:

By educational sociology we mean the science which describes and explains the institutions, social groups, and social processes, that is, the *social relationships* in which and through which the individual gains and organises his experience.

These *social inter-dependencies* include not merely those in which the individual gains and organizes his experiences as a child, but also those social groups in which he must function in adult life. These social relationships are furthermore regarded particularly in relation to the educational system in its evolution and changing function.⁴³

The world economic depression of the 1930s encouraged the popularity of Marxian ideas and of sociological investigation. Interest in social problems pervaded the sociology of both rural and urban life. Influenced by anthropology, the study of cultures as a whole developed.

An Early Radical Sociology of Education

The Depression encouraged a radical re-examination of American social institutions, including education. For a few years

a left-wing, semi-Marxist sociology of education emerged, an early anticipation of the much more daring radicalism of the 1970s.

American educational theorists were divided into supporters of liberal or general education (the neo-Herbertians being the most recent proponents) and supporters of progressive, child-centred education, associated with the ideas of John Dewey and W. H. Kilpatrick. The progressives, in turn, harboured a potential division between those who emphasised psychological, child-centred approaches and those who emphasised understanding society and developing social attitudes. George S. Counts, Professor of Education at Teachers College (Columbia University) told the Progressive Education Convention in 1932 that it must emancipate itself from the influence of the middle class and romantic sentimentalism and address current social issues. A 'social reconstruction' wing emerged within progressive education. Counts presented a radical, Marxist sociology of education in his pamphlet *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* (1932) and also as editor of *The Social Frontier*, whose first issue appeared in October 1934. Some leaders of progressive education, notably Kilpatrick, joined the radicals. But in *Education and the Social Crisis* (1932) Kilpatrick warned that teachers should not expect to reform society by themselves. He also disagreed that teachers should deliberately indoctrinate for reform. They 'must educate for intelligently directed social change rather than assume to inculcate the details of a specific program'. 44

But Conservatives rejected the view that schools could lead to social reform, while Charles Beard, the noted liberal historian, remarked in an American Historical Association report in 1932 on the objectives of social studies, that 'the schools have no access to super-wisdom'. At the other extreme, Theodore Brameld, writing in *The Social Frontier* in November 1935, reminded radical teachers that Marx saw social reform coming through violence, not through the schools.45

But policy changed. After August 1935 the Communist International adopted a more moderate line, calling for a 'United Front' against fascism. In America, Roosevelt was building a welfare state. American politics became more tranquil. In late 1935, while the teachers were on summer vacation, the social reconstructionists grouped round *The Social Frontier* set aside the task of building a new social order. In the next few years less well-known educators quietly sought to rebuild society by preparing materials, study lists and books for social studies teachers. A new magazine, *Building America*, assisted the study of American social conditions in the classroom.46

These were early premonitions of the more vigorous debates of the 1970s, when political, social and ideological change raised

in even more intense form similar questions of indoctrination and curriculum reform.

An Early Sociology of Schooling

In the 1930s Willard Waller tackled certain sociological issues in education from a leftist position reminiscent of Veblen. From 1929 to 1937 Waller taught in academic obscurity in Nebraska and Pennsylvania. In 1937, when his work was beginning to attract attention, he joined Barnard College. His reputation rested mainly on three studies, *The Sociology of Teaching* (1932), a journal article, 'The Rating and Dating Complex' (1937), and *The Family: A Dynamic Interpretation* (1938). He died prematurely in 1945.

Waller's interest in the sociology of schools was appropriate at a time when schools were growing in size; when the development of large comprehensive schools generated pedagogical problems; and when the number of educational administrators was increasing. Waller pioneered the sociology of schooling and *The Sociology of Teaching* remained the dominant exposition for more than 20 years. Waller viewed the school as a social system or 'social organism' and analysed the social roles involved in the formal and informal social structure of educational institutions. He noted the existence of two cultural systems in schools those of the students and those of the educators. He saw the social relationships between students and teachers as one of 'perilous equilibrium'. He also realised the limitations of his analysis. 'A first treatment of this sort must necessarily be rough and inconclusive'. He emphasised that 'empirical research must be done before more refined investigations can proceed'. Yet he also argued that qualitative research must always go before quantitative research. 47

Waller did not hesitate to express opinions: the value judgements in his work make it less dreary than much sociological writing. His book on the family and his research on dating among college students fostered the case study method. He had no confidence in statistical surveys, believing that 'intensive study of a few cases' usually proved more enlightening than 'collecting facts about many' and that 'no generalization can be so clearly buttressed by facts as one which is definitely supported by one or two well understood cases'.48

Nothing further on the sociology of the classroom appeared until Talcott Parsons' theoretical essay, 'The School Class as a Social System' in 1959. Sociological interest in schooling concentrated on the selection and allocation of pupils. None of the major works on the sociology of education even indexed the classroom until the late 1960s.49

Decline of the Sociology of Education in America

In the 1930s and 1940s interest in educational sociology declined in American universities and teachers' colleges. Sociology was in disfavour in universities, being considered too radical. Education had low prestige as a university faculty; educational sociologists in the teachers' colleges were people trained in education, not sociology. An observer commented in 1937 that the immaturity of the field of educational sociology was indicated by the fact that it was not mentioned in the recently published *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. But in educational circles some interest persisted. A whole issue of *The Review of Educational Research* (February 1937) was devoted to educational sociology.

In the 1940s sociologists criticised the sociology of education because the subject was developed in colleges of education by educators who were sociologists only secondarily, if at all. Yet the educational sociology taught in university Sociology Departments also sought to meet the practical needs of education students. 'As service courses, they tended to develop a market orientation in which customer satisfaction became the primary concern'.⁵⁰ In the 1930s and 1940s most educational sociologists saw American high schools as instruments for social improvement and for the social adjustment of the students rather than academic establishments for the inculcation of knowledge.⁵¹

Britain's Limited Interest in Sociology of Education

In early twentieth century Britain interest in sociology was limited; interest in the sociology of education was miniscule, except among radical socialists. The main proponents of sociology were 'outsiders' either radicals interested in social reform, or foreigners, or both. Only a few writers kept the concept of sociology alive. In 1903, under the influence of Victor Branford, the Sociological Society was founded in London. Its membership included many leading figures in anthropology, history, biology, political economy, geography and philosophy. It published the *Sociological Review* from 1908 to 1949.

The first chair of Sociology in Britain was established at London University in 1907, its occupant being L. T. Hobhouse. Hobhouse was closely associated with the liberal-radical *Manchester Guardian* and for many years wrote for the paper. The sociological system of Hobhouse, like that of Spencer, was an all-embracing philosophy of evolution. His social philosophy was set out in the four volumes of his *Principles of Sociology* *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* (1918), *The Rational Good* (1921), *Elements of*

Justice (also 1921) and *Social Development* (1924). In his work he advanced the use of the comparative method, for instance in statistical studies. Assisting Hobhouse was a Finn, E. A. Westermarck, who lectured in sociology at London from 1904 to 1907. He was also a moral philosopher and anthropologist. From 1907 to 1930 he was Professor of Sociology during each Easter term, combining this with a post in moral philosophy at the University of Helsingfors and periods of anthropological fieldwork. 52

After the death of Hobhouse in 1929, the appointment of Morris Ginsberg (born in Lithuania; migrated to England in 1910) brought a true sociologist once again to the chair at London, still the only one in the country. Writing in 1933 Ginsberg saw three sources of data available to sociologists: the voluminous descriptions of primitive peoples provided by anthropologists; the 'immense historical record of the civilisations'; and the 'ever-multiplying studies of contemporary social conditions . . . frequently employing quantitative methods'.⁵³ Ginsberg, a disciple of Weber, was one of the last sociologists to accept a close link between history and sociology.

Although universities had become involved in teacher training in the 1890s, they displayed no interest in the sociology of education. Certainly students in teacher-training courses at universities and teachers' colleges studied a little educational theory. Originally this centred on the ideas of great educational theorists, but around 1911 educational theory split into educational psychology and the history of education. One reason for this lack of interest in the sociology of education may have been the long tradition of a peacefully functioning social order, which encouraged theorists to take the actualities of society for granted.⁵⁴

In 1929, however, Nicholas Hans, formerly Director of Education in Odessa during the social-democratic (Kerensky) phase of the Russian Revolution and a doctoral graduate of the University of London, published a pioneering study, *The Principles of Educational Policy*, which applied historical, comparative and sociological approaches to education on a worldwide scale, though with particular attention to England, America, France and Germany. Hans discussed the implications for education of democracy, the state, the church, the family, and centralisation and decentralisation.⁵⁵

Frederick Clarke:
Educationist and Sociologist

With Frederick Clarke (1880-1952), whose Christian beliefs intensified his commitment, we come to the first educationist with a strong sociological orientation. Born in England, he lectured at universities in South Africa, Canada and England. This practical

encounter with comparative education strengthened his sociological interests. From January 1935 he was at the London Institute of Education, set up in 1932, becoming Director in October 1936. Clarke had argued as early as 1923 that the controlling science for education was not psychology nor biology but sociology, quoting Durkheim in support: 'The man that education must realize in us is not the man such as Nature has made him but such as society would have him be'.⁵⁶ In *Education and Social Change*, published in 1940, Clarke asked how society coheres and why it should do so. He answered that education provides this cohesion and continuance. Religious belief also holds society together.

The chairs of Education which Clarke held at Cape Town (191129) and Montreal (192934) provided him with insight into education in new, pioneering societies. This found expression in an important address, 'The New Countries in Education', given at a New Education Fellowship conference in South Africa in 1934. Clarke identified some major characteristics of pioneering societies which were important for education. Positive characteristics included confidence, planning and financial generosity; negative characteristics included a dislike of intellectual discipline, a dislike of distinction, and a suspicion of excellence.⁵⁷ This analysis is very pertinent to Australian education before the 1950s.

Like Durkheim, Clarke believed that every society sought to produce a particular type of person. In *Freedom in the Educative Society* (1948) he stated: 'An "educative society" is understood here to mean one which accepts as its overmastering purpose the production of a given type of citizen. The type itself may be defined with varying degrees of precision and detail'. In post-war Britain 'the idea of an educative society is again strongly with us, and in conditions far more dangerous than those of the past'. He believed that the weakening of the traditional consensus had made the task of reconciling the favoured concept of the type with freedom more difficult.⁵⁸

Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Education

Yet the weakening of traditional social concepts helped the development of sociology in Britain after World War II. The welfare state was being built. But this brought social strain and threatened individual freedom. Education was seen by many as an important social service. The 1943 White Paper on education, the 1944 Education Act, the 1947 Ministry of Education paper on 'The New Secondary Education', and public debate over the merits of a tripartite system of grammar, technical, and modern secondary schools on the one hand and of local comprehensive schools on

the other, raised such issues as the social role of secondary schools and the appropriate curriculum in these schools.
59

Karl Mannheim (1893-1947) was both a sociologist and an educationist. He had some intellectual affinities with both Durkheim and Marx. Mannheim had suffered personally from the disruption of a social order. He had become a professor of sociology at the University of Frankfurt in 1930 but had to leave Germany in 1933, after the accession of the Nazis. He settled in London. He was thus intensely interested in the problem of reconciling freedom and social stability. In the 1940s, when the welfare state was being created in Britain, Mannheim wrote about the individual in a planned society and about ideology in a planned society.

Mannheim, a friend of Clarke with whom he shared many ideas, was appointed lecturer in sociology at the London School of Economics. From 1942 he gave a one-term lecture course at the Institute of Education on the sociology of education. On Clarke's retirement in September 1945 Mannheim succeeded him as Professor of Education. But he died three years later.

Mannheim is often considered the founder of the 'sociology of knowledge', which became better known after his book *Ideology and Utopia*, published in Germany in 1929, was translated into English in 1936. Initially the sociology of knowledge was a minor stream in sociological thought. English schools had a measure of curricular freedom unknown in other western democracies, illustrated by the statement attributed to the Labor Secretary of State for Education, George Tomlinson, in 1947: 'The Minister knows nowt about curriculum'.⁶⁰ But in the 1970s the sociology of knowledge was taken up by the epigones, exerting a devastating influence on Western intellectual culture and education.⁶¹

Sociology in Australia, 1912-1950:
A False Dawn

In Australia, still a developing, pioneering society, intellectuals in the early twentieth century were even less interested in social theory than in England. A few visiting Englishmen had provided some social analysis of Australia in the late nineteenth century notably R. E. N. Twopeny (*Town Life in Australia*, 1883) and Francis Adams (*The Australians*, 1893). Overseas observers were intrigued by the contrast between Australia as a laboratory of social reform and as a land of 'socialism without doctrines'. Australia also offered a contrast on the one hand with class-structured England and on the other with democratic America. Writing in 1920 Meredith Atkinson (an Oxford graduate active in university adult education in Sydney and Melbourne) commented: 'Probably no country in the world has been more forward in social experiment than

Australia, and none so backward in contributing to the world stream of sociological thought'. 62

The growth of the universities and of a professional middle class around 1911²¹ saw the beginning of sociology as an academic study. In 1909 the subject appeared as one-third of the syllabus in Philosophy II or III at the University of Sydney. But it was rapidly found unsuitable for undergraduates and was moved from the BA curriculum and introduced as one of seven options for the MA in philosophy. There it continued until 1925. The man who first introduced sociology was Francis Anderson, who came to the first lectureship in Philosophy at Sydney in 1888 and became the first Professor in 1890.⁶³

Addressing the 1912 meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, Anderson urged the case for sociology:

In a country which claims to be a pioneer in the field of social and political practice, no place is found in the head centres of the national education for the teaching of the science of society . . . A new science like Sociology is left to the outsider, the freelance, the popular press. Only when it has been made respectable by public recognition and foreign example, is it regarded as a safe subject for university teaching.

Sociology, he said, was the science which gave coherence to all other social sciences.⁶⁴

A fellow professor at Sydney, R. F. Irvine, who held the chair of Economics and had just toured North American universities, addressed the Melbourne University Association in 1914 on 'The Place of the Social Sciences in a Modern University'. Sociology was the subject which alone could make sense of that 'one great unity human experience'. He commented that 'nothing strikes visiting economists and sociologists so much as the meagreness of investigation and criticism by Australians of their own social evolution'.⁶⁵

It was the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), established in Australia following a visit by its English founder, Albert Mansbridge, in 1913, which stimulated the academic study of sociology. Indeed, the adult education movement often led the way in widening the university curriculum. In the late 1880s political economy, history and English literature were taught in Sydney University Extension classes while not yet available to undergraduates. The WEA operated in combination with the universities. In each state the university established a Department of Tutorial Classes which provided the lecturers while the WEA provided the lecture rooms and organised the classes.

The first Director of Tutorial Classes in Australia was Meredith Atkinson, a graduate of Oxford and a tutorial class lecturer in the University of Durham, who took up his post at the

University of Sydney in March 1914. The WEA organised two classes in sociology in 1915. Atkinson, an energetic but vain man, resigned when he was denied the title of professor and went in 1918 to Melbourne as Director of Tutorial Classes, where he enjoyed the higher status. 66 He taught sociology to undergraduates at Melbourne until his resignation in 1922. In 1919 sociology was offered as a pass subject in the School of Philosophy but in 1920 was moved to the School of History and Political Science, to be taken in either second year or third year. It could also be taken as honours work. About 100 students enrolled each year. W. K. Hancock, the Australian (and British) historian recalled in his autobiography the stimulus he received as a Melbourne undergraduate from Harrison Moore's lectures on British Constitutional History and Law and Jessie Webb's on Ancient History. 'What I did not so much relish was the pretentious mumbo-jumbo that was called sociology . . . we were offered second-hand fact, disputable generalizations and a pretentious vocabulary'.⁶⁷

The first attempt at a sociological analysis of Australia was undertaken by Clarence Northcott. Northcott, a student of Francis Anderson, had gone to Columbia University to work under F. H. Giddings. His doctoral thesis, *Australian Social Development* was published in New York in 1918 (and reprinted in 1968). Australia, he wrote, had excellent social statistics but the 'relations and correlations which lie hidden within them' still awaited investigation. He tended to read American relations into the Australian setting. Thus he saw 'a contrast between the practical and independent spirit of the pioneer and the radical socialized consciousness of the city dweller'. The contrast between the individualism of the pioneer and the socialism of the working classes produced a social idealism intolerant of special privilege. In fact, the Australian frontier differed from the American. It was a 'Big Man's Frontier' (pastoral), not a 'Small Man's Frontier' (farming). It discouraged individualism but encouraged 'mateship'. In his preface Northcott denied what this implied and others could see that Australia was an egalitarian country where the independent middle class was weak and where the man of ideas felt uncomfortable. He saw education as originally neglected but recently valued as the right of every individual and a potent force for reform again, an American view. The Australian tradition in education had been and continued to be one of fair average standards, with an early starting age and an early leaving age.

Australia. Economic and Political Studies, edited by Meredith Atkinson and published in 1920, included some chapters with a strong sociological character. The shrewder analyses included 'The Political Systems of Australia' by W. Harrison Moore of Melbourne

University, 'The Australian Political Consciousness' by Elton Mayo of Queensland University and 'The Australian Labour Movement' by G. V. Portus of Sydney University. Other potentially sociological chapters were disappointing. 'Education in Australia', by Alexander Mackie of Sydney Teachers' College, was a purely descriptive account. Mrs Francis Anderson's survey of 'The Women's Movement' paid considerable attention to the education of girls and women, but tended to be historical rather than sociological.

Atkinson was, in fact, an unfortunate prophet for the new academic discipline because of his reputation 'for self-aggrandisement, financial wheeling and dealing and . . . what appeared to be . . . bourgeois capitalist sympathies'. His successor as Director of Tutorial Classes at Melbourne, Dr J. A. Gunn had been a WEA tutor for the University of Liverpool. Gunn shared the growing enthusiasm for eugenics in the 1920s. 'With Gunn, a new element entered the teaching of sociology in the identification of social progress with better breeding and higher intelligence. Eugenics was as important as education'. 68

In the 1920s, however, the pretensions of sociology to academic status evaporated as departments of Economics, Psychology and, in Sydney, Anthropology were established. At Melbourne Gunn's economics textbook, *Livelihood*, published in 1927, did nothing for his reputation. The reviewers concluded that the book was 'useless, elementary, out-of-date, poorly organised, ill-balanced, carelessly written and badly punctuated'.⁶⁹ From 1928 sociology disappeared at Melbourne. At Sydney the teaching of sociology was subsumed within the Department of Anthropology, established in 1925. It was set up with the help of government grants and the department's students included cadets training for service in Australian New Guinea, teachers and officers who would work in the Northern Territory, and future missionaries.⁷⁰

One reason for the failure of sociology in the universities was the establishment of rival subjects such as economics, psychology and anthropology. Another was the lack of vocational demand, in a society in which the public service did not recruit university graduates, economists met the limited demand for administrative advisers, and clergymen and social workers did not usually frequent universities. Sociology, with its stress on the vitality and autonomy of groups, had little appeal to the political culture of a centralised state-dominated society. Pioneering Australia still produced only a limited interest in ideas.⁷¹

The economic and social changes of the inter-war decades industrialisation, growing state intervention in social and economic matters, increased unemployment finally encouraged soul-searching about the Australian condition. Most Australian historians

concentrated on economic development, but one book provided a strong social analysis. W. K. Hancock, who was now at the University of Adelaide, published *Australia* in 1930, an influential study encompassing the themes of nationalism and democracy. Hancock left Australia for England at the end of 1933.

In 1939 *Some Australians Take Stock*, edited by J. C. G. Kevin, proved the first of a series of similar self-scrutinising collections. The book was a set of essays by graduates of various English and Australian universities, mostly living in England, on a diversity of topics, most showing the national concerns of a 'young' developing country—the Aborigines, settlement, speech, politics, foreign policy, migration. The closest to education was a chapter by J. V. Connolly on 'The Export of Talent'.

After the war an American specialist on Australia, C. Hartley Grattan, made some shrewd observations on Australian society, notably in his survey of 'The Social Structure' in *Australia* (1947), a volume which he edited. Hartley Grattan possessed a good comparative view of the two democracies, strengthened by personal experience in Australia. He emphasised that the Australian frontier, unlike the American, was a 'Big Man's Frontier'. He drew attention to the persistent weakness of the middle class throughout Australian history. 'The Australian middle class has never been able to impose its values on the nation as the American middle class has done'. 72

The Beginnings of Educational Sociology

The weakness of sociology certainly contributed to the neglect of the sociology of education. But the social and political crises of the 1930s had some effect. Mass unemployment encouraged the introduction of educational and vocational guidance in state schools, and hence a few studies in vocational guidance were undertaken. One of these, funded by the recently established Australian Council for Educational Research, culminated in a book by G. R. Giles and J. R. Lyall, *Occupations in Victoria* (1932). Roy Giles, a teacher, had recently been appointed Vocational Guidance Officer in the Department of Education; John Lyall was editor of the *Education Gazette*. The book was a pioneering effort in the use of statistics to determine opportunities available for juveniles. It also made some observations on the secondary school curriculum. 73

In addition to the economic crisis, the social upheavals of communism in Russia and fascism in Germany aroused some interest in education and social change. In 1935 a lecturer at Sydney Teachers' College, H. S. Wyndham (later Director-General of

Education) asked his students to write an a essay on the topic, 'The Schools Reflect, Rather than Effect, Social Change'. Philip Shnukal's response was so impressive that it was printed in *Schooling*, a journal published by the college. The schools, said Shnukal, are the agents of society and obey the instructions issued from above. Only in times of dramatic social reconstruction 'do the schools play some part, albeit a secondary part, in changing society'.
74

The economic crisis and ideological challenges made the future of political democracy an urgent issue. A conference of the Australian Institute of Political Science in Canberra in January 1936 discussed the role in education of schools, universities, adult education and the media (cinema, radio, the press, libraries). The proceedings appeared as a book, *Educating a Democracy*, edited by W. G. K. Duncan. But while the social and political context was prominent, the discussions were rarely sociological.⁷⁵

This was about the sum of educational sociology. With the exception of Melbourne, universities were not closely involved in teacher training, nor did they maintain sociology departments. Only one teachers' college, Sydney, recruited staff with high academic qualifications. In most training colleges the lecturers were good practical teachers, inhibited by their limited education, heavy teaching loads, and status as public servants from openly discussing controversial issues. In teacher-training colleges and university education departments theoretical studies were limited in number. Academic educational publications concentrated on practical teaching problems, on educational psychology, or on the history of education. P.R. Cole, vice-principal of Sydney Teachers' College, edited three books in the 1930s which, in a different intellectual climate, might have made a contribution to the sociology of education *The Primary School Curriculum in Australia* (1932), *The Education of the Adolescent in Australia* (1935), and *The Rural School in Australia* (1937), all sponsored by the Australian Council for Educational Research. But they were strongly oriented to psychological, administrative, and statistical concerns, particularly as these related to the curriculum and to teaching methods.

By 1950 Theoretical Foundations Laid

In Western society generally, the theoretical foundations had been laid by 1950 which would permit sociologists to address the educational problems of the welfare state, the form of state capitalism which had emerged as a response to the economic crisis of the 1930s and the tremendous mobilisation of the Second World War. In Britain democratic pressures were producing an expansion of

secondary education, which raised significant sociological problems. But the curriculum remained steady. In America, this institutional expansion and the concomitant structural changes in schools had occurred in the 1920s and 1930s. But its effect on the curriculum, the weakening of liberal humanist education, was now becoming apparent. Australia in 1950 was still on the verge of such changes.

In America sociology was ensconced in universities. It was beginning to appear in Britain. But in Australia sociology was not an academic study. By 1950, too, a methodology of sociological investigation and a body of research had become established in the United States and Europe. When, in the 1950s, sociology finally took root in the difficult soil of Australia these investigatory models were available. Before looking at the sociology of education in the welfare state we will consider the methodology of sociological research in education.

Chapter Two The Scope, Methodology and Theory of the Sociology of Education

In this chapter we will consider the heritage which sociology and the sociology of education had bequeathed to a new generation of sociology of education writers, teachers and students by the beginning of the 1950s. Three major components in the sociology of education had been defined: the scope or areas of study appropriate to the sociology of education; the variety of theories available to analyse these areas; and the research methodologies which had been devised for such studies.

After analysing Durkheim's methodology, A. K. C. Ottaway of the University of Leeds specified in 1955 four major functions of educational sociology: (1) determination of the present social facts of education, and their sociological function; (2) determination of the relationship of education to social and cultural change; (3) the comparative sociology of education; and (4) the study of the school itself as a social group, and in relation to other social groups. 1 These remain important aspects of the sociology of education.

Areas of Study of the Sociology of Education

1

The Identification and Explanation of Educational Circumstances

This is, of course, the prime undertaking of the sociology of education. The sociologist looks at the major facets of education: the philosophy, theory and aims; the organisation and administration of schools; the curriculum; the teachers and their methods of instruction; and other fields of education in the light of the total culture and of the influence of major groups within that culture. Thus sociology of education claims its place alongside the history of education, educational psychology, the philosophy of education, comparative education and educational measurement in describing and explaining the theory and practice of education and schooling. Indeed, at its most ambitious, the sociology of education will analyse and help explain the very companion studies just mentioned.

2

Education and Social Change

One of the most important questions in the sociology of education is the relation between educational change and social change. The great weight of evidence suggests that education is an effect, not a cause; a product, not the producer. But is this equally true at all times? Are there times (such as today, some would argue) when schools can change society? Can schooling be revolutionary, as some radical teachers seem to think? Or is education inevitably conservative?

Many of the theorists advocating educational reform were, in reality, social reformers. Plato and Rousseau, to name but two, were moved to write on education not primarily because of an interest in education but because they saw education as a means of changing society, or of changing the individual. Education was only one of their many interests. Other great educational theorists were, however, primarily educationists. Quintilian and Herbart, for example, wrote about education because of a deep-seated interest in education as such. A third category would be the practical educationists who as teachers developed their theories to explain and justify their methods. Pestalozzi is an example. All three groups could suggest educational change intended to benefit both the individual and society.

The crisis in the liberal humanist phase of Western civilisation became apparent after the First World War. The Russian Revolution of 1917, the Great Depression of 1929-1938, and the spread of fascism after 1933 intensified the interest of many intellectuals in social reform. Some of them also became interested in Marxism. Some people hoped that the schools might provide a

source of social reform. *Dare the schools build a new social order?* George S. Counts asked Americans in his 1932 pamphlet. The social reconstructionist wing of the American progressive movement encouraged the idea that schools might help solve the problems of contemporary capitalism.

A few years later Philip Shnukal, writing in Australia, took a contrary view, as we have seen in the previous chapter. His message was that 'The schools reflect, rather than effect, social change'. Towards the close of his essay he says:

It is now clear why schools cannot effect any social change and why the philanthropic theories of educators are dubbed impracticable. The schools, being the agents and instruments of society, must always obey the instructions issued from above. If, however, a social reorganisation is effected, then the schools are galvanised into activity and far-reaching changes in curriculum and method are introduced. Then, and then only, do the schools play some part, albeit a secondary part, in changing society. 2

This analysis was in harmony with the classical Marxist view that education is, in general, subsidiary to stronger social forces. Shnukal was writing at a time when the Russian and Nazi revolutions provided examples of societies which could energise and reorientate educational systems.

Thirty years later another Australian, Margaret Mackie, adopted a more sophisticated formulation. Schools, she said, had increased in importance. While agreeing that schools do not change society, she argued that schools are essential in a society undergoing change. Moreover, *education* does bring about change, taking 'education' in the sense of inquiry and discovery. A scientific movement, for instance, works through various educational institutions and can help change society.³

But reverting to the question of schooling, rather than education, a number of arguments can be marshalled to support the view that society determines school education, not vice versa.

(a) Most schools have pupils for only six or so hours per day, and for only five days out of seven. Certainly boarding schools can do more, for they absorb more of their pupils' time. But in day schools, anyway, other competing influences are strong.

(b) In a 'healthy' society the family is normally in control of the young human until the age of five in Europe often till the age of seven. By the time the child starts formal education his or her outlook has already been heavily determined. Of course, there are periods in an individual's growth when revolt against the authority and mores of adults is likely. But, in the main, family influence is powerful and circumscribes that of the school. If the family does not support the educational efforts of the school the academic and moral education of the pupil is severely threatened. Differing family

backgrounds explain much of the relative success or failure of particular pupils. Here, again, family influence may be diluted or circumvented in boarding schools.

(c) In modern society the 'educational' impact of television, radio, journalism and advertising is usually stronger than that of the schools. Today, at least, the media set the agenda, the schools respond.

(d) The influence of the peer group can be very strong, particularly amongst adolescents. It can often outweigh the influence of the teachers.

(e) The teachers themselves are part of society and are likely to reflect (and transmit) the current social outlook and ethos. Of course, this is less true if teachers are chosen from special, socially alienated sections of society.

Or should we conclude that it is 'a bit of both', that education, the schools, are to some extent the product, to some extent the producer?

Nonetheless, I would sum up the argument on the schools and social change thus:

- i. Social change is usually the dominating factor.
- ii. Education can sometimes be an instrument of change.
- iii. The educational system also responds to internal imperatives, to the logic of its own development. This element of autonomy sometimes precipitates educational change not intended or envisaged by society. The specific evolution of an educational system is not always fully under the control of society. But when the outcome is sufficiently dramatic, various social groups become aware of the new developments and may intervene to 'correct' a process.

3

Comparative Studies in the Sociology of Education

Comparison of the sociological character of differing educational systems can be a rewarding study. This is a particularly fruitful undertaking when the systems have much in common but are sufficiently different to stimulate explanations of such differences. Two characteristic examples would be comparisons of American and English education, or of American, English and Australian education. Within Australia the variations in education between the different states or territories raises challenging problems. But a major difficulty is that those undertaking a comparative sociological investigation need a broad historical, sociological and educational knowledge not of one country or region but of two or more social patterns.

The movement of academics from Britain to universities in the British Dominions and colonies stimulated comparative sociology. Frederick Clarke, who worked in Canada and South Africa, as well as in the United Kingdom provides a good example. In the 1920s

and 1930 colonial educational systems were starting to develop. Colonial and Dominion students visited Britain to study for higher degrees. Indeed, some went to the United States to study in education or sociology. This also helped stimulate some comparative sociology of education.

4

The Sociology of Schooling

Interest in the social structure of formal institutions of educationthe schoolsis another branch of the sociology of education. But attention to the sociology of schooling has been intermittent. 'The sociologist is usually found at work where there are problems rather than when things are going smoothly'. 4 When schools become overlarge, or when a multiplicity of groups or of aims develop within schools, problems are likely to emerge which will engage the attention of sociologists. One factor inhibiting the engagement of sociologists in this area was that they frequently lacked close contact with schools.

Formal education in a school is itself a pattern of relationships. This became most obvious when large secondary schools started to develop and when their student body became more diverse. Schools could be considered as communities and investigated, like primitive or advanced societies. One area sociologists could scrutiny was the role of the teacher in the school community; another was relations between teachers and pupils. The relationship between groups of pupils, in the school or in the classroom, could also be studied. (In America, and later in England, sociometric testing was developed to assist the identification of groups and their relationships within the classroom). A study of interactions of individuals within the classroom community was also possible. In large schools, relations between pupils, teachers and administratorsnon-teaching members of the schoolcould be undertaken.

Furthermore, the role of individuals within the school community could be studied. How far can individual teachers influence the pattern of schooling? How far can a headmaster set the tone of a school? These questions could be examined without too much reference to the 'outside' world, simply by looking at the school as a closed community.

Various Theories of Social Structure

By 1950 sociological theory had produced several descriptions and explanations of the pattern of society. Society was recognised as consisting of a variety of overlapping groups. It was seen to have a structure or pattern, within which all elements were related in

some way, closely or distantly. But the theory of a pattern of society had to answer several significant problems. How did the various groups cohere? And how did social change occur?

Some four main theories emerged. The earliest ones had a strongly historical character, i.e. they arose out of the study of history or, at least, their validity was justified on the basis of history.

1. The materialist or classical Marxist theory asserted that economic and material institutions are prime. Social classes derive from the economic base. More accurately, social classes are based on the relationship which individuals have in common to the means of production. In turn, political parties are based on social classes. Finally comes the realm of ideas: intellectuals shape an ideology, culture and theory for the social classes and the political movements. This ideological realm includes religion, political theory, art, education indeed, culture generally. But for the classical Marxist the dynamic of the social, political, and cultural structure is generated in the materialist base. The rest is superstructure, though sometimes sections of the superstructure can affect the base.

2. At the other extreme, the idealist explanation of the development of society argued that ideas are the source of social change. History is the working out of vital beliefs, often expressed through 'Great Men'. Philosophical and religious movements, it was argued, provide the sources of social change. Economic development also can come from new ideas; for example through the impact of inventions. New ideas can produce new art forms. Idealism, however, placed great stress on the individual, and in education this takes the form of a belief in great teachers, the elaboration of new, powerful educational theories or the reforming impact of energetic and able educational administrators. Idealism was often associated with strong religious belief. It downgraded the importance of society and elevated that of the individual or of divine providence at work through the agency of human beings.

3. The neutral or scientific approach described the operation of 'factors' but does not attribute any persistent priority to particular factors. The operation of a variety of interests or factors is discerned: the religious, the economic, the political, the social class factor. These factors operate side-by-side. This may be called an empirical approach. Applied to education, this interpretation offers a limited sociological explanation, rather than a comprehensive sociological view. The empirical approach is little concerned with theory. It finds expression in sociological surveys, but the organisers of these might be more interested in developing a public response than in advancing a general theory.

4. The functionalist (or structural-functionalist) has some similarities with the objective, scientific approach. Society is made up of a

number of parts, groups or institutions. The structure of each part is determined by the function it serves. 5 The functionalist investigates the role of a particular social institution in relation to the whole social structure. The conscious purpose and actual function of an institution may differ. The American sociologist R. K. Merton expressed this as a distinction between manifest functions (which are intended and recognised by participants in the system) and latent functions (neither intended nor recognised): the official or nominal purpose and the real or actual function.6 Thus the establishment of comprehensive state high schools might be intended to encourage social harmony and understanding, i.e. to advance democratic principles. Yet the bringing together of disparate types of pupil in the one school might actually encourage disharmony. Again, comprehensive schools might be justified as providing a wider curriculum. But, in reality, such schools might undermine subjects with minority appeal, such as Latin or French. The actual function of the school might be to facilitate the emergence of a new salaried middle class or to reduce discipline problems, or to save money, or to avoid pressures from parents anxious that their children enter the former specialised 'selective' academic schools.

The Methodology of the Sociology of Education

As early as 1914 a French sociologist, Henri Poincare, sarcastically complained that 'sociology is the science with the greatest number of methods and the least results'.7 In fact, intellectual results had already materialised in the form of major sociological books by Durkheim, Weber and others, but it was not until the growth of the welfare state a generation after the Frenchman's witticism that the quantitative growth of sociological literature began to produce practical results, usually through the implementation of official reports on social problems. A plurality of methods remained a feature of sociology. Indeed, after the 1960s the growth of pluralist, multicultural societies intensified this pluralism. An Australian educational sociologist remarked in 1980 on the wealth of methodologies, ranging from traditional empiricism (objective and controlled observation) to participant observation (involved and dynamic), and including survey studies (interviews, questionnaires, statistical analysis of data), analysis of primary and secondary documents, comparative studies, case studies and sociometric studies.8

This multiplicity of methods can be roughly grouped into three major categories. These basic methods of work emerged very early in the history of sociology, but their relative popularity changed from period to period. By the 1950s all three were bal-

anced in popularity; they all retain their importance. The combined use of all three methods has often produced high-quality work, although after the 1950s a balanced, combined approach has become less frequent. 9

1 *The Historical (Comparative) Method*

The use of the historical and comparative methods in the sociology of education is based on the assumption that such studies can provide generalisations applicable to both contemporary and non-contemporary education. The concepts and generalisations provide clues to the forces and processes operating today. The historical method, of course, has a comparative element if any lengthy period of time is surveyed.

Comparisons are useful primarily because they enable us to see what is not there. Comparisons are also useful in the search for explanations. To see what varies with what makes it easier to understand the differences between one society and another. It was for this reason that Durkheim called the comparative method a kind of 'indirect experiment', without which it would be impossible to move from description to analysis. He distinguished two main kinds of comparison, between societies which were fundamentally the same in structure and between societies which were fundamentally different.10

Similarly, we can make comparisons between educational systems which are fundamentally the same and those which are significantly different.

The historical approach can make valuable contributions to the understanding of social change, i.e. to the sociological dynamics of education. Another advantage of the historical background is that it can strengthen an objective approach to the present though some would argue that objectivity is more likely from statistical studies and the use of measurement in education. The comparative approach assists the analysis of different contemporary educational systems by identifying similarities and differences. It could be argued that it is also more objective, since investigators, looking at education in countries other than their own, can adopt a more disinterested approach. By the 1970s, of course, some neo-Marxist sociologists were denying that objectivity was possible; some even argued that it was not desirable.

2 *The Case-Study (Survey Analysis) Approach*

This requires the assembly of data about individuals, though it can also be applied to institutions (e.g. a particular school) or groups (e.g. women teachers). It can involve the use of observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentary data (letters, diaries). These various techniques all carry dangers. Gathering data by

observation is usually not reliable unless it is specifically limited. The validity of interviewing is threatened because it relies on subjective factors. The danger in the questionnaire lies in its formulation, which can determine its conclusions. 'But if the questionnaire is brief and specific, it is an economical and effective way to carry out an extensive investigation in such fields as school costs or number and types of student organizations'. 11

3

The Statistical Method

The popularity of the statistical method was heightened because it seemed make sociology scientific. It has definite limitations 'since many social phenomena are not subject to quantitative measurement and cannot be isolated and counted'.¹² It has at least one advantage, however statistical material is harder to ignore or rationalise away.

In fact, all three methods can be employed by the one investigator. The study of sociology and the sociology of education requires a background of historical, economic and other social knowledge. It benefits from some knowledge of the world. Accordingly it should be undertaken late in a course of academic studies. It is unfortunate that as the decades have passed individuals have become more anxious to embark on sociological studies at too early a stage in their intellectual development.

Sociological method implies the application of scientific method to social phenomena. But the surety of the scientific method has weakened, in social fields at least, in recent decades.

Scientific Method:
Deduction and Induction

Scientific method is a way of investigating problems. The principles of scientific method were first elaborated by Aristotle in the fourth century BC, but commitment to scientific method has waxed and waned over the centuries. Two forms of logical reasoning comprise the scientific method.

(A)

The Deductive Method

One element in scientific method can be described as deductive. This starts from known principles or generalisations. They are usually derived from an authoritative source, such as the work of earlier scientists. But especially in cultural or social matters, other sources have often been used the Bible, the Church Fathers, Karl Marx, or a respected educational theorist, such as Rousseau. In the medieval scholastic tradition this is sometimes called multiple interpretation. It involves the statement of a proposition; discussion of several possible interpretations; and the final selection of

the interpretation favoured by the scholar. Something akin to this process operates today amongst adherents of specialised ideologies, who invoke pronouncements by founding theorists such as Marx, Althusser, Foucault, Derrida and so on.

(B)

The Inductive Method

Inductive reasoning moves from the study of data to a generalisation. It rests on repeated observations of an experiment or event. These generalisations are then tested by application to additional, new facts. Should they fail, a new thesis is tested, until one is found which survives the tests.

Scientific method is a combination of both inductive and deductive approaches. The stages of investigation are:

1. statement of the problem
2. assembly of data
3. formulation of a generalisation or theory
4. testing of this theory by application to further data
5. confirmation or modification of the original theory

In fact, the human mind seems able to work through these various stages simultaneously, or in varying order. But the principles of scientific method are satisfied if the final presentation of the argument conforms to this format.

Two Problems of Methodology

Two factors which make research in the social sciences, including the sociology of education, more difficult are the short-term improvement which may result from any change in routine and the problem of taking a large number of variables into account.

Elton Mayo, who started his career as Professor of Philosophy at the University of Queensland but moved to America in the 1920s, made an important contribution to sociological and educational research, though one which is frequently ignored. In the 1930s Mayo and others from Harvard working in the Western Electric engineering plant at Hawthorne discovered that when conditions were improved in an 'experimental' room but left unchanged in a 'control' room, productivity improved in both rooms. When conditions were made worse in the experimental room but held constant in the control shop, productivity again rose in both rooms. Social scientists interpreted this to mean that subjects respond positively to experimental change. Their morale improves, they take a new interest in their work. This is sometimes referred to as the 'Hawthorne effect', or the 'halo effect'. In sociological methodology a variant of the Hawthorne effect is the boost

which people feel when answering questionnaires or being interviewed in case studies. This may encourage them to provide a more positive response than is warranted. In the context of schools, this effect means that educational experiments usually succeed. It is when experiments or innovations are applied on a mass scale and become routine that problems often arise. 13 The 1960s and 1970s were replete with innovation and experiment in the schools comprehensive high schools; the open classroom; and, in the 1980s, process/conference writing. The 'halo effect' may explain the initial success of some of these experiments with which educationists persisted long after they lost their gloss.

The Hawthorne Western Electric studies also drew attention to another difficulty confronting sociological research, the multiplicity of variables which operate. The investigators had been looking at only one variable the change in illumination. They now adopted the notion of a *social situation* existing as a system of interdependent elements. 14 In sociological investigations a large number of factors usually exert an influence at any one time, and they need to be taken into account. In the physical sciences it is possible to isolate particular factors and remove others. But a sociologist conducting research into classroom discipline, for instance, would have to consider a multiplicity of factors, such as the size of the class, the ability of the teacher, the existence or absence of motivations for study, the home background and level of support given to students by their families, the economic or other rewards of study, and other factors.

The Autonomy of Education

This last consideration brings us back to something mentioned a little earlier the existence of a degree of autonomy within education. One source of this is the operation of so many variables, not all of which are under social control. The examination system acts on the curriculum. The number of enrolments affects teaching methods; so does the curriculum. Educational aims are an expression of the curriculum, but may affect methods of teaching. The examination system influences teaching methods, but so does the curriculum. Even the physical structure of the school can affect the educational process the building of open plan schools may impel teachers to adopt new methods, such as team teaching.

Changing one of these constituents can produce changes amongst others. Thus any pattern of relationships will exist among specifically educational activities, as well as within a social context.

The work of dedicated teachers can, at least for a time, cir-

concurrent social influences. Sometimes the principal of a school is able to transform an unpromising educational environment. The chance of a strong minister for education, or director of education, can hasten or delay sociological change in school systems, or give the educational system a particular twist.

Other evidence of the operation of purely 'educational' elements in education is historical. The history of education will reveal some purposes which seem to operate irrespective of changing social circumstances for example, the concept of liberal or general education appears to remain stable, as opposed to vocational training, which changes more frequently.

Conclusion

The areas of interest, theories and methodologies of the sociology of education are themselves socially conditioned and we see the sociology of education in a clearer light if we study its historical evolution. One of the purposes of this book is to answer the question, In response to what circumstances did various sociological theories evolve? Few historians have, till now, written histories of sociology and the attempts that have been made are mostly the work of sociologists, not historians. Sociologists are more frequently concerned with developments in theory and methods, rather than with the historically-evolving social context of sociology.

The main contributors to sociology and the sociology of education have been the Continentals (Marx, Durkheim, Weber); the Americans (Parsons, C. Wright Mills); the British (Mannheim, Clarke, Bernstein, M. Young); and more recently the Franco-German neo-Marxists (Habermas, Althusser, Bourdieu). In its conceptual evolution sociology produced the evolutionary-historical school; the structural-functionalist; and the neo-Marxist. But since 1967 sociology and, with it, the sociology of education have been troubled by the collapse of consensus. The growth of pluralism in Western society matched an increasing diversity of groups. The sociology of education has become one of a large group of subdisciplines in education, such as the history of education, philosophy of education, comparative education, educational psychology, special education, and measurement in education. The areas of study *within* the sociology of education have tended to increase. This is itself a reflection of the pressures of a pluralist society.

One pervading problem has been the significant gap between, on the one hand, a theoretical sociology of education as presented in the lecture room or at conferences of learned societies; and, on the other, the sociological reality manifested in the classroom and school. How this separation arises is one of the concerns of this book.

One of the problems confronting the student of sociology in the twentieth century is the increasing turgidity and complexity of sociological language. Technical jargon has proliferated. In the nineteenth century the association of sociology with history encouraged some elegance in literary expression. Many sociologists were broadly educated, able to express themselves clearly and fairly simply, even when dealing with complex issues. In more recent years sociologists have been over-specialised. As sociology aspired to the status of a science, it became important to invent a technical jargon, often more complex than necessary, in the belief that this would attach a scientific prestige to sociology. This has provoked the jibe that 'sociology tells us what we already know, in bad English'.

Many of these problems were exacerbated by the academisation of the sociology of education and the proliferation of sociologists as teacher training expanded in the late 1950s and the 1960s. It is to this era that we now turn. The welfare state constructed in Western society in the 1950s and 1960s was not only a significant sociological phenomenon; it also provided a new field for sociological theory.

Chapter Three
The Sociology of Education in the Welfare State, 1949-1966:
America, Britain and Australia

The 1950s and early 1960s witnessed the slow disintegration of the ethical and cultural tradition of liberal humanism. This phenomenon occurred in the context of economic expansion, scientific and technological development, the growth of state intervention, and changes in the social structure, particularly the growth of the salaried middle class. The growth of state capitalism and the welfare state provided a new context for sociologists. Both the theory and practice of sociology changed as new problems for investigation became important.

The welfare state evolved through at least three major phases. The first was the period of growth during the 1930s and 1940s, a response to the economic crisis and social distress of the Depression and the stimulus to widespread state intervention associated with the tremendous mobilisation of the Second World War. The second stage lasted from about 1949 to about 1967. Western society enjoyed a long boom in which productivity increased steadily, unemployment was low, and the state had a plenitude of economic resources to meet the demands put on it. Western society also experienced the tensions of the Cold War, with its ideological and moral overtones. After a traumatic transitional period of cultural revolution, roughly

from 1967 to 1974, a third phase dawned, marked by decreasing resources, excessive bureaucratisation, and a plurality of competing special interest groups within society. For some years an element of prosperity was sustained by a variety of devices, including borrowing. But about 1987 the open crisis of the welfare state enforced significant changes in policy.

The benign social environment of state capitalism in the 1950s and 1960s produced a new climate of opinion affecting the theory and practice of sociology and the sociology of education. Education became a major state-dominated service, valued for its social, as much as its educational, functions. The promotion of social and educational equality became a major concern. Access to secondary and higher education became easier and institutions of formal education expanded. As higher education expanded specialisation grew in the intellectual and academic world. Yet some academics still adhered to the old tradition of the broad sweep, of a liberal education which provided major generalisations in the spirit of a 'grand theory'. It was a time of transition.

The economic, social and political growth of welfare state capitalism brought an important change in social class. The white-collar class, the salaried middle class, developed first in the United States, later in Britain and other Western societies. Despite its numerical importance, it was a dependent class, economically and politically. Its ideology was much more 'flexible' than that of the independent property-owning middle class or even of the relatively independent professional middle class. At the same time, the changing economic structure started to reduce the numerical and social importance of the industrial working class.

The two decades after 1950 saw the dissolution of the humanist ethic, which had dominated Western society for nearly two centuries and had been characterised by an interest in the individual and in the formation of character. As the archetype-character changed, some sociologists gave attention to the new personality fostered by the new social climate and shaped by such institutions as business corporations, the family and the school.

The death in 1952 of John Dewey, Frederick Clarke, and Maria Montessori marked the end of an era of 'grand theory' in education. The times were changing. But the sociology of education was not yet in a position firmly to claim the rights of succession. In America the flowering of the welfare state provided sociologists with new fields of theory. But the sociology of education lost prestige. Enervating forces in the 1950s included the collapsed repute of progressive education, the weakening of liberal education and the suspicion of radicalism. But in the 1960s a radical stream in sociology began to erode the old sociology. In Britain, by contrast,

sociology and the sociology of education widened their tenuous foothold in academic institutions. The welfare state was challenging the British class system, and gave a cause to sociologists of education. In Australia, sociology emerged even later than in America and Britain, experiencing a second birth after its abortive gestation at the beginning of the century.

The Sociology of Education in the United States

In America the sociology of education made little progress in the 1950s, a decade when progressive education was losing its prestige and alarm about the quality of American education was spreading. There was a dearth of significant educational theorists. The liberal humanist ideological tradition weakened as the independent, property-owning middle class lost vitality. The devastating affects of ideological conflict—democracy versus fascism in the Second World War, democracy versus communism in the Cold War of the late 1940s and 1950s—also undermined humanism. The Cold War ushered in a decade of intellectual neutrality, suspicion of radicalism, and respect for science, with its non-ideological aura. Social science was challenging humanist theories. These trends were most pronounced in the United States.

W. H. Auden, the English poet, an ex-communist who turned to Christianity and psychoanalysis and who fled to the United States on the eve of the Second World War, sounded the alarm for humanism in his 'Hermetic Decalogue', written at Harvard in 1946. 1

Thou shalt not do as the dean pleases,
Thou shalt not write thy doctor's thesis
 On education,
Thou shalt not worship projects nor
Shalt thou or thine bow down before
 Administration.

Thou shalt not answer questionnaires
Or quizzes upon World-Affairs,
 Nor with compliance
Take any test. Thou shalt not sit
With statisticians nor commit
 A social science.

These admonitions proved in vain.

Many Americans saw sociologists as a suspiciously unorthodox, if not dangerous, sect. Nonetheless, in the major universities sociologists continued to ply their trade. A few mainstream sociologists made incidental contributions to the sociology of education.

The two outstanding sociological theorists in the 1950s and 1960s were Talcott Parsons of Harvard University and Robert K.

Merton of Columbia. Both accepted the essentials of structural-functionalism. Functional analysis can be traced back, in some respects, to Marx and Engels. In the 1910s and 1920s Emile Durkheim and such anthropologists as Bronislaw Malinowski and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown revised and energised this interpretation. As Merton pointed out, the fact that functional analysis was seen by some as inherently conservative and by others as inherently radical suggests it may be inherently neither one nor the other. It has no intrinsic ideological commitment though, like other forms of sociological analysis, it can be infused with a range of ideological values. 2

Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) wrote his doctoral thesis in the 1920s on the idea of capitalism in the works of Marx, Weber and Sombart. He taught economics at Harvard but moved into the Sociology Department in 1931 and was Professor of Sociology from 1944 until he retired in 1973. Like Marx, he was attracted by the grand scheme, an overall theoretical framework of society. Parsons called his version of structural-functionalism the 'systems' theory. He saw society as systems made up of parts, each of which performed a particular function in the operation of the whole. Thus the structure of society consisted of institutions, rules and status positions. The structure of these parts is determined by their function. He provides the most concise summary of his approach in *The Social System* (1951). He published *Essays in Sociological Theory* in 1964.³

Robert K. Merton was taught by Parsons and worked in the Department of Sociology at Columbia University from 1941 to 1979. Merton contributed to historical sociology, for instance in his *Science, Technology and Society in 17th-Century England* (1938). He was well acquainted with the views of the major sociological theorists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He mildly criticised functionalism in *Social Theory and Social Structure* (1949, revised 1957), arguing for theories of the middle-range, as against the grand theory of Parsons. Sociology should be modest in its claims; he preferred intermediate theories to minor working hypotheses on the one hand and all-inclusive speculations on the other. Merton contributed to the sociology of knowledge and especially to the sociology of science, accepting to some extent the Marxist view of the part played by economic and military necessities in scientific discovery. Another principle with Marxian affinities was his distinction between the 'manifest function' of an act (that intended by the actor) and the 'latent function' (the unintended or unrecognised consequences). This theoretical distinction can easily be applied to schooling. The manifest function in a school might be to stimulate curiosity; the latent function to make learning a drudgery.⁴

American sociologists were becoming increasingly interested in the white-collar class. As early as 1950 David Riesman, a social psychologist and Professor of Social Sciences at the University of Chicago, analysed in *The Lonely Crowd* the 'other-directed' personality which he found developing within the 'new' middle class: the bureaucrat, the salaried employee in industry. This he contrasted with the 'inner-directed personality' of the 'old' middle class: the banker, the tradesman, the small entrepreneur, the technically-oriented engineer. He noted the 'false personalization' in the white-collar class (false because enforced) in the form of the studious and effortful 'glad hand' what we would now call the 'have a good day' syndrome. 5

The radical but independent C. Wright Mills was at the time of his early death in 1962 one of the most interesting and controversial university sociologists in America since Veblen. He was the first American sociologist to see his books become best sellers.⁶ He analysed the social character of the class in *White Collar*, first published in 1951.

They do not fulfil one central positive *function* that can define them, although in general their functions are similar to those of the old middle class. They deal with symbols and with other people, co-ordinating, recording, and distributing; but they fulfil these functions as dependent employees and the skills they thus employ are sometimes similar in form and required mentality to those of many wage-earners.

In terms of property they are equal to wage-earners and different from the old middle class. Originating as propertyless dependents, they have no serious expectations of property independence. In terms of income, their class position is, on the average, somewhat higher than that of wage-earners.⁷

The lower ranks of the white-collar class were young, and often female. Access to this class usually required a full secondary, or even some post-secondary, education. Above the white collar-class, said Wright Mills, ruled a 'power elite', mainly males, an integrated elite of politicians, businessmen, and military men. He analysed this group in *The Power Elite* (1956).

William Whyte, a journalist and social analyst, also discussed the new class in an important book, written in popular style, *The Organization Man* (1956). Whyte remarked that the people he discussed were white collar, but not in the older clerical sense. They were the dominant members of society, even though they had not joined together in a recognisable elite. Their values, he said, would set the American temper. Whyte described how the Protestant Ethic of the independent middle-class had given way to the Social Ethic (which could equally have been called the Organisation Ethic or the Bureaucratic Ethic). The Social Ethic had three major propositions: a belief in the group as the source of creativity, a

belief in 'belongingness' as the ultimate need of the individual, and a belief in the application of science to achieve belongingness. 8

William Whyte also noted the growing number of papers in scientific and social research written by two or more people. Group work was more popular than individual. Investigators were constricted by committee planning and prefabricated 'research designs'.

Such planning, furthermore, compounds the younger men's already great interest in the externals of research rather than the content of it. In social science, particularly, methodology is being made the route to prestige, and those most likely to get ahead are becoming once or twice removed from the people they are supposed to be studying.⁹

By the late 1950s criticism of sociology was becoming frequent. Classical Marxism was not incompatible with the humanist and structural-functional traditions, but the stereotyped Marxism of the Soviet Union and its communist acolytes in the West repelled many intellectuals. The events of 1956 Soviet intervention in Poland and Hungary and Khrushchev's revelations about Stalinism increased the revulsion of intellectuals to Marxism. A 'New Left' emerged, though as the rate of social change accelerated the New Left soon grew old. Radical intellectuals began to assess sociology critically.³⁸

C. Wright Mills launched a radical attack in *The Sociological Imagination*, (1959). Sociology, he said, had deteriorated into general theory (which was too abstract) and non-theoretical empiricism (the collection of data with hardly any theory). The main gesture to theory was a survey of 'the literature' preceding the statistical findings. Mills attributed this deterioration to the growth of a vast class of academics engaged in research. For Mills, Marxism incorporated what was best in western culture, while furnishing a foundation for a scientific sociology. In *The Marxists* (1962) he identified four elements in classical Marxism vital for such a theory: the tone of moral outrage; the methodology of theoretical abstraction coupled with historical specificity; the concept of human nature, of social psychology; and the Marxist model of social relations.¹⁰

Pitirim A. Sorokin attacked the pretentiousness and irrelevance of much current American sociology in *Fads and Foibles in American Sociology* (1956). Peter Berger, Professor of Sociology at Boston University, wrote in 1963 that 'a goodly part of the sociological enterprise in this country continues to consist of little studies of obscure fragments of social life, irrelevant to any broader theoretical concern'. He suggested that the political and economic structure of American academic life encouraged this. College and university administrators used the criterion of productivity in appointing, promoting, giving tenure, or dismissing academics.

Scholars concentrated on work that could be quickly converted into a journal article. For sociologists this meant some little empirical study of a narrowly confined topic, employing statistical techniques. 'The sensible person reads the sociological journals mainly for the book reviews and obituaries, and goes to sociological meetings only if he is looking for a job or has other intrigues to carry on'. 11

Berger claimed to have a humanist perspective in sociology, which ranks him with the older generation rather than the new. His humanism was evidenced in his emphasis on the importance for sociologists of history and philosophy.¹² Yet he anticipated several new concerns which were to shoot into favour at the end of the 1960s theories of social control and of the sociology of knowledge.

If the reputation of sociology was low, that of the sociology of education was lower still. Any broad contributions to educational sociology were likely to come from outside its ranks. The sociology of education was mainly concerned with demographic aspects of education.

Talcott Parsons took an interest in education. He wrote the 'Foreword' to the 1956 translation of Durkheim's *Education and Sociology*. But his main contribution was to the long-dormant sociology of schooling. His interest in schooling was appropriate at a time when the retention rate in high schools was rising, but when concern was growing about the academic standards and the type of personality being developed in these schools. Parsons' paper on 'The School Class as a Social System: Some of its Functions in American Society', appeared in the *Harvard Educational Review* in 1959 and was frequently reprinted. He discussed several important concepts, notably socialisation and internalisation. He believed that the school was the main, though not the only, agent of socialisation. Internalisation was the mechanism of the socialisation process. It is the development within individuals of commitments and capacities. Through his concept of differentiation Parsons considered the way in which particular mechanisms, operating within the school class, secured the allocation of individuals to various occupational roles in adult society and the development of the appropriate values. While Parsons saw these mechanisms as largely operative within the school class, he recognised that other agencies, such as the family, were of importance. So, too, were informal peer groups, churches, voluntary organisations and on-the-job training.¹³

Robert M. Hutchins, President of the University of Chicago, 1929-45 and Chancellor 1945-51, commented on the relationship between education and social change in *The Conflict in Education in a Democratic Society* (1953). Hutchins reminded his readers

that almost all writers on education were social reformers. John Dewey, 'the most influential American writer on education', had re-made the educational system. (Hutchins could have noted that Dewey himself became alarmed at what teachers were doing in his name). Hutchins warned those of Dewey's followers who wished to use the school to reconstruct society that this could only happen if the ideals of the social reformer were those of society. John Dewey succeeded, he said, because the social ideals he favoured were those generally popular in the United States. 'A revolution cannot be brought about through the conscious inculcation of revolutionary doctrine in the schools'. The social reformer, he said, was limited to meeting needs that are sanctioned by society. 'He can hope to make himself felt in the educational system only after he has won over the society'.¹⁴ This assessment of the role of the school in social change was to be tested in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Hutchins was an outstanding advocate of liberal education. But this philosophy was now hard-pressed. So, too, was progressive education, its hitherto successful competitor. During the Second World War and the subsequent Cold War criticism of the quality of American schooling grew, and progressive education received much of the blame. The Progressive Education Association closed in 1955, its journal, *Progressive Education*, ceased publication two years later.¹⁵

In his 1963 analysis of the preparation of American teachers, James Conant, a former President of Harvard, distinguished between sociologists who investigated education and educationists who claimed to be sociologists. If a competent sociologist developed an interest in some problem related to education he could give a course to future teachers. But 'whether the present group of professors who consider themselves educational sociologists should perpetuate themselves, I have the gravest doubts'.¹⁶ In 1965 R. G. Corwin of Ohio State University observed that 'perhaps the early limitations of the sociology of education do not lie so much in the inadequacy of its conclusions as in the sterility of the questions that it asked'. Preoccupation with classroom interaction and stress on socialisation had overshadowed such matters as the influence organisational convenience, of the status of teachers, of social class, of power, and of institutional change.¹⁷

The insecurity of sociology and the sociology of education was related to the pervasive philosophical malaise of the 1960s. Daniel Bell, who taught sociology at Chicago and Columbia universities before becoming a professor at Harvard in 1969, illuminated this in his contributions to the 'end of ideology' debate. He saw a decline in the importance of political ideology for capitalism

and the increasing importance of technical and economic forces. He saw a post-industrial society emerging, dominated by a new elite of businessmen, scientists and technocrats. Capitalist and state socialist societies were thus becoming more alike. He formulated these views in *The End of Ideology* (1960), *Capitalism Today* (1971) and *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973).

The Sociology of Education in Britain

When, in 1950, the British Sociological Association and the *British Journal of Sociology* were both established, structural-functionalism was dominant. By the late 1960s consensus was starting to disintegrate. Structural-functionalism in Britain was largely influenced by American writings, especially those of Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton. The subsequent drift away from this interpretation was also a response to American influences. 18

Many of the sociological surveys undertaken in post-war Britain were concerned with local circumstances and practical objectives, a British tradition reinforced by the building of the welfare state. The slowly changing social structure directed attention in the 1950s to commensurate changes in social class. Roy Lewis and Angus Maude's *The English Middle Classes* (1951) was one such work, as was Ferdynand Zweig's *The British Worker* (1952). T.B. Bottomore provided a comparative study of the class structure in *Classes in Modern Society* (1955).¹⁹ Zweig continued his earlier study with *The Workers in an Affluent Society: Family Life and Industry* (1961), based on 617 interviews conducted in 1958/59 with male and female workers and over 200 with managers and foremen. He found a deep transformation of values, a new ethos, compared with his earlier survey.

In the dominant atmosphere of empiricism the main proponent of general theory was Karl Mannheim who had founded the International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction, a series of books published by Routledge and Kegan Paul.

British universities remained wary of sociology. Cambridge only took the plunge in 1961 when David Lockwood was appointed to a lectureship. Oxford had appointed a lecturer in 1955, but sociology was not admitted to the undergraduate curriculum until 1962. No chair was created.²⁰ As sociology slowly began to spread in the universities the need for a textbook with a British rather than American orientation led G. Duncan Mitchell of the University of Exeter to write his *Sociology: The Study of Social Systems*, which was published in 1959.²¹

In education, sociological influences were also appearing. In 1954 Professor W. R. Niblett commented in *Education and the*

Modern Mind on the growing influence of anthropologists and sociologists upon education. Sociology emphasised the importance for education of environment, rather than hereditary. This was an optimistic approach, for it was easier to control environment than to change inherited characteristics. But sociology could never give an adequate philosophy of education. Niblett emphasised Mannheim's view, in *Ideology and Utopia* (1929), that sociological knowledge did not get rid of the need for moral decisions, but merely forced them farther back. Sociologists, however, were unwilling to admit the inherent limitations of their calling.²² This emphasis on the moral effort was characteristic of British Christian humanism tradition which was soon to weaken.

The first systematic sociology of English education was A. K. C. Ottaway's *Education and Society* (1957). Two years earlier Ottaway, a lecturer in Education at the University of Leeds, had expounded Durkheim's educational ideas in the *British Journal of Sociology*.²³ He wrote *Education and Society* for Mannheim's series on Sociology and Social Reconstruction. As the subtitle, 'An introduction to the sociology of education', suggests, his approach was cautious. Ottaway defined the sociology of education as 'a study of the relations between education and society'.¹⁸ This would be hard to quarrel with. His elaboration of this definition was equally broad and of little more value: 'It is concerned with educational aims, methods, institutions and curricula, in relation to the economic, political, religious, social and cultural forces of the society in which they function'. Any general study of education would be covered by this; the only omission seemed to be educational psychology and measurement. Ottaway's definition in England in 1957 was less satisfying than Payne's in America 30 years earlier.

Ottaway also addressed the problem of educational change and social change. He emphasised two principles: (1) the behaviour of human beings is very flexible and will adapt to the cultural environment; (2) education depends on the whole culture of society. The culture of a person is derived from various social groups which transmit this through education. For most of the time education follows social change.²⁴

The education a society provides, at a given time, is determined by the dominant social forces at work in that society. Social forces are defined as groups of people trying to bring about social action or social change. As the nature of society changes, through the interplay of social needs, techniques and values, so education tends to follow. The question will be asked: is not education itself a social force? In one sense, yes. It is a force which supports and develops the changes in social aims already decided upon by those in power, but it does not initiate the changes.²⁵

Ottaway agrees that education is not, normally, one of the *causes* of social change. But he provides an interesting example of the idealist position on social change:

Educational change tends to follow other social changes, rather than initiate them. Ideas of change originate in the minds of men; often in the mind of a single man. Exceptional individuals invent new techniques and propound new values for their society. These ideas . . . do not change the culture until they are shared and transmitted by a social group. Education cannot be changed until the culture changes. 26

During the 1950s and 1960s many sociologists and social scientists supported the widening of access for children of ability to the grammar schools and universities. They set out to demonstrate the influence of social class on secondary education, focusing on success at the 'eleven plus' selection tests for secondary schools and the 'wastage' problem revealed by early leaving. Children of unskilled and semi-skilled workers were found to fare relatively badly, while children of professional and managerial fathers fared relatively well. For the remaining 65 percent of the population the achievement rate was in accord with the proportionate numbers in the community.²⁷ But the definitions of the various classes were often simplistic. 'It is impossible to know from a reading of Douglas' influential book *The Home and the School*, how he arrived at parents' "social class"', states Frank Musgrave.²⁸ But Douglas' statistics were provided to the Robbins Committee whose Report, *Higher Education* (1963) validated the expansion of universities and the creation of colleges of advanced technology. Colleges of education also expanded, replacing their two-year courses with three-year ones. Social science research assisted this process by asserting that there was no fixed reservoir of talent and that an adequate supply of talented students could fill the new institutions.²⁹ The *Robbins Report* marked the advent of a new area of sociological interestthe universitiesbut re-emphasised an old principle, equality of access. However, government reports henceforth began to venture into the sociology of education.

With the expansion of teacher training, courses in educational theory expanded. In 1966 *The Study of Education*, edited by Professor J. E. Tibble, supported the view that education should be studied through subdisciplines such as the psychology of education, the philosophy of education and the history of education.³⁰ Now the sociology of education was added to this group. More British sociology of education textbooks began to appear. P. W. Musgrave's *Sociology of Education* was published in 1965. O. Banks published a manual with the same name in 1968. These continued 'traditional' approaches to the sociology of education.

The Sociology of Education in Australia

The tradition of 'taking stock' books reached a new level with *The Australian Way of Life* (1953), edited by George Caiger. The seven chapters in this volume included several of a sociological character, notably 'The Australian Nation' (Sir F. W. Eggleston), 'The Family' (W. D. Borrie), and 'Religious Institutions and Aspirations' (Rev. K. T. Henderson). Contributors now included a few university academics alongside talented graduates. From 1953 onwards universities started once again to expand and academics slowly became more prominent in sociological analyses.

Pioneer sociological studies of social class and of the family appeared in Australia in the 1950s. Sharing the classical Marxist interest in social class Alan Barcan took up Hartley Grattan's theme of the weakness of the Australian middle class in an article in the English left-leaning historical journal, *Past and Present* (1955).³¹ An analogous point of view was taken by J. D. Pringle, a Scot who came to Australia to edit *The Sydney Morning Herald*, in *Australian Accent* (1958). He scrutinised the perception that Australia was 'one of the most democratic and egalitarian societies the world had ever seen'. He identified three distinct class systems. The first, inherited from England, was formerly strong in Law, the Church and administration, but now lacked power; it was a social but not a political force. The second was the class of new rich, 'a class system based entirely on money'. A third group were the graziers. They were selfish and refused to participate in public life and local government. 'What Australia badly needs is not a ruling class but an educated class'.³²

Not all Australians agreed. In the 1950s, as over the preceding hundred years, 'fair average standards' characterised Australian education. As if to exemplify this tradition, Russell Ward a few years later criticised Pringle as 'strangely obsessed with the absence in Australia of a distinguished educated class something on which most natives will, I hope, continue to congratulate themselves, however much they may hope for a wider diffusion of education'.³³

One of the earliest discussions on the family, *Marriage and the Family in Australia*, edited by A. P. Elkin, Emeritus Professor of Anthropology at Sydney University, was published in 1952. Its contributors included Jean Martin (formerly of the Department of Anthropology at Sydney and later prominent in the sociology of ethnic migrants) and W. D. Borrie, Reader in Demography at the Australian National University. As already mentioned, Borrie also wrote on 'The Family' in *The Australian Way of Life*.

Such analyses of social class and the family relied heavily on observation and experience, reinforced by some historical and a

little statistical material. But academic courses in sociology or related studies were slow to develop. The inclusion within the postgraduate Australian National University in Canberra of a Research School of the Social Sciences (1947) was a stimulus. When S. F. Nadel became the first professor of Anthropology at the ANU in 1951 he had just written *The Foundations of Social Anthropology*. Before he died in 1956 he published *Anthropology and Modern Life* (1953). Graduate work in sociology at the ANU also benefited from the establishment of the Department of Demography under W. D. Borrie in 1952. As yet no university had found the courage to offer a full undergraduate course in sociology.

The Australian philosopher, J. A. Passmore, a graduate of Sydney University, noted in 1958 the changing interests of sociologists, in particular, the weakening of the broad historical perspective:

Now they concentrate their attention either on such special questions as "the relation between family background and marital happiness" or "the influence of television on reading habits" in which case the historian simply cannot supply the sort of material which the sociologist needs or else they attempt the broadest possible characterisation of the social structure. The broad range of societies studied by the anthropologist is more likely to provide the sociologist with relevant information. 34

The growth of sociology as a university study began in 1959. It was easier to find a place in new universities than in long-established ones. Dr. Morven Brown, previously Director of the Department of Social Work at the University of Sydney, became Professor of Sociology at the NSW University of Technology in February 1958 (it became the University of New South Wales the following October). His staff consisted of two lecturers. Under Brown sociology courses had a practical, vocational bias: child welfare, youth welfare, criminology, migrant assimilation. One of Brown's colleagues was Athol A. Congalton who, in the 1950s, had been a lecturer in Psychology at Victoria University College, New Zealand. Congalton conducted some empirical research, producing three social analyses based on interviews and statistical surveys. These short reports, which attracted considerable interest, were on 'The Status Ranking of Sydney Suburbs' (1961), 'The Social Standing of Occupations in Sydney' (1962), and *Occupational Status in Australia* (1963). They were essentially statistical surveys of opinions. They were later consolidated into a larger book, *Status and Prestige in Australia* (1969). Congalton was particularly concerned to provide an Australian-based sociology for nurses in training.

In the early 1960s more undergraduate sociology departments appeared at the University of New England in 1962; at Monash and Queensland (as anthropology and sociology) in 1964 and

1966 respectively; at La Trobe in 1967. The University of Western Australia established a Department of Anthropology in 1961. 35

At the University of New South Wales Brown, who died in October 1965, was replaced by Professor Sol Encel as head of the School of Sociology in the following year.³⁶ Encel had been and continued to be a strong advocate of social science and sociology as academic studies. With A. F. Davies (Political Science, University of Melbourne), he edited *Australian Society: A Sociological Introduction* in 1965. Three more editions of this book appeared, in 1970, 1977 and 1984. The general approach has been described neo-Weberian. The 1965 edition emphasised the growing importance of white collar occupations and of formal education; from 1977 the tone was more radical, the implications of changes in social class less clear, and concern for specific issues greater.³⁷

While sociology did develop somewhat in the 1960s, the sociology of education made little progress prior to 1967. The chapter in *The Australian Way of Life* (1953) on 'The Educational System', written by Dr K. S. Cunningham, Director of the Australian Council for Educational Research, was purely descriptive. A book of essays sponsored by the Victorian Fabian Society a year later failed to advance any clear socialist or working class educational theory. Its chapter on education was a contradictory mishmash of egalitarian ideas and progressive education ('children will be taught to read when they are ready and willing to do so'), yet coupled with opposition to socialist indoctrination in schools. The aims of education, said the Fabians, should not depend on socialist principles. 'They stand by themselves, above economic theories and political strategy, as primary moral aims'.³⁸

The official avenue for progressive education, the New Education Fellowship, which had been founded in 1938, was now bereft of educational theory. The Australian Council for Educational Research, also, sympathised with progressive ideas. But both these bodies gave their attention more to the individual pupil than the role of society in education. A visiting American advocate of progressive education, Freeman Butts, noted in 1957 the 'relative neglect' in Australia of the study of education as a social institution.³⁹ Reviewing educational research in Australia in 1957, W. C. Radford of the Australian Council for Educational Research commented that research in the area of educational sociology was fragmentary and uncoordinated, but that there was a growing interest in the field. He referred to studies in reading habits, radio listening and cinema attendance, and on surveys of gang membership. This research was being done almost entirely by 'educationists'. Five years later, in 1962, Radford noted some

increase in 'sociologically oriented research, particularly in regard to university selection and performance'. 40

University lecturers in education eschewed sociological approaches. Yet in 1962 a textbook for Sydney University education students, *The Foundations of Education*, included chapters on 'Society and the school' and 'Culture and the school', while sociological references crept into a number of other chapters, such as 'Child development 1218' and 'The implications of theories of learning for teaching'.⁴¹ The chapter on 'Society and the school' presented definitions and summaries of American sociological textbooks without any reference to Australian social or educational conditions. The essay on 'Culture and the school' discussed culture in a formal way and included Waller's views on the subculture of the school. 'Unfortunately', wrote the author, 'information concerning the internal traditions of the Australian school is meagre and often incidental'. Still, a description was attempted, 'at the level of personal experience and observation'. This touched on school rules, school rituals, teachers' relations with teachers, and with pupils. The inclination was to consider social influences for their impact on the individual development of the pupil.⁴²

Indeed, social psychology made more ground than educational sociology. A particular exponent was Professor O. A. Oeser of the Department of Psychology in Melbourne University, whose books included O. A. Oeser and S. B. Hammond, *Social Structure and Personality in a City*, O. A. Oeser and F. E. Emery, *Social Structure and Personality in the Rural Community* (both in 1954), and Oeser (ed.), *Teacher, Pupil and Task: Elements of Social Psychology Applied to Education* (1955), which included chapters on the school as a society, the teacher in the educational hierarchy, the social conditions for learning, the classroom as a social group, sociometry, and changing the social structure of the classroom. This book was frequently reprinted.

Social psychology was strong at Melbourne University, but in the Department of Psychology rather than the School of Education, which preserved a commitment to the liberal humanist tradition through its emphasis on the history of Australian education. At Sydney sociology of education was gaining strength. The University Department of Education was strongly committed to progressive education and contemporary American ideas.

One of the major educational changes, sometimes supported on social grounds, was the introduction of state comprehensive high schools. These appeared in New South Wales, Western Australia and Tasmania in the late 1950s. In Australia, unlike England, the argument over comprehensive schools was rather muted. In New South Wales and Western Australia educational officialdom simply assumed the advantages of this school structure.

They considered comprehensive schools a natural evolutionary response to political and educational pressures the march of democratisation, the extension of the benefits of secondary education to all adolescents. In Tasmania educationists did argue the case for and against comprehensive schools, which were sometimes seen as a vehicle for social change. The debate whether the school should reflect, or initiate, social change was again heard. In 1955 the Director of Education in Tasmania, D. H. Tribolet, back from an investigatory visit to England, Scotland and America, wrote:

Supporters of the comprehensive school see the school as a powerful social instrument by which both educational and social objectives can be realised as an indivisible whole. The school is not merely a selective scholastic institution . . . a funnel for the upward ascent of the intellectually superior. They claim for the school a broader social purpose. It is not merely a mirror of society, not merely a passive object on which the pressures of society work. It is not the function of the school merely to react to, or to reflect, or to adjust to environment. Its proper function is also to improve and to create . . . We must avoid complacency with the status quo. 43

Tribolet recommended that Tasmania should experiment with comprehensive schools a safe recommendation, since such schools had already started to appear. In New South Wales, also, the first comprehensive schools preceded the Wyndham Report, which assumed rather than recommended their introduction.⁴⁴

Sociological arguments also being voiced in higher education. The Martin Report of 1964, *Tertiary Education in Australia*, like the Robbins Report in Britain, reinforced interest in the sociology of higher and advanced education. It was the first of a series of governmental reports with a strong sociological character. It included an appendix, 'Tertiary Education and Socio-Economic Class', which advanced the view that some social groups were under-represented in 'tertiary education' and implied that this was both undesirable and remediable.⁴⁵

A statistical measure of the stunted development of educational sociology in Australia is provided by an analysis of education theses accepted for higher degrees. Of the 634 education theses accepted between 1919 and 1973, only 49 were prepared between 1919 and 1948. By contrast, 337 were produced in the 18 years from 1949 to 1967 and 248 in the next six years. Only 139 theses accepted between 1919 and 1973 were in areas closely related to educational theory. The vast majority, some 506, were concerned with practical aspects of education pre-school, primary, secondary, higher education, teacher education and technical education. Eighty-two were about students and seven about schools. Of the various possible approaches, the historical was the most popular and the sociological one of the least.

History of education	78
Educational psychology	60
Comparative education	51
Religious education	46
Psychology of learning	37
Philosophy of education	29
Educational sociology	26

The first higher degree thesis in the sociology of education was accepted in 1940, by the University of Melbourne, and the second in 1946, by the University of Sydney. Their topics were characteristic of a pioneering, developing society 'The rural school and the countryside' and 'A sociological and regional approach to education'. It was not till 1950 that a third thesis was accepted. Between 1950 and 1966 only 12 theses in the area were successful. But the numbers then accelerated, and in the six years 1967-1973 another 12 were accepted. 46

Conclusion:

Educational Sociology On the Eve of Change

From around 1949 to around 1967 (and for a few years after) welfare state capitalism flourished in America, Britain, and Australia. Yet in these same years the sociology of education stagnated. In America it was in disrepute, in Britain it was only beginning to establish itself, in Australia it hardly existed. In America secondary and higher education was already highly developed, many teachers had to be trained, the extended educational system had generated problems. This situation sustained a basic level of educational sociology. In Britain and Australia the great expansion of secondary schools, teacher training colleges and universities was just beginning. The firm class lines which characterised British society and the strength of the intelligentsia produced energetic debate about education and ensured an interest in educational theory, including the sociology of education. In Australia the more open, democratic social structure, the egalitarian tradition and greater prosperity limited the heat of controversy over the theory and practice of education. In the state-controlled teachers colleges the short (two-year) teacher training courses concentrated on practical training, allowing no place for fanciful or radical educational theory, though progressive education did have a slight foothold in some colleges.

In all three societies the Christian-humanist tradition experienced a startling failure of nerve. Liberal humanist culture rapidly declined. The expanding influence of the state and of large industrial corporations undermined the independent urban and rural middle classes which had sustained old social patterns. The rise of the white

collar class also helped undermine liberal humanist ideology and threw new emphasis on secondary education. Educational theory deteriorated. In America the established sociological tradition also suffered. The way was open for a new sociology and with it a new sociology of education. The seedbed of the new sociology, however, was to be France rather than the Anglo-Saxon democracies.

Why did the old sociological tradition disintegrate? Two circumstances can undermine an intellectual tradition, one 'internal', the other 'external'.⁴⁷ Firstly, the doctrines may exhaust themselves. They become over-refined, sterile, lose clarity. This constitutes an internal crisis. Further, internal deterioration can take the form both of degeneration in content and in method. Francis Bacon's criticism of the degenerate scholasticism of the later Middle Ages, written in 1605, provides an analogy. Either the content chosen for investigation becomes unreal, unimportant; or the technique, the method, becomes excessively elaborate.⁴⁸ Secondly, the social reality which the theory explains may change so much that categories become inapplicable. The changing social context mentioned above constituted an external source of collapse. Here the social and political changes associated with transition to Hellenistic culture towards the end of Aristotle's life provides an analogy. The aims of education, as Aristotle commented in *Politics*, writing about 330 BC, had become confused.

The great social, cultural and educational crisis of 1967/74 has some similarities with the social shift from Classical to Hellenistic times in ancient Greece. But before we consider the significance of these transitional years for the sociology of education, we should analyse the sociological character of Australian education during the 1950s and 1960s, something which the small group of contemporary sociologists and the later more numerous historians of education largely failed to do.



*Figure 3.1:
A generation gap develops*

Concern about youth problems and juvenile delinquency spread in the late 1950s. In Victoria the Barry Committee of enquiry was established in 1956, in Queensland the Dewar Committee in 1957 and in New South Wales the Curlewis Committee in 1960. A South Australian journalist, Dick Wordley, edited *The Gap* in 1958. Fifty-five thousand copies of this 98 page collection of articles were circulated in two months. West Australian and Victorian editions were published in 1960.

Chapter Four Australian Education in the Welfare State, 1949-1966

For more than a century the sociological forces conditioning Australian education had been predominantly attributes of a 'new' society. They included a persistent shortage of labour (encouraging brief schooling, irregular attendance, and a high proportion of infants in the schools); a shortage of capital, especially private capital (resulting in considerable reliance on the state or the churches for the provision of schools); and demographic problems such as the sparse population of rural areas and periodic upsurges in the number of children (producing problems in the supply of schools). The unimportance of education for economic and social advancement discouraged the growth of secondary and higher education. The absence of a hereditary ruling class and of a strong independent middle class, either urban or rural, discouraged rigid class divisions in education, but also meant the lack of social groups strongly committed to education by reason of vocation, leisure or culture. Because of the colonial relationship, British migrants met much of the local demand for educated people.

Another special feature, the absence of a predominant religion, meant that the four major denominations—Anglican, Roman

Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist created rival systems of schools. This division also weakened the impact of religion on education. But pressure for social cohesion, often characteristic of new societies, favoured the growth of state schools, open to all. For much of its history the gap in Australia between primary and secondary education was not as great as in England. 'Fair average standards' was the rule, and extremes of excellence or depression in education were rare. In 1949 Australia retained these features of a pioneering country; but in the early 1950s the situation started to change. 1

Australian education has been marked by short periods of relatively rapid reform alternating with longer periods of slower development. The decade 1938 to 1948 was one of intense social and educational change in Australia. Twenty years later came another phase of rapid social-educational change, from 1967 to 1974. The intervening period, from about 1949 to about 1966, were years of relative stability. They constitute a coherent whole which can be studied as a sociological unity.

The intellectual climate of these years saw the slow disintegration of long-established social philosophies. Educational theories, the liberal-humanist concept of education, weakened. Teaching methods responded to changing social attitudes amongst parents and pupils. But in a state-dominated system change was slow and public awareness of pedagogical problems even slower.

This chapter provides a sociological view of the structure and content of education between 1949 and 1966. It focuses on the major social groups which, as for many years past, had influenced with fluctuating intensity the character of education the state, the family, social class, the churches, and so on. In the late 1960s and early 1970s this pattern came under severe challenge.

Welfare State Capitalism in Australia, 1949-1966

The dominant socio-economic system in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s may be categorised as welfare state capitalism. As this term suggests, state management of the economy was a prime feature of society. A form of controlled capitalism emerged. The Depression of the 1930s had encouraged state intervention, and the massive war effort of 1939-1945 increased this. But state intervention had long been a feature of Australian society. Even in the nineteenth century the difficulties of the harsh, dry terrain, and the relative weakness of the independent property-owning industrial or farming middle class encouraged state activity in the economy. The electoral victory of the Labor Party in 1941 in New South Wales in May, at the Commonwealth level in October also

encouraged the growth of the welfare state, which was a basic part of Labor policies. The aim was to spread social welfare, through full employment, better health services and better education. In 1949 R. G. Menzies and the Liberal Party-Country Party coalition inherited this restructured society.

In the 1950s a more sophisticated economy started to develop. The new Commonwealth Government relaxed many of the wartime restraints which Labor had retained after 1945. Industrialisation, stimulated by the war, continued to expand, particularly in the area of consumer goods. Immigration provided a new supply of labour and widened the internal market. While the state's role in economic development expanded, the pattern of state relations changed. The introduction of 'uniform taxation' in 1942 had increased the economic and hence the political importance of the Commonwealth Government. This arrangement, under which the states abandoned their power to levy direct income tax, was originally adopted as a wartime measure but was retained after the war. The balance of power between the Commonwealth and the states was shifting. By 1949 the Commonwealth Government was an important source of finance for universities and suggestions were sometimes heard that it should play a larger part in education generally.²

A major economic feature was the prolonged boom, a new prosperity which started in the 1940s and accelerated in 1950s and 1960s. In the period from 1950 to 1973 the Australian economy grew at a real average rate of 4.7 per cent. Unemployment averaged out at less than 2 per cent of the work force.³ Though punctuated by periods of inflation, these were years of economic expansion and social improvement. Initially the governments of both the states and the Commonwealth were slow to divert more funds to education; but by the mid-1960s politicians were well aware of the new importance voters were attributing to schools and universities.

Demographic changes were also important. From 1941 onwards the age of marriage fell and the birthrate rose, as Australia entered a long period of prosperity and full employment. One educational consequence was a rise in primary school enrolments after 1945. In the secondary school enrolments declined or were stable during the 1940s; but about 1950 they started to rise. Increasing numbers were an important force for educational change.⁴

Politically, the main change was that in 1949 the Labor Party, which had initiated many major social reforms, lost power in the Commonwealth sphere. The Liberal Party-Country Party coalition government began its long period of rule, under the dominance of

a strong prime minister, R. G. Menzies. When Menzies took office in 1949, education was not an important political issue; when he retired in 1966, it was.

Important social changes were also underway. Economic expansion produced full employment and, indeed, a shortage of labour. The post-war immigration program, which started in 1947, contributed to the rise in school enrolments. About half the migrants came from non-British countries, so that gradually a language problem developed in the schools. However, throughout the 1950s and 1960s state departments of education ignored migrant children as much as possible. Immigration put particular pressure on Catholic schools, for many of the migrants from continental Europe were Catholics. But while full employment prevailed and adolescent school leavers could easily find jobs, what went on inside the schools aroused little public scrutiny.

Family life continued to be firm and stable. During the war many women, including married women, had obtained jobs in industry and elsewhere. After the war they returned to the home. The wartime interest in preschool centres did not last. The family continued to exercise a fairly strong educational purpose.

During the 1950s some observers claimed to discern an 'end of ideology'. This decline in intellectual commitment was partly a reaction to the intensity of wartime ideology. Fascism was discredited, doubts were beginning to spread about Soviet communism, democratic socialism had achieved many of its social objectives. The Cold War discouraged intellectual unorthodoxy and encouraged academic quiescence. In the universities and the secondary schools the 1950s produced a quiet generation of students.

The Changing Social Role of State Schools

After World War II Australia was still a pioneering society in which, for the majority of citizens, education was not especially important for economic or social advancement. As Sir Frederic Eggleston, a retired lawyer and diplomat, wrote in 1953:

The attitude of the ordinary Australian to education is not encouraging so many people have succeeded in life without education, in politics, in business, and in the public service that there is not the 'magic' in education that exists in some countries. It is not regarded as a step to wealth or to a higher social grade. 5

But even as he wrote the situation was changing. It was especially in the secondary school that change was most intensive.

In 1949 the liberal (i.e. general, non-vocational) curriculum continued to be the humanist-realist compromise established after the reforms of 1902¹⁶. The humanist subjects could roughly be

defined as those concerned with the creations of mankind, humanity. The realist subjects (from the Latin 'rea', things) were concerned with the natural world. Humanist subjects had a moral ambience they were concerned with character; realist subjects had a scientific or utilitarian bias. In primary schools this compromise curriculum usually consisted of English language and literature, history, geography, mathematics, nature study, art and crafts, music, and physical education. Some religious instruction was provided in state schools, more in church schools. The majority of pupils ended their schooling at the minimum leaving age of 14 (in New South Wales 15, in Tasmania nominally 16 but normally 15). Most pupils did not proceed beyond primary school. The more able ones continued with an academic curriculum in high schools and intermediate high schools, or in the church and independent collegiate schools. Some post-primary vocational schools existed in both state and Catholic systems. The academic secondary school curriculum was essentially Latin, English, history, French (or occasionally German), mathematics, science, physical education, and usually some religious instruction. This curriculum was particularly suited to boys and girls likely to enter the middle-class professions. The vocational schools provided a modest core of liberal studies, but concentrated mostly on subjects with a strong vocational bias: commercial, technical, home science, and occasionally agricultural or rural studies.

Three major processes were eroding the established pattern in state and Catholic school systems. First, a constant shortage of teachers, particularly secondary teachers, weakened the quality of education. Second, the proportion of pupils moving into the secondary schools was increasing. Third, comprehensive state secondary schools were established in New South Wales, Tasmania, Western Australia and, in a limited way, in Queensland.

The shortage of teachers stemmed partly from the entry of new cohorts into primary schools as a result of the rising birthrate after 1941 and of the immigration scheme which started in 1947. The shortage was accentuated because the new teachers were drawn from the low birthrate cohorts of the 1930s. Moreover, the economic and technological expansion was beginning to offer alternative jobs to well-educated men and women who once would have had little alternative to teaching as a career. In some years state departments of education had to 'scrape the barrel' to staff their schools.

The increasing movement into secondary schools was the consequence of various social, economic and educational factors. Formal education was assuming a new vocational and social importance. More secondary students aspired to enter universities,

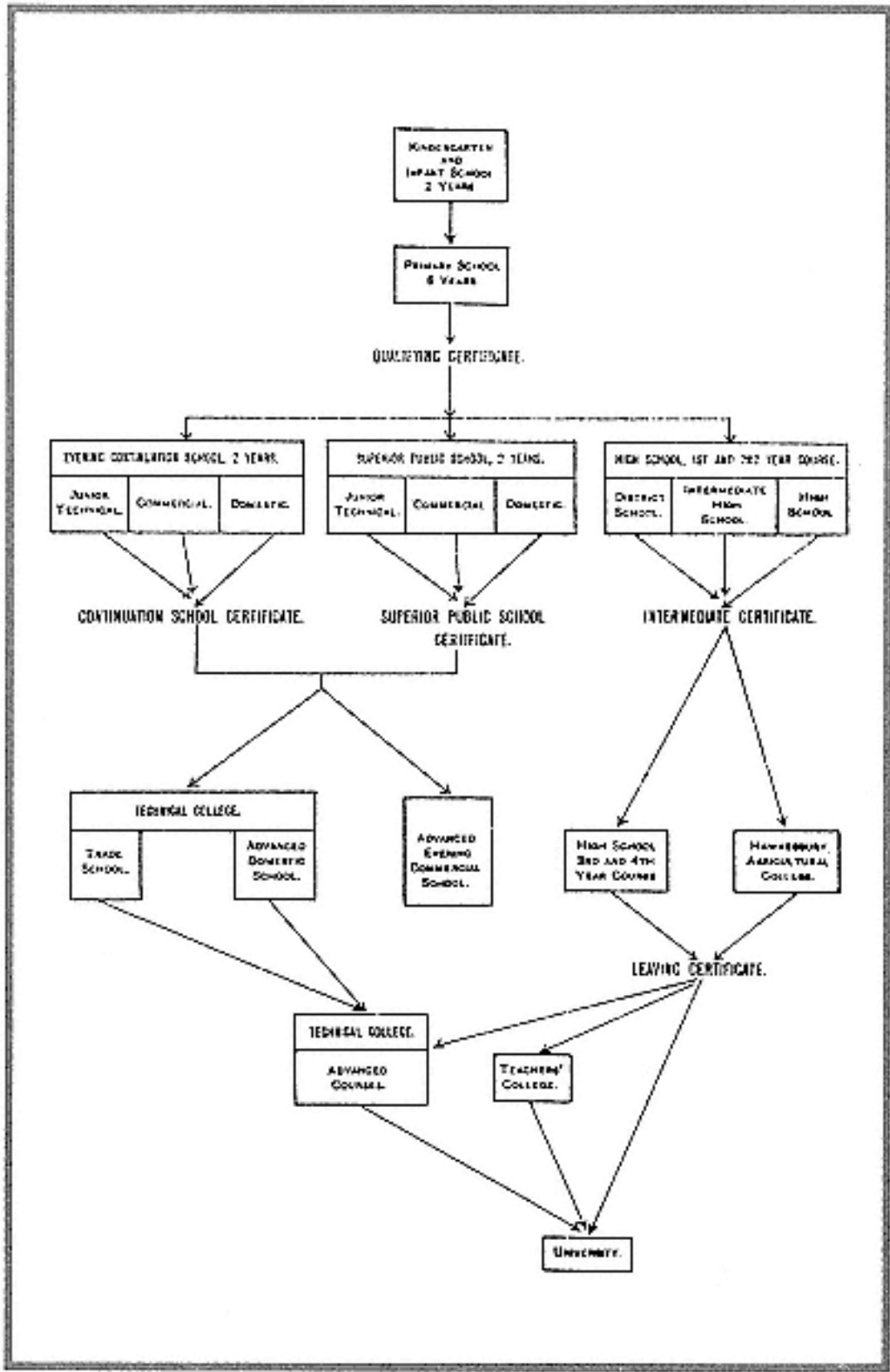


Figure 4.1:

The educational ladder, c.1910c.1960

After 1910 government school systems responded to democratic pressure for access to advanced and higher education and to the need to prepare for the professions and skilled trades. The 'educational ladder' permitted pupils of ability to rise from primary to secondary school, and thence to university, teachers' college or technical college. Progression was regulated by external examinations and aided by scholarships and the abolition or reduction of fees. But not everyone proceeded beyond primary school and most pupils left at age 14.

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where enrolments increased from the mid-1950s. Progression into state secondary schools was easier because fees had been abolished. Greater prosperity permitted more parents to keep their children at school longer. In many states examinations guarding access to secondary education had been abolished or modified.

In states with Labor governments comprehensive high schools were established, though the political parties were much less involved in this policy than in England. The first comprehensive schools appeared quietly, with little public debate. Some of their supporters saw them as vehicles for social change. As we have noted, the first official discussion of the case for and against comprehensive schools came from Tasmania in 1955, when D. H. Tribolet, Director of Education, wrote that 'Supporters of the comprehensive school see the school as a powerful instrument by which both educational and social objectives can be realised as an

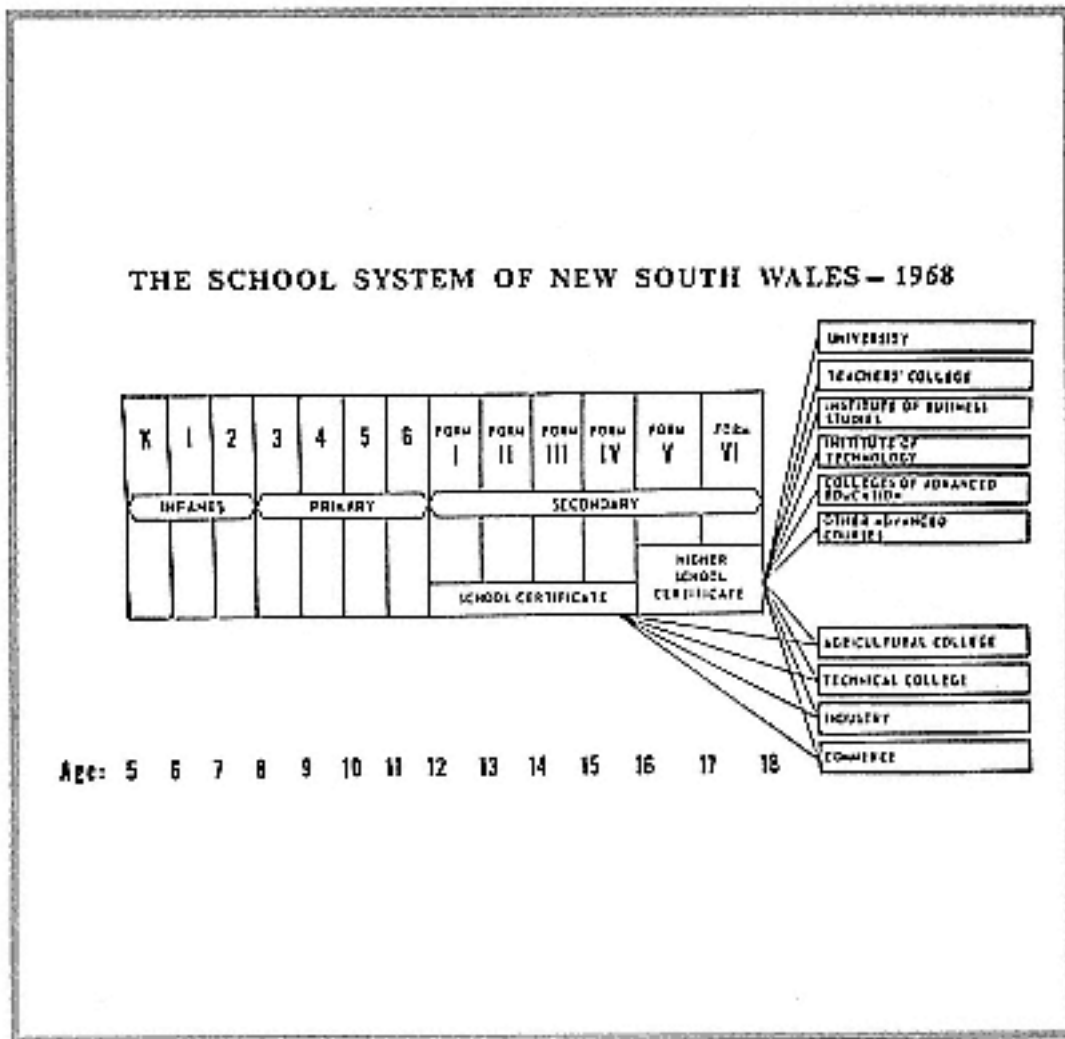


Figure 4.2:
The educational conveyor belt
After the mid-1950s the importance of education for social and economic advancement increased and a new concept of democracy emphasised 'secondary education for all'. The educational conveyor belt replaced the 'educational ladder'. Most external examinations were abolished; selection was now by persistence, students moving through the system whether they worked or not.

indivisible whole'. The school should not be simply a selective scholastic institution providing social mobility for the intellectually able. It was not merely to mirror society. 'Its proper function is also to improve and to create'. In 1958 the Western Australian Department of Education expressed the case for comprehensive schools in social and political terms. 'If we believe in democracy and really do want our children to have equal opportunities, then our answer lies in the comprehensive schools'. 6

But could schools initiate or resist social change? In April 1959 Dr H. S. Wyndham, Director-General of Education in New South Wales, discussed this problem in reference to the primary school. He believed schools could exercise some autonomy in their social and educational function. We live, he said, in an age of rapid technological and social change. The school must adapt to these changes. But it must also 'retain the values which have survived the test of changing social orders'. The school must integrate with life outside its walls; but it was, nevertheless, 'a formal institution with a life of its own and a responsibility for giving the child an adequate range of experiences presented in an orderly, meaningful way'. 7

The wider range of pupils entering state secondary schools in the 1950s and early 1960s modified their social and intellectual character. Together with the slowly changing social climate, this put pressure on the curriculum and teaching methods and raised the question of the aims of education. The initial reaction was to reaffirm long accepted aims.

The *Report of the Committee set up to Survey Secondary Education in New South Wales* (the Wyndham Report, 1957), which envisaged secondary education for all, in comprehensive schools, identified eight major aims of education: health; mental skills and knowledge; capacity for critical thought; readiness for group membership; the arts of communication; vocation; leisure; and spiritual values. 8 These were reminiscent of the seven aims in *The Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education*, a report issued in America in 1918 by the National Education Association's Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, which advocated secondary education for every normal boy and girl up to the age of eighteen. 9 The priority given to health in both statements was evidence of a new concern for the individual and for the social role of schools. The NSW report omitted 'worthy home membership' and 'civic competence', found in the American report. Instead of 'command of fundamental processes' Wyndham suggested a balance of mental skills and knowledge 'mental skills' was becoming a fashionable aim in America in the 1950s. The firm 1918 aim of 'ethical character' was generalised into 'spir-

itual values'. The vocational aim also emphasised the importance of 'a sound general education' and 'parity of esteem among the subjects'. Such views harmonised with a growing egalitarian interpretation of democracy and with the outlook of the growing white-collar class.

In Victoria the Ramsay Report of 1960 the *Report of the Committee on State Education in Victoria* also reaffirmed old aims. State schools would provide children with an education which would: (a) develop their memory and mental ability with knowledge that was immediately useful and/or had direct relevance to their post-school life; (b) store the memory with knowledge and develop skills for work, citizenship, marriage; (c) give experience in self-expression; (d) expose children to appropriate emotional experiences; (e) provide an understanding for children whose parents did not *consciously* object, of the beliefs of Christianity; (f) develop an understanding of democracy; (g) develop such character traits as physical and mental courage, honesty, kindness, loyalty, respect for the integrity of others, unselfishness, truthfulness, and the capacity for self-sacrifice; (h) develop an appreciation of the joy of hard work. 10

Thus a balance was maintained between acquisition of knowledge and mastery of mental skills. Yet new approaches were hinted at an emphasis on the individual, an emphasis on mental training. The moral virtues of the Protestant Ethic survived, though in the 1960s these, scornfully categorised as the 'bundle of virtues', were to come under attack from L. Kohlberg and other Americans.

In America attempts were being made to restore academic standards, particularly in the scientific and mathematical studies. The theories and practice of progressive education had lost much of their credibility. Jerome Bruner, a professor of psychology, argued in *The Process of Education* (1960) that the restoration of intellectual aims required that acquisition of knowledge be capped by understanding of the underlying concepts, generalisations and skills associated with and arising from a subject. This 'structure of disciplines' doctrine, which implied some revival of the principles of mental training and faculty psychology, became popular in Australia in the 1960s. It gave a new twist to liberal education by permitting a shift of emphasis from content to procedures and skills. In state schools the doctrine sometimes became distorted into the view that mastery of knowledge ('mere knowledge') was not important; what was important was to develop concepts and mental and study skills.

There is little evidence of any major change in the social role of *primary schools* in this period. The official aims remained firm.

The NSW Department of Education's 1959 'Primary Education Statement of Guiding Aims and Underlying Principles' named the objectives of primary schools as the basic skills (six were specified), knowledge (six areas were named), and attitudes and habits (nine were identified). But a new hesitancy could be seen in the reference to the schools maintaining values which society may not be practising. One change in the 1960s was towards co-educational primary schools, rather than separate schools for boys and girls. The primary schools suffered as academically talented students in teachers' colleges were diverted to secondary school training courses, to meet the desperate shortage of teachers in that sector.

One important social function of state and Catholic primary schools was the assimilation of non-English speaking migrant children. 'New Australian' children were sometimes put in separate classes or were often placed in grades well below their age-level. They were categorised as handicapped, or slow learners. In 1954 the Victorian Teachers' Union sought the appointment of special teachers, but the shortage of teachers and the view that this was a Commonwealth responsibility meant that little was done. In South Australia a committee of teachers under Inspector Haines surveyed the situation in 1956. A few special classes were set up. In New South Wales a few schools received special materials and staffing was allegedly more generous to schools in need of assistance. A 1959 enquiry in Queensland claimed that migrants were being smoothly absorbed into state schools. Effective action was frustrated by three significant factors: the tendency of the busy educational bureaucracy to minimise the problem, the policy of non-discrimination and assimilation, and shortage of funds. 11

In the 1950s and 1960s the major social institutions relevant to education remained, as they had been for many years, the state, social class, the family, the peer group, the churches and the teachers, unions. We will look at each of these in turn.

The State and Education

By 1950 the state had come to play a very prominent part in education. The state system was centralised, not decentralised as in Britain or America. The institutions of local government (the municipalities and shires) played no role in education. The Commonwealth's involvement in education was limited to financial aid to universities and the provision of scholarships for university students. It was the six States which had the predominant role in education. This had been the case from the late nineteenth century.

The strength of state influence in education was evidenced in a variety of ways. The most obvious was by the provision of

government schools. In the period under survey the number of pupils attending schools grew but the balance between state and non-state remained fairly stable. 12

Table 4.1: Enrolments in government and non-government schools, Australia, 1950 to 1966.

	Govt.	Non-Govt.	Total	% in Govt.
1950	1,027,459	309,673	1,337,132	76.8
1958	1,492,355	473,186	1,965,541	75.9
1966	1,921,263	583,067	2,504,330	76.7

Across Australia the government sector dominated primary education and the non-state dominated secondary. The exception was New South Wales, where the state was dominant in both primary and secondary education. In all states a variety of government secondary schools existed academic, technical, commercial, home science, and a few agricultural and conservatorium schools. But the great majority of pupils were in primary ones. In the 1960s, however, the number of state secondary schools increased significantly.

A second aspect of the growing state influence was the increasing size and complexity of the educational bureaucracy, the professional educationists engaged full-time in administration. The number of inspectors, directors and other senior officers increased, and research and guidance staff also increased. This expansion occurred mainly in the 1960s. In New South Wales 'professional and educational officers' numbered 618 in 1960 (including 124 inspectors and 101 subject supervisors and specialists); in 1966 this administrative corps had grown to 1863.¹³ A picture of the administrative expansion is provided by diagrams of the structure of the Victorian Education Department in 1948 and in 1961.

A third form of state control was through legislation. State parliaments required compulsory education. They set minimum school starting and leaving ages. They also regulated some aspects of non-government schooling by requiring the registration of non-state schools. In New South Wales and Victoria registration of schools meant inspection of the standard of buildings and associated amenities, such as toilet facilities. In Victoria and Tasmania the state exercised an extra control by requiring the registration of all teachers, state and non-state. This meant a limited state supervision of the training of Catholic teachers.

Another form of state intervention was through the provision of bursaries and scholarships, available to pupils in non-state schools as well as state. The bursary and scholarship examinations, mainly at the end of primary school, encouraged the non-

state schools to follow the same syllabus as state ones. In New South Wales, the Department of Education was represented on the board controlling public (i.e. external) examinations; in the other states these exams were controlled by the universities solely. An important extension of Commonwealth intervention was the introduction in 1964 of the Commonwealth Secondary Scholarship Scheme, providing boys and girls in both state and non-state systems with an allowance for the last two years of secondary schools.

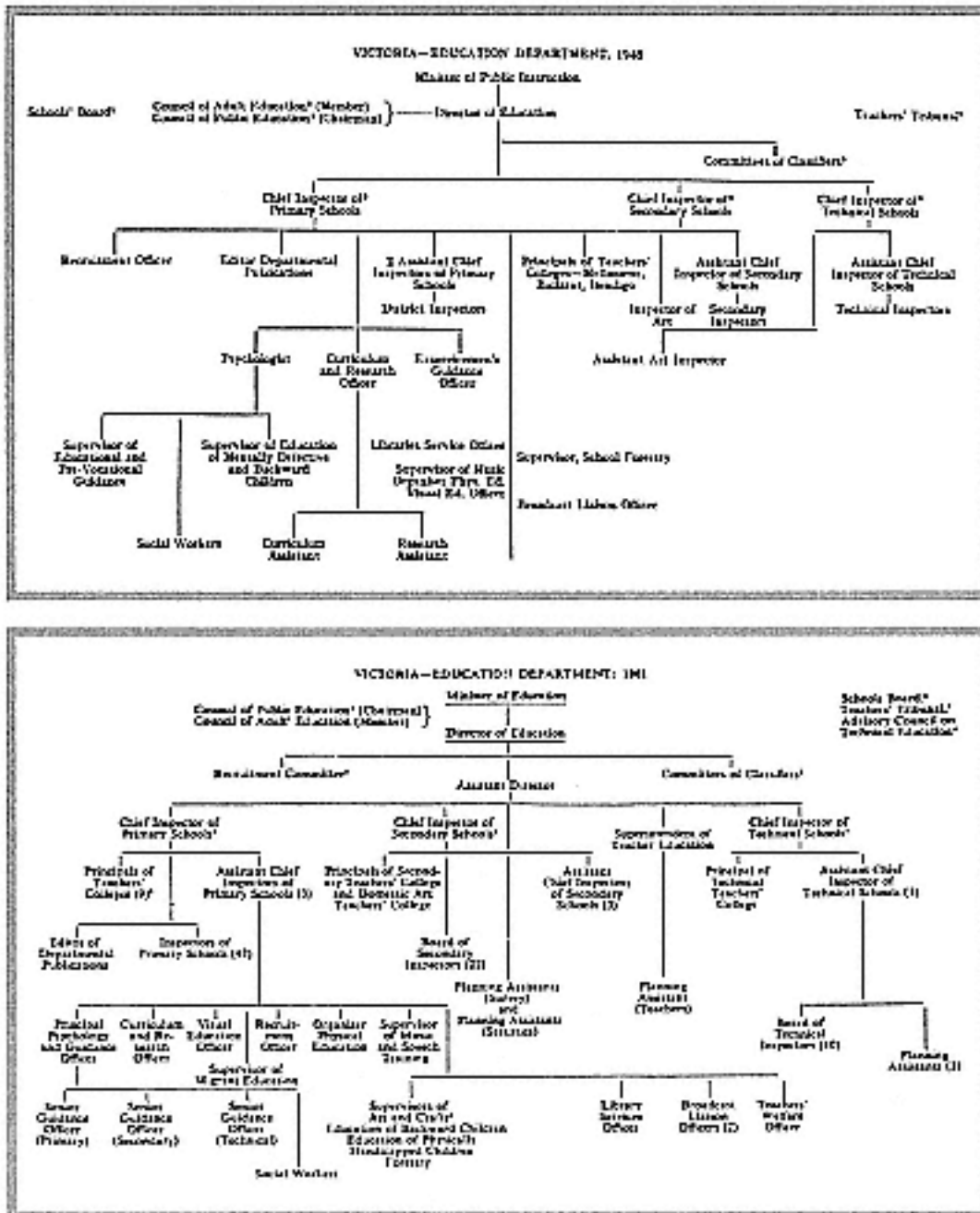


Figure 4.3:

The expanding bureaucracy: Victoria

These diagrams (adapted from the ACERs *Review of Education in Australia 1940/1948* and *1955/1962*) show the growing size and complexity of the administration of the Victorian Department of Education between 1948 and 1961. The thirty categories of officers in 1948 had increased to thirty seven by 1961. In 1938, when there had been only seventeen categories, their main concern was inspection. By the 1950s the provision of guidance and ancillary services also occupied a significant number of officers.

These scholarships were allocated on the basis of a competitive Australia-wide examination, one which tested intelligence as much as knowledge.

During the 1950s each state government made grants to its university, located in the capital city. The Commonwealth Government also gave some financial assistance by intermittent capital grants to the universities and by scholarships to students under the Commonwealth Financial Assistance Scheme. The state governments were not much interested in the universities, which accordingly exercised considerable *de facto* independence. University autonomy was also assisted by the independent income from fees and endowments. Yet another bulwark of academic self-government was the lack of public interest in universities. For many years relatively few pupils aspired to higher education. Good jobs were available without degrees. But in the early 1950s this was changing. As enrolments started to rise, a few new universities were established in New South Wales, the University of Technology in 1949 and New England University in 1954; in Victoria, Monash University in 1958.

The older universities, being more independent economically, had more autonomy. Thus Sydney University was frequently able to resist government pressure. On the other hand, newcomers to the university world were inclined to accept state control. The Director of the NSW University of Technology, Professor J. P. Baxter, frankly stated at a conference on NSW universities in 1954: 'There is no truer saying than, "He who pays the piper calls the tune" and if the Government has to provide the university finance, the Government will expect some say in how that finance is used'. 14

Following the *Report of the Committee on Australian Universities* (the Murray Report, 1957), Commonwealth aid to universities grew significantly. The Australian Universities Commission, set up to supervise these grants, soon started to influence university developments. The universities became more dependent on Commonwealth funds and less on state funds and student fees. In the period 1955-57 24.7 per cent of the income of the Australian universities came from the Commonwealth Government, 45.5 per cent from the states, and 11.1 per cent from student fees. The remainder was derived mainly from endowments and donations. By 1965 total income had risen from an annual average of £14 434 000 in 1955-57 to a remarkable £152 198 000, an increase of 954.4 per cent. The Commonwealth contributed 43.4 per cent of income, the states 37.4 per cent, while income from student fees had fallen to 9.8 per cent. Endowments rose only slightly in this period, reaching 5.8 per cent of income in 1965. 15

While the Commonwealth had become dominant financially, the state governments retained political responsibility for the universities. This division favoured university autonomy.

Social Class and Education

Social class has always exerted an important influence on education. This usually took the form of special schools with special curricula for children of the major social classes. In Australia, however, it has usually been possible for a few children of good academic calibre to enter schools intended mainly for children of a higher class. But for the majority of children the school attended and the curriculum studied served to confirm their class characteristics. But successful study, and sometimes mere attendance, at a particular school might, on occasions, confer a new class status.

In Australia, in contrast to England, education or schooling had never been very important as a means of social mobility. Australia had obtained many of its professional and skilled people by migration from Britain. In a young, pioneering society one did not need much education to succeed. This situation was now changing. Perhaps 1953 is the transition point the year in which the retention rate in state secondary schools started to rise and universities started to expand. The changing economic structure, including the rise of tertiary (service) industry, and the concomitant growth of the white-collar class, made prolonged schooling more important socially and economically.

What were the main social classes in Australia in the early 1950s? The definition of social class is a difficult matter. A subjective approach is to ask people to what social class they thought they belonged. By this criterion most Australians would be classified as middle class. In 1961 an Australian Gallup Poll revealed that 5.5 per cent of respondents classified themselves as upper middle class, 44 per cent as middle class, 12 per cent as lower middle class and 38.5 per cent as working class. 16 Thus the majority, 61.5 per cent, preferred to see themselves as in one branch or other of the middle class. In fact, the 5.5 per cent who described themselves as upper middle class constituted an upper class which, in an egalitarian democracy, preferred to wear modest clothing.¹⁷

But one's opinion of one's status is not necessarily a reliable guide. Many people might assess their social status by financial criteria. Yet it would be possible for a member of the working class to have a middle-class income, or for an aristocrat to suffer the limitations of a middle- or lower middle-class income. Up to the 1950s the middle class was relatively weak, unable to impose its values. Australia had a very large working class with middle-class

standards of living. Indeed, many members of the upper class were, in a sense, working class.

A more objective view might attribute high value to occupation as a guide to social class. In fact, the analyst needs to take into account a number of factors, including income, occupation, place of residence, education (including accent) and historical evolution. In some historical periods, marriage patterns provide a clue to social class. Since classes change, and since classes often incorporate subclasses, it is often best to use a composite vocational-social description, making it possible to distinguish a commercial middle class from an industrial, professional or rural one, and an industrial working class from a farming or pastoral working class.

Using these principles, we might discern in Australia around 1950: (1) a small upper class of urban industrialists and executives; (2) a rural upper class of pastoralists and landowners; (3) an industrial and commercial middle class; (4) a professional middle class; (5) an emerging salaried middle class (the white-collar or employee class); (6) a rural middle class of wheat and dairy farmers; (7) an industrial working class.

Another analysis centring on people in dependent occupations reveals the growth of the white-collar middle class between 1947 and 1961 and a decline in rural vocations. 18

Table 4.2: Work force at Censuses of 1947 and 1961

Work Force	1947	1961
White collar workers	32.6	38.3
Blue collar workers	42.3	42.2
Service workers	7.3	7.1
Farm workers	16.5	11.3
Armed forces	1.3	1.1

Naturally, the pattern of social class varied from state to state. An analysis of this regional pattern will help explain differing patterns of education in the 1950s.¹⁹

Victoria had for long been the richest state, the financial centre of Australia. The independent middle class was stronger in *Victoria* than elsewhere, and this was reflected in the strength of the non-conformist religious denominations and, educationally, in the strength of the church corporate colleges. The middle class was industrial and urban. It was reinforced by a strong pastoral class, which also sent its sons, and daughters, to colleges. Victorian colleges charged the highest fees in Australia. Class lines were strong in Victorian education, even in the state system where a clear

distinction existed between district high schools and technical schools. The greater wealth of Victoria was an important reason why it was the only state with a six-year secondary course. The Liberal-Country Party was usually in power.

In *South Australia*, too, the strength of the middle and upper-middle classes produced strong church collegiate schools. The South Australian middle class had a stronger rural base than in many other states. The non-conformist denominations were also unusually strong. In 1954 Methodists made up 24.2 per cent of the population, Lutherans 5.3 per cent, Presbyterians 3.9 per cent. The Church of England could claim only 28 per cent, the Catholic Church 15.8 per cent. By 1961, Church of England representation in a population of 969 340 had fallen to 26.3 per cent and Methodist to 22.4 per cent. Catholics now made up 18.9 per cent. Lutherans came next with 5.6 per cent, while Presbyterians were still only 3.9 per cent. 20 South Australia was a wheat producing state, not a pastoral one. An industrial middle class had only developed in the 1940s. Thus junior technical schools had only just got under way by contrast with Victoria. The Liberal and Country Party was in power from 1938 to 1965.

In *New South Wales* the industrial middle class was important, though not as strong, proportionately, as in Victoria. Victorian ownership of NSW companies had distorted the social pattern, strengthening the industrial working class in New South Wales, but with the complementary middle class located, to a considerable degree, in Victoria. While NSW collegiate schools were strong, they were less dominant than those of Victoria and South Australia. Many of the middle classes were prepared to send their sons and daughters to the academically selective state high schools, which did not charge fees. The strength of the industrial working class and the fact that the pastoral class was small in number and scattered in location gave the Labor Party a strong foothold. The strength of the working class and the relative weakness of the middle class encouraged a strong democratic ethos. This, in turn, encouraged an emphasis on equality of opportunity in the state school system. It made New South Wales more receptive in the 1950s to the principle of comprehensive secondary schools. A cluster of corporate schools at Armidale served the pastoral and farming classes. Because a significant segment of the working class was Catholic and the proportion of Catholics in the community was high, Catholic schools were strong in New South Wales.

The rural working class remained strong in *Queensland*, though it had declined elsewhere. Queensland was rich in natural resources, had a near monopoly in tropical agriculture sugar and pineapples and was an important beef producer. Its rich rural economy made Queensland the third wealthiest state and gave it

some distinctive characteristics. The pioneering spirit survived. Education, particularly secondary education, was not very important for social or economic advancement. Queensland retained the nineteenth century pattern in which the transition from primary to secondary education occurred at age 14, the minimum leaving age. Hence relatively few boys or girls went on to secondary school. The proportion of Catholics, who were predominantly working class, was high. Hence the Catholic school system was strong. Moreover, Queensland was the only state which had a form of state aid for non-state schools, provided by the Scholarship Exam at the end of primary school. A cluster of corporate collegiate schools in the Darling Downs was patronised by pastoralist and other well-to-do families; the healthy climate was an attraction. Labor was usually in power in Queensland, but it was a moderate Labor Party. The more even distribution of population and the existence of provincial cities produced a more decentralised educational system, including eight state-aided grammar schools, in Brisbane, Rockhampton, Toowoomba, Townsville and Ipswich.

Western Australia was also a rural state, but a poor one with South Australia and Tasmania it was one of the 'claimant states' to whom the Commonwealth gave special assistance to offset the adverse economic effects of federation. It had little industry; hence its technical school system was undeveloped. The wheat farmers contributed a radical element to Western Australian politics and this sometimes helped Labor win power. The Labor Party was sympathetic to the principle of comprehensive secondary schools, which were introduced in the late 1950s. The large size of Western Australia and the scattered rural population meant that small, one-teacher schools continued to be important after they had declined elsewhere in Australia.

Tasmania, like Western Australia, was a poor state, a claimant state, in which the remnants of a nineteenth century landed gentry still survived. The Labor Party, a moderate organisation, seemed permanently in power. This, together with the small size of the state, encouraged a democratic spirit in education, and Tasmania was as ready as New South Wales to accept comprehensive secondary schools in the 1950s.

Having looked at the social factors in each state which were especially important for education, we now consider some major educational institutions which reveal the influence of social class.

The most prestigious secondary schools were the corporate boys' colleges which were members of the Headmasters' Conference. When this association was set up in 1931 it established three criteria for admission independence (i.e. the existence of a school council), absence of the profit motive in running the school, and

conformity with 'the accepted tradition of public school ideals'. 21 The leading schools in the association were those with Church of England, Presbyterian or Methodist affiliations. A few Roman Catholic and non-denominational colleges were also admitted. In 1949 45 schools were members; by 1967 membership had grown to 77.

Table 4.3: Membership of the Headmasters' Conference, of 1949 and 1967

State	1949	1969
Vic	16	23
NSW	14	20
Old	6	12
SA	3	8
WA	4	8
Tas	2	5
ACT	NA	1

In 1949 five of the 45 schools were Catholic; in 1967 21 of the 77. In 1967 the Conference schools represented one-seventh of the 686 secondary schools in the private sector. But 498 of the private secondary schools were Catholic. While 56 of the 188 non-Catholic schools were members, only 21 of the 498 Catholic secondary schools were.²²

Nine schools stood out, four of them in Victoria. Melbourne Grammar was connected with the business elite, law, medicine and the landed gentry; former students of Scotch College were well represented amongst industrial managers, the professions, the public services, and the armed forces; Wesley College sent many of its boys into the public services, politics, and the armed forces; and Geelong Grammar, a school favoured by squatters, contributing also to business and the diplomatic service. In New South Wales The King's School served the landed gentry, while Sydney Grammar and Sydney Church of England Grammar School ('Shore') had connections with the land but also with business and the professions. In South Australia St Peter's College was the leading school and in Western Australia the Hale School, Perth.²³

The Headmistresses' Association, formed in 1945, was a far less formidable grouping. It emerged out of various state associations.²⁴

In 1949 only one university existed in each state, though the University of Melbourne had an offshoot in the Canberra University College and the University of Sydney controlled the New England University College in Armidale. An important function of the universities was to provide an education and training for future

members of the professional middle class. The pastoralists, the urban upper class and the wealthier middle classes sent their sons, and to some extent their daughters, to the universities. But in 1949 many Australian boys and girls of intelligence and adequate education had no particular desire to enter the university. Employment in the public service, journalism, commerce and industry were available for boys and girls who left school at the minimum permissible age. A variety of scholarships and exhibitions made the universities accessible to persons of academic ability from any social rank. Beginning in 1951 the Commonwealth gave financial assistance to qualified students. Teacher training scholarships offered by departments of education also gave boys and girls from poorer families the opportunity to obtain a university education. Evening courses were available, mainly in Arts and Economics, to those who could not afford full-time attendance. In New South Wales a strong system of state secondary schools fed into the university. In Victoria the private corporate colleges dominated access to the university. In Western Australia, a relatively poor society, the state funded the university, the only one in Australia which charged no fees.

In 1958 23 per cent of the 41,770 university students held Commonwealth scholarships and 50 per cent of all students were financially assisted in one way or another. Indeed, the proportion of full-time students receiving assistance reached 80 per cent. However, only 61 per cent of students were full-time. Another 28 per cent were part-time (mainly evening) students and 11 per cent took external (correspondence) courses. The failure rate was high. 25

For 50 years the universities had been dedicated to preparing members of the professional middle class and providing a liberal education for a small group of upper class youths, particularly female. Now they were beginning to cater for a new social group. The growing salaried middle class, the employee or white-collar class, was a product of the welfare state and of 'tertiary industry'. Some members of the new class were employed by the state or its instrumentalities, some occupied positions in the managerial and clerical sections of the expanding business corporations. Entry into the white-collar class came through extended secondary and university education. But unlike the old professions, the salaried middle class was not associated with any specific curriculum.

The formation of the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Workers in 1956 was indicative of the growing strength of the white-collar class. According to the *Report of the Committee of Economic Enquiry* (the Vernon Report, 1965) in 1947 25.5 per cent of male workers were in white-collar jobs, but 56.1 per cent of female. By 1961 30.0 per cent of male workers were in this class and

63.1 per cent of female. 'Australia's pattern in 1961 was similar to that of the United States in 1950'.²⁶ The Vernon Report drew attention to the connection between prolonged attendance at school and entry into white-collar occupations.

The growing preference for white-collar occupations is reflected in the increase in participation in full-time education in recent years and . . . particularly in the decreasing proportion of young people taking up trade apprenticeships. At the 1954 census 46.5% of 15-year-old males were engaged in full-time education; by 1961 the proportion had risen to 64.2%.²⁷

The decline of apprenticeship and the growth of the white-collar class continued during the prosperous 1960s. The proportion of young men training as apprentices in skilled manual trades fell from the post-war peak of 30.2 per cent in 1956 to 20.5 per cent in 1963. The persistent shortage of skilled artisans was one reason for the abandonment of the White Australia Policy in 1966, which was replaced by a policy of selective immigration with reference to the skills needed in Australia.

As the old pioneering society faded in the 1950s and as secondary education became more important for access to vocations and hence as a means of social mobility, the school retention rate rose.

Table 4.4: Percentage of students remaining till the Final Year (Year 12) of Secondary School, 1960 and 1966

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas
1960	NA	15	26	NA	18	NA
1966	28	23	26	15	22	11

These figures are the average for government and non-government schools. The persistence rate was lower in government schools than in non-government.²⁸

Another phenomenon affecting the white-collar class, but also other classes, was a high economic dependence on the state. This had long been an Australian phenomenon. While the total number of state employees in Australia increased during the 1950s and 1960s, the proportionate distribution between state and private employment did not change much. In 1950 there were 2 630 000 employees in Australia, 74 per cent employed by private enterprise and 26 per cent by governmental authorities. Of the 661 000 persons employed by governments 30 per cent were in the service of the Commonwealth, 60 per cent were employed by state instrumentalities, and 10 per cent by local authorities.²⁹

Comprehensive schools, introduced into the state systems of

New South Wales, Tasmania and Western Australia in 1956-58, were major vehicles for the preparation of future members of the white-collar class. In public discussion, however, the comprehensive school was justified in terms of other social benefits—particularly the reduction of barriers between children of different social classes. It was seen as more democratic. Comprehensive high schools meant the disappearance of specialised technical, commercial and home science schools, though in comprehensive schools these curricula often survived as distinct streams. Nonetheless, the disappearance of specialised vocational schools discouraged the preparation of boys, and to some extent girls, for the skilled trades. Another obstacle to technical education was that entry into the apprenticeship system continued to be at the age of 16, in most states two years after the minimum school leaving age.

The 1961 Gallup Poll suggested the disparity between the educational level of the different classes. Whereas a quarter of those in the upper middle class had received university education or the equivalent, almost half the working class had received primary education only. 30

Table 4.5: Education According to Social Class, 1961.

Education level	Upper middle class %	Middle class %	Lower middle class %	Working class %
Primary	10.5	20.5	28	45
Some secondary	30.5	26	33	35
Higher secondary	32.5	41.5	28	18
Tertiary	26.5	12	11	2

The time was approaching when the raising of the minimum leaving age, the progression of all children into secondary schools and a great increase in university enrolments would reduce these contrasts.

The Family and Education

The strength and nature of the Australian family as a *social* unit in this period, 1950-1966, is suggested by such things as the size of families, the marriage rate, the divorce rate, the age at marriage, the proportion of working wives, and the proportion of working mothers. The role of the family in *education* may be assessed by such things as the extent of formal instruction within the home (by tutors, governesses and parents); the use of pre-school centres for

very young children; the age at which children started their formal education in schools; the extent to which the family backed up the ethos and values of the schools; the behaviour and discipline of children at school and in the community (which may reflect the home environment); the interest of the family in school work, (evidenced by such things as parental support for homework and their willingness to check their children's knowledge); the supply of books and newspapers in the home; and the involvement of parents in school activities (including parents' and citizens' associations).

However, there was not one single type of family. One major distinction was between rural families and metropolitan families, but we may also distinguish between lower class, middle class, and upper class families. Some upper and middle class families entrusted the education of their children to boarding schools, mainly denominational colleges. Catholic families were often stronger than Protestant ones, while Jewish families had a reputation for solidarity and for an anxiety to promote the education of their children.

The prosperity which developed during World War II brought a drop in the age of marriage, from 1941 onwards. The enlistment of young men in the armed services also encouraged early marriage. Parents became younger. The 1947 census showed that 47 per cent of women were or had been married by the age of 25; the 1954 census showed 59 per cent; and in 1961 the proportion was over 60 per cent. The tendency was to start having children earlier, but also to cease having children at an earlier age. 31

During the war the entry of women into the workforce had encouraged the provision of pre-school centres. But after the war a high proportion of women returned to family life. The constant shortage of labour in the 1950s was met initially by immigration, not by wives entering the world of work. The proportion of women in the workforce remained at about one-fifth of the total workforce at the censuses of 1933, 1947, and 1954.³² However, by 1966 the female segment of the workforce had increased to 29.5 per cent. The proportion of married women who were at work rose from 8.6 per cent in 1947 to 13.6 per cent in 1954, 18.7 per cent in 1961 and 28.8 per cent in 1966. Women were beginning to emerge from the home.³³

After the disturbing years of the war, the divorce figures in Australia decreased. In 1939 divorces numbered 3145. They peaked at 8791 in 1947, but fell to 6630 in 1949. By 1966 divorces had risen to 9921.³⁴ In February 1961 grounds for divorce were made uniform throughout the Commonwealth.

The 1950s brought a baby boom. The average family size jumped to nearly four children. This trend was encouraged by prosperity, the earlier age of marriage, and the immigration of

southern Europeans, accustomed to large families. In the schools, classes were large and a shortage of teachers existed. The average family took a fair amount of its entertainment together, often outside the home. From 1958 television appeared as a new element in the home, but for some years it did not greatly disturb the pattern of family life. Nor did it, at first, offer competing values.

Writing in 1953 the leading Australian demographer, W. D. Borrie, Research Fellow in the Social Science School, Australian National University, asserted that the majority of Australian couples who married remained together to rear their children, and 'despite the rapidly changing environment in which they live, particularly in the cities, they appear to be essentially in control of their offspring'. On the other hand, he doubted whether, in the majority of homes, there was any longer deliberate inculcation of children with an ethical code:

Parents do not lack concern for the moral welfare of their children, but the hedonistic spirit is strong, and spiritual matters are almost certainly the subject of serious discussion in only a minority of homes. Without perhaps conscious shirking of their responsibilities, parents are tending to leave to the school an increasing share of the task of moral training. 35

In 1956 Dr Morven Brown of Sydney University was somewhat more optimistic. 'The Australian family system had undergone a renaissance since the war. Trends of low birth-rate and high divorce rate had been reversed . . . Social education of children was the concern of parents, and intellectual development a task for schools'.³⁶

A 1957 newspaper article summed up the family orientation of this decade. 'The dearest wish of Miss 1957 is to be Mrs 1958 and she is much more interested in marriage than she is in sex . . . the prime aim of the modern Australian girl is to marry and have children'.³⁷ Girls from the growing number of broken and unhappy homes also wanted marriage at any price, and were less likely to worry about love.

The arrival in 1961 of the contraceptive pill aroused considerable public discussion regarding its significance for the family and morality. The birthrate reached its peak in 1960 at 22.42 per 1000 of population. By 1966 it was down to 19.28.³⁸

In the mid-1960s most observers still believed the family had retained its stability. Two Queensland academics, writing in 1965, pointed out that the 1960 Commonwealth legislation on uniform divorce laws assumed that the bonds of marriage were not lightly to be shed; provision was made for accredited marriage guidance organisations. However, five years separation had been included as a ground for divorce a provision which circumvented the principle

of matrimonial fault or guilt. Television was considered to have brought families together, at least physically, and to have encouraged common values within the family. In Australian families the mother exercised an apparent dominance, but this was probably more the outcome of reduced participation by fathers. Despite encroachments by schools and other organisations on family responsibilities, socialisation remained an important family function. Some families were less likely to provide a good environment for adolescents than for younger children. 'Schools, churches, clubs and the community at large are still seen as supporters of the home'. While the withdrawal of fathers from many areas of family living had placed a heavy burden on mothers, it seemed that 'most of the young generation do develop adequately'. 39

Religious Denominations and Education

The 1947 census showed that 39 per cent of Australians were adherents of the Church of England, 20.7 per cent were Roman Catholics, 11.5 per cent Methodists, and 9.8 per cent Presbyterians. These were the major denominations. Next in importance were Baptists, 1.5 per cent. Nearly 11 per cent of the population had no religious affiliation. The Catholic Church maintained a strong educational system, with 1422 schools throughout Australia in 1950. These catered mainly for the primary grades, though about a quarter of the pupils were in secondary schools. The Church of England had 124 schools, pupils being about equally divided between primary and secondary. The majority of the 41 Presbyterian schools and 15 Methodist schools were secondary. The Church school systems will be discussed in more detail later.

In assessing the sociological significance of religion for Australian education one must distinguish between religious belief, with its implications for the curriculum and the values, and the churches as religious institutions, which had significance in the politics of education, in the sustenance of schools, and in the maintenance of religious societies, some of whose purposes were educational.

As the 1950s opened Australians seemed to retain much the same degree of religious devotion as over the previous hundred years. A significant minority was actively churchgoing and religious, but many Australians had only a nominal claim to church membership. Most Australians were indifferent to the traditional religious institutions, though maintaining considerable attachment to religious rites of passage, such as christenings, church marriages, and funerals. In intellectual circles a broad humanitarianism was gradually spreading at the expense of dogmatic theology. A lead-

ing Methodist, Alan Walker, writing at the end of 1949, noted the growing concern of the churches with social issues. Yet the leaders in the major churches sensed that their influence in society and politics was diminishing. 40 This was perhaps less true of the Catholic Church. The number of Catholics was being swelled by immigration from Catholic countries in Europe and by the traditionally high Catholic birthrate. Many Catholic journals and organisations of cultural significance reinforced Catholic ideology.⁴¹ But the 1955 split in the Labor Party diminished the Catholic Church's influence within that party.

The churches' concern that society was developing in ways that took little account of religious values found expression in the 1951 'Call to the People of Australia', which warned of the dangers arising from a reduced commitment to God, king and country, from threats to the centrality of the family and from the challenge of communism. Issued on Remembrance Day, 11 November 1951, it was signed by the leaders of the four major churches and the chief justices of each state, who stated: 'We are in danger from moral and intellectual apathy . . . Unless these are withstood, we shall lack the moral strength and moral unity to save our country and our liberties'.⁴²

For many years the strength of organised religion had been reinforced by a nexus between religion, class, race and education. Adherents of the Church of England were usually Anglo-Saxon in racial background. They were strongly represented amongst the upper classes and the lower classes. Therefore, at the highest level Anglicans were well educated, but the majority were not. Catholics tended to be Irish, lower class, and poorly educated. Presbyterians were sometimes found in the upper classes (such as pastoralists) and the skilled artisan class, and were normally of Scottish origin. They were often well educated. Methodists occupied a more modest social rank. Often lower middle class, they tended to be urban and moderately well-educated. Their parents might well have come from the mining districts of Cornwall, North-east England, or from Wales.⁴³

The 1961 Gallup Poll offered a numerical view.⁴⁴

Table 4.6: Religion and Class, 1961

Class	Catholic	C. of E.	Presb.	Methodist	Other Christian
Upper middle	5.5	5.9	7	4.3	3.8
Middle	38.8	43.5	50.7	47.4	42.4
Lower middle	11.4	11	11.4	13.7	16.9
Working	44.5	39.6	31.9	34.6	36.9

The Presbyterians had the highest proportion of respondents who identified themselves as either upper middle class or middle class; the Methodists had the highest describing themselves as lower middle class. Anglicans were the least likely to consider themselves lower middle class. The 'other Christians' (mainly small evangelical groups like Lutherans, Baptists, Churches of Christ and Salvation Army) were most likely to call themselves lower middle class. Catholics were strongly working class. 45

The sectarian division between Protestants and Catholics, reinforced by class and racial features, remained a feature of Australian society until the 1960s. Some businesses avoided employing Catholics, some social groups, such as golf clubs, quietly excluded Catholics (and Jews). It would have been politically impossible for a Roman Catholic to be minister for education. In states such as Queensland and New South Wales, where Catholics dominated the Labor Party, the allocation of this portfolio was sometimes no easy matter for a Labor premier. Fortunately, in those days the minister for education did not need to know much about education.

The expanding welfare state undermined the role of institutional religion. The churches found many of their long-established social initiatives were now being provided by the state. As its influence spread, the democratic state promoted a neutral ideology, not easily compatible with strong religious belief. The growth of a consumer society and the weakening of the traditional middle class challenged the major churches in two basic ways. The new society weakened their legitimacy as articulators of established values; the new values were predominantly secular. Secondly, it eroded elements in the legal structure which endorsed traditional religious values, from female modesty in dress to Sunday observance, from liquor laws to gambling.⁴⁶

In 1950, as over the previous century, the four major denominations maintained a strong independent presence in education. In Australia as a whole 292 247 pupils attended 1672 denominational schools.⁴⁷

Roman Catholic schools accounted for 81 per cent of the enrolments in church schools. By 1950 the Catholic school system had rectified many of the vocational and social disadvantages which Catholics had endured during the nineteenth century. As late as 1933 the census revealed that while Catholics made up 19.4 per cent of the population they constituted only 15.7 per cent of university students. Anglicans were in exact proportion to their weight in the community (nearly 39 per cent). The smaller denominations were unduly strong in the undergraduate body. But by

Table 4.7: Denominational Schools in Australia, 1950

Church	Schools	Pupils
Roman Catholic	1 422	236 562
Church of England	124	30 559
Presbyterian	41	11 503
Methodist	15	7 138
Presbyterian and Methodist	6	1 603
Seventh-Day Adventist	27	1 481
Christian Science	1	94
Lutheran	28	1 266
Baptist	3	666
Congregational and Baptist	2	271
Hebrew	2	398
Society of Friends	1	706

1947 the census revealed no significant divergence amongst major denominations in the occupational pattern. 48

At the close of his survey of Catholic education in Australia from 1806 to 1950, Fogarty asserted that the Catholic system had emerged as the state's *de facto* partner, educating more than 20 per cent of the children of the state. The Catholic contribution to the survival of Christianity in Australia was unique. Its school system stood as the Church's criticism of the prevailing ideologies and socialising pressures of the twentieth century.

Besides giving great satisfaction to the ecclesiastical authorities and to the Catholic laity, it has rendered valuable service to society as a whole, buttressing by its relative independence a precarious pluralism, enriching by its insistence on ultimate values an age of spiritual impoverishment.⁴⁹

This was written in 1959. Twenty years later the structure and ideology of Catholic education was rapidly changing in a society whose developing pluralism was producing still greater spiritual impoverishment.

During the 1950s Catholic schools experienced tremendous strains. A major reason was the increasing numbers of pupils, particularly as a result of immigration. But a second reason was that in the Catholic system, as in the state ones, the proportion of pupils proceeding on to secondary education was growing. The continuous expansion in the proportion of Catholic children attending Catholic schools ceased, and then reversed. In 1941, 69 per cent of Catholic children in New South Wales were enrolled in Catholic schools; in 1951, 72 per cent. The peak point was reached in 1958 when 73 per cent of Catholic children were enrolled in

Catholic schools. By 1961 the proportion had fallen to 71 per cent and by 1963 to 68 per cent.

The keystone of Catholic schools since the 1880s the teaching orders was no longer able to sustain the structure. To make matters worse, the numbers entering teaching orders dropped. Lay teachers once again appeared in Catholic schools. In the Archdiocese of Sydney lay teachers made up 15 per cent of the total in 1956, 25 per cent in 1960. In the Archdiocese of Melbourne lay teachers constituted 35 per cent of the total in 1960. By 1965 the proportion of lay teachers in NSW primary schools was 31 per cent, in secondary schools 23 per cent. 50 This trend, coupled with growing enrolments in secondary schools, produced a financial crisis and motivated a campaign for state aid for non-state schools, which achieved success in the mid-1960s.

Even so, the size of classes in Catholic schools remained higher than in state schools and much higher than in Anglican or Protestant ones. In 1950, for instance, the number of pupils per teacher in Catholic schools in New South Wales was 32; in Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist schools it was 19. In Victoria, Catholic schools had an average pupil:teacher ratio of 36; Anglican and Presbyterian had 19, Methodist 22.51

The *Church of England*, like the Catholic Church and the state governments, maintained both primary and secondary schools. But whereas in the Catholic and state systems three quarters or more of the pupils were enrolled in primary classes, in Church of England schools the proportion was evenly balanced, except in Tasmania.⁵² The Anglican schools were mostly self-governing corporate colleges, primary education being provided in preparatory schools serving these colleges. Church of England colleges were usually also boarding schools. In 1950 boarders made up 32 per cent of students in Anglican schools in New South Wales. By contrast, the proportion in Catholic schools was only 9 per cent.⁵³

In *Presbyterian schools* the balance between primary and secondary enrolments was roughly equal in New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland. In the other states the schools were predominantly secondary ones. The balance in *Methodist schools* was equal in New South Wales and Tasmania, but elsewhere these schools concentrated on secondary education. Taken together, the two strongest non-conformist, dissenting Protestant churches accounted for 8161 (10 per cent) of the 84 373 pupils in church schools in Victoria. In Western Australia they accounted for eight per cent, in South Australia and Tasmania seven per cent. In New South Wales they held 5912 (five per cent) of the 120,099 pupils in church schools and the same proportion in Queensland. In both

these states the proportion was affected by the large numbers in Catholic schools.

Boarders made up 39 per cent of students in Presbyterian schools in New South Wales in 1950, and 31 per cent in Methodist schools. Queensland possessed four Presbyterian schools and six joint Presbyterian/Methodist schools. In Australia as a whole boys outnumbered girls in Presbyterian schools, while girls considerably outnumbered boys in Methodist ones. But in the main Presbyterians and Methodists tended to send their children to state schools, relying on school scripture lessons and their Sunday Schools to provide a religious education for their offspring. In state departments of education the leading administrators usually belonged to non-conformist denominations.

In 1950 boarders made up 12 per cent of enrolments in the non-government schools of Australia. In Anglican schools they accounted for 28 per cent of pupils, in Presbyterian 23 per cent, in Methodist 20 per cent. As might be expected, two rural states, Queensland and Western Australia, had the highest proportion of boarders, Victoria the lowest. In 1950 male boarders outnumbered female in South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania. In New South Wales the numbers were even. In Queensland girls outnumbered boys; the existence of non-denominational grammar schools may explain this. 54

Most Church schools were single-sex, but the Seventh-Day Adventist, Lutheran, Baptist and Congregationalist schools were co-educational. So, too, was the only Quaker school, The Friends' School in Hobart. Religious and moral beliefs determined policy over separate or mixed education, but for smaller denominations the economic advantages of co-education were important. In the corporate colleges traditional humanist concepts of character-building, which influenced the formal and informal curriculum, underscored the desirability of single-sex education.

Most denominations maintained Sunday Schools to provide a more specific doctrinal religious and moral education. But numbers were falling. In 1948 the number of children attending Methodist Sunday schools across the land had fallen to 132 738 compared with 178 791 in 1904. In the 1960s the number of children attending Sunday Schools dropped heavily.55

The denominations also provided religious instruction within the *state school* systems. But here, too, there was cause for concern. 'The evidence of Australia's religious illiteracy was beyond question', the Professor-designate of Education at Melbourne University, W. H. Frederick, told the Australian Council of the World Council of Churches in August 1956. He welcomed recent innovations in Victoria.56 In 1950 the Education Act had been

amended to allow representatives of religious bodies to give instruction in state schools. In New South Wales the 1959 primary school social studies syllabus integrated general religious teaching into this course, but public objections led to a reversal of this arrangement in 1964. In South Australia attempts in 1945 and 1959 to replace segregated denominational instruction, which was not working efficiently, by non-segregated general instruction failed. 57 As enrolments in state secondary schools rose, the ability of the Anglican and non-conformist churches to provide religious instruction in these schools weakened. But in the late 1950s the Catholic Church started to provide instruction for Catholic pupils in state schools, something it had previously frowned on. The attendance of visiting religious instructors in state primary and secondary schools declined during the 1960s. In New South Wales the number of lessons by Presbyterian and Methodist religious instructors fell after 1963.⁵⁸

Another dramatic change in state schools was the rise in Catholic enrolments. In 1963 that denomination moved into second place in NSW state schools, after the Church of England, pushing Presbyterians into third place.

In the 1960s the antagonism between Catholics and Protestants started to fade. One reason was that the nexus between social class, religion, race and education, which had long reinforced religious antagonisms, was weakening. The rise of the white-collar class, the salaried middle class, contributed to this. More Catholics were progressing into secondary education and were joining the salaried middle class. To a considerable degree, this upward social mobility was a tribute to the effectiveness of the Catholic school system. The white-collar class, economically dependent on the state or on big business corporations, needed a flexible ideology and avoided commitment to rigid principles or beliefs. Another reason for the fading of religious tension in the 1960s was the moderation fostered by continuing prosperity and social-economic expansion.

A watershed in the history of sectarianism was the campaign for the reintroduction of state aid to denominational schools. In the late nineteenth century the principle of 'free, compulsory and secular education' had swept across Australia, leading to the abolition of state aid to denominational schools. The campaign to reintroduce state aid was led by the Catholic Church. After some hesitation, the Church of England ultimately supported it. The smaller Protestant churches opposed the move. But once state aid was introduced, most churches accepted it. The victory of this campaign, in 1963⁶⁴, was the last major occasion on which the churches

were able to demonstrate their political strength. But it also meant that henceforth political parties had to develop education policies.

It was the Catholic Church which benefited most from the reintroduction of state aid, as the revived growth in the number of its schools indicates. 59

Table 4.8: Church schools 1961 and 1966

	1961	1966	(enrolments)
Roman Catholic	1172	1820	(478 422)
Church of England	122	114	(44 210)
Seventh-Day Adventist	41	44	(2787)
Presbyterian	36	39	(17 954)
Methodist	24	25	(13 554)
Lutheran	22	28	(3398)
Hebrew	2	11	(2785)
Other Denominations	8	13	(4313)
	1427	2094	(567 423)

'Other denominations' included Baptist, Society of Friends and Christian Science schools. While the Catholic system continued to grow, the others were static. Growth was mainly in the smaller sects, outside the mainstream. The Seventh-Day Adventists initially rejected state aid, yet expanded the number of their schools. (In 1968 rising costs associated with equal pay for men and women teachers forced them to accept state funds). In addition to expanding the number of its schools, the Catholic Church was able to reduce the size of classes. In New South Wales, for instance, the pupil-teacher ratio in Catholic schools fell from 30.1 in 1964 to 27.8 in 1967.

Having looked at the major social groups or institutions significantly influencing education the state, social class, the family, the Churches we now examine two groups very closely associated with the schools: the pupils, considered as the peer group, and the teachers and their unions.

The Peer Group and Education

The peer group was predominantly a secondary school phenomenon. In the primary school it was normally weak, because of the relative strength of teacher control and the considerable dependence of the pupils on adults. In the primary school, playground gangs were more important socially than the peer group. In 1949 the distinctive feature of the adolescent peer group in state schools

was its distribution across different types of specialised post-primary schools with somewhat specialised curricula. This division weakened the impact of the peer group. The relatively small size of schools encouraged greater contact between the peer group and teachers. Peer group attitudes often coincided with family and class attitudes.

The early leaving age also reduced the influence of the peer group in the school. In the comprehensive high school, the peer group was frequently divided into streams taking different courses. Another factor dividing the peer group in both primary and secondary schools was the presence of migrants, particularly non-English speaking migrants.

By the 1960s Australia, in common with western society generally, was becoming aware of 'the adolescent-adult gap'. (see Fig. 3.1, p. 65) Economic prosperity and the growth of the white-collar vocations encouraged adolescents to stay on longer at school. The rising persistence rate was most marked in state and Catholic schools; in the corporate schools the retention rate was already high. Longer education meant a longer period of dependence on, subservience to, and friction with, adults. Teenagers were now acquiring a new importance as consumers. 60 Boredom was alleged to be one cause of adolescent frustration and of the growth of delinquency, which peaked between the age of 15 and 16. Church youth clubs and police-citizens clubs tried to meet the problem.

Differences in education according to sex remained strong in the 1950s and 1960s. Girls attending a non-denominational private school might differ from girls attending a Catholic secondary school or a state comprehensive one. Girls left school earlier than boys. In New South Wales in 1959 60 74 per cent of boys left school before the age of 16, but 80 per cent of girls. In Catholic schools 57 per cent of boys left before 16 and 73 per cent of girls. In other schools, 20 per cent of boys and 37 per cent of girls left.⁶¹ Several influences explain this situation. The different vocational aspirations of girls encouraged early leaving; and girls believed strongly in their roles as future wives and mothers. In the 1950s some parents still believed that their daughters needed less education than their sons. In the cities single-sex state secondary schools reinforced differences in the curriculum and values provided for girls, as did separate classes for the sexes in primary schools. But in country districts co-education was common. Separate sex schools were normal in the Catholic and other non-state systems.

In the mid-1960s those states which still had a minimum leaving age of 14 raised it to 15 South Australia from April 1963, Victoria from February 1964, Queensland and Western Australia from the beginning of 1965. This changed the size and character

of the peer group besides having implications for other facets of education, such as the curriculum and the examination system.

By 1966 schools had become larger, the peer group had become more powerful. Promotion by age, which had developed in primary and secondary state schools, helped keep the peer group together and strengthened its influence. By comparison with Britain and America, adolescent delinquency was mild in New South Wales the delinquency rate was perhaps only one half of Britain's and one third of America's. Nonetheless, the growth of an independent adolescent culture was a feature of the times. These separate interests found particular expression in popular art forms, such as music.

Some adults were reluctant to recognise any change. In 1965 a *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial, commenting on the fashion at school speech days to assess the younger generation, denied the existence of such an abstract entity as 'a generation of youth'. There were only large numbers of boys and girls growing up as best they could. Yet six months later Craig McGregor wrote in the same paper: 'The most startling thing about young people in Australia today after the number there is of them is how radically they differ from the adult community'. 62

Teachers' Associations and Education

One other organised social group exerted a strong influence on education teachers' professional associations. Sociologically, these may be regarded as specialised vocational organisations. But their policies did not necessarily reflect the values of the mass of teachers, whose outlook responded to a variety of factors, such as the classroom, the inspectorial system, public examinations, and their own educational and social background.

The membership of teachers unions grew considerably during this period: 63

Table 4.9: Membership of teachers' organisations, 1950-51 and 1966-67

	1950-51	1966-67
State School Teachers' Union of WA	1995	6026
SA Institute of Teachers	2162	7956
Vic. Teachers' Union	6686	20 001
Vic. Secondary Teachers' Assoc.	370	4511
Tas. Teachers' Federation	1340	3757
NSW Teachers' Federation	12 275	30 661
Qld Teachers' Union	4762	9018

The Teachers' Federation in *New South Wales* was by far the strongest of the state teachers' unions. Its power grew significantly between 1941 and 1965, when Labor governed the state. The introduction of compulsory unionism was of great help to the Federation leadership. In addition, the willingness of the NSW government to deduct membership dues from teachers' salaries also helped the Federation. In this period a left-wing alliance, in which communists were strong, controlled the Federation. However, a gap always existed between the leadership and the membership, and sometimes the leadership found itself venturing too far ahead of the members. One strength of the Federation was the cohort of full-time officers it gradually built up. In 1957 it had nine administrative officers; by 1975 they had grown to 25.⁶⁴ They became a bastion of left-wing influence within the Federation, almost impervious to changes in the elected leadership. The NSW Teachers' Federation was the only teachers' union affiliated with the local trades union council.

In 1949 primary teachers predominated in state education and, accordingly, the Teachers' Federation also reflected the interests of primary teachers. Thus in salary negotiations the Federation opposed any great differentiation between primary and secondary teachers. A divided teaching body might mean a divided Federation. But by 1966 the number secondary schools and hence the influence of secondary teachers had grown. The persistent shortage of teachers strengthened the power of the Federation. The NSW Department of Education hesitated to pursue policies which it opposed; indeed, the NSW Teachers' Federation had a significant influence on educational policy. For instance, its support for comprehensive high schools, the abolition of external examinations, and increased federal funding for state education carried some weight.

In *Victoria*, unlike the other states, teachers in government schools were divided into a plurality of unions. The Victorian Teachers Union (VTU) was the parent union. Like the NSW Teachers' Federation, it had a Labor Party bias. After Labor won the 1945 state elections the Minister for Education told the 1946 Annual Conference of the VTU: 'I suppose it might be true to say that by the grace of God and the Teachers' Union I stand here this morning'.⁶⁵ In 1948 the forerunner of the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association (VSTA) split from the VTU. The VSTA came under strong militant control from 1964 onwards. The Technical Teachers' Association of Victoria was established in 1967.⁶⁶

The *South Australian* Public Teachers' Union had split in 1937 when 60 per cent of its women members withdrew to form the Women Teachers' Guild. This division remained until 1951,

when a unified body, the South Australian Institute of Teachers was formed. 67 The State Teachers' Union of *Western Australia* and the *Queensland* Teachers' Union were moderate bodies. Queensland was the only state other than New South Wales with compulsory unionism.

Teaching had for long served as an avenue of social mobility. Many of those entering the profession were sons or daughters of unskilled, semi-skilled, or skilled workers. But their own children were likely to move into a higher social occupation. A survey of first year teachers' college students in Victoria in 1955 found that 37 per cent were children of unskilled, semi-skilled or skilled workers, 11 per cent of sales and clerical employees, 26 per cent of small businessmen and farmers, 17 per cent of members of the professions, four per cent of proprietors, managers, or graziers, and five per cent other. In New South Wales the bulk of teachers' college students were children of shopkeepers, manual workers, farmers and white collar workers. Only in a country college, Armidale, were a high percentage children of teachers. At Sydney Teachers' College only 10 per cent were the children of teachers.68

In all states during the 1950s and 1960s the composition and outlook of teachers' unions changed as the teaching profession itself changed. The proportion of young teachers increased. The growth of secondary schools shifted the balance within the unions towards the more militant secondary teachers. The proportion of women teachers grew, particularly in the primary schools; equal pay for men and women teachers encouraged the feminisation of the profession. The widening range of vocations available to educated people, together with the increasing problems in the schools, often diverted higher quality graduates away from teaching. By 1966 teacher militancy was strong and teachers' strikes, previously unheard of, occurred in Victoria and New South Wales.

Social Change and the Quality of Education

In the early 1960s R. B. Madgwick, Vice-Chancellor of the University of New England, reflected on the weakening influence of social groups which had long exercised an educational influence. He suggested that the breakdown of the *family unit* was a consequence of the complexity and speed of change in community life, which threatened beliefs and attitudes. The vision of higher living standards encouraged both parents to seek higher incomes, to the neglect of the children. Lack of family support for education threatened the teacher's work. Unwisely, educationists were being tempted to take over the responsibilities of the family. The *Church* had lost its leadership in moral, spiritual and social thought.

Churches still retained their schools, but lack of family support often undermined their educational efforts. The sporting, social, cultural and educational facilities of *youth clubs or societies* were enjoyed by too few Australians. The educational significance of the *mass media* the press, radio, film and television was at best of immense value; at worst the media was destructive of community standards. He regretted the growth of sensationalism in news reports and a tendency to fail to distinguish between fact and comment. Finally, he found keen interest in *adult education* in the community but inadequate material provision. 69

The social changes of the 1950s and 1960s contributed significantly to a crisis in standards and values in the curriculum. A major force for change was number the great increase in those who saw education as important for economic and social advancement. But would 'more' mean 'worse'? From 1949 onwards there was much talk of a crisis in education.⁷⁰ This crisis was particularly evident in the state system, but affected Catholic schooling also. The crisis was usually seen as a quantitative one, a material one, especially by teachers' unions. The qualitative crisis was less widely recognised, though some leaders in religious groups and some university academics did comment on it.

The *material crisis* expressed itself in a shortage of buildings and equipment, and in an inadequate supply of teachers. A decline in the quality of teachers started in the mid-1950s. In Victoria the proportion of graduates in state secondary schools fell from 50 per cent in 1952 to 37 per cent in 1962; in New South Wales from 50 per cent in 1964 to 42 per cent in 1966; and in South Australia from 66 per cent in 1954 to 46 per cent in 1960.⁷¹ Other disturbing features were a growth in the number of casual teachers and a remarkable rise in the resignation rate of teachers in the mid-1960s.

The *qualitative crisis* was expressed in various ways. The liberal humanist curriculum was being eroded. In primary schools the principles of progressive education, often imported from the United States, were spreading. Progressive ideas were supported by the Australian Council for Educational Research, the New Education Fellowship, the small but growing band of research officers in state departments of education, and some lecturers in teachers' colleges and university departments of education. The abolition by 1950 of most external examinations at the end of the primary school made change easier. In state (but not Catholic) primary schools history and geography were replaced by social studies about 1952⁵³. History was a strong vehicle for values, the transmission of the cultural heritage and the humanist curriculum. Syllabus revision in the 1950s and early 1960s often emphasised progressive, child-centred methods of teaching. These were slower

methods of learning and required a reduction in the intensity of study, in the amount of ground covered. A growing reluctance to fail students, coupled with pressure of accommodation, encouraged automatic ('social') promotion.

In secondary schools lower standards on entry and social pressures encouraged a narrowing of the curriculum; the number of subjects a pupil studied simultaneously was reduced. Added to this erosion of the broad character of liberal education was the introduction of more non-academic subjects. History declined in popularity. Yet the picture is not one-sided. Standards in mathematics and science rose, at least for a while, as pupils were able to concentrate on fewer subjects. Larger classes, less qualified teachers and poorer discipline undermined quality. The raising of the minimum school leaving age meant forcible retention at school of non-academic pupils and was likely to lead to increased discipline problems. 72

The universities, too, experienced these crises. Of the full-time students entering universities in 1951 only 61 per cent passed their first year examination, only 35 per cent graduated in the minimum time, and only 58 per cent graduated at all. The material crisis diminished with the flow of funds after the Murray Report of 1957 and the establishment of the Australian Universities Commission. But the universities came under further pressure as the numbers seeking admission continued to grow and as new semi-professions began to seek the higher status conferred by university courses. Moreover, other types of tertiary institutions, such as technical colleges and teachers' colleges, were calling for Commonwealth financial assistance.

At the secondary level two major educational reforms were to precipitate further remarkable changes the raising of the minimum school leaving age, and the abolition of many examinations in mid-secondary school, at about age 14. At the tertiary level the Martin Report, *Tertiary Education in Australia*, 1964, produced new state-aided tertiary colleges providing vocational training for students unlikely to be accepted into a university or unlikely to complete a university course easily. These became known as Colleges of Advanced Education. These, too, were to change the character of Australian education. On top of these internal developments came a social revolution from outside, the great cultural collapse of 196774.

We will consider these tremendous changes in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Five

A New Education in a New Society, 1967-1974

In the late 1960s and early 1970s Western civilisation underwent a remarkable metamorphosis. Australia, a distant outpost of that culture, shared in the transformation. The changes were comparable with those that engulfed ancient Greece about 330 to 323 BC, when Alexander the Great widened the area and changed the nature of Greek civilisation by his conquest of the Persian Empire. The characteristic features of the new Hellenistic culture anticipated in some respects those which became established in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They included a cosmopolitanism, the liberation of women, the restriction of population, a humanitarianism coupled with a contrasting brutality, local rather than national allegiances, a concern with the individual, inflation, a vast literature covering many facets of knowledge but with few writers able to match the best of the past, the growth of science, an interest in technique rather than content . . . above all, a failure of nerve, a loss of confidence, a turning to the Goddess of Chance, Tyche. 1 In education new characteristics included the spread of education coupled with its deterioration, a vast growth in secondary and higher education, establishment of research institutes, the proliferation of textbooks, and the enhanced prestige accorded education.

Another analogy is with the late medieval period, from about 1300 to 1450. This age was marked by economic stagnation, inflation and financial crises, decline of population, international wars, a sense of death, plagues, a decline of tolerance, a crisis of belief. The growth of nominalist philosophy and of mysticism expressed the doubts and despair of the age. 'Both nominalism and mysticism were attempts at building inner kingdoms of the mind and soul while outside the peoples of Europe remained locked in a state of permanent civil war'.² Four educational features reminiscent of our own time were the growth in the size of schools, the decline of religious education, a strong vocational element in schooling, and deterioration in the universities, where the scholastic disputations became increasingly formal, their topics narrow and often remote from the concerns of the everyday world.

The essential feature of the cultural revolution of 1967/1974 was the rejection of traditional authority. The most startling aspect of this was the new sexual freedom. The new morality favoured relativism; absolute beliefs, based on Christianity or liberal humanism, became unfashionable. Politically, a new radicalism and a new concern for minorities emerged.

Before continuing our survey of the development of the sociology of education we must consider the social and educational revolution of 1967/1974. We will look first at the student revolt, as a symbolic overture. This leads us to a consideration of the crisis of liberal humanism, both a cause and a consequence of the intellectual revolt in universities and elsewhere. After considering the challenge of the new permissive culture abroad and in Australia, we look at the changing political context within which social and educational change operated. Equally important is the emergence of new special interest groups. Some specific forces reshaping Australian education are noted. Then we consider the arrival of the new education in government schools, state by state, as well as the great changes in the Catholic school system. Developments in the universities and colleges of advanced education are surveyed. Finally we consider the new aims emerging out of these educational changes but also reflecting the social changes. The chapter closes with an estimate of Australian education about 1974.³

The Student Revolt Abroad and in Australia

The student unrest which shook many Australian universities and colleges of advanced education (institutions closely associated with preparation for the professions and the salaried middle class) was a revolt against inherited values, standards and culture. The aims of the students were often not very clearly expressed. The

leadership of the student movement tended to come from middle class youths enrolled in the older deteriorating humanities subjects and in the newer, less orthodox sociological studies.

The United States led the way. For some years after 1964 the Berkeley campus of the University of California was in chaos. The revolt spread to other American universities. In the United States conscription for the Vietnam War intensified the issue. England did not directly participate in the war but opposition to American involvement in Vietnam was a central theme. At the London School of Economics the first outbreaks of direct violence by students occurred in the winter of 1966 and the spring of 1967. 4 In December 1967 students at the Regent Street Polytechnic and the Holborn College of Law and Commerce in London demonstrated on the issue of student representation. Students at Aston University, Birmingham, soon followed suit. Controversies developed at the Universities of Edinburgh and Leicester in February 1967.

Events in France further stimulated the world movement. Issues ranged from discontent over the problems of overcrowded French universities to greater sexual freedom for students and political frustration with the Fifth Republic. The revolt started at the Nanterre campus of the Sorbonne, 1966⁶⁷. Nanterre was a new School of Liberal Arts to the west of Paris, set in an industrial slum, in hopelessly overcrowded buildings. Daniel Cohn-Bendit led the student body in an anarchistic protest over access to each others' rooms by students of the opposite sex.⁵ May 1968 saw widespread student revolt not only in France but in many other countries.

In Australia unrest started in July 1967 when students at Monash University collected money to send to the National Liberation Front in Vietnam. On 4 July, US Independence Day, students demonstrated outside the American consulates in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Monash continued to be the leading centre of dissent. In May 1968 the politicisation of Australia's campuses intensified in response to proposed amendments to the National Service Act which would have forced officers in educational institutions to provide confidential information on students liable for registration. In April 1971 students at La Trobe University launched a campaign for the resignation of the Chancellor, Sir Archibald Glenn, who was Managing Director of Imperial Chemical Industries (ANZ) and a director of the parent company in London. A meeting of the University Council was blockaded, the administration offices were occupied, 12 students were excluded from the university, 23 were fined, and the Chancellor announced he would resign.⁶

After the victory of the Labor Party in the federal elections of

December 1972 radicalism declined. Many universities had already accepted student demands for representation on various academic governing bodies. Moreover, Whitlam's first act as prime minister was to abolish conscription, which reduced the personal concern of many students with the Vietnam war. 7

Some people believed that the outlook of many of the protesters had been shaped by their studies in social science and sociology at universities and colleges. Some believed that lecturers in sociology actively assisted the militant students. In fact, the connections were more tenuous. Some sociologists opposed the student movement, while many students criticised existing sociological theories and methods. In both Australia and abroad students who had been attracted to sociology as an explanation of the world found that not many jobs were available to them as graduates, and these were mainly ones which assisted capitalist enterprise. However, as Sol Encel said in his presidential address to the Sociological Association of Australia and New Zealand in August 1969, 'even when the student activists are not themselves students of sociology, the language they use is the language of sociology, and their ideas are drawn from sociological theorists even when they deride them'.⁸

The students were in the forefront of the revolt against humanist traditions. As potential members of the new salaried middle class, the white-collar class, their critique of traditional ideology exercised an appeal within this class. Many students came from middle class families, though some were socially mobile and imparted a working class egalitarian spirit to the new ideology. The autonomous youth culture was now centre stage.

The Crisis of Liberal Humanism

Since the late nineteenth century the universities had been one of the custodians of the liberal-humanist tradition. The intelligentsia and the university scholars became unsure of this tradition in the 1950s. In America the rejection of the humanist tradition in literature was assisted by the writers of the 'beat' generation. Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1953), a novel of frantic movement across America, set the new movement going. The key beat poem was 'Howl' by Allen Ginsberg (1956). As the rebellion against American cultural and social values continued, the novelists of the 1960s turned increasingly to non-fiction, mixing fiction and fact to form a genre referred to as 'faction'.

In Britain the collapse of humanism in literature started with John Osborne's play, *Look Back in Anger*, in May 1956. The shock of the 'kitchen sink' set was reinforced by the social message. The

play's hero was lower class; his language was aggressive. A further step towards a new society and a new ethic was the trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* under the Obscene Publications Act 'Regina v. Penguin Books Ltd' in 1960. At the trial the Bishop of Woolwich, Dr John Robinson, witness for the defence, argued that the sexual act was one of 'holy communion'.⁹

March 1963 was notable for the publication by the Bishop of Woolwich of *Honest to God*. This book, which was to sell more than three quarters of a million copies, brought the doubts and insecurities within the Church of England to a head. In a chapter on 'The New Morality' Dr Robinson set aside the Ten Commandments as the basis of the Church's teachings. 'Relativism, utilitarianism, evolutionary naturalism, existentialism have taken their stand, quite correctly, against any subordination of the concrete needs of the individual to an alien universal norm'.¹⁰ Christianity, he said, was identified with the old morality. It was necessary to alter this. The two main changes should be: to reject the idea that marriages are made in Heaven and to reject the idea that there are absolute standards laid down by God. There was 'nothing prescribed except love'.¹¹ Within the Catholic Church, that great defender of absolutes, the Second Vatican Council of 1962-1965 began to sow new seeds of change. The publication of the 'Is God Dead?' issue of *Time* in 1966 showed the winds of change were strongly blowing.

Two theatrical landmarks encapsulated much of the new morality. The first was *Oh Calcutta*, which intrigued New York in June 1969 and was staged in London in July 1970. Its title was a pun on the French for 'Oh, what an arse you have'. Its sketches were a mixture of the crude, the subtle and the erudite. 'Mr Tynan's Nude Review', *The Times* called it.¹² *Jesus Christ, Superstar*, a rock opera by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber, opened in New York in October 1971. It depicted the last seven days of Christ, from the point of view of Judasrelativism indeed! Religious groups and church parties dominated both the audience inside the theatre and the protesters outside. As with most of Webber's subsequent rock operas, its success rested heavily on dazzling technical effects and several catchy tunes. It was condemned by the newspaper critics but was a tremendous popular success. When it opened in Paris Webber took care to obtain the endorsement of the Cardinal Archbishop. Its production in London in August 1972 had the commendation of the Bishop of Southwark.¹³

In 1968 Malcolm Bradbury, then at the University of East Anglia and already known as a witty novelist, stated in an interview:

We are moving into a world of anarchy where the values I'm most attached to have little chance of surviving.

Are they the values of an elite culture? Well, one could call them liberal humanist values. I feel very much more identified with a notion of art as order, or art as growth, than with art as indulgence or as mere self-expression.

. . . what is worrying me is the apparent exhaustion of the written word, the way culture is today translated into visual media which are not only mostly based on team-work but also almost inevitably short-term visual media. The result is that the literary imagination itself looks less relevant than it was . . . 14

In a survey of the arts in 1969 Alistair Cooke, the American journalist and commentator, referred to the concern, expressed some 40 years before by the Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset and the English critic F. R. Leavis, that the multitude was about to overwhelm civilisation, that the standards of the intellectuals were being overwhelmed by such mass entertainments as the movies, radio and popular journalism. But, Cooke suggested, in the late 1960s something even more radical was occurring:

In both Europe and America, we are witnessing a glorification of mass *culture*. Possibly for the first time since the Goths and Vandals sacked the Roman Empire and banished orthodox Christianity and its arts to a precarious holding-operation on the northern fringes of Europe, we are seeing the arts of the many imposing themselves upon the few. Certainly for the first time in modern history, the style (in theater, movies, popular music, painting and speech) is up from the lower classes instead of down from the upper.¹⁵

The sources of this change were manifold. But in a broad sense, it reflected the reduced social strength of the independent middle and upper classes and the relative affluence of the working classes, especially of working class youth.

The Permissive Society, the Pluralist Society

The permissive society was not co-incident with mass society; but it was a by-product of it. The term originated among American psychologists in the 1950s, becoming more widely used in the late 1960s. In Britain it appeared in *Punch* in March 1967 and in *The Listener* in January 1968, acquiring the sense of: 'tolerant, liberal, allowing freedom, especially in sexual matters'. The intellectual liberty which challenged traditional standards in education and the arts was paralleled by an emotional liberty which argued that 'any experience however raw, violent, or perverse is as good as any other, that any instinctive behaviour, if it is honest, is permissible in society'.¹⁶

Permissiveness brought with it a flood of pornography in

both America and Britain. An obvious feature of pornography is its anti-humanist character. This aspect of the collapse of Christian-humanist-bourgeois morality produced a small literature of denunciation. As early as 1964 two English Christians, Arnold Lunn (Catholic) and Garth Lean (Anglican), wrote *The New Morality*, 'the first review of the whole New Moralists battle line, from Dr Alex Comfort to the Bishop of Woolwich'. In 1965 Mary Whitehouse organised a Viewers and Listeners Association to monitor television and radio. A series of court actions punctuated the struggle for liberalisation. The first, of course, concerned *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, in 1960. In 1964 and 1967 the resistance achieved successes when courts found *Fanny Hill* and *Last Exit to Brooklyn* obscene. The last major protest was the publication of *Pornography: The Longford Report* in 1972. At 500 pages it represented 16 months' work by a committee of 53. It was concerned with more than pornography. Religion and civilisation were also issues. It was an affirmation, a protest, a survey, and a call for reform. But it had little affect; the approved reaction to the Longford Report was one of knowing if somewhat weary amusement. 17 The Sexual Offences Act of 1967 legalised homosexual acts between consenting adults. In 1968 the Lord Chamberlain's office lost its responsibility to examine and censor stage plays before their public performance. In 1970 the Gay Liberation Front was set up.

In America Henry Miller's book *Tropic of Cancer* was the subject of a Supreme Court decision in June 1964 which marked the end of literary prosecutions for obscenity. The women's liberation movement dates from 1966, when Betty Friedan, author of the *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) founded the National Organization of Women. In 1972 the US Congress approved the Women's Equal Rights Amendment, which guaranteed equal rights irrespective of sex. In 1967 Illinois became the first state in America to abolish laws against homosexual acts. The emergence of feminists, homosexuals, lesbians and stronger ethnic groups was matched by a general weakening of ideological consensus.

One of the most succinct accounts of the great change in British society was provided by Ferdynand Zweig. In *The New Acquisitive Society* (1976) he analysed the end of the old working class and the reciprocal of this the end of the old middle class. These fundamental changes were linked with the enormous changes in education over the preceding 30 years. The emergence of a consumer society cast the worker in a variety of roles a wage-earner, a consumer, a property-owner, a saver and investor.

It is significant that the most forceful social movements in recent times have been centred around other criteria than class or socio-economic stratification, e.g. sex (Women's Liberation Movement), age (Student

Movements), race (Human Rights Movement), nationality or religion (as in Northern Ireland), regional discrepancies (Welsh and Scottish Movements), protection of environment (the fight against pollution), famine relief, or cruelty to children, etc. 18

While the British working class was assuming features once associated with the bourgeoisie, the middle class was losing its bourgeois character. The independent, self-reliant merchants and industrialists (and to some extent the professionals) were turning into salaried office-holders. The middle classes were becoming bureaucratized. The majority of industrial assets was in the hands of corporations, private or public. In the corporate sector the entrepreneurs were being replaced by bureaucratic self-perpetuating managers. Shareholders were losing their rights to the office-holders. 'Corporate capitalism is bureaucratic capitalism, capitalism without capitalists'. The shedding of middle-class values and lifestyle in the younger generation had many facets: withdrawal into a closed, apathetic, community life; a search for a new semimystical meaning for life; a seeking for escape through drugs. Another facet was the appeal of New Left movements built around the idea of permanent revolution, cultural revolution, or the cult of radical heroes. Militancy was expressed mainly against the educational authorities, decried as autocratic and paternalistic.¹⁹

The permissive society sanctioned an ethos of consumerism. It loosened the efficacy of internalised norms, it emphasised rights, not duties. The Welfare State harmonised with consumerism. The old acquisitiveness was individual, the new acquisitiveness was that of a group.²⁰

A New Ideological and Moral Climate in Australia

During the seven years from about 1967 to about 1974 Australia experienced the full force of cultural and social change. The permissive society featured a new ideology and a new morality.

The new morality rested on basic social changes. No longer was any single social class able to impose its values on society. The middle classes had always been relatively weak in Australia but 'middle class morality' rested on a variety of supports: Christian belief, the dominance of the English cultural heritage, the weakness of credible alternatives. The extending influence of the welfare state in the 1950s had made the implanting of values harder in state schools, for in a democracy the state had to maintain a neutral stance. Changes in the strength and structure of the family also brought ideological and moral change. Associated with this were new sex roles in employment, particularly the greater participation of women in the workforce. Reduced religious commitment

facilitated the advance of the new morality. Inflation was another factor undermining traditional values, for it contradicted some of the basic assumptions of bourgeois morality and the Protestant Ethic. The new morality rested on a distinctive lower class youth culture, often expressed in popular songs, a permissive ideology, often voiced by university adolescents, and an affluent life-style among the growing new salaried middle class. After a while, the media, particularly television, became an important avenue for new values.

A new social ideology was developing. Egalitarianism, always strong in Australia, became more intense. New terms of abuse came into circulation in intellectual circles 'elitist' and 'middle class' especially. New vogue words came into favour, embodying vaguer concepts words like 'relevant', 'open', and 'freedom'. 'Multicultural' became popular in 1971, 'pluralist' a little later. ²¹ The federal Labor government of December 1972 stated its belief that education would be a major instrument for the achievement of equality. Moreover, equality in education was sometimes seen as an equality of outcomes, not merely equality of opportunity. A new version of democracy had developed. One consequence of egalitarian democracy in an increasingly pluralist society was relativism the view that all interest groups were equal, all ideologies were equal. Truth was relative to the individual or group; it was not absolute, determined by revealed religion or by three thousand years of civilisation. This new ideology undermined what was left of humanist values.²²

The 1960s produced a crisis of faith. The decline in religious belief can be measured statistically. The proportion of the population failing to indicate a religious adherence at the census grew slightly, from 11 per cent in 1961 and 1966 to 13 per cent in 1971. In 1961 perhaps 27 per cent of Australians attended church once a week; in 1970 21 per cent; in 1974 20 per cent. Between 1967 and 1974 the proportion of marriages celebrated by a minister of religion fell from 89 per cent to 82 per cent.²³

The emergence of the new morality paralleled developments in England and America. The oral contraceptive pill, tested in Los Angeles in 1960, was on sale in Sydney the next year. The incidence of venereal disease grew; in 1965 the birthrate reached its lowest point in 22 years. In 1964 Sydney saw its first 'streaker' (a nude waterskier) while in March male strippers enlivened the Sydney University Orientation Week.

The concept of femininity was changing. Mini-skirts came into fashion in November 1965; pantihose two years later; jeans for women in 1968. In 1969 bra manufacturers reported that sales had dropped 600 000 over two years. In June of that year women

were granted equal pay for equal work and in December Women's Liberation groups were formed in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. South Australia legalised abortion in January 1970; by 1972 it was accepted *de facto* across Australia.

Homosexuality was becoming open. In Sydney Australia's first 'gay' sauna opened in February 1966; the first 'gay' disco in June 1968. A Homosexual Law Reform Society was formed in Sydney in 1969. In March 1972 *Number 96* introduced nudity on television and gave the first sympathetic portrayal of homosexuals.

As in England, new freedom of expression swept across literature, theatre and film. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Lolita* were released by the Commonwealth censor in 1965, while in the following year the banned novel, *Fanny Hill*, was ruled not obscene. In Sydney in July 1969 the rock-musical 'Hair', with its nude scene, helped establish an era of greater freedom on stage. Don Chipp, Minister for Customs in the Liberal-Country Party government, confronted the full force of the new morality. Censorship, he told the House of Representatives on 11 June 1970, making the first Government statement on that matter since the 1930s, is 'evil and is to be condemned'. The Chipp Revolution was a major step in the the establishment of the Permissive Society. 24 In August 1970 Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint*, featuring masturbation and just published in America, was published also in Australia, to circumvent a customs ban. The following year a general liberalisation of censorship was introduced. But in September 1971 'Oh Calcutta' was banned in Adelaide.²⁵

Indeed, elements of resistance existed. Religious groups formed The Festival of Light in May 1973 to oppose the new morality. A few fundamentalist Christian groups also voiced concern notably in Queensland, where Mrs Rona Joyner founded the Society to Outlaw Pornography in 1971 and the Committee against Regressive Education in 1972. In October 1973 the Australian Council for Educational Standards was established 'to give expression to the widespread concern felt by many people about the quality and content of education in Australia at all levels'. The 11 sponsors were mainly university academics, the president being Leonie Kramer, Professor of Australian Literature at the University of Sydney.

Three great themes dominated the permissive culture of the late 1960s and early 1970s: sex for pleasure; violence in art and lifestyle; and tolerance of drugs.²⁶

In 1970 wife-swapping clubs were alleged to be active in Sydney. In October 1971 Australia's first sex shop opened in Sydney. The first rape crisis centre was set up in Sydney in March 1974. The introduction of civil marriage celebrants in December acceler-

ated the move away from church marriages. In the following year the Family Law Act facilitated divorce. In 1975 it was estimated that Melbourne contained 120 'massage' parlours.

Statistical records provide a rough measure of the growth of crime and violence. Between 1967 and 1974 75 reported cases of crime in Australia rose generally: homicide from 300 to 701; serious assault from 2158 to 2897; robbery from 960 to 3467; rape from 311 to 825; breaking and entering from 19 072 to 127 178; motor vehicle theft from 26 791 to 51 540; and fraud, forgery, and false pretences from 15 823 to 35 294. The unskilled and the under-educated were over-represented in criminal court statistics. The proportion of adolescents and unemployed amongst criminals was growing. 27

The drug culture developed in the mid-1960s when many youngsters became convinced by pop music and otherwise that marijuana and LSD were important ingredients in anti-war, anti-parent and anti-Establishment movements. In 1969 a Commonwealth Bureau of Narcotics was set up within the Department of Customs. Don Chipp, the Minister for Customs, responded variously on the drug issue. In December 1970 he pronounced himself terrified about the drug LSD and asserted that marijuana was dangerous psychologically. But as the 1972 elections approached he stated that it was not harmful.²⁸ The presence from 1970 of American troops in Sydney on leave from Vietnam accelerated the growth of a drug culture in Australia. When the last of these servicemen departed in January 1974 they left a legacy of drug-taking and prostitution amongst middle and lower class youths. By 1975 a Drug User's Parent Union had been formed in Victoria. The number of drug charges rose from 6705 in 1973 to 15 847 in 1975.²⁹

Some radical sociologists were evasive about crime and drugs, seeing crime as simply 'deviance' and not necessarily to be condemned. This was analagous with educational sociologists who saw misbehaviour in the classroom as a worthy expression of resistance by working class lads. Other sociologists hastened to point out the association of crime and drugs with unemployment. In both cases 'the social system' was the prime culprit, either by labelling dissenters and deviants as criminals or by providing social circumstances which generated crime.³⁰

The Changing Political Culture

The nature of politics was changing, and some of these changes had implications for education. The decline of the independent middle class slowly weakened the social basis of the Liberal Party, just as the decline of the industrial working class slowly affected

the Labor Party. The influence of the expanding white-collar class, the salaried middle class, was penetrating both major parties. The Labor Party was the main vehicle for social and cultural reform; parties are often more radical while in opposition. But the Liberal Party also made its contributions to furthering social, cultural and ideological change.

When in January 1966 Menzies, prime minister since 1949, announced his retirement, he signalled the end of an era. After his resignation Canberra accommodated three Liberal Party prime ministers in seven years Harold Holt (who drowned in December 1967), John Gorton (who ignored his cabinet and was forced to resign in March 1971) and Billy McMahon (whose effectiveness was handicapped by divisions within his party and the stubbornness of his Country Party coalition partner). This political instability probably promoted the volatile social and ideological climate of these seven years. 31

After Gough Whitlam replaced Arthur Calwell as leader of the Labor Party in 1967 the new, better-educated white-collar class gained control of the party. The October 1969 federal elections brought to Canberra a large group of young, educated, middle class Labor politicians. Labor was also gaining refugees from the extreme left. In March 1964 the Australian Communist Party split when pro-Chinese members formed the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist), with a strong base in Victoria. In 1966 the Australian Communist Party had about 5000 members, half in the Newcastle-Sydney-Wollongong area. At its 21st national conference it struggled to establish an identity independent of both Peking and Moscow. At its next conference in 1970 the party accepted many of the principles of political democracy freedom of speech, freedom of religion, minority rights, a multi-party state. In 1971 some 400 members seceded (including half the communist trade union officials) to form a pro-Moscow Socialist Party of Australia.³² Other leftists materialised in small Trotskyist or anarchist sects, which had some strength amongst romantic students.

On the other hand, the Country Party, which was beginning to change its name to the National Party, resisted the new values more adamantly. The Democratic Labor Party, which had strong Catholic support, particularly in Victoria, was also a citadel of old-fashioned values. This small party had reduced the Labor vote in elections and, because of its power in the Senate, had ensured financial aid for church schools. Its collapse in the 1974 federal elections was further evidence of a changing political culture.

Middle class democracy was being transmuted into mass democracy. Television played an important part in this process. Party rallies at which the individual could feel he was making an

impact were becoming less important. Mass demonstrations and confrontations made better television spectacle. The political leader with a strong television personality had considerable advantage. A 'presence', charisma, became the hallmark of successful leaders.

The new cultural climate shaped the issues facing the major political parties. The new climate produced the abandonment of the White Australia Policy in 1966. The last imposition of capital punishment occurred in 1967, when Ronald Ryan was hanged in Melbourne. In 1967, also, by a record 90.8 per cent vote a referendum approved the proposal that Aborigines be counted in censuses and gave new responsibility for Aboriginal affairs to the Commonwealth government. This marked the *de facto* end of constitutional discrimination against Aborigines and gave them the status of citizens.

One of Menzies' last major decisions, in May 1965, had been to send a battalion of troops to Vietnam, thus committing Australia to America's side in this struggle. Vietnam became a rallying point for the new radicals. Anti-Americanism flowed from opposition to the Vietnam war. The encounter between student demonstrators and police on 4 July 1968, Independence Day, was the first of several violent demonstrations. Yet the anti-war march in Melbourne, the first 'moratorium' of 8 May 1970, was an amiable procession of up to 100 000 people, watched by over 1000 police. The radical new middle class was on view. 33 But attendance at the second moratorium in 1971 fell by half. After a third, the moratorium movement petered out. From 1971 the doctrines of neo-Marxism attracted support in left-wing circles. These doctrines accorded a greater importance to the educated, white-collar classes and to the schools as centres for social change.

Abortion became an issue of public debate in the period prior to the 1972 federal elections. In its leader of 29 November the *Sydney Morning Herald* associated the Labor Party with the permissive society. 'Labor has become identified with soft attitudes on moral issues'.

Whitlam's federal victory in December 1972 confirmed the arrival of a new era in Australian society. It also marked a new phase in the 1967-74 cultural revolution. The radical attack on the past now had to be complemented by the creation of new structures. The permissive wave had washed away much of the old Australia. Now the pluralist phase arrived. The permissive victory encouraged new special interest groups to organise homosexuals, feminists, environmentalists, ethnic groups, Aborigines. The consensus of bourgeois humanism disintegrated in the mosaic a multicultural society. The establishment by McMahon in June 1971 of the Department of the Environment, Aborigines and the

Arts may be considered the conception of a new progeny; its birth quickly followed the Whitlam accession. 34 A culmination was the passage through federal parliament in 1975 of the Racial Discrimination Act, which outlawed discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, descent or national origin. In 1975 the Labor Party established ethnic branches, which soon exercised a potent influence. The Greek branches in Victoria were particularly important.

Don Dunstan, Labor premier of South Australia during 1967-68 and from May 1970 until 1979, provided a new flamboyant style appropriate to a party of radical social reform. South Australia was a leading state in progressive education. Western Australia, and especially Queensland, remained in an earlier phase of social-economic development. These two states retained some features of the old, rural, pioneering Australia. In these states progressive education made slower progress and tertiary education was less important. But most politicians cultivated youthful voters. South Australia, New South Wales and Western Australia reduced the voting age from 21 to 18 in 1970. The Commonwealth and the remaining states followed suit in 1973.

The advent in 1974 of a world recession dampened political optimism. In the election of that year Labor managed to retain power, but only narrowly. In November 1975 came the dismissal of the Labor government by Sir John Kerr, the governor-general. In the subsequent election campaign the Whitlam policy speech of about 4000 words contained only some 100 words on education. The Coalition education policy indicated that they were unlikely to modify the basic framework established by the Whitlam government. Morgan Gallup polls revealed that the public ranked education 12th out of 15 major issues. The Liberal Party-National Country Party coalition was swept into power.³⁵

The New Special Interest Groups

About 1971 social radicalism changed. While attacks on the old order continued, new rival social forces were beginning to exert an influence. The white-collar or salaried middle class was the largest single class and the source of a new sort of ideology. The proportional strength of the industrial working class was shrinking. The family continued to change. The trend towards early marriage continued. Divorce was growing, disrupting the home background of many children. The divorce rate in 1972 was 12.03 per 1 000 persons, the highest on record. The proportion of working mothers had grown. In 1969 403 000 working women had responsibility for children under 12 years of age in four working women.³⁶ A new social phenomenon, single-parent families, was becoming

part of the social scene; the distinction between the parent who was divorced and who had never married at all was blurred. Many families were unable to adequately support the educational efforts of the school. The television set was replacing the family as a child-minding device. It was also replacing church and home as a source of values.

New special interest groups not based directly on socio-economic class were developing ethnic groups (race), feminists (sex), neo-marxists (politics), homosexuals, Aborigines, compassionate groups (concerned with the handicapped, or with the environment). Some of these feminists and neo-Marxists had a firm ideological foundation. Others homosexuals, ethnic groups, Aborigines owed their coherence mainly to physical and cultural characteristics. Long-persistent links between religion, class, race and education now dissolved. Yet some migrant groups reinforced elements of this old pattern. e.g. Greeks were identified with Orthodox Christianity and had high aspirations for the education of their children.

Ethnic groups were producing a more cosmopolitan culture. After the abandonment of the 'White Australia Policy', non-Europeans who were 'well qualified and useful' were allowed to settle. By 1972 about 10 000 non-Europeans were settling in Australia each year. Many of the Asian migrants belonged to the professional class. The principle of cognate immigration also allowed relatives of residents to immigrate. The 1971 census revealed that 20 per cent of Australians had been born overseas, an increase on earlier censuses. A further 19 per cent were born in Australia of parents one or both of whom were born overseas. About half this 40 per cent derived from non-English speaking countries. 37

In 1970 the Liberal Party Minister for Immigration stated: 'The use of the term "integration" instead of "assimilation" is not mere semantics it is the outward sign of a fundamental change in the attitude of the Australian government and people'. In 1973 A. J. Grassby, Minister for Immigration in the new Labor Government, produced a statement, *A Multi-cultural Society for the Future*, which advanced the view that cultural pluralism entailed social pluralism. After Labor fell in 1975 the new Liberal Government signalled its acceptance of multiculturalism by appointing Grassby Commissioner for Community Relations.³⁸ Yet not all ethnics supported multiculturalism; some were quite anxious to become absorbed into the mainstream Australian culture. This was particularly true of children of migrants and of many migrants from lands with a culture cognate to the Anglo-Celtic, such as Holland or Germany.

The Federal Labor Government's Australian Assistance Plan of 1973 aimed to develop a network of ethnic groups for welfare purposes. Regional councils set up under the scheme established ethnic committees of various kinds. Ethnic Community Councils were formed in South Australia and Victoria in 1974 and New South Wales in 1975. The ethnic groups were developing political muscle. A system of government-financed community welfare workers emerged; they numbered 49 across Australia by the end of 1974. Professionals were replacing volunteers.

Aboriginal pressure groups also emerged. The 1967 referendum gave the federal government power to legislate for Aborigines in the various states. All states except Queensland had abandoned or soon abandoned laws and policies discriminatory against Aborigines. A Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs was established in 1968, becoming the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in 1972. In 1971 the NSW Aboriginal Legal Service was formed. The forerunner of community-controlled organisations, the service in many ways nourished the ideological framework of the activists amongst Aborigines. In 1972 a special Aboriginal flag was designed. In 1973 a National Aboriginal Consultative Committee was set up as an advisory body to the federal government. Aborigines elected the members. As amongst the ethnic groups, a new bureaucracy of activists with career prospects was growing. A significantly high number of the leaders in the Aboriginal movement were part-Aborigines, sometimes, indeed, revealing little external evidence of a native ancestry. In some ways this separated them from the Aboriginal community, which, in any case, was divided into a number of groups widely differing in their way of life, their place of abode, their outlooks and their problems. 39

Another important group were the new *feminists*. Originating as Women's Liberation in December 1969, this term gradually faded from view after 1972, when the Women's Electoral Lobby was formed. Soon after, the term 'feminism' became popular. The birth of a federal feminist bureaucracy occurred when Whitlam appointed Elizabeth Reid his personal adviser on women's affairs in April 1973. In July 1974 the Women's Affairs Section was established within the Department of the Prime Minister. Thus the women's movement became involved in government. The celebration of International Women's Year in 1975 produced more funds for feminist causes.40

In the long run, the feminists and the environmentalists provided the most enduring activist movements of these tumultuous years, despite the strong influence exerted by radicals and neo-marxists in education. The *environmental* movement can be dated as an organised pressure group to 1965, when the Australian

Conservation Foundation was established in Melbourne. Branches were later set up in Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth. In 1973 the federal Labor Government set up a Department of the Environment. The trade union leadership was beginning to extend its interests from economic and political matters to the environment. In October 1971 Jack Munday, communist secretary of the Builders' Labourers Federation, coined the term 'green ban' for the withholding of labour from a project considered environmentally damaging. A series of bans in 1973/74 caused an outcry but made the environmental movement respectable. Munday was appointed to the Australian Conservation Foundation. Like other special interest groups, various environmental bodies received Commonwealth and state funding. In education their importance focussed mainly on the curriculum. 41

A pluralist society, characterised by the separate identity of a variety of new social groups, was emerging. More generally, the pluralist society was referred to as a multicultural society. Tom Roper, a student leader from New South Wales, identified ten handicapped groups in *The Myth of Equality*, published by the National Union of Australian University Students in 1970. He attacked the dominance of middle class teachers, middle class values, and the middle-class curriculum in Australian schools. 'Our schools are places designed by middle class English-Australians for middle class English-Australians and controlled by middle class English-Australians'.⁴² The concept of a dominant Anglo-Celtic culture, into which migrants would be assimilated, was challenged by the ideology of pluralism, which envisaged a great variety of cultures in both state and non-state schools.

A General View of the New Education in Australia

In Australia as overseas, the initial, most dramatic expression of the arrival of the new education was turmoil in the universities. But the universities were not the only centres of disruption. In many Australian states the upheaval in secondary schools was far greater than in the universities. In both universities and schools the curriculum and teaching methods were central issues.

A new attitude to children was developing. The romantic, sentimental view that children needed the protection of adults against the harshness of the world, the view that childhood was a special phase of development, weakened. The old approach had been symbolised in the name 'kindergarten' a garden of children. Now 'pre-school' was coming into favour. Once again, as in the centuries before Rousseau and Froebel, many parents believed children should be treated as miniature adults. They were sometimes

regarded as the equals of adults, capable of exercising adult judgements and entitled to adult rights. In the schools this egalitarianism would make pupils the equals of their teachers. It permitted the presentation of adult problems to young children, in the classroom, in literature and through television. It sometimes required the pretence that they were equal partners in the discovery of knowledge or that the opinions of students (the term 'pupil', hinting at a subordinate role, fell into disfavour) were as 'valid' as those of teachers.

The concept of open education harmonised with the view that truth was relative to the individual, to the group, to society. Open education sometimes meant that class discussions should be 'open ended' there should be no 'closure', no firm conclusions. Equally, relativism undermined belief in educational standards. Some educationists, for instance, doubted whether the concept of right and wrong speech was valid. Good grammar, correct spelling were simply a matter of conventions. Similarly, in moral education aversion had grown to identifying specific behaviours or beliefs as good or bad. The new democratic ideology promoted the view that all subjects were of equal value.

Another reflection of crisis was the reduced provision of denominational instruction in state schools. In NSW state schools the number of lessons by religious instructors of all Churches reached a peak of 590 509 in 1968, and thereafter fluctuated. But the number of lessons by Presbyterian or Methodist instructors had reached their peak in 1964. The number of lessons by Church of England representatives fell for the first time in 1968. Roman Catholic lessons increased steadily. From 1963 Catholics became the second largest denomination in NSW state schools. 43 One Anglican clergyman told the Newcastle diocesan synod in June 1969 that visits to high schools did more harm than good. Discipline was impossible. 'The image of religious instruction in the eyes of students is at best a free period and at worst utter chaos'.⁴⁴

Numbers were a source of change. In the 1960s state high schools became larger. In 1966 Queensland state secondary schools had the distinction of being the largest in Australia. Twenty-four of the 94 secondary schools had more than 1000 pupils. New South Wales came second, 22 out of 267 schools exceeding this enrolment. The growing size of schools accentuated the sense of impersonality and fostered discontent amongst both adolescents and teachers. Militant university students assisted the emergence of a high school student movement. During 1968-69 student underground newspapers appeared in secondary schools. The Vietnam Moratorium demonstrations of May 1970 involved school pupils as well as university students.

The shortage of graduate teachers, a consequence of the rapid expansion of secondary education and of the many alternative jobs now available to university graduates, meant that a high proportion of teachers in state secondary schools lacked degrees. Many were young and inexperienced; the resignation rate was high. Teacher militancy produced strikes in Victoria and New South Wales and threats of strikes elsewhere. In July 1965 the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association organised a half-day-strike against an unsatisfactory wage award. Other strikes followed. In New South Wales the first major strike occurred in October 1968.

Another significant problem, particularly in state and Catholic schools in urban areas, was the large proportion of non-English speaking migrant children. This problem was much greater in



Figure 5.1:

Teaching less attractive as a profession

By 1968, when this cartoon appeared in a Newcastle suburban paper, members of the general public had become aware that many teachers were finding their vocation difficult and even unattractive.

New South Wales and Victoria than in other states. In 1967 non-British migrants made up 74 per cent of migrants settling in Victoria, 69 per cent in New South Wales, and 57 per cent in Queensland, but only about 35 per cent in the three other states. Ethnic multiculturalism in education developed. The Commonwealth's Child Migrant Education Program of 1970 had had a limited and simple objective: to assist individual migrant children to learn English, by providing special teachers and sometimes special classes. The scheme accelerated rapidly. The Karmel report of May 1973 and the Schools Commission, founded in January 1974, widened the arena of migrant and multicultural education.⁴⁶ State education departments, particularly the Victorian, began various programs, with the emphasis on providing teachers to take withdrawal classes for English as a Second Language.

In addition to growing enrolments, changes in the examination system cleared the way for changes in curriculum and teaching methods. Many states abolished the external examination at about age 15 (Year 10) in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Queensland and the ACT even abolished the external exam at the end of the secondary school. This removed a strong regulatory influence on the curriculum and teaching methods. State departments of education made other concessions which gave greater freedom to schools, principals and teachers. Official syllabuses were no longer issued in state primary and junior secondary schools after about 1968 and long-established systems of inspection were abandoned. From about 1971 teachers were no longer required to maintain teaching programs and lesson registers.

The new ideology was given tangible form in secondary schools in April 1972 with the Australian edition of *The Little Red School Book*. This had originated in Denmark in 1969, and was reproduced, with minor local adaptations, in many English speaking countries. Don Chipp, Minister for Customs, released the book after considerable hesitation. 'I sweated five lonely weeks before I made my decision to release it'. He argued that the book was in three parts. The section on drugs was anti-drugs. The section on sex was commonplace. The third section, on radical politics, could not be subjected to political censorship. *The Little Red School Book* epitomised the rejection of traditional authority in education. It told pupils that 'the aim of the education system in Australia is not to give you the best possible opportunity of developing your own talents' but to 'churn out' a small number of highly educated experts and 'a large number of less well educated people to do the donkey-work'. It commented on classroom motivation. With the decay of exams some teachers attempt to foster interest. 'When it's impossible to get students interested in the subject-matter itself the

teacher tries to make its outward appearance entertaining. If the subject isn't worth learning, then this is a waste of everybody's time'. But . . . 'never muck about unless you're absolutely certain that the teacher is an incurable bore and you've tried every way of persuading him to change'. The two longest sections in the book were on sex and drugs. 'People go to bed with one another for many reasons'. 'Drugs are poisons which can have a pleasant effect'. 47

Radical ideologues brought new ideas to Australia. The Australian Union of Students invited Ivan Illich to address a 'Quality in Education' conference in Melbourne in May 1972. Illich, an American and former Catholic priest, had argued in his *Deschooling Society* (1971) that schools should be replaced by 'learning exchanges'. He told the Melbourne conference, which was attended by 2000 teachers, students and others, that 'Schools do more harm than good in society because they restrict the spread of knowledge and create social classes based on levels of education'.⁴⁸ The Australian Council of Churches in 1974 brought Paulo Freire, a Catholic convert to Marxism, to a conference on 'Education for Liberation and Community'. Freire was known for his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, published in America in 1970 and in Britain in 1972. As a result of his experience teaching literacy to adults in South America and Africa, Freire argued that education was political and should be revolutionary. To arouse motivation the teacher must give words a political context.⁴⁹

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) helped spread the ideas of progressive education in Australia by funding conferences, particularly the 1967 seminar in Melbourne on 'The Teaching of the Social Sciences at the Secondary Level' and the 1972 seminar in Sydney on 'The Teaching of English'. The UNESCO publication *Learning to Be* (1972) expressed the progressive ideology popular amongst some sections of this international organisation. This book asserted that the four goals of education were scientific humanism, creativity, social commitment, and shaping the complete man.

The new morality had particular significance for humanist subjects, such as English and history, in which values were an important component. At the April 1972 conference of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English, Professor James McAuley of the University of Tasmania commented that one of the few times that English teachers got into the news was when someone complained about the dubious moral character of some of the books set for study.

Is *Tom Jones* a suitable text to be put in the hands of an adolescent? By what strange shift of public standards does *The Catcher in the Rye* move in a few years from being a banned import to being a text set for high school

students? Are we recklessly playing with fire when we prescribe *Sons and Lovers* a novel about the pre-marital sexuality of young people? 50

Sociological influences found expression in new approaches to literature in secondary schools. In the early 1970s an English visitor, David Holbrook, warned Victorian teachers against the growing use of anthologies which, alongside good writers, provided trendy *avant-garde* material which pursued goals based on sociological assumptions. Some of these sociological assumptions derived their justification from the Anglo-American seminar at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, USA, in August-September 1966. A report of this conference by a lecturer at an English college of education, John Dixon, was published as *Growth through English* in 1967. It greatly encouraged the 'New English' in Britain and had an influence in Australia. According to Dixon, emphasis in teaching English on acquisition of skills and on the transmission of a cultural heritage distorted child development. The personal growth of the child needed more attention and the culture of the child's family and neighbourhood should find its way into the schools.⁵¹

In the early 1970s the head of the English Department at Scotch College, Adelaide, remarked on the way the Leaving Certificate English syllabus in South Australia served as a vehicle for sociological concepts. 'Whether or not students have access to other sources of knowledge about society, study of the Leaving English Syllabus provides such knowledge and is partly designed to do so'. He saw a danger in treating literature not as literature but simply as social comment. Possibly about one half of the students sitting for the examination were below the standard of written expression and level of conceptual maturity believed appropriate by the examiners. Many students lacked appropriate oral and written language because of home backgrounds and earlier schooling. This encouraged negative attitudes to formal literary education. An alienated sub-culture was created in the lower grades, especially where streaming occurred. Some solutions to what was partly a social problem were individual teaching, breaking up literature into themes to reduce the dichotomy of good literature and popular culture, and introducing literature of social concern. Literature might be taken over by sociologists as an avenue for learning about social relationships.⁵²

The new morality also found expression in sex education. Reformers argued that 'students want information about sexuality' or 'love education' to be part of the curriculum, as well as politics and drugs.⁵³ The physiology of sex was usually a component in biology courses, but more direct and widespread instruction was needed. Yet this raised questions not merely of physical knowledge

but of values and moral attitudes. It was a delicate matter if only because some religious groups (including Catholics) and some ethnic groups held particular views on marriage, the family, and the role of women. On the other hand, feminist and homosexual groups, as well as supporters of progressive education, held alternative views on sex education.

Where the school-based curriculum was entrenched, the nature of any sex education rested largely in the hands of the teacher. In Victoria a couple of startling incidents caught public attention. The most dramatic was the dismissal of Helen Garner in December 1972 over her impromptu sex education lesson to junior pupils of both sexes, mostly children of Italian, Greek and Yugoslav migrants, at Fitzroy High School. She faithfully answered explicit questions from students on sexual matters ranging from fellatio to menstruation, using frank language tolerated in the playground but prohibited in the classroom. 54 In October 1973 a group of Melbourne homosexuals, members of the Gay Liberation movement, visited high schools, giving talks to classes of pupils aged 14 to 18. They had been invited as part of social studies courses. The Director-General of Education commented that sex education and homosexuality were 'delicate matters', falling under the jurisdiction of individual headmasters.55

In New South Wales the Department, which retained slightly more control over the curriculum, set up a committee in 1971 to review policy regarding sex education in government secondary schools. After an Interim Report and a year of public discussion, *Personal Development in Secondary Schools the Place of Sex Education. A Statement of Principles* April 1974 was issued. This stated that 'Young people are acquiring sexual knowledge and attitudes through a network of informal influences', that parents cannot turn their backs on the issue, and that because students need guidance the school must be involved. It suggested eight aims and 11 objectives for personal development programmes, emphasised that schools should encourage its students 'to examine, clarify and formulate their values', and provided a 'recommended programme'. The respectably named 'Personal Development' course provided information on abortion, contraception and family planning.56

In 1972 a pilot sex education program was introduced into five Western Australian primary schools. Secondary schools also introduced courses on human sexuality when students, parents, or citizens organisations requested this, sometimes using the Australian Science Education Project unit 'Males and Females'.57

Queensland stood firm. In 1969 the Director-General of Health commented on the significant rise in venereal disease, particularly

in the 15 to 19 year age group. At the same time, rising divorce and illegitimacy rates reinforced the need for sex education. But in 1970 the Director of Primary Education stated that sex education was a parental responsibility. In May 1971 the annual conference of the Queensland Teachers Union urged the Department to introduce sex education courses into both primary and secondary schools, conducted by specially trained persons. The Minister for Education responded that while separate sex education courses had never existed in Queensland state schools, some sex education was provided through other courses. Between May and December the minister received hundreds of letters opposing the introduction of sex education, a significant proportion coming from supporters of the Society to Outlaw Pornography (STOP) and the Campaign Against Regressive Education (CARE). In January 1971 he announced his decision not to introduce a sex education course. In 1973 the Queensland Council of State School Organisations urged the Department to introduce a personal relations and sex education course at primary and secondary levels. In the same year the Womens Electoral Lobby made the first of a series of submissions to the Department favouring a human relationships course in schools. From 1975 onwards the Department undertook an investigation of alternative concepts of sex education. 58

As well as new educational philosophies and new curricula, new methods came from abroad. The open classroom originated in England. The first open classrooms in Australia appeared in 1969 in South Australia. The decision to design open area schools was largely taken by architects, though the financial savings in this type of building appealed to the administrators. But the new physical structure forced changes in teaching methods. The concept of open education embodied a variety of ideas. It could encompass at least five meanings. Education could be open: (1) physically, in the design of buildings, which often implied the use of team teaching; (2) in the involvement of the community in schools, thus breaking down the barriers between the school and society; (3) in the choice and organisation of learning experiences, suggesting a sceptical attitude to traditional values and knowledge; (4) in relations between children and teachers, expressing a new egalitarianism and lack of concern for privacy, a 'middle class' value; (5) in attitudes and values, in that the teacher did not impose any views; there was no 'closure'. This was a relativist, pupil-centred style.59

Social and educational change fostered a variety of struggling theories and curricula. In some places remnants of the old liberal-humanist curriculum and teaching methods retained some support within the educational administration. Bruner's doctrine of the 'structure of disciplines' gave some comfort to this philosophy.

Opposed to this were the neo-progressives and the neo-Marxists or radicals. A distinctive feature of neo-progressive education was the concept of open education. The neo-Marxists or radicals advocated a political radicalisation of the curriculum through the infusion of new, socially-aware, content into established subjects. But they were more inclined to support traditional methods of teacher control.

Many of these changes were imported from England and America. Some were introduced from above, by the educational leadership in departments of education, the Commonwealth Schools Commission, and teacher-training institutions. But some originated in the teachers' unions, which threw up new radical leaders, notably in Victoria. The youth and changing ideology of the teachers was an additional factor, alongside the changing character of school texts and the changing outlooks of adolescents, promoting the new morality.

Having considered some general characteristics of the new education in Australia, we now turn to a state-by-state analysis of the educational revolution. This will be followed by a discussion of the impact of the new education on the largest independent system, the Catholic schools.

The State Systems and the New Education

The new education gained most ground in the state schools of Victoria, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. In the 1950s Victoria and South Australia, unlike New South Wales, Tasmania and Western Australia, had resisted educational reforms such as comprehensive high schools. Thus when change did come it was more dramatic. In most states change was set in motion in the early 1960s by the raising of the minimum leaving age from 14 to 15 and the abolition of the external exam, the Intermediate Certificate, held at about age 14. The abolition of long-established systems of inspection also gave a new freedom in both primary and secondary schools. The future of the curriculum became a vital issue.

In *Victoria* a Curriculum Advisory Board was established in 1966 to encourage curricular changes made possible after the Intermediate Certificate exam was abandoned at the end of that year. The Victorian Secondary Teachers Association (VSTA) and its journal, *The Secondary Teacher*, were energetic advocates of innovation in the curriculum and teaching methods. VSTA members were active on committees and boards. Following the Curriculum Advisory Board's recommendations and a seminar at Burwood Teachers' College the Director of Secondary Education

in December 1969 gave the schools control of the curriculum from Forms I to IV. Many state high schools experimented with teaching through themes, which usually involved the merger of a number of separate subjects into a new integrated course, often called General Studies or sometimes Humanities. The Curriculum Advisory Board and the VSTA opposed competitive assessment of pupils. Supervision of teachers and courses by inspectors ceased in 1972. After 1974, however, many schools reverted to more traditional subjects. 60

In *South Australia* the minimum leaving age was raised to 15 in 1963 and the external Intermediate Examination was abolished in 1968. The Director of Education issued a 'Freedom and Authority Memorandum' in 1970 giving the schools control over the curriculum. But the distinctive development from 1969 onwards was open education, both in primary and secondary schools. This meant open plan schools and team teachingsometimes as many as six teachers taking a group, though two-teacher teams were more common.

Until the end of 1973 education in the *Australian Capital Territory* was provided by the NSW Department of Education in buildings provided by the local administration. Local responsibility for buildings made it easier for the ACT to adopt the South Australian scheme of open plan schools in 1971. When a separate education system was established in 1974 further radical changes were introduced. The strongly middle-class community in the ACT, coupled with the strength and radicalism of the ACT Teachers Federation, and generous Commonwealth funding, ensured a friendly reception to progressive and radical education. All external exams were abolished; separate senior secondary schools for Years 11 and 12 were set up; a community school, 'The School without Walls', was established; and school councils were instituted.

The other four states were slightly more cautious. *Tasmania* was a small rural state with fewer educational problems. Contact between teachers and administrators was closer and more cordial. Because few non-English speaking migrants went to Tasmania, the schools escaped many of the difficulties afflicting urban schools in Victoria. Three matriculation colleges, offering one or two year courses preparatory for university, opened in 196568. Tasmania adopted Bruner's 'structure of disciplines' approach to the curriculum. It took the lead in developing a new social science course. In 1971 some open area schools were built. In *Western Australia* the minimum school leaving age was raised to 15 during 196364. Open plan primary schools were established from 1970 and by February 1972 there were 33. As in other states, the abolition of the traditional system of inspection (1970) gave more freedom to the teachers. In December 1971 a report on discipline problems

in secondary schools denied that large schools caused such problems but found that 36 per cent of state secondary teachers were below the age of 26, that 25 per cent of them had been primary trained, and that only 35 per cent possessed degrees and diplomas. 61



Figure 5.2:

One hundred years of education: The official view

In 1972 Victoria celebrated the centenary of the Education Act which established 'free, compulsory and secular education' a centralised system of state schools under a minister for education. The Department's *Education Gazette and Teachers' Aid* depicts state education occupying a place within the Temple of Minerva, Roman Goddess of Wisdom.

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The external Junior Certificate exam was abolished in 1972, opening the way for radical changes in the curriculum and teaching methods of the junior secondary school.

The changes in *Queensland* were more traumatic than elsewhere because education in that state had retained many late nineteenth century features. Transition from primary to secondary



Figure 5.3:

One hundred years of education: The radical view

During 1972 *The Secondary Teacher*, journal of the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association, published a series of cartoons ridiculing the achievements of the state system of education since the 1872 Education Act. This front cover, February 1972, questions the educational rationale of Victorian state schools.

school was at age 14, the minimum leaving age. For this reason, and because of the existence of a number state-aided autonomous grammar schools and a well-developed Catholic system, state high schools were not strongly academic. In 1963 the Scholarship Exam, which dominated the curriculum and teaching methods in the primary school, was abolished. The 1964 Education Act raised the minimum leaving age to 15 years, and transferred the top class of the primary school to the secondary. The Radford Report of 1970 led to the abolition of the two external secondary school examinations, but the system of moderation set up to regulate academic results proved as onerous as any external examination. Because it retained many of the features of a new, pioneering society, Queensland was less receptive to progressive education.

New South Wales was also slow to change. The Wyndham System, a reorganisation of secondary education named after the Director-General of Education, had been introduced in annual stages between 1962 and 1967. Accordingly, New South Wales was not anxious to undertake further reform. An important feature of the Wyndham scheme had been the re-introduction of an external exam mid-way through secondary school. The School Certificate, first held in 1965, together with the external Higher School Certificate introduced in 1967, gave some stability to the secondary school curriculum and teaching methods. In the 1960s New South Wales had adopted Bruner's 'structure of disciplines' doctrine as a key concept in the curriculum. It was impossible to resist the new educational currents completely, and some open classrooms were introduced. But they never developed much popularity. The 1972 secondary school syllabus in English marked the beginning of strong neo-progressive currents in the curriculum. State primary schools gained the freedom to respond to progressive education when the long-established system of inspection was abolished in 1972 and official syllabuses ceased to operate.

The *Commonwealth Government* now began to exert a strong influence on primary and secondary education. When the Labor Party under Gough Whitlam won the federal elections of December 1972 it gave pride of place to its education policy. Until this time the Commonwealth's educational influence had operated primarily on the universities. The new government appointed an Interim Committee for the Schools Commission, with Professor Peter Karmel as chairman. The Karmel Report of May 1973 gave special aid to minority groups. The Schools Commission continued these policies in its First Report of June 1975. After 1973 state aid was no longer a major political issue, being administered through the Schools Commission. The new schemes especially the Innovations Program and the Disadvantaged Schools Program

overvaulted state and Catholic authorities and encouraged neo-progressive experiments in state and non-state schools across Australia.

The New Education and the Catholic Schools

The Catholic complex of schools, under varying forms of control, constituted the equivalent of a major state system. In 1967 enrolments in Catholic schools across Australia totalled 486 758, about 18 per cent of all enrolments. This system now faced a twofold crisis material and ideological. In the long run the material crisis eased; the ideological crisis worsened. In some respects the two crises were intertwined. The material crisis was largely local; the ideological was worldwide. Before looking at the educational scene we must briefly refer to the crisis of faith.

The Vatican II Council (1962-65) had opened many new windows for Catholicism, letting in the breezes of the modern world, some of which were invigorating; but some carried sicknesses. Following the Council a Papal Commission on Birth Control was set up. It recommended the legitimisation of contraception. After considerable delay Pope Paul VI issued an encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, in July 1968, reaffirming the Church's opposition to artificial forms of contraception, including the use of the contraceptive pill. But in the preceding eight years many Catholics had employed this means of family limitation. The papal encyclical was widely disregarded by the laity. This problem reinforced the view, now spreading in Catholic circles, that the task of the Church was to lay down general moral principles, letting individuals decide according to the dictates of their own conscience. This was a Protestant principle. 'Around about 1970', an English Catholic novelist later wrote, 'Catholics ceased to believe in Hell'. Catholics claiming to attend Church weekly fell from 55 per cent in 1962 to 51 per cent in 1970 and 42 per cent in 1976. 62

The attractions of the secular world and a weakening of faith reduced the supply of religious vocations, men and women prepared to devote their life within religious orders to serving Christ in medical work (e.g. hospitals), social work (refuges for the poor or disabled), education (schools), or in the Church. In 1967 the number accepting a vocation to religious life in Australia was 599; it had fallen to 254 by 1975. The number of new sisters fell from 300 to 124; the number of brothers from 143 to 56; clerical brothers from 39 to 12; religious priests from 117 to 62.63 The Church also lost older religious. A 'runaway priest' publicly specified his grievances in 1971 the authoritarianism of the Church (which

supported the war in Vietnam) and its sexual morality (opposition to divorce, homosexuality and abortion). 64

Despite the benefits which followed the introduction of state aid in the early 1960s, the aspiration of the Catholic Church to enrol more and more Catholic children in its schools had run into trouble. Immigration and natural births had made attainment of this objective difficult. The teaching nuns, brothers and priests who had sustained Catholic schools since the 1880s were becoming fewer; the proportion of lay teachers was growing. In New South Wales members of teaching orders fell from 52.3 per cent of teachers in 1970 to 34.1 per cent in 1974. In Melbourne the proportion of teachers in parish primary schools who were members of religious orders was 61 per cent in 1960 but only 45 per cent in 1968. Some of the lay teachers were non-practising Catholics; some were non-Catholics.⁶⁵

Some Catholics argued that the Church should abandon its efforts to maintain distinctive schools, at least at the secondary level. In August 1965 Father Brian Crittenden of the Catholic Education Office, Sydney, advised a Catholic Education conference in Melbourne to accept the state schools, help improve them, and provide religious instruction for Catholic children in these schools. In March 1970 Father Patrick Crudden, Director of Catholic Education in the Melbourne Archdiocese, stated that the future of education in Australia rested with the state school system. He was transferred to a parish.⁶⁶

After 1973 the increased flow of Commonwealth funds alleviated the material crisis in Catholic schools. But the ideological crisis persisted. While some Catholics sought to reform the teaching of religion, others were alarmed at these new ideas. In 1967 Father Crudden, then an inspector of schools, expressed doubts about the type of faith, the solid indoctrination, which had prevailed in Catholic schools for many decades. He welcomed the waves of Vatican II. But what did the Second Vatican Council say about education? *Gravissimum Educationis*, promulgated on 28 October 1965, reiterated concepts of liberal education reminiscent of Cardinal Newman a century earlier. The Catholic school cultivates the intellect, ripens the capacity for right judgment, provides an introduction into the cultural heritage, promotes a sense of values, encourages readiness for professional life. Archbishop Guildford Young of Hobart reaffirmed such views in his contribution in 1972 to Peter Gill's collection of Catholic views, *Catholic Education. Where is it Going?*⁶⁷

Such a philosophy was antagonistic to progressive education. Yet some Catholic schools, particularly primary schools under the nuns, accepted much of the new child-centred, open education. A

few schools, mainly primary ones, tried open education and team teaching. Because open area schools required special architecture this system was often introduced in newly built schools. 68

They hold open discussions in class on spiritual and academic topics. They don't teach down to the children.

They keep up with the latest educational changes color teaching and cuisinaire rods and they hold regular seminars in a very open-ended way. 69

Both colour codes to teach reading and cuisinaire rods to teach mathematics were innovations developed by an American, C. Gattegno.

One attraction of open education was that it promised to reduce discipline problems. As secondary schools grew in size, as the number of migrant children imposed heavier pressures on teachers, and as ideological differences between students and the ageing religious teachers grew, discipline problems developed. Expulsions and suspensions from schools sometimes became numerous. 70

Innovations in teaching methods were encouraged by the availability of funds from the Australian Schools Commission, set up in 1974, which favoured progressive education. Co-education, another important change forced on Catholic schools because of the need to rationalise resources, also carried ideological implications. The Christian Brothers, however, stood out against co-education. 71

The introduction of state aid had encouraged the development of a Catholic educational bureaucracy. So did the decline of the teaching orders and the growth in the number of lay teachers. Catholic education offices were established in the various dioceses in the late 1960s. A Federal Catholic Education Office was established in April 1968. While the Catholic bureaucracy was initially inclined to resist the new education, educational consultants now working with Catholic education offices often accepted the new theories and urged hesitant schools to apply for the Commonwealth Schools Commission's innovation grants. In Victoria, for instance, the Melbourne Catholic Education Office accepted the principle of school-based curricula in September 1974. Child-centred theories, such as those of Jean Piaget and Ronald Goldman about stages of mental or moral development in young children, became fashionable. So did the view that the curriculum should begin with the experiences of the child. On the other hand, some parents, clergy and bishops expressed alarm at what was going on in the schools. 72

Thus the ideological ferment in society affected Catholic education also. To this was added troubling doubts concerning Catholic faith. Perhaps if a Catholic university had existed, the Catholic philosophy of education might have proved more sturdy. Yet the universities, too, were experiencing some troubles.

The New Education in Universities and Colleges of Advanced Education

The universities continued their function of preparing the professional middle class, but they now contributed to the leadership of the white-collar, salaried middle class. Many graduates obtained employment in the state administration and public service.

As in the schools, expansion helped change the character of universities. In 1957 the Murray Committee on Australian universities had suggested, rather generously, 12 000 students as the desirable maximum for an Australian university. By 1966 four universities Sydney, New South Wales, Melbourne and Queensland exceeded this. By 1975 Monash had joined this group. Sydney had 17 667 students in 1975, the University of New South Wales had a hundred fewer. The 'small' universities were Tasmania with 3399 students and Flinders University with 3474.

For the first time since Monash and the University of New South Wales opened in 1958, new universities appeared. The Newcastle University College became a separate university in 1965, the Bedford Park branch of Adelaide University became Flinders University in 1966. Macquarie and La Trobe Universities commenced teaching in 1967. James Cook, Griffith and Murdoch were established in 1970, Wollongong in 1975. In 1970 universities numbered 15, with a full-time staff of 7371 and 116 778 students, 30 per cent of whom were women. By 1975 there were 18 universities, with 148 338 students, 37 per cent of them women. 73

In 1967 (as in 1957 and 1977) the largest group of students was enrolled in the Faculty of Arts, followed by Science. In 1967 35.6 per cent of bachelor degree enrolments were in Arts. Science had 18.1 per cent of enrolments, Economics 12.6 per cent, and Engineering 9.8 per cent. The trend over the period 1957-1977 was for the faculties of Arts and Economics to increase proportionately, while Engineering and Medicine fell. Law and Science fluctuated, the former rising after 1967, the latter falling.⁷⁴ The quality of student life changed. Pornography became a widespread feature of student publications.⁷⁵ Student militancy developed. The Australian Universities Commission commented in May 1972:

There is some evidence that a small but increasing proportion of students and even of staff is ceasing to attach value to academic excellence, the maintenance of academic standards and the use of rational methods of enquiry and investigation . . . some of the proposals relating to university government put by radical groups take a completely unrealistic view of the academic, administrative and financial basis for the operation of universities . . .⁷⁶

The intensity of student activism varied from university to university. The leaders of the protest movements were mainly Arts

students. Often the larger or the newer universities were the most radical Monash being an example in point. By contrast, an academic newcomer to the University of Queensland commented on the students' mode of dress. 'It is surprisingly neat, tidy and uniform compared with the standard of dress at other universities'. Nonetheless a Students for Democratic Action society appeared at Queensland and a civil liberties protest march was held in 1967.⁷⁷ Around Australia student militancy declined during 1971. The very success of the students in bringing change to the universities was one reason. The victory of the Labor Party at the December 1972 federal elections further reduced militancy; the first step Whitlam took as prime minister was to abolish conscription. Student radicals now started to switch their attention to the environment.⁷⁸

Partly under pressure from students, teaching methods and the curriculum were changing. *The Sydney Morning Herald* in June 1968 gave 'conservative professors' a slight nudge. 'With student unrest and protest in the news almost every day', the staffs of all universities were urged to meditate on the invitation to students by Sir Philip Baxter, Vice-Chancellor of the University of New South Wales. Baxter, until then known for his autocratic style, asked students to send him 'constructive views on courses, syllabuses, examinations and other matters'. However, Baxter warned that the Council of his university had been frustrated in its attempts to broaden education by 'academic attitudes'.⁷⁹ Recently established universities were generally more receptive to new educational courses and teaching practices, and were more likely to experiment with their internal structures. Some universities (e.g. Macquarie) introduced schools instead of faculties and departments. Students voiced complaints about written examinations. Engineering and Science lecturers tended to rely heavily on written examinations, but many academics in Arts and Law reduced the importance of formal examinations by giving credit to course work components (essays, papers, projects, practical work). This was described as progressive (or continuous) assessment. Sometimes students set their own exam papers. The failure rate fell. The Murray Committee had estimated that about 58 per cent of students entering universities in 1951 graduated. The Williams Committee estimated that about 72 per cent of full-time students who commenced in 1971 would graduate.⁸⁰

Students were given greater freedom of choice in the curriculum. New courses of study appeared, while the old disciplines or subjects often radically changed their content. Neo-Marxist influence produced disputes within some academic departments, particularly in Philosophy, Economics and English. Sometimes students were offered the alternative of 'critical' (radical) and

traditional (liberal) courses. Feminists usually aligned themselves with neo-Marxists. After a month-long strike by some lecturers and students at Sydney University, the administration in July 1973 appointed two graduate students to teach a women's liberation course, 'Feminist Thought', in the Philosophy Department. In 1973 a course in Women's Studies, funded by the Philosophy Department, started at Flinders University, South Australia. 81

From 1974 the Commonwealth Government took over complete funding of the universities and colleges of advanced education. Student fees were abolished and a scheme of student awards replaced the scholarship scheme.

Colleges of advanced education were first set up in 1967. Originally they were intended to cater for students unlikely to succeed at a university, and to provide semi-professional and vocational courses which universities might hesitate to offer. They were to confer certificates and diplomas, not degrees. Many technical colleges were converted into colleges of advanced education; but in New South Wales the Department of Technical Education refused to give up its empire. Australia possessed 26 colleges of advanced education in 1965, with an enrolment of 24 300. From July 1973 single-purpose teachers' colleges were accepted as colleges of advanced education; the number of colleges jumped from 39 to 78.82 In 1975 122 557 students were enrolled in CAEs, compared with 148 338 in universities.

The small single-purpose, state-controlled teachers' colleges disappeared and teacher training was conducted in autonomous colleges of advanced education and universities. Colleges of advanced education were multi-purpose. They soon revealed aspirations towards upward social mobility. They started to grant degrees. The Australian Commission on Advanced Education reported early in 1972 that no less than 70 degree and 40 postgraduate courses were being offered in the CAE system. Some CAE lecturers undertook research, despite the heavier teaching load and limited facilities compared with universities. The appointment of men and women with academic qualifications to the staff encouraged this, as did the application of theoretical approaches to what were originally intended to be practical, vocational courses. The distinction between universities and colleges of advanced education gradually became blurred. Some colleges seemed set to become second-rate universities rather than first-rate training institutions. Fortunately, the technical colleges gained new life following the Kangan Report of 1974, which created a new Technical and Further Education (TAFE) system.

The changes in primary and secondary schools and in universities and colleges of advanced education were indicative of a vast change in the aims of education.

that mastery of knowledge ('mere knowledge') was not important; what was important was mastery of mental and study skills. Emphasis was moving from acquisition of knowledge towards acquisition of techniques.

In the late 60s and early 70s the major traditional aims disintegrated, especially in state schools. New aims appeared. They may be identified as: the development of the individual; the development of mental skills, including skills of investigation ('learning to learn'); the cultivation of individual creativity; personal and moral autonomy; and the exploration of feelings (rather than rationalism). Some educationists rejected the idea that aims could be formulated they considered it an impossible or deceptive exercise. In some places the older 'traditional' aims survived in deteriorated form. Some authorities preferred to evade the problem by issuing vague statements of aim, or none at all. Others adopted the protective device of listing a large number of aims.

In *Victoria* the steering committee of the Curriculum Advisory Board stated in 1966 that the task of formulating aims was too difficult. Two years later the Assistant Director-General, R. A. Reed found the aims of secondary education to be confused partly because 'we have not had the courage to state our aims', partly because the secondary school tended to surrender to outside pressures. The purpose of secondary education, he said, was 'to encourage and assist each individual pupil to realise, largely through his own efforts, the fullest possible development of his intellectual, physical, aesthetic, social and moral potential'.⁸⁴ In 1971 a committee enquiring into education in *South Australia* saw the school as an institution set up to impart essential knowledge and to develop the individual's skills and abilities. But it was now expected increasingly to assume other responsibilities emotional, social, vocational and personal. 'We are a pluralist society, in which different beliefs, different values and different interests can be accommodated, even though the act of accommodation may be painful'. The large size of communities, schools and workplaces had produced the loss of a sense of personal identity, a sense of inability to participate in making decisions, less scope to be an individual and to express a personal view. 'Learning how to learn is important, but it is not enough'. It must be accompanied by liking to learn. The student 'experiences success rather than failure', but nevertheless gains 'a realistic picture of his abilities and interests'.⁸⁵

In *New South Wales* the Board of Senior School Studies and the Secondary Schools Board asked the Directorate of Studies, whose principal officer was Dr W. J. A. Vaughan, to draw up a statement of the aims of secondary education. The *Aims of Secondary Education in New South Wales* was presented in November 1973 and published in March 1974. This document asserted:

The central aim of education which, with home and community, the school pursues, is to guide individual development in the context of society through recognisable stages of development towards perceptive understanding, mature judgement, responsible self-direction and moral autonomy. 86

The belief in a balance between individual and social objectives which had marked education in the first half of the twentieth century had gone. So, too, had commitment to a specific set of values. The Christian-humanist-rationalist heritage was ignored.

Queensland lost its two external exams following the Radford Report of July 1970. A definition of aims became necessary. The Board of Secondary School Studies, in consultation with the Department of Education, prepared a document on the 'Aims and Objectives of Secondary Education in Queensland' which was circulated in December 1973. It presented eight objectives, four of them social, four individual.

Many primary schools were also uncertain about their direction and purpose. An officer of the Australian Council for Educational Research commented in 1972 on the 'freer and more relaxed atmosphere' in primary schools, on the reduced stress on the three Rs and greater emphasis on pupil activity and spontaneous expression, and on the new school architecture and furnishings. But he noted 'a pervasive sense of confusion and uncertainty about aims and purposes'.⁸⁷

Education and Society by 1974

Economically the late 1960s and 1970s were good years. The boom which had started about 1957 was accentuated after 1964, but collapsed in 1974. While it lasted, governments could find something for every significant social group. But economic management, especially under the Whitlam Labor government, was rather inept. One problem was inflation. During the period 1950 to 1970 the annual inflation rate averaged about 3.5 per cent. In 1972⁷³ it reached 6 per cent, in 1973⁷⁴ 12.9 per cent, in 1974⁷⁵ 16.7 per cent.⁸⁸ Apart from its implications for social morality, inflation weakened the position of the private schools, especially the boarding schools which found it more difficult to meet the cost of maintaining staff.

The recession which started in 1974 meant that for the first time since 1941 unemployment was a problem. A whole generation had never encountered the problems of unemployment. The smaller, more competitive labour market had a significant influence on education in attitudes to vocational training and to persistence at school. However, this change only became apparent after 1975. From 1946 to 1965 unemployment had averaged only

1.4 per cent of the workforce; between 1971 and 1974 it was 2.25 per cent of the workforce; in 1975 it was 4 per cent.

These years saw a rising retention rate in the schools. In 1969 the apparent retention rate (or persistence rate) of secondary school pupils to Year 12 was, for Australia as a whole, 27.5 per cent. By 1971 it had risen to 30.6 per cent, by 1972 to 32.4 per cent, and by 1973 33.1 per cent. In 1973 it fell to 32.9 per cent but in 1975 it recovered to 34.1 per cent. 89 In the early part of this period the rise may be attributed to the prosperity which allowed parents to support their children longer and to the value of prolonged education

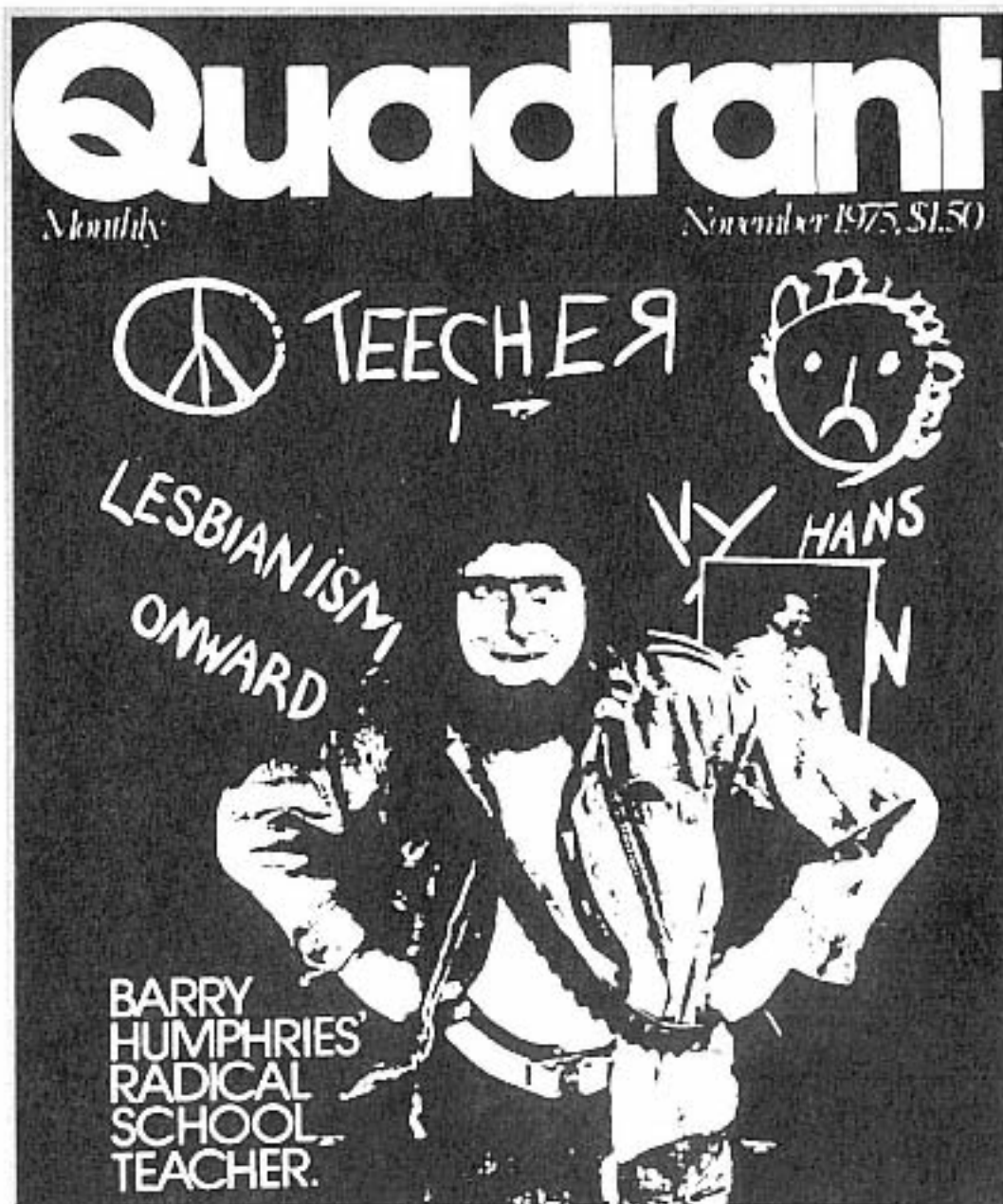


Figure 5.5:

A satirical view of radical teachers

In 1975 *Quadrant*, published by the Australian Association for Cultural Freedom, printed a monologue from Barry Humphreys' latest show. The teacher, Craig Steppenwolf, advises his students that classrooms were to be renamed 'de-learning laboratories' and that 'inhibiting desks and chairs' would be replaced by black polyester mattresses.

as a means of access to the white-collar class. After 1972 the increase was due to the higher persistence rate of girls, whose vocational ambitions were expanding; the persistence rate for boys was falling. But children of immigrants were staying on longer. Then in 1974 unemployment provided a new motive for persistence.

Responding to social change, Australian education had by 1974 assumed a new character. The new special interest groups were shaping a pluralist society. In education neo-Marxist/radical currents had become more influential and neo-progressive approaches lost some of their appeal. At the other end of the spectrum, traditionalist or conservative groups, under academic leaders such as James McAuley (of the University of Tasmania) and Leonie Kramer (of the University of Sydney) were resisting both progressive and radical education while trying to sustain the liberal-humanist tradition. Some criticism of the changing standards and values in schools and universities found expression through the Australian Council for Educational Standards.

Education or at least schooling had assumed many of the features of a social service. In other words, schools were attempting not only to provide education but also to meet family and community problems, such as drugs, excessive drinking, careless driving, child abuse. Primary schools had always been, in part, child-minding institutions; now many secondary schools were becoming adolescent-minding institutions. The schools were expanding their custodial function.

A new educational Establishment was emerging by 1974. It saw schools as having a new social function to foster social change in order to create a more egalitarian society. This aim centred particularly on equality of groups rather than equality of opportunity for the individual. It was an egalitarianism which played with the idea of 'equal outcomes' again, as much for the groups as for the individual. Schools were to foster a new ideology favorable to the new multicultural/pluralist society. 'Social engineering' was how some critics described this.

Commonwealth intervention in state educational systems had expanded as the Australian Schools Commission launched a variety of programs. Pressure from commonwealth education authorities and from teachers' unions undermined the authority of the state departments of education. Centralised systems of education were cracking, not only because of their bulk and inefficiency but also because of these new pressures. Changes in the control of education were developing.

'Open education' marked a new ideological current. Open education made varying progress in different regions. It was especially strong in South Australia, the ACT, and Western Australia.

But many schools did not adopt this educational fashion or, if they did, soon abandoned the more extreme forms.

Adolescents from non-English speaking ethnic groups had, by 1975, developed high educational and occupational aspirations and stayed on at school longer than their Anglo-Celt counterparts. 90 Despite the rising power of new social groups, the old groups persisted, albeit in weakened form. But one of the old groups, the teachers' unions, had increased considerably in strength. The outlook and leadership of these unions had changed in a radical direction.

One response to the nexus of social and educational currents was the birth of a new sociology of education. The number of students of sociology in universities and teacher training colleges and the number of lecturers in these institutions multiplied. A new sociology was engendered as the liberal-humanist tradition disintegrated and the Stalinist version of Marxism fell into crisis. It is to this new sociology of education, whose origins were on the other side of the globe, that we now turn.

PART B
PLURALIST MODES

Chapter Six
New Sociologies of Education in Western Europe and North America

Throughout Western society sociology became a boom subject in universities and colleges in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The numbers of courses, lecturers and students multiplied. In 1971 a new sociology of education was proclaimed. In this, neo-Marxism was particularly prominent, but other radical social theories also appeared, together with some which stressed individual ideology rather than social approaches. One important stream in the new sociology of education was the sociology of knowledge, a perspective which was employed to challenge the validity of traditional liberal-humanist intellectual culture.

While the numbers studying sociology at universities and the various 'tertiary' colleges grew, their educational background was now less uniform. The students came from schools in which history was losing ground to such social sciences as geography, economics and social studies. Where history survived it was shedding its humanist character, assuming the features of a social science and concentrating on more recent times. At the same time consensus over the nature and purpose of sociology disappeared. A variety of interpretations challenged structural-functionalism. Grand theory

gave way to analytical approaches. In the 1960s the New Left transformed Marxian sociology, spawning three new sociologies: ethnomethodology (H. Garfinkel in America), conflict sociology, (John Rex, David Lockwood, and Ralf Dahrendorf in Britain) and a neo-Marxian sociology based on Althusser's structuralism in France. 1 One British academic identified eight sociological theories (or 'perspectives') in the 1970s, some surviving from earlier times: critical theory, ethnomethodology, functionalism, interactionism, Marxism, positivism, structuralism, and Weberism.²

This chapter opens with the emergence of a new sociology in the United States. We then consider the impact of a number of Continental theorists: the Italian Marxist Gramsci; the French neo-Marxist Althusser; and Pierre Bourdieu whose sociological theories accord a stronger role to education. Next we look at the new sociology of education in Britain, leading on to Michael Young's contribution to the sociology of knowledge. Various 'interpretive' theories are then mentioned. The consummation of the new sociology of education is seen in the work of the American economists, Bowles and Gintis. In the late 1970s the new sociology of education ran into an intellectual crisis. We then turn to the role of the sociology of education in teacher preparation. Paul Willis provides an example of a new shift towards practical school matters in his ethnographic study, *Learning to Labour*. Concern with school practice now attracts more attention amongst educational sociologists. After a brief look at the differing styles of American and British sociologists, the chapter closes with a reassessment of two major sociological problems: 'Can education advance equality?' and 'Can education change society?' After a brief mention of the new sociology in literature the chapter closes with a summing up of the achievements of the sociology of education by the late 1980s.

A New Sociology Emerges in America

The new sociology developed first in America, where the decay of liberal-humanist culture was well advanced in the schools and in intellectual life. It was born in the context of an emerging pluralist, multicultural, cosmopolitan society. As the basic consensus on social issues disintegrated a variety of philosophies emerged. So did a variety of sociologies. These theories, interpretations, or 'perspectives' acquired various names. They tended to fall into two groups, a 'hard' or Marxist-radical group and a 'soft' or liberal-progressive group. Critical sociology, radical sociology, or conflict theories (mostly delicate ways of saying 'Marxist') had a strong political character. Another distinction was between the 'macro'

theories (e.g., structural-functionalist, Marxist) and the 'micro' (e.g. phenomenological, interactionist, ethnomethodological).

The 'micro', interpersonal, theories were more abstract and relativist. They introduced sociology to areas previously left to philosophy. Phenomenology was developed in its sociological form by Alfred Schutz, an Austrian who moved to New York in 1939. *The Phenomenology of the Social World* (1967) was a translation of a book he wrote in 1932. Social phenomena, he argued, are understood through a constant process of construction of meaning by the individual. We can only know phenomena as presented to us through our senses. Different individuals create different meanings, though certain common world-views are built and rebuilt through negotiation and interaction.

Symbolic interactionism originated in the ideas of the American social psychologist, G. H. Mead. Another American, Herbert Blumer, gave the approach its name in an article on Mead in the *American Journal of Sociology* (19656). Symbolic interactionism saw a more active role for the individual in social life. Individuals saw physical objects and behaviour as symbols of something else. Different individuals gave different meanings to such symbols. Thus each person's perception of the world was subjective.

Harold Garfinkel, a student of Parsons who was influenced by phenomenology, presented his *Studies in Ethnomethodology* in 1967. His work centred on close studies of everyday life. He believed society acquired coherence from a series of collectively held, taken-for-granted assumptions. For a sociologist, ethnomethodology meant that social situations had to be seen from inside, as they appeared to those living them. Such views were non-historical, subjective, ignored the overall larger scene and were, of course, relativist. 3 Subsequent theorists, however, diversified the concept of ethnomethodology considerably.

Both the macro and micro approaches encouraged a revival and burgeoning of the sociology of knowledge. This was part of a challenge to long-established views regarding the nature of knowledge. The new interest can be traced back to a book published in 1966 by two Americans, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in The Sociology of Knowledge*. They argued that the sociology of knowledge was concerned with 'the relationship between human thought and the social context within which it arises'.⁴ This is a broad field. But they emphasised that sociologists are not concerned with the truth or logical coherence of particular areas of knowledge, which was a matter for philosophers. They also maintained that while sociology is a science, it is also a humanistic discipline because it is concerned with the relationship of people to one another. It therefore should

work in association with history and philosophy. 5 But very soon other proponents of the sociology of knowledge assumed that in revealing a social class basis to particular studies they were discrediting such studies. They also rejected sociology as a humanist study, dependent on history, preferring to consider it a social science.

The turmoil in society in the late 1960s and early 1970s shaped the outlooks and activities of some American sociologists. The great majority, of course, retained their academic caution. In 1967 the Council of the American Sociological Association defeated a resolution opposing American intervention in the Vietnam War. The motion was sent to a postal ballot of members and was again defeated. The majority of those voting were opposed to the war, but also opposed the ASA taking an official stand on political issues. In mid-1968 a group of academic radicals formed the Sociology Liberation Movement to challenge both the leadership of the Sociological Association and the views of the 'Establishment' in American sociology. They started a newspaper, the *Insurgent Sociologist*, in 1969, which became a journal in 1971. The Sociology Liberation Movement collapsed in 1972, but left behind a number of more persistent smaller societies. Pluralism was now an institutional feature in American sociology. Twenty years after the official birth of radical sociology Professor Dick Flacks of the University of California, Santa Barbara, wrote:

We were, it turns out, wrong to believe that there was a self-conscious and powerful 'establishment' in sociology that could or would mobilize real power against us. We were, in fact, wrong to think that sociology had become a crucial vehicle for maintaining social control. Indeed, we shared with analysts like Daniel Bell and other theorists of the 'post-industrial' [society] an exaggerated belief in the strategic centrality of the university for shaping the society's futurebeliefs that led us to think that our challenge to the discipline and to the university was more weighty than it turned out to be.6

Radical American sociologists did not direct much critical attention either to the new special interest groups or the new middle class, preferring to concentrate their ire on 'the Establishment'. Some sociological investigation into the rise of the new salaried middle class occurred in the 1960s, but interest in this theme weakened in the 1970s. The rise of the special interest groups in the 1970s should have been a major interest of sociological research. But, to a considerable extent, sociologists preferred to act as advocates for these groups, not as critical analysts of them. Their main critical energies were devoted to discrediting the old, waning bourgeois humanist society and the humanist/historical relics in structural-functionalist theory.

Continental Theorists:
Gramsci, Father of Neo-Marxism

Neo-Marxism became an important element in sociology in the 1970s, especially in the sociology of education. Neo-Marxism elaborated one of the central issues in Marxism, the role of the state. It put greater emphasis than classical Marxism on the active role of ideology and culture in maintaining the social order and on the importance of theory in changing society. This shift of emphasis increased the importance of education for the sociology. Neo-Marxism contributed four closely related concepts to the sociology of education: hegemony, legitimacy, ideology and reproduction. These concepts were associated with the names of Gramsci, Althusser, and Bourdieu. ⁷

A generation before 1971 the ground-plan for a revised version of Marxism was elaborated in an Italian prison. The theories of Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) started to gain attention in France and Britain in the late 1960s. Gramsci developed his approach to Marxism while in a fascist prison in the late 1920s and 1930s. Gramsci had been a member of the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party from its foundation in 1921, becoming its General Secretary in 1924. In 1926 he was arrested by the Fascist regime and imprisoned. He died the day after his release in 1937. During the 1930s and 1940s the Stalinist version of Marxism was dominant and Gramsci's social theories attracted little attention. He challenged simplified views of the base: superstructure principle of Marxism. This had emphasised the potency of the materialistic base from which the social, political, legal, cultural and ideological superstructure derived. Gramsci argued that under capitalism the bourgeoisie held power not merely because it controlled the means of production but also because it established its hegemony throughout society by control of the administration and through religion, education, and communication. Through education and indoctrination other classes are persuaded to accept bourgeois rule as natural. Thus the 'superstructure' has almost as much importance as the 'base'.

But the domination of the bourgeoisie was never complete, for the working class had a dual consciousness, one part imposed by the capitalist class, the other a commonsense knowledge arising from the workers' everyday experience in the workplace. This commonsense knowledge was potentially revolutionary, but needed to be developed by intellectuals. The political revolution could only be successful when the working class had won the battle of ideas.

Gramsci called his theory the 'philosophy of praxis', a term which constituted a cautious reference to Marxism. The philosophy

of praxis argued for a close link between theory and practice. The Gramscian view meant that politics was no longer simply a conditioned response to changes in the instruments of production and productive relations. Marxist intellectuals could infiltrate various segments of the superstructure, transform it, and establish a new hegemony. This process of 'passive revolution' required the conjunction of communist intellectuals acting from above and the masses acting from below.

The rediscovery of Gramsci's *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* was published in London and New York in 1971, suited youthful radical intellectuals of the new white collar class. It promised them that they could produce the revolution through infiltration of the state apparatus, the educational system, and the mass cultural media: radio, television, newspapers. Classical Marxism had argued that the proletarian revolution had to come first; only then would ideological and cultural changes follow. Neo-Marxism suggested that a prior proletarian revolution was not essential. Moreover, the new white-collar class could be seen as an intellectual proletariat. 8

Radical educationists used Gramsci's concept of hegemony to attack the curriculum and values espoused in 'capitalist' schools. Gramsci argued that hegemony, or domination, was more than brute force. It included the power of the ruling class to define accepted concepts of 'commonsense'. Hegemony was largely established through ideology. All hegemonic relationships were pedagogic relationships. But the intellectuals could form a counter-hegemonic culture. To do this they must maintain contact with the masses. Indeed, Gramsci believed that the masses were to develop their own intellectuals. Therefore they had to master traditional learning.

What, initially at least, the neo-Marxists preferred not to notice in Gramsci was the value he placed on formal education, even that provided in capitalist state schools, and the importance he put on hard work and high standards in education, as much for working class children as for others.⁹ He did not regard all knowledge as relative, as socially conditioned.

Continental Neo-Marxism:
Althusser, Ideology and Education

Louis Althusser (1918-1990) spent five years in concentration camps in World War II. In 1948 he was appointed to teach at the Ecole Normale Supérieure and joined the French Communist Party. Despite the crisis of 1956 (Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin; the suppression of the Hungarian revolution) Althusser,

unlike many communist intellectuals, retained his party membership. His major writings began in 1961; he ceased writing in 1978. Althusser suffered from manic depression and in 1981 was committed to a mental hospital after strangling his wife. He was released in 1984 and died six years later.

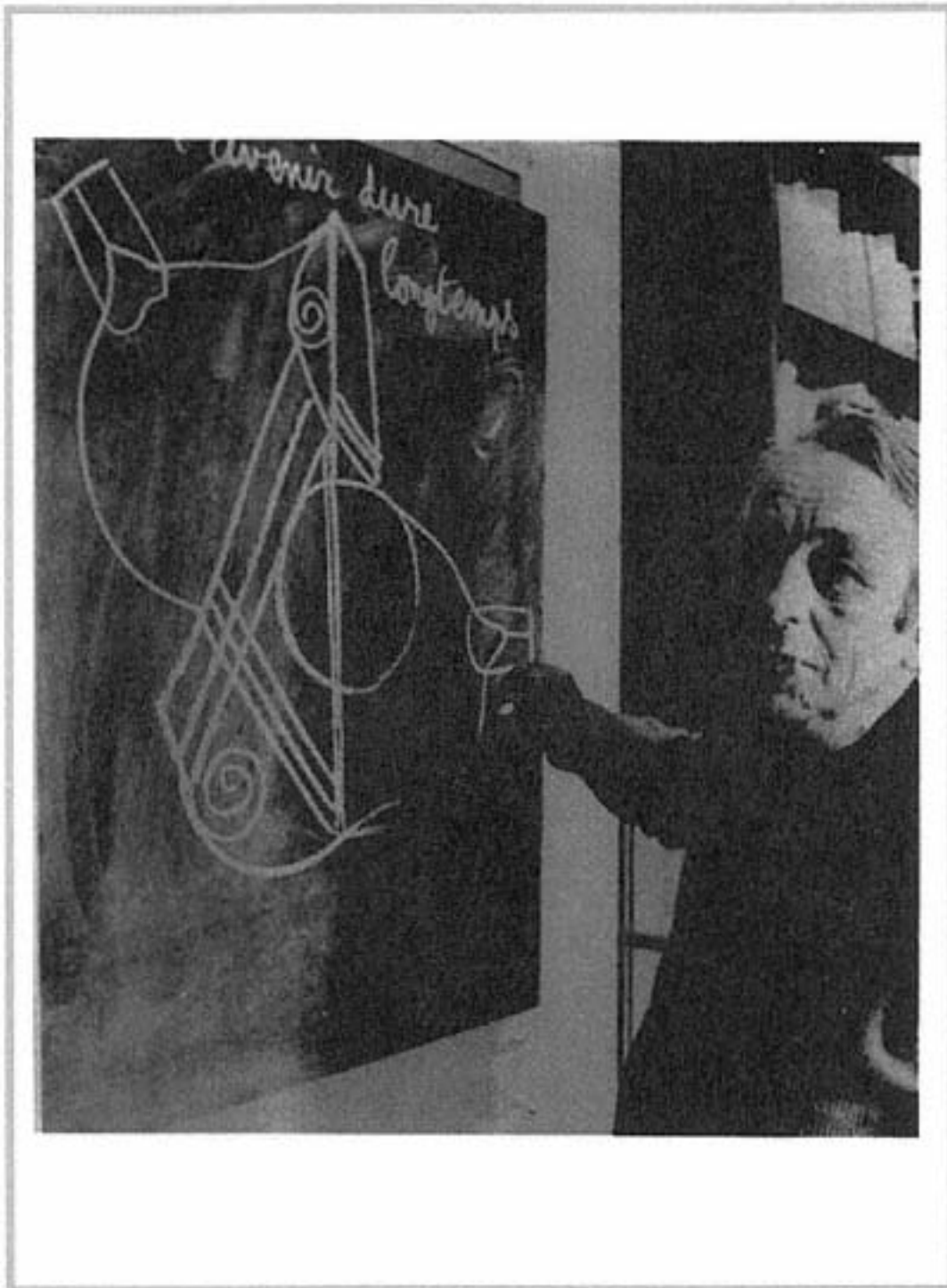


Figure 6.1:

Louis Althusser, major theorist of neo-Marxism

Althusser, member of the French Communist Party from 1948 and lecturer at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, made a major contribution to neo-Marxism with his theory of Ideological State Apparatuses. Althusser's impact in Britain was strong after 1970 but declined following attacks by classical Marxists and increasing disillusion with the outcome of Marxism, exemplified in the Soviet Union.

Althusser sympathised with the Chinese communists when in 1961 they denounced the Soviet Communist Party's 'revisionism' of Marxism-Leninism in favour of socialist humanism. He wrote an article, 'Marxism and Humanism' (1964), arguing that humanism was simply an ideology. According to Althusser, the humanist Marx disappeared after 1845; from 1857 Marx was a fully fledged scientific Marxist. 10 Althusser believed Marxism was a revolutionary science of history conceived as class struggle. He saw it as a philosophy concerned with the production of concepts, the 'theory of theoretical practice'. He now added to these concepts.

A collection of his articles written in the late 1960s and published in London by New Left Books in 1971 under the title *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays* introduced Althusser to English speaking intellectuals. Althusser developed the Marxian view of the state as an agent of repression. To the Repressive State Apparatus Althusser added a number of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) religion, education, the family, the law, the politics, trade unions, the media (press, radio, television etc.) and culture (literature, the arts, sports etc.). The plurality of these instruments of the state perhaps reflected the growing plurality of Western society. It might be noted that some of these arenas really belong to the private domain. The ISAs, said Althusser, 'function massively and predominantly by ideology, but they also function secondarily by repression, even if ultimately . . . this is very attenuated and concealed, even symbolic'.¹¹ Schools, churches, families and the rest use punishment, expulsion and selection to discipline their flocks; so do the cultural arms of the Ideological State Apparatus.

Althusser's relevance for education, including the sociology of education, sprang from his view that ideology was an important factor in maintaining the state and the dominating role of certain social classes. The school is the major one of several Ideological State Apparatuses which inculcate bourgeois ideology. Political and social forces operate in the schools. Ideology is impressed on pupils through the school's daily organisation the buildings, relations between teachers and pupils, seating arrangements, and so on. The inculcation of ideology in the students occurs unconsciously rather than by direct conscious absorption.

But Althusser's picture of schooling was generalised and oversimplified. His notion of domination was so one-sided that it is hard to conceive how oppositional ideologies could develop. Althusser failed to explain how radicals escaped the crushing ideological influences of the state apparatuses and managed to achieve positions of influence in universities and schools, as well as being able to promote their theories in books published by capitalist firms. Some radical theorists criticised Althusser because they

wished to interpret student indiscipline as an ideological revolt. 'In Althusser's simplistic schema human beings are reduced to static role bearers, carriers of predefined meanings, agents of hegemonic ideologies that are inscribed in their psyche like irremovable scars'. 12

Like many educational observers, neo-Marxist educationists attributed too much power to the schools, overlooking the possibility that the educational role of the family, the peer group, churches and the mass media, particularly television, might at times be more powerful than that of the schools. Moreover, these institutions often presented contradictory values and knowledge.

Continental Theorists:

Pierre Bourdieu and Social Reproduction

Pierre Bourdieu, like Althusser, gave the school central importance in the transmission of power and inequality, but he is less convincing. Bourdieu took the idea of 'hegemony' much further. He has been called a Marxist by some, a Weberian by others, and even a follower of Durkheim. Rachel Sharp a Marxist sociologist at Macquarie University, denied that Bourdieu was a Marxist, even though he uses Marxian concepts such as social formation and class struggle. In fact, Bourdieu drew on the work of many others.13

Bourdieu worked with a team at the Centre for European Sociology, Paris. He came to general notice after he contributed two articles to M. F. D. Young's 1971 book, *Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Education*. His 'Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction' appeared in a selection of papers originally given at an April 1970 Durham conference and published in 1973 in *Knowledge, Education and Cultural Change*, edited by Richard Brown (Michael Young and Bernstein also appeared in this volume.)

Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction is based on the assumption that societies are divided into classes and that these class structures are maintained and given 'legitimacy' by 'symbolic violence'. He argues that dominant symbolic systems or 'cultural capitals' are produced, distributed and consumed in a set of social relationships relatively independent of those which produce other forms of capital. A distinctive intellectual field exists with its own logic and processes, its own institutional forms like the educational system, academic societies and journals.14

His core proposition is scarcely remarkable. As Frank Musgrove of the University of Manchester put it in 1979, 'His extensive, involved, and highly abstract writing on this subject can be stated in one sentence: schools are very important, especially for upper class families, because they convert a child's family advantages

into cultural symbols and scholastic credentials, which is a legitimate basis for high social position, whereas today "birth" is not'. 15

Musgrove argues that Bourdieu's study of the consumption of culture in France was not, in fact, substantiated by the data he collected. Bourdieu distinguished eight social levels in the population. But, says, Musgrove, the richest and most powerful spend proportionately less on culture than others. Bourdieu's thoughts, says Musgrove, 'are concealed in verbose language and a tedious and pretentious terminology. The only saving grace would be that he is sometimes right. He seldom is'.¹⁶ Two familiar problems haunt Bourdieu's theory. If schools are, in fact, agents for 'legitimizing the established order' how is it that so much resistance to the established order has appeared? Secondly, why is Bourdieu unable to produce any historical perspective to show how the arrangements he describes came into existence?¹⁷

The New Sociology of Education in Britain

In Britain the development of the new sociology was facilitated by the vast expansion of universities between 1964 and 1967. In the 1960s 28 new university departments of sociology and 30 new chairs were created. In 1966, 724 students graduated in sociology; in 1971, 1768. They found positions in the expanding universities and, when these became filled, in polytechnics and further education colleges (both of which undertook teacher training), and as teachers in secondary schools by 1976 100 000 students had achieved secondary school A levels in sociology.¹⁸

The appointment of Dr Basil Bernstein to a chair in the Sociology of Education at London University Institute of Education in 1967 was a landmark; it represented official recognition of a new area of study. Bernstein had been head of the Sociological Research Unit established by that institution in 1962 and had developed a reputation in sociolinguistics. Bernstein helped shift the sociology of education from the 'macro' interests of the 1960s to the 'micro' interests of the 1970s. He argued that children develop linguistic codes in their early relationships, particularly with their mothers, and that these codes differ between working-class children (who have a Restricted Code) and middle-class children (who have an Elaborated Code). Their Restricted Code handicaps working-class children at school. On the other hand, Bernstein opposed providing compensatory education for working-class children. One problem is that his definitions of working class and middle class are not clear. Another is his obscurity. He himself uses a code of sociologese which is hard to break. His influence grew after a collection of his writings was published as *Class, Codes and Control* in 1971.¹⁹

The year 1971 was the *annus mirabilis* of the new sociology of education, whose arrival was marked by the publication of a book of readings, *Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Education*, edited by Michael Young, who had been appointed lecturer in sociology at the University of London Institute of Education in 1967. This book drew on material presented at the April 1970 conference of the British Sociological Association. Apart from Young's own article, 'An Approach to the Study of the Curricula as Socially Organized Knowledge', the collection included contributions from Basil Bernstein ('On the Classification and Framing of Educational Knowledge'), two from Pierre Bourdieu, and one from Geoffrey Esland. In his introduction, Young asserted that:

to move to explanations of how pupils, teachers and knowledge are organized . . . existing categories that . . . distinguish home from school, learning from play, academic from non-academic, and 'able' or 'bright' from 'dull' or 'stupid' must be conceived as socially constructed, with some in a position to impose their constructions or meanings on others.

The major commitment of the new sociology of education was to a new sociology of knowledge. Young argued that Marxist, Weberian and Durkheimian traditions could help a sociology of education which no longer neglected curricula. 20 But in challenging 'absolute' concepts, the new sociology opened the door to relativism. It could equally be argued that the New Sociology was a 'socially constructed' phenomenon. And whatever the *social* basis of knowledge, this did not in itself reflect on its *educational* validity. One cannot escape the suspicion that one attraction of the sociology of knowledge to academics was that it did not require a close acquaintance with life in the classroom.

Another important contribution in 1971 to the new sociology of education was the Open University's textbook *School and Society*, prepared by the School and Society Course Team, B. R. Cosin, I. R. Dale, G. M. Esland and D. F. Swift. The introduction to these 40 readings remarked that the sociology of education in Britain and America had previously concentrated on analysing educational achievement in terms of social class or stratification and on analysing educational organisations as social systems. But the main theoretical focus of the Open University course was 'the reciprocal relationship between social structure and knowledge'. It sought to fuse the intellectual traditions of Marx, the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz and the social psychology of George Herbert Mead. The readings included Blumer's article on Mead and symbolic interaction. An article by Basil Bernstein described the innovations of neo-progressive education: problem solving, learning to learn, topic-centred studies, integrated studies, replace-

ment of teacher authority by a shared or co-operative system, greater pupil choice in the curriculum, open architecture in the schools, non-school adults in the school. Bernstein takes a neutral, relativist attitude. He is not sighing 'over the weakening of authority' but exploring 'changes in the forms of social integration . . . in order to re-examine the basis for social control'. 21

In addition to its own *School and Society*, the Open University course included among the set books Berger and Luckman's *The Social Construction of Reality* and Young's *Knowledge and Control*.

Michael Young and the Sociology of Knowledge

M. F. D. Young's collection of articles, *Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Education* (1971), stimulated interest in the sociology of knowledge. Exponents of the sociology of knowledge argued that all knowledge was socially conditioned, that it reflected the social character and interests of the society which produced it. This was no new discovery. Marx had assumed the truth of this, though his comments were mostly in general terms. He certainly did not suggest that this truth could devalue the school curriculum. Other writers had from time to time examined the way in which the social environment suggested the types of knowledge which was developed (e.g. the communist Benjamin Farrington in his *Greek Science: Its meaning for Us*, 1944). What was new was the implication that because knowledge was socially conditioned, it was invalid, that there was no corpus of absolute knowledge accumulated, for whatever social reasons, over the centuries.

In his essay 'An Approach to the Study of the Curricula as Socially Organized Knowledge' in *Knowledge and Control*, Michael F. D. Young argued against a 'stratified' view of knowledge the view that some kinds of knowledge have more value than others. He says that by questioning the criteria on which 'knowledge areas' are stratified:

we are led to consider the social basis of different kinds of knowledge and we can begin to raise questions about relations between the power structure and curricula, the access to knowledge and the opportunities to legitimize it as 'superior', and the relation between knowledge and its function in different kinds of society.²²

A historian might see 3000 years of intellectual evolution as conferring some validity on particular areas of knowledge, irrespective of the changing social contexts which shaped this knowledge. Gramsci, a classical Marxist, identified certain peak periods in the development of civilisation which set standards, which provided a measure of worth. But Young was a graduate in science

and had taught science in secondary schools for some years. The concept of an absolute core balancing the relativist variations of a discipline did not occur to him.

A basic trouble with the theory of the sociology of knowledge is that the investigator discovers what he knew right from the start. Thus Young, in recommending a study of the Schools Council in England, already knew what would be discovered:

The Schools Council, through its legitimation of curricula that might be characterised in Bourdieu's terms as based on class cultures, together with the schools, maintains the class structure of which they are reflection. 23

The theory poses several problems:

1. On the one hand, if working-class children study 'middle-class'; subjects they are being brainwashed. If they do not, they are being excluded from access to positions of power (a good example of 'Morton's Fork').²⁴
2. If working-class culture (knowledge) is as valid as middle-class culture, does not the rejection of the latter keep the working class in a ghetto and even impede their vocational training?
3. If schools and universities are simply agents of capitalist hegemony, how are so many radicals able to secure positions in the teaching staff? How is it that they have not been 'brainwashed' by the system? (an example of 'The Paradox of the Liar').²⁵

Most writers who adopted the new sociology of the curriculum implied that this critique of accepted concepts of knowledge, this revelation its social origins, opened the way for alternative definitions. While some alternative approaches did develop in the classroom, in general the reformers had little success in devising convincing alternative curricula.²⁶

Michael Young was not, strictly speaking, a Marxist, though Marxists welcomed his contributions to the new sociology of education.

The New Sociology of Education:
Interpretive Theories

A number of theoretical orientations, sometimes grouped as 'interpretive', developed, providing a marked contrast to structural-functionalism, neo-Marxism, and neo-Weberism. They included social phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and symbolic interactionism. These sociologies tended towards subjectivity. They were concerned with how individuals or particular groups saw social reality. In education, they examined small groups operating in

practical circumstances. But these new trends were obscure and troubled with esoteric jargon:

Strong claims are presently being made about the interconnection between phenomenology, sociology and education, but . . . their meaning and, perhaps, truthfulness is not entirely clear. Claims concerning the contribution which phenomenology could conceivably make to sociology and vice-versa must be predicated upon conceptually clear ideas of what phenomenology is and what it can become.

Unfortunately, phenomenologists, it seems to me, have considerable difficulty in communicating not only to non-phenomenologists but also among themselves. 27

Theoretical Impotence of the Neo-Progressives

Significantly, the supporters of progressive education seemed unable to contribute much to the new sociology of education. The neo-progressive movement was associated particularly with open education and the open classroom, while retaining such old progressive principles as democracy in education (e.g. the comprehensive secondary school), group learning, a child-centred curriculum, integrated studies (e.g. social studies), and activity work. The original progressives had sheltered under the ideological umbrella of John Dewey and W. H. Kilpatrick in America, A. S. Neil, J. Hemming and others in England. The neo-progressives were unable to advance any strong educational theory. What passed for theory was usually embedded in a series of educational reports, starting with the 1967 Plowden Report, *Children and their Primary Schools*.

The neo-progressives shared with the neo-Marxists a hostility to liberal humanist ideology and the old curriculum. But they were more interested in the development of the child than in the social commitment of neo-Marxists to combating the class character of education or in undertaking political action over education. Both movements shared an inclination to relativism. The neo-Marxists, however, attacked the progressives for their non-political and, indeed, anti-political stance.²⁸

Bowles and Gintis: The Correspondence Theory

Two American neo-Marxist economists, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, presented in their rather rambling book, *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life* (1976), some of the ideas of revisionist historians in the United States, coupled with some of their own previously published material. They argued that the educational structure and ethos 'corresponds' to, or 'replicates', the structure and ethos

of the institutions of monopoly capitalism. The hierarchy of pupils and teachers corresponded to a hierarchy in the workplace; the different levels of the education system provided preparation for the different levels of occupations; the regimentation of the lower-ability pupils corresponded to the regimentation of the factory. The relations between the economy and the education system are 'legitimated' by an ideology they called 'IQism'. In essence they concluded that these relationships were fixed and inevitable. 29

Bowles and Gintis were not particularly interested in the curriculum, though their theory could be related to the currently fashionable and rather pretentious term, 'the hidden curriculum'. The concept of the hidden curriculum is to be found in Parson's discussion of the school class as a social system; the term was coined by P. W. Jackson, *Life in Classrooms*, 1968. But existence of informal education had long been known. Nor were Bowles and Gintis very adept at analysing social class. They made only perfunctory reference to the new white-collar, salaried middle class, which they categorised as an 'emerging white-collar proletariat'.³⁰

The main problem with the correspondence theory was that it did not coincide with reality. Clearly Bowles and Gintis lacked adequate experience of teaching; they overestimated the effectiveness of schools. Employers have often complained of the inadequate preparation which the schools provide for the world of work. Different teachers in the one school, different schools in the one system, have different outcomes. An interesting analogy is taken too far. It is, to some extent, a literary device first used at the beginning of the nineteenth century when Dr Andrew Bell referred to the monitorial system as 'the steam engine of the moral world'. But analogies can be pressed too far.

Schooling in Capitalist America, which the Open University included amongst its set texts in 1977, established neo-Marxist theory at the heart of British sociology of education, despite its questionable data and the flaws in its account of the rise of mass schooling which critics soon identified. 'It led to the neglect of other significant influences on the nature of schooling and those aspects of the education system that could be linked to the system of production only by a considerable stretch of the imagination'.³¹ Yet in their final chapter, 'Education, Socialism and Revolution', Bowles and Gintis presented a program for social and educational change, offering some prescient advice. Radicals could not 'sit around and wait for a political cataclysm'. Nor could they rely on creating little islands of socialism in a sea of capitalism. Rather, they should work within existing bodies, such as unions, schools, the media, and government. Bowles and Gintis repeated the call of the radical German student leader, Rudi Dutschke, for a 'long march through

the institutions'.³² This echo of the Chinese communists' 'long march' in the 1930s did, indeed, presage what would happen. But would the radicals change during their lengthy immersion in the institutions?

Paul Willis and an Ethnographic Case Study

Paul Willis and others used the ethnographic method to concentrate on the way of life of the pupils themselves, in school and in the workplace. This was a shift towards the sociology of the school (rather than of education) and towards the study of socialisation. The opposition of many students to schooling (which contradicted the view that schools brainwashed them into accepting bourgeois values) produced a new effort at explanation, known as 'resistance theories'. These offered an alternative to liberal explanations of disruptive behaviour in psychological terms.

Paul Willis of Birmingham University's Centre for Contemporary Studies was the author of *Learning to Labour* (1977), whose subtitle is 'How working class kids get working class jobs'. Willis undertook an ethnographic case study of a group of working-class youths in Huddersfield. He found that the counter-culture of the 'lads' was anti-authority, anti-mental labour, and male chauvinist. But these features were consistent with the requirements of working-class jobs. Hence, by resisting the schools the youths prepared themselves for their future life.³³

Rachel Sharp of Macquarie University, a friendly Marxist critic, hailed this in 1980 as 'without doubt the most significant contribution to the study of schooling which has been published for many years'. Willis shows that the boys' antagonistic attitudes in school 'are vitally important components of the way in which the class structure is legitimated'.³⁴ More sceptically, Geoffrey Partington of the School of Education, Flinders University, described Paul Willis as 'the leading British loony' amongst the theorists who have attempted to expose the 'machinations of the Ideological State Apparatus'.³⁵ Willis, he says, sees three ways in which the rulers of Britain manipulate the school system to reproduce the class system of capitalism:

1. Teachers deliberately seek to produce docile conformists who will imbibe bourgeois ideology and its version of knowledge.
2. Teachers, perhaps unconsciously, 'prepare young people for the soulless drudgery of mass production by boring the pants off them in school' and thus render them listless and apathetic.
3. Even where teachers deliberately or inadvertently provoke working-class boys to resist (Willis is not quite clear about girls), this really diverts their revolutionary energy. They experience a fruitless rebellion at school which leads them to abandon rebellion after leaving school.

Social reproduction and resistance theories, like so many theories in the sociology of education, greatly overestimated what schools could do and underestimated the importance of the peer group, the family and television both in formal education and in the shaping of attitudes.

The Crisis of Neo-Marxist Sociology

A number of characteristics distinguished neo-Marxism from classical Marxism. *Politically*, it had a composite character. It was an alliance of (1) several radical political sects (Trotskyists; dissenting communists) with (2) feminists, (3) the leadership of some ethnic groups, and with (4) other minor groups (radical trade union leaders, pacifists, ecological reformers, left-wing Christians and even homosexuals). *Socially*, neo-Marxism was the Marxism of the white-collar class and of intellectuals. For long Marxists had believed that in developed countries the industrial proletariat and the trade unions provided the social basis for revolution. (In peasant lands, like China, the poorer peasants and intellectuals acting in the name of the proletariat provided this social base). But in the developed countries the proletariat was declining proportionately, while new professional unions (white-collar unions) were growing in strength.

The new social basis of neo-Marxism was evidenced by its great strength in universities and tertiary colleges and in the mass media, though sometimes neo-Marxist radicals were able to capture leading positions in trade unions. They were much less successful in politics when they ran for office under their own flag. Because of its appeal to the intelligentsia neo-Marxism was more heavily theoretical than was classical Marxism. It largely rejected liberal humanist culture, whereas classical Marxism and Leninism had viewed humanist culture as worthy of being mastered by the working class. Neo-Marxist ideology had a strong tendency towards relativism. This was in part the outcome of its egalitarian ideology, plus the confederate nature of the movement. Neo-Marxists had to concede the 'validity' of a variety of groups.

Neo-Marxism reached its peak in the late 1970s. But it had come under public attack from about 1976 onwards. In England a director of a polytechnic described it as 'alchemy', a High Court judge called it 'nonsense' and a minister for education called it 'mindless'. In 1977 Julius Gould wrote a criticism from the right *The Attack on Higher Education: Marxist and Radical Penetration*. This booklet was based on the work of a study group of seven social science and philosophy teachers, four of them sociologists. It noted as a curious phenomenon the eager publication of Marxist

texts by leading well-established publishers Macmillan, Penguin, Routledge and Heinemann. 36



Figure 6.2:

The new sociological jargon

This cartoon in *The Times Educational Supplement*, 14 March 1980, accompanied a discussion by Digby Anderson of recent cuts in government funding of social science research. The cartoonist links Gramsci's concept of hegemony, popular amongst radical sociologists, with the gift of a posy of anemones.

In France Althusserianism faced its moment of truth. French radicals had now had time to read Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* (1974). In 1976, for the first time, Althusser openly condemned Stalinism and repression in the USSR. Michel Foucault, another anti-humanist intellectual, stated that Stalinism was the truth of Marxism. To make matters worse, the facts about Mao's 'cultural revolution' were becoming known. In September 1977 *Time* magazine described the reaction against Marx in Paris 'Marx is dead'. Scientific Marxism had been revealed as technocratic and authoritarian.³⁷ By 1977 post-structuralism had arrived. Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1975) was another challenge to neo-Marxism. In November 1977 Althusser delivered a paper on 'The Crisis of Marxism' in Italy and thereafter ceased writing. The prestige of neo-Marxism collapsed.

But the disintegration of neo-Marxism was the product of an internal crisis as well as of the changing external context. Old-

style Marxists criticised neo-Marxism soon after its arrival in Britain. The attack on Althusser and the neo-Marxists was stimulated by two factors: the obscurity and dogmatic assertion of much of their writing and their attack on sociological method and the importance of history for sociology; indeed, the new radicals were strongly anti-historical.

In so far as Marxist historical scholarship in the West has traditionally earned higher prestige than any other Marxist academic undertaking, this Althusserian position has enraged many who might otherwise have had some sympathy. For those like E. P. Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm who could fairly claim decades of service to Marxist history and the cause of the labour movement to be told that their efforts were both scientifically and politically worthless by young men, whose own historical scholarship was undistinguished and yet whose works were being widely discussed, must have rankled considerably. 38

Apart from the changing political climate, other factors were undermining sociology as a discipline. Excessively rapid expansion and diversity of interpretations weakened the theoretical basis of sociology. As Philip Abrams, Professor of Sociology at Durham, commented in 1980: 'so many doors were open, sociology was so much in demand such an unknown quantity so many talented young people were coming forward, that the new sociologists were to a remarkable degree left free to define sociology in any way they chose'. But whether the talent was sufficient for the demand is, in fact, dubious; dilution surely occurred. The multiplicity of theories led to considerable internal disputation. Abrams suggests new sociologists attempted to justify their discipline by over-sophisticated standards in technique. But Marxism, says Abrams, saved it from becoming remote from popular interests in the way that academic psychology had become.39

Digby Anderson, research fellow at the University of Nottingham, complained in *The Times Higher Education Supplement* that 'sociology has allowed itself to acquire a reputation for being monotonously trendy, persistently impractical and pathetically subversive'. Neo-Marxist sociologists lacked the sense of humour which might qualify their fantasies.40

As economic conditions deteriorated, universities in general, and sociology especially, suffered cuts in funding. Severe cuts in provision for postgraduate research students were imposed in 1979; opportunities for postgraduate research in sociology dropped by over 50 per cent in seven years.41

In the late 1970s the composite features of the radical movement made it more difficult to define neo-Marxism. The conflicting character of the component groups weakened radical theory. But many of the basic ideas of neo-Marxism spread through large

areas of society and, despite its theoretical troubles, neo-Marxism still dominated the field. Phenomenology and ethnomethodology retained some support. Symbolic interactionism rapidly lost its appeal. It was criticised for its indifference to problems of evidence, proof and systematic theory. It seemed to lack an overview of society. 42

Some sociologists now rediscovered merit in the Weberian interpretation. Randall Collins of the University of California, outlined its attractions in the *Harvard Educational Review* early in 1977.

Although the Weberian approach rejects the Marxian emphasis on the causal preponderance of the economic structure and its historical evolution, the Weberian approach is, to a degree, a sophisticated version of the Marxian tradition. That is, Weberians do see economic interests based on property divisions as key bases of group organization, or intergroup conflict, and of historical change. But, in contrast to Marx, Weber also pointed out that organizational resources, especially those of state and private bureaucracies, and cultural resources, above all religious traditions (but also secular ones such as education), can create and channel additional interest groups and conflicts. Three lines of societal division—economic, organizational-political, and cultural (or in Weber's terms, 'class', 'party', and 'status')—mesh, so that economic classes or organizational politicians are stronger if they also possess the unity that comes from common cultural resources.43

The Crisis in the Sociology of Education

The revaluation of neo-Marxist sociology spread naturally into the new sociology of education. 'Social reproduction' theories about schooling came under criticism. They were unable to adequately explain how, despite the formal egalitarian features of educational systems, class inequality persisted. Radical explanations 'tended to be overmechanistic and overdeterministic, stressing variously socialisation factors, theories of correspondence between school and society and the imposition of a dominant ideology on a largely passive working class'.44

The doyen of Marxist historians of education, Brian Simon, whose academic studies gave him an intellectual base lacking for many of the new radicals, questioned in 1977 the contribution of Althusser and other neo-Marxists, forthrightly criticised Bourdieu and Bowles and Gintis in 1981, and in 1983 commended Gramsci's positive view of the value of education as such for working-class children.45 In the Marx Memorial Lecture for 1977 he asked whether those who sometimes claimed to speak as Marxists were going too far in evaluating the whole system of education as a function controlled by the state and reducible to the simple reproduction of existing social relations.

Are the Althusserians right when they define education as the means by which the ideology of the ruling class is assimilated by the rising generations, as Althusser puts it, an Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), and leave it at that? Are these people right when they tell teachers and others that, whatever forms or procedures they adopt in school or classroom, they can do *nothing* to transform the situation? That they are, in fact, mere cogs in an other-directed machine? 46

Right-wing criticism was encouraged by Julius Gould's 1977 booklet already mentioned, *The Attack on Higher Education: Marxist and Radical Penetration*. From the radical right Dennis O'Keeffe, who lectured in the sociology of education at the North London Polytechnic, took a more traditional Weberian approach to neo-Marxist sociology. From 1978 onwards he published strong criticisms of Bowles and Gintis and neo-Marxist education generally.47

At a sociology of education conference in January 1978 Gerald Bernbaum, professor of education at Leicester, criticised the condition of the study, which for the great majority of lecturers was largely a teaching rather than a research enterprise, conducted in colleges of education. He suggested that the reduced demand for teachers would produce a severe crisis for the sociology of education. Prime Minister Callaghan's Ruskin College speech of October 1976, the Great Debate which followed, and the Green Paper of July 1977 illustrated public concern about standards in basic skills, the curriculum, and the control of schools and teachers, and cast doubts about the association of the sociology of education with specific policy recommendations. Neo-Marxist theories could hardly fail to alienate liberal and social-democratic educationists.48

At the end of the decade two important books, by Frank Musgrove and Jack Demaine, made highly effective critiques of the neo-Marxist sociology of education. In *School and the Social Order* (1979) Frank Musgrove, Professor of Education at Manchester, tackled the major neo-Marxist theorists, including Gramsci, Althusser and Bourdieu. He was particularly savage with Pierre Bourdieu. He presented a devastating verdict on the sociology of education.

The record of sociology in its application to the study and practice of education since the war is a sorry story. Quite apart from its tragic practical consequences, one wonders at the intellectual shoddiness of it all, the spectacle of people of modest talents on the make. It has been a tawdry, over-hasty but curiously bombastic exercise . . . pretentious and arrogant, often with careless, incompetent, or none-too-scrupulous treatment of evidence either through cowardice in the face of fashion or perhaps unawareness that truth matters.49

Jack Demaine, a lecturer in education at Loughborough University who had the advantage of experience in a wide range of

teaching activities, also grappled effectively with Marxian concepts. His *Contemporary Theories in the Sociology of Education*, 1981, written from a democratic socialist position, scrutinised critically the neo-Marxist and radical left, including such theorists as Michael F. D. Young, Althusser, Bowles and Gintis, and Paolo Freire. 50

In the early 1980s English right-wing critics denounced the sociology of education for its adolescent approach and its anxiety to treat the subject as a debunking exercise rather than a practical enterprise. A writer in *The Times Educational Supplement* (June 1982) roundly condemned the Open University for the 'stunted development of the sociology of education'. Ten years earlier the sociology of education was diverse in its interest. 'Today, under the hegemonic influence of the Open University . . . the sociology of education is reduced to a single issue, 'schooling', perceived by a single perspective, the neo-Marxist'. The head of the Sociology of Education unit at the Open University responded, denying both the diagnosis and the suggested cause.⁵¹ At the end of 1982 M. Hickox of the Polytechnic of the South Bank, London, writing in the *British Journal of Sociology*, attacked four main strands in the Marxist analysis: that mass education was introduced to supply capital with a passive workforce; that education prepared students for a stratified society and legitimated capitalist control through certificates, diplomas and degrees; that education denied knowledge to the working classes; and that schools transmitted capitalist ideology. In no industrial society, said Hickox, is there a close fit between educational qualifications and eventual jobs. Nor was the distinction between mental and manual skills a product of capitalism. Schools, he said, had little impact on working class attitudes towards employment. Cultural factors were more important. Hickox's critique attracted some attention.⁵²

But it was the attack on Bowles and Gintis from 1977 onwards, launched from both the left and the right, in both America and Britain, which first shook confidence in the neo-Marxist theories of education. Ultimately, in 1981, Bowles and Gintis themselves engaged in retrospective self-criticism.⁵³

The Sociology of Education and Teacher Preparation

How did all this affect teacher training? And to what extent did the preparation of teachers sustain or weaken the sociology of education?

In the early days many academic sociologists saw teacher training as unhelpful to sociology. In 1966, for instance, William Taylor, Professor of Education at Bristol, noted in a contribution

to Tibble's *The Study of Education* that 'problem-centred' courses in teacher training were often considered to interfere with systematic analysis of social structure and behaviour. But by 1971, in a revised version of this book, a different contributor claimed that the sociology of education had 'achieved tremendous importance and takes its place alongside psychology, philosophy and history as one of the principal elements in the education course'. 54

Teacher-training institutions became strongholds of the sociology of education. But by the mid-1970s debate developed about the relevance of the sociology of education to teacher training. Moreover, the contraction of teacher-training reduced an important base of the sociology of education. The number of training institutions in England and Wales fell from 196 in 1968 to 118 in 1979; the number of students in training from 120 000 in 1972 to 55 000 in 1981. The academic quality of students entering colleges of education became a cause for concern.⁵⁵

A teacher at a comprehensive school argued in a right-wing booklet, *The Pied Pipers of Education*, that sociology unfitted teachers to teach. 'Sociology of education, as taught recently, expresses values inimical to education and industrial enterprise'. It offers, he said, a deceiving and demoralising interpretation of the social significance of teaching. 'Most people think that school reports and examination results tell us something about the pupil to whom they refer. The "new sociologists of education" deny this commonsense assumption'. His article closed with the complaint that 'this is the age of the sociologist-kings, who know what is best for every-one elseparents, teachers, policemen, doctors, nurses, engineers, scientists and social workers'.⁵⁶

Sociological researchers still struggled to find a sinister association between schools and capitalism. But highly theoretical analyses were now declining in favour of empirical case studies undertaken in the schools. The ethnographic method was becoming popular.

One of the features of the new sociology of education was the specialised character of its concerns. The old sociology of education drew on a background of history, economics and anthropology, and tended to examine broad sweeps, often historically. The new sociology of education fostered specialised sub-species, with an autonomy of their ownthe sociology of the school, the sociology of the classroom, the sociology of the curriculum, the sociology of higher education, of ethnic groups, of girls' education, of working-class pupils, and so on. This was a reflection of the emergence of new special interest groups within society. It was also an outcome of the greater narrowness and specialisation of the scholars who professed sociology. But the new sociology of education still recog-

nised older groupings, such as the family and education and class and education.

A great deal of the debate amongst proponents of the new sociology of education was a debate amongst theorists about theories, with minimum reference to the realities of school practice or to the history of education. Partly as a reaction against this, a pragmatic sociology emerged, especially in teacher training institutes. This studied social aspects of education (minorities and education, women and education, the family and education, television and education, rural children and education, the handicapped and education, etc.). These specific issues became popular because of their importance in teacher training, because the special interest groups gave them political importance, and because high sociological theory was too abstract for the average teacher in training.

The Sociology of Education and School Practice

The fragmentation of the sociology of education undermined the links between theory, research, policy and practice which the sociologists of the early 1970s had discerned. As the radical sociologist Whitty remarked, 'neo-Marxist theoreticism seems to have run its course for the time being, leading some of its former advocates both to re-assert the importance of empirical research and to reemphasize the need to locate their work within a specific political project'. 57

Participant observation and direct observation without participation were preferred methods of research amongst ethnomethodologists and symbolic interactionists. However, in the early 1970s American ethnomethodologists provided an empirical analysis of the distortions which social context and linguistic misunderstanding introduced into test performance. Ethnomethodologists strongly attacked positivist social science through their critique of measurement techniques in conventional empirical research. The possibility of absolute knowledge was denied; all knowledge was considered ideological.58

In England a remarkable application of radical sociology to school practice occurred in the William Tyndale Junior School between January 1974 until February 1976, when the teachers were dismissed following disciplinary proceedings. The curriculum and teaching methods were anti-middle class, and hostile to parental power. Frank Musgrove comments:

The affair of the William Tyndale School . . . illustrates the tragi-comic intellectual muddle that we call 'the Sociology of Education'. The Tyndale affair was not a product of class conflict; it was the product of university-based in-service training. The school under its headmaster . . . who had

recently obtained his Diploma in Primary Education (with a thesis on team teaching), implemented a fair selection of sociologically inspired clichés in the repertoire of advanced diploma courses for serving teachers . . . It is in the day-to-day life in classrooms, as well as in Education's Grand Design, that the indescribable and deeply destructive intellectual muddle of the Sociology of Education will be found. 59

The impact of neo-Marxist or radical political outlooks in the school and the classroom was stronger than that of the major interactionist theories, symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and ethnomethodology. The adherents of radical left ideologies organised themselves in small political sects, in groups within the teachers' unions, and through publications, such as *Teaching London Kids* (September 1973, onwards). The adherents of ethnomethodology or phenomenology found expression mainly within associations of lecturers in the philosophy of education and the sociology of education, or in academic publications. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, their views were formulated in language the average teacher could not understand. Yet, while the direct impact of these abstruse theories in the schools is sometimes hard to discern, some developments in the curriculum harmonised with the personalised, inward-looking approach. Examples in the 1970s were personal development and values clarification programs. In the 1980s one notes the increasing emphasis on developing empathy as a function of the teaching of history. But we cannot assume *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* that the theories caused the practice.

Efforts to strengthen the impact of the sociology on schools and teachers included a 1985 conference at St. Hilda's College, Oxford, promoting ethnographic sociology. Speakers frankly identified previous weaknesses: the oppressive jargon which made communication a basic problem; messages which were either banal or confusing; the esoteric interests of sociologists and lack of relevance to the classroom; the antagonism of some sociologists to what teachers were trying to achieve.⁶⁰ This new humility was reflected in the book which eventuated from the conference *Sociology and Teaching*, edited by Peter Woods and Andrew Pollard, 1988. 'Having been cast down from their former position as isolated theorists' (said Margaret Wilkin, a college of higher education lecturer) 'sociologists now have the opportunity to establish themselves as the consultants of the classroom: those who will extend teacher understanding by working besides them'.⁶¹ The problem with ethnographic studies, teacher-based and classroom-based research, was that this could equally provide an objective view or a subjective one, oriented either to the teacher or the students. As a teacher, reflecting on an in-service course which included Paul Willis' *Learning to Labour*, remarked: 'What Willis identified as a

group of subordinated youth resisting oppressive institutional and wider class structures, we recognised within our classrooms as "young hooligans", who prevented us from teaching, which for some of us included an ideological commitment to improve the life-chances of such working class youth'. 62

Differences between American and British Approaches

Three characteristics distinguishing American sociology of education in the late 1970s and early 1980s from British were identified by Madeline Arnot of the Open University and Geoff Whitty of King's College, London. These were exemplified in the work of Jean Anyon, Michael W. Apple, Henry Giroux, J. Taxel and P. Wexler. The first was an attempt to move beyond a 'radical, sociological critique of existing school practice' to the development of radical practice in education. This was a more optimistic approach than prevailed in Britain. The second was a commitment to 'intellectual and methodological pluralism'. Americans sometimes drew simultaneously from theories that the British treated as mutually exclusive. In Giroux, for instance, phenomenology, neo-Marxism and social and cultural reproduction theories, the Frankfurt school and Paulo Freire all had a significant influence. The third distinction was an attempt to relate theoretical and substantive concerns and to interrelate theoretical work and empirical research. While Americans imported much of the theoretical inspiration for their work from Britain or continental Europe, their use of this to criticise mainstream empiricism did not produce a rejection of all empirical research.⁶³

However, another English investigator, Andy Hargreaves of the Department of Educational Studies at Oxford, while agreeing that these three areas were distinctive of American sociology of education, suggested that this plurality undermined the value of American sociology and that, indeed, American sociology of education lacked empirical rigour. The Americans, engaging in a 'prodigious research effort', sought to replace earlier, crude and pessimistic theories of 'direct reproduction' the Bowles and Gintis correspondence thesis by theories of 'resistance' and 'relative autonomy'. Michael Apple, 'ever-changing yet always influential', had presented a version of 'direct reproduction' in his 1979 papers, published as *Ideology and Curriculum*. By 1980, partly influenced by Willis, he was stressing resistances in school systems. Giroux, like Apple, was troubled by the political negativism of early neo-Marxism, which allowed too little scope for radicalism. 'Schools often find themselves at odds with the needs of the domi-

nant society' he wrote in 1980. So a specious optimism replaced the earlier specious pessimism. All pupil responses, from passivity to rebellion, were seen as resistances to the reproductive functions of schooling. 64

Education and Equality

If we turn from theories of what sociology of education should be and how sociologists conceived the role of education to the sociological issues they investigated, we find that equality continued to be a major underlying issue.

In the 1930s a communist scientist in England, J. B. S. Haldane, published a book of essays, *The Inequality of Man*, which recognised that individuals are unequal in their physical and mental endowments. Families are unequal in their economic resources, in their moral values. Thus children entering school will already be unequal. Some children who enter school at the age of five are already losers, some are already winners.

Concern for equality was linked with interest in social mobility. Education had become important for social or economic advancement in mid-nineteenth century Britain, in early twentieth century America, and in the 1950s in Australia. The growth of a public examination system played an important role in the rise of a meritocracy. Until the late 1960s equality in education was envisaged primarily as equality of opportunity. As schooling became more important for mobility demands grew for equal access to secondary schools. After 1967 the importance of the white-collar (salaried middle) class and the growth of special interest groups accentuated pressure and stimulated a new twist in the debate a demand for equality of outcome. The new egalitarianism added to the new concept of equality of outcomes a concept of equality for disadvantaged groups rather than for the individual.

In a pluralist society, with numerous special interest groups, *equality* of outcome was not usually envisaged as *identity* of outcome. In a society consisting of various social groups, the distribution of educational achievement within each group should be roughly the same. Amongst blue-eyed children the proportion gaining entrance to university should be the same as the proportion amongst brown-eyed children. The proportion of lower-class children doing badly should not be higher than the proportion of upper-class . . . Within each group, of course, different individuals would differ in achievement.⁶⁵

Concern for equal outcomes originated in the United States. The Supreme Court decision of 1954, ruling that legal separation by race in different schools constituted inequality of opportunity,

drew attention to the matter of outcomes. Following the Civil Rights Act of 1964 the US Office of Education conducted a 'Survey of Equality of Educational Opportunity' which identified five types of inequality. At a 1967 conference on this report, James Coleman drew public attention to the confusion over the concept of equality in education and to the demand for equal outcomes. He argued that this equality must be between groups, though with differences among individuals within each group. 66

James Coleman argued that two sets of influences were involved in the debate over equality of educational opportunity: those which were alike for various groups, principally in school, and those which were different, principally in the home or neighbourhood. Coleman did not mention the possibility of innate differences in intelligence amongst individuals or racial or social groups, nor the effect of television (though all of these might be considered 'home' influences).

The relative intensity of the convergent school influences and the divergent out-of-school influences determines the effectiveness of the educational system in providing equality of educational opportunity. In this perspective complete equality of educational opportunity can be reached only if all the divergent out-of-school influences vanish, a condition that would arise only in the advent of boarding schools; given the existing divergent influences, equality of opportunity can only be approached and never fully reached.⁶⁷

Spartan education of the fifth century BC would seem to provide the supreme model of excluding home influence, amongst boys anyway.

The congressional enquiry had found that the distribution of material resources amongst various schools was fairly equal. Coleman's argument that family background was much more important than school characteristics in explaining inequalities in performances suggested the interpretation that ghetto families were culturally deprived. In due course this promoted the idea of compensatory (or 'positive') discrimination. In *Inequality* (1972) Christopher Jencks surveyed individuals irrespective of their group membership. His book, based on work done in the early 1960s, ignored attitudes and values and the internal life of schools. Like Coleman, Jencks argued that schooling was marginal in the process of social stratification. He attributed much of income variation to 'luck' and argued that social reform had to be sought in the economic arena.⁶⁸

The 1977 edition of the Open University text *School and Society* gave greater emphasis than the 1971 one to equality, devoting a separate section to 'Social Class and Selection' which, in addition to Coleman, had contributions from A. H. Halsey, Noam

Chomsky (discussing coolly whether intelligence is hereditary), and D. F. Swift.

David Rubinstein, Head of the Department of Economics and Social History at the University of Hull, edited in 1979 a collection of 24 articles which he called *Education and Equality*. In his introduction he argued that 'our present education system, struggling to emerge from its inegalitarian past, is based not so much on distinctions of natural ability as on class, sex and race'. He welcomed the efforts which had been made to redress the balance in favour of the working class but was worried at recent attacks on progressive education. He wanted a society with greater social, economic, political, racial and sexual equality. This could be achieved by giving everyone the education of an enlightened managing director, so that Britain could move 'towards a society in which we are all managing directors'.⁶⁹ But two difficulties suggest themselves. By the late 1970s a new concept of equality in education had materialised: equality for members of 'disadvantaged groups' rather than talented individuals. Secondly, Rubinstein did not consider whether education could of itself produce the better society he sought.

Can Education Change Society?

Neo-Marxist theories of social reproduction implied that dominant social forces used schools ensure social stability. In 1983 Brian Simon, professor of education at Leicester and Marxist historian of education, discussed the evolution of this theory. He remarked that many contributors to a well-known reader on the sociology of education, *Education, Economy and Society* (published in 1961 and edited by A. H. Halsey, Jean Floud and C. Arnold Anderson) argued that education was a major factor in bringing about social change. Education was investment in human capital and this was the key to economic and social advance. Then the cultural revolution of 1967/74 generated new theories of the relation between education and society. In 1977 A. H. Halsey and an American, Jerome Karabel, edited another reader, whose title, *Power and Ideology in Education*, suggested a quite different approach. Education, it was now believed, could do nothing of significance for most people. It must reflect society; its function was social reproduction.⁷⁰

Simon believed that the answer to the question 'Can education change society?' would not be found in contemporary theorising and empirical studies, for these left out of account the human factor. This determines outcomes, not whether statistics show that schools marginally affect the distribution of income. He believed that education *can* change society provided education is defined broadly as a process involving such formative influences as the

family, peer groups, the Church, apprenticeship, and village or civic relations. Both formal and informal agencies are relevant to the matter. 71

The sociologists of the 1970s lacked the close links with policymakers typical of their predecessors of the 1950s and 1960s, such as Halsey and Floud. 'In the mid and late 1970s, few sociologists of education showed much interest at all in influencing policy and practice in and around education'.⁷² They turned to detailed investigations either of the nature of advanced capitalism or to the nature of life in classrooms.

The New Sociology in Literature

The neo-Marxist penetration of the ideologically insecure humanist culture went far beyond education. The literature and artistic directions of the last two centuries were reversed. In literature the new ideology was known as 'post-modernism'. Two strains predominated in post-modernism: a sense of irony, of scepticism, of futility in the old tradition; and a vision of a new sensibility, an attempt to create a revolutionary future.⁷³

English literature was an early target. Richard Hoggart gave the movement some impetus in the late 1960s when he was Director of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham. Terry Eagleton, a major English literary critic, identified the enemy in Althusserian terms. 'Departments of Literature in Higher Education . . . are part of the ideological apparatus of the modern capitalist state'.⁷⁴ But neo-Marxism was not the only sociology to penetrate literary criticism. The phenomenological viewpoint was adapted to literature by the Polish theorist, Roman Ingarden (1893-1970), whose books *The Literary Work of Art* (1931) and *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art* (1937) were translated in 1973. Another group, the Geneva School, included Georges Poulet, whose 'Phenomenology of Reading' was printed in 1969 in *New Literary History*, (vol. 1).

Post-modernism itself was overtaken by 'deconstructionism', otherwise known as 'post-structuralism' (because it attacked structuralist semiotics, based on concepts developed by Ferdinand Saussure). Deconstruction rested heavily on the philosopher Jacques Derrida, who set out his views in three books published in France in 1967, *Of Grammatology*, *Writing and Difference*, and *Speech and Phenomena*. Deconstruction was a mode of reading texts which subverted the implicit claim of a text to its own structure, unity and determinate meanings. But because an English translation came much later his impact in the English-speaking world was delayed till the 1980s.⁷⁵

What Did the New Sociology of Education Achieve?

Perhaps the most significant effect of the new sociology of education was to help discredit humanist education and to divert attention from functional-structuralist theories. Neo-Marxism filled the vacuum. Posing as 'scientific Marxism', it was still structuralist, accepting the concept of a social pattern and of the interrelationship of various social institutions, including education. But oversimplified, reductionist variants, such as that of Bowles and Gintis, soon developed. By the early 1980s neo-Marxism was collapsing. Relativist ideologies, centring on individuals rather than society, gained ground.

Possibly the main *positive* achievement of the new sociology of education was to direct more attention to the curriculum, to the sociology of knowledge, and to underlying values. It also helped revive an interest in the educational ideas of Weber and Gramsci and even, among some theorists, those of Durkheim. This contribution was little enough, particularly as the new attention to the curriculum was by no means benign.

Jack Demaine remarked that the major contrast between traditional sociologists of education and the new sociologists was that the former affected *educational policy*; the new sociologists sought to affect *pedagogical practice*. Traditional sociology had its successes, such as the breaking of psychometric testing and a better distribution of resources in the interests of greater equity; radical sociology encouraged teachers to undertake political activity, for instance by imposing meanings on the curriculum. 76

What remained after the collapse of sociological theory was a new curriculum, which could be variously described as a sociological, a politicised, or a social studies curriculum. Yet this curriculum probably owed more to social forces (such as the new special interest groups) and the deteriorating level of pupils' knowledge than to sociological theory. Nonetheless the theory did help undermine the old curriculum and gave some degree of authority to the new curriculum.

Sociological approaches helped reshape the curriculum by infusing new interpretations into established subjects; by encouraging new integrated 'studies'; and by establishing itself as a secondary school subject in its own right. Sociology was examined for the first time at 'A' level in English schools and colleges in 1966. By the mid-1970s it was being studied by tens of thousands. Its importance continued after the General Certificate of Secondary Education replaced the Certificate of Secondary Education in 1988. Its content is suggested by Stephen Moore's *Revise Sociology* (1985, revised 1989). This textbook has 20 major aspects or themes: Socialization; Research methods; The family; Education; Social

stratification; Gender; Age; Race and ethnicity; Work; Unemployment; Leisure, and so on. The values in this text are those of the new sociology. The section on Religion tells students: 'There are three approaches to religion and social control . . . Durkheim, Marx and Weber'. The section on Social control informs them that there are two views on who benefit from the rules of societythe pluralist position (rules generally reflect the true feelings of the population) and Marxist-influenced (social control is part of a system in which the ruling class maintains its power). The same two interpretations are presented (in Politics and power) to explain control of the state. 77

The new sociology of education was unfriendly to traditional school disciplines. These disciplines might survive in name, particularly in the senior years where an external or part-external examination existed. Even so, the structure and content of the disciplines changed significantly. Moreover, new areas of learning appeared, often incorporating the word 'study' or 'education' in their name. Peace studies, women's studies, environmental studies, world studies, anti-racist education, environmental education, multicultural education were highly political, reflecting current social biases.

At the close of his 1985 book, *Sociology and School Knowledge*, Whitty implicitly conceded some strength to Demaine's assertion that the new sociology of education had betrayed working class children. Yet he found comfort in the hope that the optimism of the early 1970s might be rediscovered. 'It is possible that we could retrieve the radical promise of a sociology of the curriculum, which was briefly, but quite inadequately, glimpsed in the early 1970s'.⁷⁸ But he also recognised the increasing movement of social theorists into the ever-expanding educational bureaucracy. Was this a victory for the radicals? Or would the practitioners become more powerful than the theorists.

In the late 1980s a new instrumental philosophy swept over education in many Western societies. It was motivated by politicians, political administrators, economists and businessmen rather than educationists or academics. The movement sought changes in the control of schools and of the curriculum. In the United States its advent was heralded by *A Nation at Risk*, the 1983 report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education; in England by the Education Act of 1986 and especially the Education Reform Act of 1988; in New Zealand by the *Treasury Briefing Paper on Education*, 1987, and the governmental statement, *Tomorrow's Schools*, which followed. Australia, too, experienced the new wave.

We now turn to consider the Australian encounter with the new sociology of education during the 1970s and 1980s and the outcome of this experience by the late 1980s.

Chapter Seven The Rise and Fall of the New Sociology of Education in Australia

In the 1970s and 1980s the theoretical and institutional development of sociology and the sociology of education in Australia paralleled, in many respects, developments abroad. As in Britain and the United States, sociological studies found strong bases in the expanding universities and colleges of advanced education, particularly in teacher-training courses. Because of regional differences, the sociology of education had a stronger impact on the school curriculum in some parts of Australia than in others. Because of Australia's slighter intellectual tradition and because 'traditional' sociology had not been long established, neo-Marxism gained influence more speedily and in a greater variety of academic disciplines than in Britain or the United States. Overall, the picture is of the rapid rise of the new sociology of education between 1971 and 1976; followed by the open recognition of the crisis of its major component, neo-Marxist sociology, about 1983; and the decline of this and other theoretical perspectives by 1987.

We commence by considering the growth and transformation of sociology in Australia as an academic study, turning then to similar changes in the sociology of education. Discussion of the

influence of the special interest groups on the sociology of education is followed by consideration of the interrelationship of the sociology of education and teacher training. The work of major neo-Marxist sociologists of education in Australia is examined. Then the re-evaluation amongst radical sociologists, historians and philosophers of education in the late 1970s and early 1980s is discussed. A modified radical tradition persisted, while at the same time some radical critics were absorbed into the educational establishment. After a brief mention of comparable neo-Marxist sociology in nurse education, the chapter closes with a summing up of the new sociology of education.

The New Sociology Reaches Australia

The Martin Report, *Tertiary Education in Australia* (1964), heralded a significant change in advanced and higher education. It resulted in the establishment of colleges of advanced education and was an important step in the flowering of the white-collar class. The report included four arguments of a sociological character which gained some popularity in universities and colleges of education: (1) higher education was a form of investment in human capital; (2) a need existed for greater attention to the humanities and the social sciences; (3) the social balance within tertiary institutions did not reflect the social balance in society (in England, the Robbins Report had said the same in 1963); (4) it was important to foster more research and the Commonwealth Government should fund this.

As we have already seen, academic sociology had strengthened its foothold with the appointment in February 1958 of Dr Morven Brown as Professor of Sociology at the NSW University of Technology (soon to become the University of NSW). After Brown's death, Sol Encel became Head of the School of Sociology in 1966. A Department of Anthropology and Sociology opened at Monash University in 1964. At La Trobe University Dr Jean Martin was Foundation Professor of Sociology from 1966 to 1974 her husband, Allan Martin, was Foundation Professor of History. At the University of Queensland, the Department of Psychology became the Department of Psychology and Sociology in mid-1966. Sociology was advancing; but some academics, particularly in the older universities, remained sceptical of its validity. So they linked it to other disciplines or deferred its entry into the curriculum, as at the University of Western Australia in 1974.

Professor Sol Encel of the University of New South Wales pioneered the academic study of sociology. His book, *Australian Society* (1965), edited jointly with A. F. Davies (Reader in Political

Science, University of Melbourne), established new academic levels. Encel's *Equality and Authority* (1970) tackled a persistent concern of Australian sociology. Books providing a popular version of sociology were also beginning to appear, mostly with a left-wing slant, such as Craig McGregor's *Profile of Australia* (1966). A right-wing view, however, was offered by Ronald Conway's *The Great Australian Stupor: An Interpretation of the Australian Way of Life* (1971), which was reprinted several times in the 1970s. Conway was a Victorian publicist and social psychologist. The publication from April 1965 of the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* was another milestone marking the onward march of sociology.

At the 1968 conference of the Sociological Association of Australia and New Zealand complaints by Professor Hugh Stretton of Adelaide about the 'professional abstinence from ideology' produced little response. But at the 1970 conference preoccupation with methodology at the expense of meaning was attacked. Undergraduate sociology now dominated in numbers and needs over postgraduate research. In his presidential address Encel argued that sociology was 'a subversive kind of study' but that its ability to question established orthodoxies was endangered by an excessive growth of technique and methodology. The speculative, philosophical, character of sociology needed to be reasserted. ¹ But within the next few years radicals and Marxists injected a heady dose of speculation and philosophy into Australian sociology.

In the 1970s the structural-functionalist position remained strong, though its interest had shifted towards survey work and measurement. Leonard Broom, F. Lancaster Jones and J. Zubrzycki were representatives of this orientation. The neo-Weberian school included S. Encel, and R. A. Wild of the Department of Anthropology at Sydney. Neo-Marxists were numerous. In many cases they had moved into sociology from an original interest in political economy.² During the 1970s they became dominant. The 1972 conference of the Sociological Association of Australia and New Zealand was marked by 'Tammany Hall politics', according to Professor F. L. Jones, who had just taken the chair in sociology in the Research School of the Social Sciences, Australian National University.³ By contrast with England, neo-Marxists were strong in philosophy, economics, history, literature and other university departments and academic societies. They poured forth a stream of articles and books. Two major publishers in Australia, George Allen & Unwin and Penguin Books, were particularly active in publishing radical writers.

High on the agenda of the new sociology were poverty and class inequality. The needs of special interest groups (disadvan-

taged minorities) were also high on the agenda. The fascination of sociologists, social workers, educationists, and political radicals with inequalities might seem a little strange in view of the unprecedented spread of affluence between 1958 and 1974. The solutions to these problems were seen in more education and increased funding of the social services. A vast class of administrators, academics and social workers benefited from these new interests. The activity of these welfare workers was validated by the reports of the Commission of Inquiry into Poverty under Professor R. F. Henderson of Melbourne University. The Commission, originally appointed by W. McMahon, the Liberal prime minister, in August 1972, had been expanded by the Whitlam Labor government, which appointed four more commissioners. In 1975/76 five reports were presented describing the extent of poverty, analysing the legal, social/medical, economic and educational aspects of poverty, and suggesting ways of assisting disadvantaged minorities.

By 1975 the Membership Directory of the Sociological Association of Australia and New Zealand listed 585 members, of whom 42.8 per cent were in universities, 23.7 per cent in colleges of advanced education and other tertiary institutions, and 13.5 per cent in government employment. The expansion of universities, the entry of universities into teacher training, the conversion of teachers' colleges into colleges of advanced education, and the increase in the length of teacher training in the colleges from two years to three produced a great increase in the number of lecturers in the sociology of education. As mentioned earlier, the expansion of sociology as a study was more rapid in the newer universities than in the older.

In 1979 nine of the 19 Australian universities had departments of sociology, two had departments of anthropology and sociology, while one had a department of social inquiry and one of the social sciences. Thus, in all, 13 departments taught sociology proper (as distinct from sociology of education or politics). A study in that year of the 112 academic sociologists in Australian universities found that 58 (51.8 per cent) had obtained their first degree in Australia, 19 (16.9 per cent) in the UK, 16 (14.3 per cent) in the US, and 19 elsewhere. Six of the 15 professors had obtained their first degree in Australia. 4

The United States was the home of sociology, employing the vast majority of the world's sociologists. American influence was strong in Australian sociology. An analysis of the intellectual origins of 49 articles published in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* between 1973 and 1977 found that two-thirds (65.3 per cent) of the authors referred to post-1955 American models or studies when 'legitimising' their own reported investigations;

12.2 per cent referred to post-war British, 10.2 per cent to classical sociologists, 8.2 per cent (i.e. four) to Australian, and 4.1 per cent to other. 5

In *Land of the Long Weekend* (1978) Ronald Conway complained of 'Marxist' takeovers in departments of philosophy, economics and particularly sociology. Yet as the most recently installed of the major social sciences, he said, sociology had become a butt for humour among tough-minded workers in the allied fields of psychology, anthropology, history and economics. He recorded the 'acid generalisation' of one academic: 'The chief qualifications for a sociology lecturer in a lot of our tertiary institutions are an uncritical worship of percentages, a total disregard of English syntax, a willingness to dabble in (or steal material from) other disciplines without decent acknowledgement and to be a Marxist, a civil rights protester or a Third World apologist'.⁶ Conway conceded that some sociologists, even such 'indefatigable socialist empire-builders' as Dr Don Edgar and Dr. Patricia Edgar of La Trobe University, were prepared to moderate their political leanings to accommodate any good work built on hard data.

Conway nominated Professor R. W. Connell of Macquarie University as the archetype Marxist sociologist. Connell started his rapid academic ascent as lecturer in Government at Sydney University in 1971/72, becoming senior lecturer in Sociology at Flinders University, South Australia, in 1973, and reaching the culmination of a chair in Sociology at Macquarie University in 1976. A sociologist at Sydney University hailed him in 1984 as 'the writer who has done most within academic circles of sociology to mould a perception of inequality into a perception of class relations'.⁷ In *Ruling Class, Ruling Culture* (1977) Connell attempted an analysis of the Australian class structure. The book was subtitled 'Studies of conflict, power and hegemony in Australian life'. Most of it had previously appeared as articles or papers. Connell's interpretation was cautious. 'The crucial feature of the cultural defence of capitalism' (he wrote) 'is not so much the inculcation of middle-class values through the whole society . . . as the prevention of the formation of an oppositional working-class culture'.⁸ Others might have argued that a working-class culture did exist; many radical or communist folklore experts felt they were exponents of such a culturesome, indeed, enjoyed government grants to foster this culture!

Connell soon transferred his energies to the sociology of education.

Cora Baldock of the Australian National University presented the neo-Marxist alternative in *Australia and Social Change Theory* (1978). Her writing was strengthened by a respect for the historical approach and by statistical analysis. She adeptly surveyed struc-

tural-functionalist and conflict theories and the economic, political and social character of Australia since the war. In the book's final paragraph she came to the (predictable) conclusion that 'belief in progress, economic growth, freedom, individualism, mobility, equal opportunity, integration, assimilation' were creeds inherent in functionalism and were accepted by the people because of their indoctrination 'into the values and ideologies of the ruling class'. Structural-functionalism was 'a product of cultural hegemony . . . a product of capitalism itself'.⁹ But Baldock's ideology is not crudely intrusive and her book provides a useful sociological analysis of Australia since the Second World War.

When in the 1980s the neo-Marxist platform became insecure, a developing feminism restored the radical impetus. 'There is a hegemony of feminism at this conference', said a male speaker at the 1983 national conference of the Sociological Association of Australia and New Zealand. Lyn Yates, who lectured in education at La Trobe, recounted this anecdote in 1983 in an *Arena* article whose title, 'Feminist theorizing on the offensive', reflected the new confidence.

But where were the graduates in sociology to find employment? Social welfare services (social work) had long provided an outlet. So had market research. Yet this was hardly sufficient to absorb the flow of new graduates. Some academics hoped that teaching in secondary schools might provide opening even though a study of sociology might reduce commitment to the teaching profession. Pressure was generated to expand the teaching of social studies or social science in the schools. 'It is likely that sociology, either as a separate subject, or as an important contribution in a wider subject, will be taught at some level in most secondary schools in Australia within the next decade', a lecturer in sociology at La Trobe University predicted in 1970. In the early 1970s Sol Encel actively campaigned to introduce social science into NSW secondary schools. The movement had little success, due to the organised strength of history and geography teachers and the disrepute of social studies/social science as school courses.¹⁰

For a few years, however, quite a few of the more highly qualified graduates in sociology found employment in colleges of advanced education, lecturing to students in the teacher-preparation courses.

The New Sociology of Education Reaches Australia

The arrival at Monash of Peter W. Musgrave as Professor of Sociology in 1970 was an important stimulus to the sociology of education. Musgrave, who had been senior lecturer in sociology at

Aberdeen, had established his reputation as a functionalist by his book *Sociology of Education* (1965). But a British academic translated to an alien Australian environment at a time when new ideological currents were sweeping through sociology faced a serious challenge, and Musgrave's response in his numerous subsequent writings was disappointing. His *Society and the Curriculum in Australia* (1979), for instance, suffered from inadequate knowledge of the Australian tradition in the curriculum and from the assumption that developments in Victoria were characteristic of those in Australia generally. 11

The earliest sociology of education textbooks published in Australia were collations of articles on social aspects of education. In 1970 F. M. Katz and R. K. Browne edited *Sociology of Education*, 'a book of readings pertinent to the Australian education system'. Katz was Director of the Tertiary Education Research Centre of the University of New South Wales; Browne was senior lecturer in education at the University of New England. A new version in 1976 was edited by R. K. Browne, now head of the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations, Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education, and D. J. Magin, senior education officer, Tertiary Education Research Centre, University of New South Wales. A third edition appeared in 1983, edited by R. K. Browne and Lois E. Foster. Dr Browne was now secretary of the Australian Education Council (i.e. the conference of ministers for education); Dr Foster was senior lecturer in sociology, School of Education, La Trobe University. The items in these collections changed even more than the editors.

The first sociology of education book which was not a book of readings appeared in 1974. *A Guide to the Sociology of Australian Education* was written by R. K. Browne (still at Darling Downs), L.E. Foster (then at the University of Alberta), and W. S. Simpkins (a graduate of Alberta then at New England). It had an introductory section on theory, but was primarily a collection of disparate study units three on 'Education in Social Context', seven on 'The Socialisation Process', three on 'Social Aspects of Schools and Schooling', and three on 'Contemporary Educational Issues'. It was not till 1981 that Lois Foster's *Australian Education* provided a coherent, theory-based survey. These textbooks were prepared by people on the periphery of academiain colleges of advanced education or in the smaller, newer universities.

Some major contributors in Australia to the sociology of education were primarily sociologists. They included Sol Encel of the University of NSW and Don Edgar of La Trobe. Bob Connell and Rachel Sharp, also academic sociologists, specialised more thoroughly in education. Two writers who were primarily educationists

were Lois E. Foster of La Trobe and Helen Praetz, lecturer in the sociology of education at Monash University.

The concern of the new sociology with inequality was matched by a similar concern in the sociology of education. Yet for many decades Australian education had been marked by considerable social and economic equality. Equality of opportunity had been facilitated by the establishment of state secondary schools, the abolition of fees, the provision of scholarships, and the spread of a more 'accessible' subjects in the curriculum (e.g. the decline of Latin, the rise of history). In the late 1950s the argument about comprehensive secondary schools suggested a new concept of egalitarianism. The emergence of a pluralist society in the 1970s produced a new egalitarianism. The decay of ideological consensus facilitated sociological interest in the educational disadvantages of minority groups. The growing importance of special interest groups gave the pluralist society what might be called a corporative character.

Two books published in 1970 formulated the issue of equality in education and society *Rights and Inequality in Australian Education*, edited by P. J. Fensham of Monash University, and *The Myth of Equality*, published by the National Union of Australian University Students and written by Tom Roper. The first, a collection of papers by 11 Victorian academics, almost all at Monash, presented a variety of positions. As we have already noted in chapter five, Roper identified ten educationally handicapped groups and attacked the dominance of middle class teachers, middle class values, and a middle class curriculum in Australian schools.

One of the earliest harbingers of a new type of Marxist educational theory was the mention in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 24th May 1971, of a Communist Party document stating that 'revolutionary-minded teachers should present to students the need and possibility of socialist revolution . . . the role of education under capitalism is in essence that of a transmitter of bourgeois ideology'. The following year a more sophisticated exposition of the new theory was provided by Doug White, lecturer in education at La Trobe University and co-editor of the Marxist journal *Arena*, in his chapter on 'Education and Capitalism' in *Australian Capitalism*, edited by John Playford and Douglas Kirsner. The classical Marxist view, said White, was that educational institutions formed part of the social superstructure 'and must be smashed'. The new view was that they were also part of the productive mechanism and can be transformed. The white-collar class was a new section of the working class 'whose ideas and values have been gained in intellectual production'. Published by Penguin

Books in 1972, *Australian Capitalism* achieved a wide circulation, going through several editions. 12

The first large-scale conference on the sociology of education was held at La Trobe University in November 1972, attended by over 160 people. It had four main themes: Minority groups and the schools; Money, politics and teachers; The school's structuring of experience; and What is the sociology of education? This reflected contemporary concerns: the developing pluralism of special interest groups, radical politics, the sociology of knowledge, and the clarification of academic interpretations of these matters. The organiser of this conference, Dr Donald E. Edgar, published a book of readings based on many of the conference papers in 1975.¹³ His introduction closed with the words: 'The sociology of education, then, is *a study of cultural power*'. And, indeed, most sociologists of education did regard formal schooling as a source of power rather than education. Conveniently, this made it unnecessary for them to have a profound knowledge of the history of education, the philosophy of education or, for that matter, the practicalities of classroom life.

The report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, May 1973, *Schools in Australia* (the Karmel Report), committed the Commonwealth Government to an effort to rectify educational inequality and gave official recognition to the needs of the special interest groups, the 'disadvantaged' groups. The inclination of this report was towards progressive education. The first report of the Schools Commission, June 1975, asserted its concern with three major themes: 'The first is equality: an emphasis on more equal outcomes from schooling, laying particular stress on social group disparities and attempts to mitigate them, and on social changes and their effects on desired outcomes'. The second was to encourage 'more open attitudes' an echo of open education. The third was 'maximum freedom' for schools to address their problems. The second and third objectives were inherently hostile to the old dispensation. But the report distanced itself from neo-Marxist theories, describing as 'romantic nonsense' the argument that the development of effective English usage and intellectual competency were 'simply attempts by one group to impose its culture on others . . . there is nothing necessarily middle class about logic, mathematics, science, art . . .'¹⁴ It might have added that a middle-class genesis would not, of itself, invalidate logic, mathematics, science, or art.

Though the neo-progressives were strong in the new commonwealth educational bureaucracy, the radicals or neo-Marxists generated a more vigorous educational theory. Neo-Marxism mounted its challenge with a conference on 'What to do about

Schools' in Sydney in June 1976, attended by 700 people. The principal speakers were the American economists Bowles and Gintis of the University of Massachusetts, whose recent *Schooling in Capitalist America* had gained them a reputation as theorists of radical education, and an English political scientist, Rachel Sharp, co-author of *Education and Social Control*. Sharp attacked progressive education. Dean Ashenden and Doug White were other speakers. This 'catalytic [sic] conference' clarified the distinction between the neo-progressives and the neo-Marxists. It resulted in the publication of a neo-Marxist educational journal, *Radical Education Dossier*. 15

The influence of phenomenology in the sociology of education was much less than that of neo-Marxism. Lois Foster of Armidale College of Advanced Education wrote approvingly of phenomenology in 1976, though emphasising the various categories included in the term. She accepted Schultz's principle that social reality is constituted by meanings which the actors give to their actions. She welcomed phenomenology as a questioning 'of the normative paradigm'. It was concerned with the sociology of the school, helping those in schools to see them as different and temporary worlds. It scrutinised aspects of schools previously neglected and exposed sociological workers in education to immediate aspects of school experience. Izabel Soliman, part-time lecturer at the Centre for Curriculum Studies, University of New England, argued in *The Australian Journal of Education* in 1977 that the decentralisation of educational policies meant that more teachers and, to a lesser degree, students, were likely to be involved in the development of curricula. Phenomenology provided a theoretical basis for 'interactive' curriculum development. She claimed that Berger and Luckman's *The Social Construction of Reality* (1972) had encouraged the influence of phenomenology in sociology and that Young's *Knowledge and Control* (1971) and Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972) encouraged it in education.

A phenomenological approach to education suggests the role of the philosopher for the teacher, in as much as he is involved in seeking knowledge rather than only transmitting established knowledge, and in questioning the knowledge he possesses, the methods used to acquire it and the means used to communicate it . . .

While assuming the role of the philosopher, the teacher appreciates the student's need to do the same. Teachers and students, therefore, embark on the task of inquiry and criticism together, as collaborators.¹⁶

The unreality of this in the context of the Australian school of the 1970s was breathtaking. The assumptions about the quality and motivations of the average teacher and the average student were naive, as were the assumptions about the validity of school-based curriculum and the failure to consider the wishes of parents, employers or society at large.

Sociology of education was far more popular, in terms of staff employed, courses offered, and students enrolled, than the philosophy of education or the history of education. A survey in 1979 found that more than 62 institutions and 209 lecturers were teaching the sociology of education. Information provided by 58 teachers in 15 universities, 40 colleges of advanced education and three other types of institution found four major approaches or theoretical positions:

Table 7.1: Major perspectives in the Sociology of Education, 1979

		Percentage
Issue-centred (20) and Eclectic (3)	23	39.7
Structural-functionalist	14	24.1
Interpretive	12	20.7
Marxist	9	15.5

As defined for this survey, issue-centred and eclectic approaches were ones concentrating on practical educational problems, which were often grouped into themes. It was strongly interested in Australian education and, one would imagine, would be popular in CAEs. The structural-functionalist approach, or 'traditional' sociology, used a 'neutral' methodology, stressed scientific method and statistical measurement, and distinguished facts from values. The interpretative approach, made popular by M. F. D. Young, favoured continuous critical questioning of accepted situations, regarded knowledge as socially constructed, accorded significance to the relativist or subjective views of individuals, and was sceptical of absolute standards. It could encompass phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, and other trends. The Marxist or radical approach associated educational improvement with increased economic democracy.

The respondents listed 29 different topics they taught, producing a grand total of 198 topics. 'Socialisation' was the most popular, being mentioned 28 times. 'The school' was listed 20 times, as was 'equality'. 'School knowledge' shared fourth place with 'teachers-students', both being mentioned 13 times. 'Subgroups' (multiculturalism, etc.) was taught in 9 courses, as was 'ideology and power'. Topics such as 'culture and values' or 'stratification' were provided in 6 or fewer courses.

Out of 80 major areas of interest or research listed by the lecturers multiculturalism (minority groups, women, Aborigines) came first, being mentioned 14 times, followed by inequalities in education, mentioned 13 times. School-community relations and theory and practice (in organisations, sociology of knowledge,

ethnomethodology, conflict) came next, both with 10 nominations. Curriculum was mentioned eight times.

The 58 lecturers who responded to the 1979 survey named 180 highly recommended textbooks. Greatest emphasis was on books related to Australia and to educational issues. Browne and Magin's 1976 *Sociology of Education* was listed 12 times; M. D. Shipman's *The Sociology of the School*, 11; and Browne, Foster and Simpkins' *A Guide to the Sociology of Australian Education*, 10. Two American texts, Cosin et al., *School and Society*, and Karable and Halsey's *Power and Ideology in Education* were both listed eight times. Two books each listed seven times were O. Banks, *The Sociology of Education* and D'Urso and Smith, *Changes, Issues and Prospects in Australian Education*. Bowles and Gintis and P. W. Musgrave each scored six mentions.

Books with a functionalist bias had a clear lead, with 40 responses. The interpretive paradigm received only nine mentions. But much of the interpretive material was still in the form of articles. The Marxist interpretation was also largely found in articles. Another interest was in the theme of alternative schools and future education. 17

The *Australian Education Index* provides a rough measure of the growth of the sociology of education by the number of items: journal articles, books, book reviews and so on. It lists in that category each year. In 1969 one item appeared under 'Education, Sociology' and a second under 'Sociology, Educational'. As this suggests, the category was not yet sufficiently important to be properly organised. In 1970 four items appeared under 'Sociology, Educational'. This had climbed to nine by 1975. The big jump occurred between 1978 with 21 items under 'Educational sociology' (plus eight under 'Educational Anthropology') and 1979, when 124 items appeared, 6.6 per cent of the total of 1887 items listed in the *Index*. By 1985 items listed under Educational Sociology numbered 223, or 5.6 per cent of all items. This was the second peak (after 1979). Henceforth the proportion of items in Educational Sociology dropped steadily.

Sociology of Education and the Special Interest Groups

From 1974 onwards the various special interest groups exerted a powerful influence on Australian education. Some of these groups overlapped, some were more powerful than others, and their relative impact varied over time. Neo-Marxism (institutionalised in small political sects and their journals) must be considered one of the special interest groups. The radicalised teachers' unions (sometimes under neo-Marxist leadership) were a second. Apart from

these two, the major active groups of significance for education were the feminists, the Aborigines, and the ethnic groups. Homosexual activists had a fluctuating impact on education (personal development courses were flourishing; AIDS education was to come later). Environmentalists slowly increased in importance; but their time was still to come. The earliest textbooks in the sociology of education assembled a variety of sociological interpretations relevant to the educational concerns of some of the special interest groups.

Sociological analyses of the education of girls and women were given a boost in 1975, International Women's Year, which generated funds and heightened motivation. The report sponsored by the Commonwealth Schools Commission, *Girls, School & Society*, opened the way. A flood of articles followed. Most writers on the sociology of the education of girls and women were not academics. The articles, books and reports came from government-sponsored committees of enquiry or from 'action research' by individuals, schools, regional projects and equal opportunity consultants. 18 The writers tended to be protagonists, whose basic premises ensured the nature of their conclusions.

Aboriginal education was avoided by academic educational sociologists, as Professor P. W. Musgrove of Monash noted in 1982.¹⁹ Collections of readings neglected this area; the field was left to popularly written journal articles. In 1982 Keith McConnochie, senior lecturer in the School of Education at Flinders University, commented on the absence of serious debate on fundamental issues in Aboriginal education. Until recently, the social sciences had exerted a minimal influence on Aboriginal education. Only psychology had played some part. He believed a principal reason was that 'the acceptance of assimilationist goals have powerfully predisposed educators towards the interventionist, person-changing programmes of psychologists'. Discussion in the 1970s had been concerned with criticising social and political aspects of equality and Aboriginal education.

These discussions have had very little impact on Aboriginal education, partly because the debate has been conducted around the theoretical implications, interpreted within sociological theory, rather than in terms of any direct implications for education: partly because those concerned with Aboriginal education do not interpret their role within a socio-political framework, and so find little of relevance in these discussions.²⁰

The official shift from assimilationist to integrationist policies in 1966⁷² did not, in fact, produce any substantial change in policy, said McConnochie. Aborigines were still expected to modify their behaviour, values and skills. The concepts of 'cultural deprivation' and 'compensatory education' were transferred from North America

to Aboriginal education. But, apart from a hint about 'meaningful communication with Aboriginal people', McConnochie failed to suggest an alternative position. Perhaps academic investigators were deterred by the great diversity of social groups within the Aboriginal community, the lack of well-educated Aboriginal leaders, or the political sensitivity of the subject.

On the other hand, sociological analysis of the education of various ethnic groups was of higher calibre. One reason was that many ethnic groups were well represented in higher education. Jean Martin's study, *The Migrant Presence* (1978) had a historical-sociological approach; she had learnt her sociology in the 1950s and 60s. Education was only one of this book's concerns, though a major one. J. J. Smolicz, whose *Culture and Education in a Pluralist Society* was published in 1979, was prominent in the sociology of ethnic education. Brian Bullivant provided in *The Pluralist Dilemma in Education* (1981) a sound survey of multicultural education in Australia and five other societies. Dr Lois Foster, now senior lecturer in Education at La Trobe University, provided *Diversity and Multicultural Education: A Sociological Perspective* in 1988. This was written at a moderate academic level, appropriate for a university textbook. The author tried to combine a macro-sociological view (regarding 'Australia's system of formal education as a crucial indicator of power and social control in action') with a more subjective picture. 21

Alongside the new special interest groups, older traditional education pressure groups persisted, though with reduced influence. Catholic educationists seemed unable to produce any sociological analysis of their own school system or of Australian education in general. *Dialogue*, a Catholic-oriented magazine, which ceased publication in December 1976, reprinted in its last issue Rachel Sharp's critique in *Radical Education Dossier* of 'free schools', in which she attacked their overconcern with process in education and neglect of content. Yet the same issue carried a review of Sharp and Green's *Education and Social Control* reproving the authors for their Marxism, suggesting that in fact they were following Michael Young's lead in *Knowledge and Control*, and that they should consider school structure not in *a priori* Marxist terms but in psycho-sociological ones.

A sociological study of aspects of Catholic education by Helen Praetz, *Building a School System: A sociological study of Catholic Education*, appeared in 1980. This was, in fact, a historical discussion of the rise of the Catholic Education Office in Victoria. Praetz says in her introduction that the work rests on the conceptual frameworks of Max Weber for a Catholic a rather safer

guide than Marx! She gave particular attention to ideology and control in Catholic education.

Teachers' unions also constituted a pressure group. In some states, particularly Victoria which was in the lead in the new education, the ideological activists in teachers' unions used their journals, conferences and union officers to endorse the new sociological theories. Bill Hannan, a leader of the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association, participated in innovative school and classroom techniques in the early 1970s and attempted to provide a garment of theory for these. He accepted some neo-Marxist views of schooling. As editor for 13 years of *The Secondary Teacher*, published by the VSTA, Hannan encouraged the new radicalism in Victorian state education. Subsequently he developed a reputation in radical teacher circles for his writings about the 'democratic' curriculum a collection of his articles were published jointly by George Allen & Unwin and the VSTA in 1985 under the title *Democratic Curriculum*. He was eclectic about theories.

John Freeland's earlier work was described by Whitty as 'among the less helpful modes of neo-Marxist analysis'. He successfully made the transition from 'a fairly crude version of Althusserian analysis' (exemplified in an article on 'Class struggle in schooling MACOS and SEMP in Queensland' in the revolutionary Marxist journal *Intervention* in 1979) to a concern with political and professional practice ('Where Do They Go After School?', in *The Australian Quarterly*, a more academic publication, in 1981). Whitty remarked that his earlier work was carried out when he was a trade union official and his later work when an academic (a tutor in social work at the University of Sydney), underlining the relative fluidity of the boundaries between these contexts, in contrast with the British situation. Perhaps it also indicated the sensitivity of some ideologues to their environment! 22

The Sociology of Education and Teacher Preparation

Reflecting on the early 1970s Dr Brian Bullivant of Monash University wrote, 15 years later:

I can still recall taking a tutorial in sociology of education at the Diploma in Education level during 1974 and at the first meeting asking students to state why they wanted to become teachers. One of them leaned back in his chair, put extremely dirty bare feet on the table in front of me and stated with expletives which need not be reproduced here that he had no intention of teaching but had joined the course with the aim of gaining access to schools in order to wreck the Victorian education system. He was not unique.

Bullivant also criticised the fashion for micro-sociological class-

room and school-based research using phenomenological and symbolic interactionist models, which maintained that classrooms were places where individuals developed their 'selves' and that the study of this process necessitated fine-grained analyses of teacher-student interactions. Influenced by the ideas emanating from the Open University, 'many of us in teacher education at that time paid obsequious deference . . . to overseas theories associated with the "new sociology of education" without appreciating the pernicious effects on educational standards that could result'. 23

Of course the majority of trainee teachers were not highly radical. Those training at a college of advanced education were likely to be less radical than those at a university. And those in Tasmania or Queensland were likely to be less radical than those in Victoria, South Australia or New South Wales.

Initially problem-centred courses in teacher training institutions acquired their sociological character through attention to educational problems associated with the older groups (e.g. the family, the churches, social class) and the new special interest groups (e.g. the ethnic groups). True, Browne *et al. Guide to the Sociology of Australian Education* had a preliminary theoretical section, 'Sociological Frameworks and their use in the Analysis of Australian Education'. But these 70 pages were not a necessary basis for the 130 pages given over to the 16 study units. Problem-centred courses hindered the development of the sociology of education as a systematic, theoretical analysis of the relations between social structure and educational practice. In these early years teacher training institutions provided the stronghold of the sociology of education.

By the mid-1970s universities were beginning to develop a more theoretical sociology of education. Almost immediately, debate started about the relevance of the sociology of education to teacher training. The dichotomy between the practical, problem-centred approach and the theoretical, academic approach weakened sociology of education as a discipline.

The twofold division was discussed by Jan Branson of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at Monash in a 1980 symposium in *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*. Branson stated that the sociology of education had been pursued in the 1970s by two quite distinct groups: sociologists working within the context of education faculties and colleges (whom she called the educationalists) and sociologists who had pursued research into education but not exclusively so (whom she called the sociologists). The first group had little awareness of sociological theory and had been concerned with education, with little reference to the rest of society.²⁴ It would, in fact, be more accurate to identify three groups: (1) sociologists of education in

teacher training colleges and colleges of advanced education. These had close contact with the schools but their heavy lecturing load prohibited much research. The modest quality of most of their students also discouraged much engagement in theory; (2) sociologists of education in university departments of education. These had more leisure but rather less contact with schools and may or may not have felt at home with theory. University departments of education sometimes benefited from their ability to recruit lecturers from training colleges; (3) sociologists in university departments of sociology. These also had leisure but, lacking close contact with schools, were stronger on theory than school reality.

The sociology of education provided jobs and research opportunities for lecturers. But did it contribute anything to the trainee teachers? Donald Edgar, then reader in Sociology at La Trobe University, stated in 1974 that sociology of education must ask: Who designs the education system as a whole? Whose ends is it supposed to serve? If it is to help in the education of teachers sociology must show 'how tenuous, unnecessary, malleable is the social structure of the school and its effects'. These tendentious questions were followed by the warning that sociology 'must focus on what is under the teacher's control rather than on what is beyond it'. 25

Two years later two academics at La Trobe, Patricia Daine, a Canadian graduate and research assistant, and Lois Foster, a lecturer (with Canadian experience) in the School of Education, remarked that the sociology of education 'has not always provided the valuable insights into the educational system that would justify its inclusion in courses for prospective teachers'.²⁶ They suggested five contributions the sociology of education could make to 'teacher education'

1. Sociology of education identifies and elaborates characteristics of the population that encourage or prevent learning.
2. It draws attention to the importance of institutional arrangements in the causation of individual strain.
3. It develops an understanding that things are not what they seem.
4. The results of sociological inquiry into interaction in the classroom have an implicit bearing on strategies of teaching.
5. It offers teachers-in-training theoretical and methodological contributions to the lifelong task of reflection on the full meaning of their work as educators.

The remarkably high resignation rate of teachers until about 1975 might have given cause for hesitation over point 5.

A strong centre of the new sociology of education developed at Deakin University in Geelong, Victoria. This university, based on the merger of a teachers' college and a technical college, commenced teaching in April 1977. Richard Bates, who came as senior lecturer from Massey University, New Zealand, in 1979, was an

able exponent of neo-Marxist ideas. His earliest commitment had been to educational psychology, but he discovered the new sociology of education while at London University, 1976-77. At Deakin the old teacher-training sociologists of education were rapidly replaced by new staff with academic outlooks. Bates was appointed to a chair in 1985. Many leading luminaries of the new sociology of education visited Deakin: Michael Apple from America in July 1983; Henry Giroux from Canada in 1984; Geoff Whitty from Britain soon after. Deakin University Press became a significant source of publications on the new sociology of education.

La Trobe University was another important centre. The 1981 University Calendar reveals a strong Sociology Department in the School of Social Sciences, but the books set for reading suggest an interest in traditional sociology (structural-functionalism) with only a moderate interest in Marxism. By contrast, the School of Education, made up of six centres, was well-stocked with neo-Marxists and feminists, particularly in the Centre for the Study of Innovation in Education and the Centre for the Study of Urban Education.

Monash was a third Victorian university in which the new sociology of education was strong. Here, too, the Faculty of Education sponsored visits by overseas exponents of the new sociology: Bourdieu came in the mid-1970s, Michael Apple of Wisconsin was welcomed as an expert on the politics of the curriculum in July-October 1983. Conservatives were less welcome. In 1977 the Faculty of Education had to withdraw an invitation to Professor A. Jensen of California 'in view of the fear that a hearing could not be guaranteed to him on campus'. 27

Australian Neo-Marxist Sociologists of Education

The confident brashness of the early neo-Marxists was epitomised in *Class, Sex and Education in Capitalist Society* (1979) by two Monash academics, Jan Branson and Donald Miller. It carried the formidable subtitle 'Culture, Ideology and the Reproduction of Inequality in Australia'. It centred on an in-depth study of Melbourne adolescents, which was felt to be relevant not only to the rest of Australia but, indeed, to the Western world. The authors advocated equality, especially as regards class and sex, but presented their case in terms of the 'reproduction' theory, already becoming suspect in radical circles:

The whole education system operates to ensure that inequalities fundamental to capitalist production in particular those based on class and sex are constantly being reproduced. Social stratification in Australia does not exist despite the provision of 'free, secular and compulsory' schooling, but essentially because of it.

MAKING THE DIFFERENCE

Schools, Families and Social Division



R.W. CONNELL, D.J. ASHENDEN, S. KESSLER, G.W. DOWSETT

Figure 7.1:

A radical interpretation of educational differences

Bob Connell and three colleagues undertook a research project in 1977 involving interviews with 424 students, parents, teachers, and school principals. Their book, published by George Allen & Unwin in 1982, became highly influential in teacher training courses. Its major concern was social inequality, which the authors linked with the 'reproduction theory' of education.

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This is, of course, a gross over-estimation of the power of schooling, even in the era of the white-collar class, when education had gained some importance for economic and social status.

The authors saw a direct nexus between economics and education. They believed that sociology should not only be concerned with inequality but, linking theory and practice, with political action.

The sociology of education should not be a field of inquiry concerned simply with the social organization of formal education or with the sociology of knowledge. The sociology of education is as economic and political as any other examination of aspects of the social process: the problems of the educational system are, when traced to their roots, essentially economic, demanding political action for their solution. 'The humane purpose of sociology' thus becomes the revelation of the root causes of the inequalities which permeate our society, with an orientation towards political action. 28

This was a reductionist version of Marxism, presenting an over-simplified, mechanical and universal explanation ('essentially economic'). The purpose was negatively to expose the sinister role of education in capitalist society. The passing sneer at humanism was aimed at earlier approaches to sociology and, indeed, reflected on the humanism of such a Marxist historian of education as Brian Simon.

Rachel Sharp, an English sociologist, made her Australian debut at the 1976 Radical Education Conference in Sydney. She had just accepted an appointment in the School of Education at Macquarie University. 'I began to think of myself as a Marxist for the first time within two weeks of my arrival', she later confessed. Her talk at the conference, 'Is Progressive Education the Alternative?' was printed in the first issue of *Radical Education Dossier*, October 1976. In *Education and Social Control* (1975), written with Anthony Green, she had rejected both structural functionalism and the new sociology of knowledge in favour of Marxism and had critically analysed progressive primary education in terms of power and the social consciousness engendered in teachers. But this examination of an English primary school found that teachers used psychological, not social, labels for children. Her major book, *Knowledge, Ideology and the Politics of Schooling: Towards a Marxist Analysis of Education*, was published in 1980. The first half of the book was a critique of classical and contemporary theorists in the sociology of education; she analysed Bernstein and Young and dismissed Bourdieu's theories as disguised liberalism, not Marxism. In the second half of the book she provided a Marxist theory of ideology, arguing that through ideology the school reproduces the social relations of production. Unfortunately her approach was becoming outdated as she wrote, while the only specific examples she gave applied to British education. As Doug

White noted, she was saved from an endless search 'for the perfect conceptual structure' by the fact that she had 'a pretty firm idea of what this is before she started'.²⁹ Sharp emphasised the importance of political action by educationists; indeed, she later wrote analyses for segments of the educational bureaucracy. She sought to be more authentically Marxist and joined the post-1978 reaction against neo-Marxism and towards classical Marxism.

Kevin Harris, senior lecturer in the School of Education at the University of New South Wales from 1974 and a co-founder of *Radical Education Dossier*, was a philosopher of education who wandered into the sociology of education. Unlike many sociologists he had practical experience, having taught in state primary and secondary schools before becoming a lecturer at Sydney Teachers' College in 1969. Yet his writings reveal little benefit of this contact with school reality. His *Education and Knowledge: the Structured Misrepresentation of Reality* was published in London by Routledge and Kegan Paul in 1979 and *Teachers and Classes: A Marxist Analysis* by the same publishers three years later. In *Education and Knowledge* Harris, like many neo-Marxists, denied the possibility of objective knowledge. All knowledge is ideological. He shared the Bowles and Gintis correspondence or replication theory. 'In a capitalist society education simply produces a particular consciousness: one suited to the capitalist mode of production'. Fortunately, Harris himself had escaped this influence.³⁰ An English writer on critical theory and education, Rex Gibson, commented in 1986:

He writes glibly, with barely a qualification, of 'the working class', and 'capitalists', as if their existence and composition was certain, and unambiguous.

Harris' strictures on education under capitalism are applicable to formal education in *any* society. Schools in every society support the existing system in the sense that no society maintains schools whose expressed concern is to alter that society beyond recognition . . .

Harris has, indeed, a touching (but misplaced) faith in the efficacy of the education system . . . He totally discounts the fact that pupils have a life outside school, and that such a life often provides experience that quite counteracts 'school ideology.'³¹

Harris believed his *Teachers and Classes* (1982) to be 'the first sustained Marxist analysis of the role and function of teachers under contemporary state capitalism' though such books were appearing in England in the late 1970s. The book's concern with teachers, rather than schools or educational theory, protected it from the worst excesses of neo-Marxism. Two introductory chapters on 'teachers and education' and 'classes and class struggle' cleared the way for surveys of the economic, political and ideologi-

cal situation of teachers, and their class location. In the final chapter, 'Revolutionary strategy for teachers', Harris argued that schooling in corporate capitalism was inimical to education, that true education was inimical to capitalism, and that teachers, whether they knew it or not, were participants in a class struggle.

Professor R. W. Connell, of the Department of Sociology within the School of Behavioural Sciences at Macquarie University, was in the front rank amongst writers on the sociology of education. His educational writings started with *The Child's Construction of Politics* (1971). *Making the Difference* (1982), with Dean Ashenden, Sandra Kessler and Gary Dowsett, was based on a number of case studies. A later fruit of this project was *Teachers' Work* (1985).

Connell's Marxism has been described as unconventional in its emphasis on childhood socialisation rather than industrial socialisation as a major determinant of class consciousness. 32 It is significant that Bob Connell was the son of Professor W. F. Connell of Sydney University, a strong proponent of progressive education from the 1950s to the 1970s. Thus Connell is a sociologist whose own family background was heavily educational. Another factor, of course, is that with the decline of the industrial working class and the rise of the white-collar class the family, rather than an industrial environment, seems to become more pertinent.

In *Who's Who* Connell listed his recreations as storytelling, surfing, subversion and play-dough modelling. However, Bob Connell was 'unconventional' in other ways. Most of his books incorporate interviews with boys and girls, parents and teachers. For many this made his writing more interesting. It harmonised with the more personal approach of the new era. Connell adopts Gramsci's theory of hegemony and Bourdieu's theory of reproduction but hesitantly, for even as he wrote these theories were coming under criticism by other Marxists.

The names Connell, Ashenden, Kessler and Dowsett appear on the cover of *Making the Difference. Schools, Families and Social Division* (1982). The order of listing doubtless indicates the relative contribution of each. The authors described the book as a report on a research project, some reflections on theory and method in the sociology of education, and a discussion of some issues in school reform. The central concern of the book is indicated by the title of the first chapter, 'Inequality and education'. The research, in the form of 424 interviews of students, parents, and teachers, took place in 1977 and 1978. Connell *et al.* initially accepted the reproduction theory; they note its fall from grace, but cannot quite reject it. Bourdieu's cultural capital idea 'isn't entirely absurd; it exaggerates a good insight'. The book's concept of social class is ambiguous; the authors accept a ruling class and working

class, but doubt the existence of a middle class. 33 The hegemony theory survives, in a new form:

Those who have seen schooling as a mechanism of hegemony in the society at large have usually seen it as a way in which conservative and complacent ideas are implanted in people's minds. We agree that schooling is a powerful mechanism for hegemony; but we don't think that is the main way it operates . . . In the context of the hegemonic curriculum, respect for knowledge can only be realized as competitive individual appropriation.³⁴

The book cautiously develops the idea of the 'competitive academic curriculum', more frequently termed the 'hegemonic curriculum'. This is defined in a derogatory fashion. 'The crucial features of this curriculum are hierarchically-organized bodies of academic knowledge appropriated in individual competition'. It is condemned for 'marginalising other kinds of knowledge'. It splits the school, and creates a subordinate 'alternative' curriculum.³⁵ There is no hint that the authors see any value in liberal education, in the diffusion of knowledge as an end in itself, or in a humanist-realist curriculum.

The main argument of the book may be summed up as follows:

1. Ruling class schools are organic to their class'They help to organize it as a social force; they help to give it its sense of identity and purpose; they form an integral part of its networks; they induct the young into its characteristic practices; they express common purposes and an agreed . . . division of labour between teachers and parents'. They are far from conflict-free, they are far from being the direct and immediate agents of the parents' wishes. But they are an integral part of the reproduction of class power and status.

2. Working class state schools operate in ways which are alien to their clienteleThey are competitive, academic, and deny self-esteem. They reproduce not only the subordination of the working class in capitalist society but confusion, frustration and negativism about schooling. The solution is to make 'working class schools organic to their class'.³⁶

A serious weakness in this analysis is the oversimplified classification of schools into ruling class and working class. Many children inhabit a middle ground between ruling class and working class. Another difficulty is to explain the steady shift of enrolments from state to non-state schools which started in 1977⁷⁸. The authors' interpretation carries the unlikely implication that it represents a growth in the size of the ruling class.

Although this book became the most popular text amongst left-leaning lecturers in the sociology of education, it received some criticism from classical Marxists. Doug White, who had

quickly abandoned the temptations of neo-Marxism, found the effect of the interviews charming, 'so much so that it takes considerable effort to realize that nothing at all novel is done with the stories. They are fed back into the theoretical maintenance of reproduction theory'. White chides the authors for not incorporating the revival of private schools into their analysis and for using the term 'ruling class schools' for all private schools. The theory, he says, is blurry, the interpretations are wonky, but the book is an interesting discussion of Australian schools. 37 Geoff Whitty complained that the authors too often slipped away from a consideration of important social issues, as much by stylistic sleight of hand as by careful and convincing argument. Their evasion of class analysis cost them some clarity. 'In their swift dismissal of the idea that the "middle class" is a class in the same sense as the others . . . they also avoid confronting the important question of the nature of the new middle class'.38

Connell returned more energetically to the 'competitive academic curriculum' in *Teachers' Work*, (1985). The curriculum is seen and condemned as encouraging competition and selfishness. It suits some 'kids', but alienates others. It erects a barrier between teacher and class. It generates pressure to test, grade and stream 'the kids'. Teachers who get the bottom stream face severe discipline problems. But Connell agrees that unstreamed classes have problems too.39

In his introduction Connell claims that the new sociology of education that emerged in the 1970s 'made giant strides with problems like the schools' relation to the economy and the class bases of educational knowledge', but it had little to say about teachers. In the late 1970s, however, teachers had come back into focus, especially in England. 'This study, therefore, may contribute to a general revival of interest in teachers as key actors in the social processes affecting education'. Connell seems unable to cope with the reaction against simplistic reproduction theories. He asserts that 'The doctrine that tells teachers the schools are captive to capitalism and exhorts them to get on with the revolution outside, could not be more mistaken; it is teachers' work as teachers that is central to the remaking of the social patterns investing education'.40 Older Marxists would have argued that during school hours the teacher should be neutral, undertaking his political activities before and after school. After all, parents may validly intervene if teachers overstep their designated responsibilities. There is something to be said for the older view that he who takes the king's shilling has an obligation of loyalty.

Connell straddles uneasily the variety of neo-Marxist sociological 'perspectives'. He is handicapped, like so many neo-

Marxists, by the lack of a strong historical empathy, by the fluidity of neo-Marxist views, and by the tensions inherent in attempts to reconcile empirical studies with sociological/educational theory. However, *Making the Difference* became an extremely popular textbook and its theories, often in distorted form, influenced the outlook of many beginning teachers. By 1986 it had gone through seven impressions.

The Re-Evaluation Reaches Australia

Althusser had stopped writing by the end of 1977, recognising that a new crisis had afflicted Marxism. By 1983 neo-Marxism was in disarray. The prefix 'new' quietly disappeared from the sociology of education. In the meantime, in 1975 Michael Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* had been published in France. It appeared in the United States in 1977 and in England, published by Penguin Books, in 1979. In the 1980s his cult started to gain strength.

As in England, sociologists and educationists in Australia began to reveal uncertainty of direction and purpose in the late 1970s. At the November 1981 annual meeting of the Sociological Association of Australia and New Zealand, Professor F. L. Jones commented, in a panel discussion on 'Crisis in Sociology':

It is probably fair to say that there has not been a conference of sociologists somewhere in the world during the last two decades where one or more sessions has not been devoted to some such question as The Crisis in Sociology . . . The topic has a perennial relevance partly because for many the pursuit of sociology promises a solution to deep existential problems facing us as individuals and as members of groups. But it also reflects a chronic uncertainty about sociology as a legitimate and coherent intellectual enterprise. 41

Criticism of the neo-Marxist sociology of education had increased. Geoffrey Partington of Flinders University, an Englishman who specialised in the philosophy of education, was an able and frequent analyst of feminist and neo-Marxist sociologies of education. British criticism for instance, Brian Simon in his Marx Memorial Lecture of 1977 soon reached Australia. In 1979 Dean Ashenden, a neo-Marxist lecturer at a NSW college of advanced education, attributed the victory of neo-Marxism as much to the collapse of an inadequate or non-existent theory as to the recognition of the cogency of a stronger one.

Three or four years ago there was hardly a Marxist paper to be seen at the standard academic conferences and putting a Marxist perspective required some courage. At the SAANZ Conference in August of this year, the sociology of education programme was dominated by radicals and Marxists of various stripes, and so were the discussion sessions. I had a feeling, though, that this revolution wasn't so much the achievement of a clearly superior intellectual system as the almost painless capture of a hegemonic structure,

a capacity to set out and control the terms of a discourse. Perhaps the Marxist analysis of education is in danger of becoming just another academic orthodoxy?

The Marxists who joined the universities and colleges in the late 1960s and early 1970s had a better foundation in theory and were better organised than the relatively few traditional sociologists. But their disciples in the sociology of education were often of no great calibre. In 1979 Ashenden pointed to 'signs of an early crisis in the short life of the Marxist analysis of Australian education'. 42

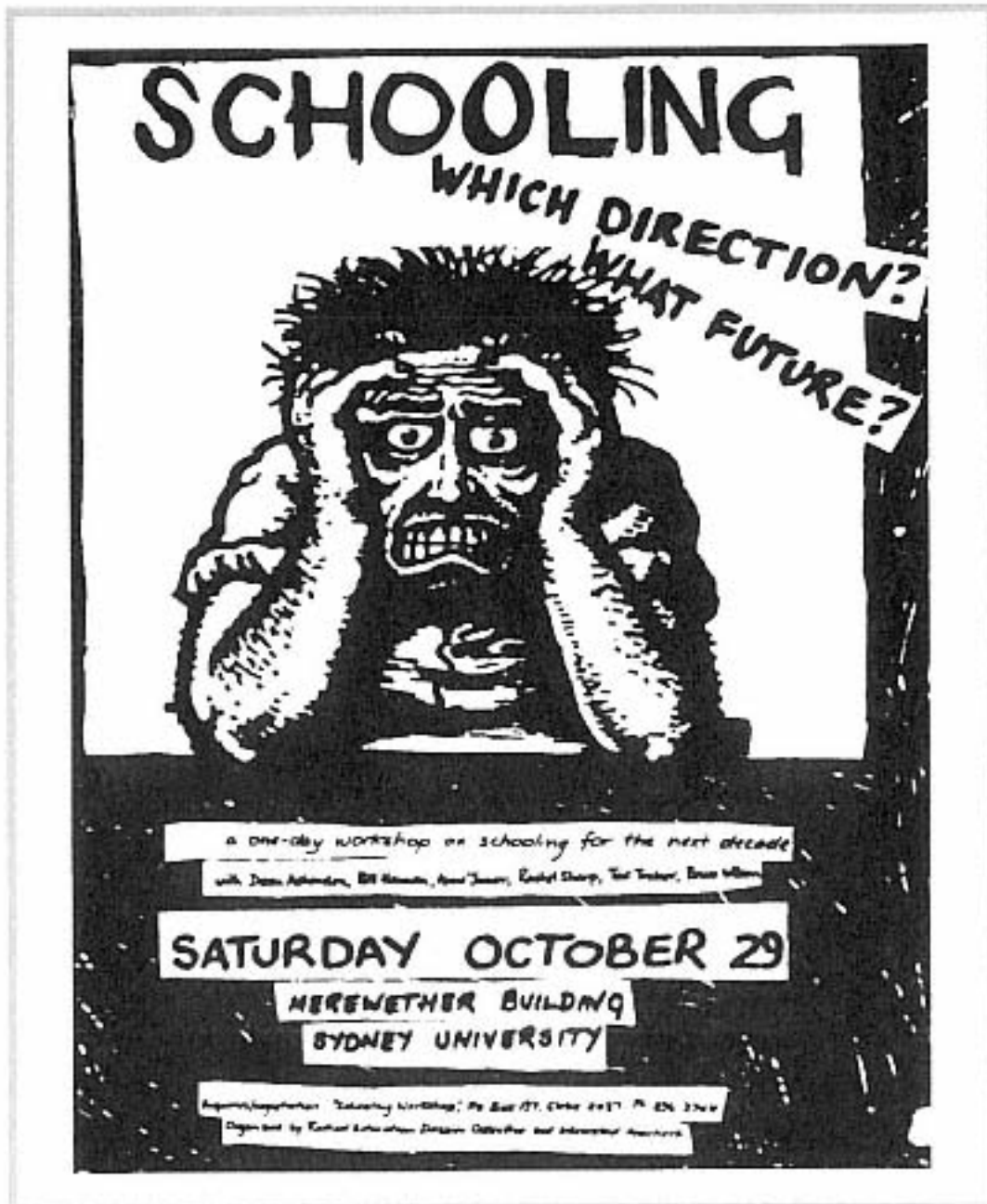


Figure 7.2:

Radical confusion over schooling

In October 1983 *Radical Education Dossier* organised a conference in Sydney on 'Future Directions in Education'. Advertised speakers included Dean Ashenden, Bill Hannan, Anne Junor and Rachael Sharp. Quite a few of the speakers had contributed to the confusion they now sought to resolve. The following year the journal changed its name to *Education Links*.

Ashenden identified some of the difficulties. While the 'human capital' theory advanced in the 1965 Martin report had been attacked by Marxists at the time, it was now being accepted as an accurate representation of capital's interests. Yet people trained in tertiary institutions very often found jobs which had little to do with their training; how could it be said that the institutions were serving the direct needs of capital? Again, why should it be assumed that the ruling class, the capitalists, had common interests and that these found expression in education? Did manufacturers need highly educated personnel? Did the mining companies? How did the various elements in the ruling classes resolve their differences and translate them into a programme for education? If the ruling class was so effective in achieving its educational aims, why did the upheavals of 1967/74 occur? 'And worst of all, if the enlarged and re-organized Australian education system was a ruling class plot, and if it did reflect so clearly the capacity of the ruling class to dominate and control, what was the point of trying to do anything about it?'

Ashenden depicted Marxists in 'a rather uncomfortable spot'.

First, teachers are rapidly consigning us to the dustbin of history. Many progressive teachers have made the acquaintance of the Marxist analysis of Australian education, and have no more time for it than they had for the other waves of left theory which have washed these shores in the past decade . . . Second, we need them more than they need us.

And he quoted a speaker at the 1979 conference of the Sociological Association of Australia and New Zealand: 'teachers are evolving their own theories and shaping an alternative pedagogy this is where the "new sociology" is really being created'.

At the 1979 Sociological conference Richard Bates of Deakin University had elaborated on the major dilemma mentioned by Ashenden. 'Many teachers presented with an analysis which saps most of the conventional justification of their activities, displays the restrictive conditions of classrooms and offers accounts of the incoherence, domination and partiality of teachers in their relations with pupils, are likely to either reject the analysis or resign in uncomfortable guilt at the damage they are doing to children'. 43

Some sociologists and educationists asserted that the sociology of education, new or old, had little or no role to play in the preparation of teachers. In 1982 Louis Murray of the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education commented on the 'crisis of legitimacy in the sociology of education'. He argued:

1. Sociology of education courses, particularly at the pre-service level of teacher training, make unrealistic intellectual demands on students.
2. The tensions within and between the perspectives of the parent discipline of sociology tend to confuse or neutralize long-standing conventional wisdom on appropriate classroom practice.

3. The 'critical' stance of sociologists produces an ambivalent relationship to social structure and to the teacher's educational responsibility.

4. The dominance of certain interests in the sociology of education (e.g. inequality, labelling, the concept of knowledge) limits its scope of enquiry and excludes some matters of concern to trainee teachers. 44

Murray was reproved by Robert Young of Sydney University, who saw no crisis in the sociology of education. Inequality was a major concern, but not a preoccupation, of Australian sociologists. 'Murray should come clean and admit that his real targets are the small proportion of Marxist sociologists of education'.⁴⁵

Brian Simon visited Australia early in 1981 and gave a public lecture at Melbourne University, 'Education in Theory, Schooling in Practice: The Experience of the Last Hundred Years', in which he criticised the over-simplification, the reductionism, of the neo-Marxists. His talk gained a wider audience by being printed in *Melbourne Studies in Education* 1982. Geoff Whitty, who also criticised neo-Marxism from a radical position, visited Australia about the same time. The radical-Marxist journal *Arena* occasionally published articles sceptical of neo-Marxist educational theory by writers such as Doug White. A crisis of nerve developed amongst the neo-Marxists. Radicals began to voice criticism of Bowles and Gintis in history of education and other journals. An editorial in the Winter 1983 issue of *Radical Education Dossier* mourned the loss of surety.

If we seem in 1983 to have lost the coherence and purity of our earlier conceptions, then we need to examine why it is so. Was the apparent simplicity gained at the expense of political reality?

The journal called a conference in Sydney on 'Future Directions in Education' (October 1983) and changed its name to *Education Links* from Summer 1984.

The insecurity of neo-Marxism in education encouraged a blurring of the distinction between neo-Marxists and neo-progressives. This was exemplified in the 1984 'Manifesto for a Democratic Curriculum', signed by Dean Ashenden, Jean Blackburn, Bill Hannan and Doug White, a disparate group.⁴⁶

Radical Interpretations Become More Sophisticated

In his 1979 address Bates proclaimed optimistically that the new sociology of education had overcome its early naivety. It was now recognising the limits, as well as the possibilities, for change. It realised that theory had to be validated within practice, and that effective practice involved political action. The revised version of the new sociology of education 'reasserts the dignity of teachers,

their importance in the achievement of human betterment, and offers grounds for rejecting the encroachment of bureaucratic controls and the mechanisation of pedagogy'. It did this by evaluating institutional practice, justifying particular educational practices, stressing the importance of the unformulated theories of teachers, and asserting the need for curricula reform. 47

Rachel Sharp attempted a more sophisticated Marxism in a 13 page roneoed discussion paper for the Disadvantaged Schools Program of the Schools Commission, *The Culture of the Disadvantaged: Three Views*. She identified three theories.

Theory 1, 'The disadvantaged are culturally deprived', had widespread support until the early 1970s. It argued that children coming from an unstable family situation often suffered from emotional impairment, lack of confidence, linguistic deprivation, and inability to acquire relevant skills. The solution was compensatory education. The main objection to this was that 'it sets up an arbitrary standard of cultural value emanating from the culture of the white middle class'.

Theory 2, 'The disadvantaged are not culturally deprived but culturally different', recognised that 'we live in a pluralistic society with a variety of groups with different cultures'. The disadvantaged should have the opportunity to learn formally their own language. 'The concept of multiculturalism summarises this approach'. But this solution reveals confusion about whether the long term goal is assimilation or co-existence. In the absence of economic and political pluralism, where power is evenly distributed among the different cultural groups, the preservation of cultural differences through education can justify continuing class or ethnic stratification.

Theory 3, 'The disadvantaged lack political and economic power and inhabit a cultural world which reinforces their subordination', is the one Sharp accepts. She argues for an objective appraisal of all cultures, 'with a view to assessing which of their various aspects are enlightening and progressive'. (But she does not suggest any criteria for this assessment.) Disadvantaged groups need an objective understanding of the roots of their condition. They should be taught, for instance, the pattern of income and property distribution, the ownership structure of Australian industry and commerce. Migrants should understand the historical role which labour migration has performed for the Australian economy. Aborigines should be made familiar with the history of black/white relations. But this cannot be imparted if the educational program tries to preserve the cultures of the disadvantaged. (This is, in effect, a recipe for a politically radical curriculum.)⁴⁸

Another contribution by Rachel Sharp to the search for a new

radical sociology of education was *Capitalist Crisis and Schooling*, a book of comparative studies of overseas educational systems which she edited in 1986. She noted the reaction against Bowles and Gintis and the confusion over what should replace their analysis. Her solution was traditional Marxism, 'the materialist primacy thesis'. But she modified this by including: (1) the need to reproduce labour power (ideology, skills); (2) the contradictions of capitalism (over-production, unemployment) which require intervention; (3) because of the class struggle, reproduction is never inevitable; (4) each country has its own history and constraints. 49

The search for a new radical sociology in the later 1970s and 1980s took place in the context of economic deterioration and growing youth unemployment. This engaged the attention of some neo-Marxists, including Keith Windshuttle, lecturer in social history and media studies at the NSW Institute of Technology. His Penguin Book, *Unemployment* (1979), came close to being a sociological analysis of contemporary Australia. His chapter on education looked at vocational education, graduate unemployment, technical education, the retention rate, and teacher unemployment. His solution remained a simple onesocialism.⁵⁰ This was still an acceptable doctrine while Labor was in opposition in the federal sphere. In March 1983, when Hawke became prime minister and as the nature of the economic crisis became more apparent, a new Labor Party program started to evolve.

Amongst the better left-wing analyses was *Confronting School and Work*, published in the Allen & Unwin 'Studies in Society' series in 1984. The authors, Peter Dwyer, Bruce Wilson and Roger Woock, were all lecturers at Melbourne College of Advanced Education. Part of their study used material from a 'community-based project'. They claimed that the results of their analysis contradicted the 'reproduction theory' explanation of the perpetuation of inequality. 'Writers such as Bourdeau (sic!), Bowles and Gintis, Sharp, and Branson and Miller exaggerate the oppressive power of schools and educational settings'. And, indeed, the book revived recently forgotten realities. 'The framework of shared meanings, standards, expectations and motives which provides the context for the interpretation of experience by working class people is qualitatively different and distinct from that of the dominant culture'. This was something that both Durkheim and Gramsci had known. 'In the case of Australia, there are good historical reasons for claiming that the working class has developed with distinct cultural traditions'.⁵¹ The next step would be to rediscover that in Australia the middle class had always been weak socially and ideologically!⁵² Indeed, the authors came close to restating this in their discussion of 'the middle class myth'.

The insecure role of the sociology of education in teacher training encouraged a constant revision of the textbooks and books of readings. Some, of course, never reached a second edition. Those which did revealed significant alterations of content. The second edition of Lois Foster's *Australian Education: a Sociological Perspective* (1987) adopted a more simplified approach, in response, she suggested, to student comments. But another reason for these changes was that the sociology of education was itself changing.

A new journal, *Discourse*, published twice a year from 1980, was a forum for a wide range of mainly left-wing social/cultural writings on educational theory. Edited by Salvatore D'Urso, it was sponsored by the Department of Education of the University of Queensland.

Was the neo-Marxism of 1971/1987 simply an unfortunate 'detour of theory' after which it reverted to classical Marxism? The world socio-political context of the 1980s suggests that the re-evaluation was more than the rectification of a mistaken sociological theory. The remarkable collapse in the late 1980s of the self-proclaimed 'Marxist' regimes of Eastern Europe promoted the disintegration of Marxist ideology throughout the West. What remained in the sociology of education was a variety of philosophical-sociological theories, reflecting the confusion of a pluralist societies in the West, frenetically promoted by a bloated academic class whose theories were often aloof from educational reality. The heritage of neo-Marxism included not only a thin stream of classical Marxism but also a shallow river of reductionist sub-Marxism. This often found expression in schools and teacher-training institutions in a crude sociological interpretation of the curriculum.

Radical Ideologues on the Road to Power

In the late 1980s many radical teachers and sociologists entered the administrative educational bureaucracy. They helped develop a new Establishment. A similar phenomenon had manifested itself in England. 53 But who was taking over whom? Was the new sociology of education becoming the orthodoxy, becoming no longer 'new'? Was this a victory, or was it an adaptation by sociologists to the state structure? In Melbourne the education editor of *The Age* commented, 3 December 1982, that one way of silencing potential critics was to appoint them to statutory authorities or overwork them in advisory committees. In 1985 Whitty claimed that:

Attempts to forge connections between sociology, curriculum studies and educational policy have perhaps been most successful in Australia. There, even the traditional discipline of educational administration has been influenced by the new sociology of education and subsequent developments.⁵⁴

Lois Foster in 1987 saw the increased use of consultants and advisers as evidence that the discipline of sociology was developing. Certainly neo-Marxists were influential in such federal instrumentalities as the Schools Commission and the Curriculum Development Centre. Radical or neo-Marxist theory was influential in Victoria, the ACT and South Australia and in the leadership of some teachers' unions. In the universities and colleges of advanced education neo-Marxist ideology spread well beyond faculties or departments of education into disciplines which in England maintained considerable immunity.

Victorian and South Australian progressives and radicals were achieving prominent positions at both state and federal levels. In Victoria Bill Hannan became a member of the Working Party on Credentials that advised the Blackburn Committee in the mid-1980s. In May 1986 he joined the administrative bureaucracy when the Labor Minister for Education appointed him chairman of the State Board of Education of Victoria. Jean Blackburn left the Communist Party in 1957. She lectured in two South Australian teachers' colleges from 1967 to 1970, was deputy chairman of the Interim Committee for the Schools Commission (Karmel Committee) in 1973, became a full-time member of the Schools Commission from 1974 to 1980 and chairwoman of the Ministerial Review of Post compulsory Schooling in Victoria, 1983-85. 55 Dean Ashenden left his academic career in New South Wales and went to Canberra, where he became ministerial consultant to the Federal Minister for Education in the Labor Government, Senator Susan Ryan.

Then there was Don Edgar who in 1963, after six years as a secondary school teacher became a lecturer in education at the Melbourne Secondary Teachers' College, moving after another six years to a senior lectureship in Education at Monash, 1970-71. He was appointed Reader in Sociology at La Trobe in 1977. In his time a radical sociologist, Don Edgar achieved respectability as a member of the social welfare bureaucracy in 1980, when he was appointed Director of the Australian Institute of Family Studies in Melbourne.

Garth Boomer was another upwardly mobile educationist. A secondary English teacher in South Australia 1962-67, he became a consultant in English, 1968-71; Principal Education Officer, 1975-79; President of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English, 1980-84; Director of the Curriculum Development Centre, Canberra, 1984-85; and Chairman of the Commonwealth Schools Commission in 1985. An advocate of progressive education in the 1970s, he modified his progressive radical views in the 1980s and, returning to the South Australian educational administration,

inclined to the fashionable instrumental approach in the late 1980s. He announced in 1984 that his study of Michel Foucault's *Knowledge/Power* (1980) had helped him review some of his 'simplistic views about power and knowledge. Foucault has helped me to understand the limitations of Althusserian determinism and to see power not as monolithic and hierarchical but as a set of "ensembles" of influence'. He recognised that it was the men on the spot, probably more than the theorists, who effected change. 'In the schools the ebb and flow of academic curriculum theorizing does not make noticeable differences. Schools keep on making some gains in some areas, while losing ground in others'. This moderate progress was due to the work of 'strugglers, actors, politicians, parents, teachers, academics and assorted mavericks and opportunists'. 56

Neo-Marxism in Other Areas: Nurse Training

The influence of neo-Marxism was not, of course, limited to education studies. It found expression in a range of university and college of advanced education disciplines. We have already noted this in considering the changes of the period 1967-74. Accordingly, it is sufficient here to consider only one parallel area where neo-Marxist or radical ideology found expression, nurse education.

As nurse training moved from its base in hospitals to one in colleges of advanced education, it became more accessible to sociologists and social scientists. In 1971 Victoria opened the first college three-year course for nurses. A Committee of Inquiry into Nurse Education and Training which reported to the Tertiary Education Commission in August 1978 recommended that training continue to be through both hospital courses and courses in colleges of advanced education. But the college share of nurse training expanded.⁵⁷ For the nurses this provided upward social mobility. For the colleges it bolstered enrolments at a time when the number of trainee teachers was falling. And for state governments it provided financial relief, for while the state financed hospital services, it was the Commonwealth which financed CAEs. In New South Wales all hospital-based training was phased out from the beginning of 1984. In August 1984 the Federal Government accepted the reality and announced that all nurse-training would be transferred to CAEs by 1993.

The typical range of topics in first-year sociology courses for nurses is illustrated by Bendigo College of Advanced Education: introduction to sociological concepts; the family and social change; structured social inequality; health and illness in society; gender divisions in society; work; education; deviance; minorities

and poverty; belief systems and social theory. Courses in some institutions were more pointed. Deakin University School of Nursing included a course on 'The politics of nursing'. The course description asserted that 'little can be achieved . . . if nurses remain in a subservient position within the health care bureaucracy, or in the wider social world'.

In his *Nurse Training and the Social Science Curriculum* Dr Ken Baker commented on the great range of textbooks from Congalton's *The Individual in the Making: An introduction to sociology for nurses* and V. Navarro's American book, *Medicine under Capitalism* (1976) to Connell's *Ruling Class, Ruling Culture*. He summarised the central themes underlying one of the most widely prescribed texts for nursing students, Cherry Russell and Toni Schofield's *Where it Hurts: An Introduction to Sociology for Health Workers* (Sydney, 1986):

1. The general thesis is that the organisation of modern industrial capitalist society serves the interests of a small minority at the expense of the vast majority, particularly the working class, women and immigrants. While improvements since the Industrial Revolution have solved some health problems, they have created others.
2. The concern of the book is not poverty or suffering in themselves but inequality. Health is treated as a resource, like wealth and power. Unequal distribution is assumed to be unjust.
3. Whatever one social group gains, another must have lost.
4. A system based on private property is incompatible with the provision of decent quality health care for all.
5. The major divisions in society which determine the distribution of good and bad health are those of class, gender, ethnicity and age, in that order.
6. The superior status of doctors within the health profession is the result less of the inherent value of their superior knowledge and technique than economic and political processes.
7. The current medical model is flawed because it focuses on cure rather than prevention.
8. The current medical model is also criticised for its individualistic bias; it treats individuals rather than seeking to transform a sick society.

Ken Baker asks: 'How does an understanding of the development of capitalism in Australia or of the causes of gender inequality or of the alienation of the proletariat from the product of their labour, even if such an understanding is accurate, help a nurse to care for her patients more effectively?' His conclusion, 'that radical sociology leads not to better nurses, but away from nursing altogether, to a career in politics' 58 provides a suggestive analogy with the impact of neo-Marxism on teachers.

Summing up the New Sociology of Education

The rapid advance of the new sociology of education in Australia

was assisted by the absence of any long-established sociological tradition, of a vigorous liberal humanist sociology of education, and of a strong intelligentsia. The impressive theoretical reserves of neo-Marxist sociology, in particular, gave it considerable initial force. Yet this supremacy was brief. At the British Sociology conference of 1980 Peter Abell estimated the life expectancy of the new doctrines of the 1970s, including particular forms of Marxism, at about five years. 59 In Australia the new sociology of education did well to survive some 15 years.

The new sociology of education, of course, comprised a plurality of theories. This plurality of positions (mainly left-wing), in conflict with each other, was a theoretical weakness. A material weakness stemmed from the fluctuating but mainly declining demand for teachers after 1974.

A dominant theme within the new sociology of education was the sociology of knowledge. Another was inequality. The two could be interlinked if inequality was seen as the outcome of an alien concept of knowledge imposed on working-class children.

A gap soon became evident between the theoretical interests of the academic sociologists of education and the practical interests of teachers. To some extent, this flowed from the political concerns of neo-Marxists in contrast to the educational concerns of teachers. To some extent it reflected a division between the more academic approach in universities and the more practical in colleges of advanced education.

A persistent problem was the inability of many theorists to clearly formulate their theories. Perhaps this reflects the spreading crisis in education during the 1950s and 1960s, when the young theorists would have received their schooling. The decline of liberal humanist culture, which notably affected the study of literature and history, weakened the quality of general education. Perhaps many sociologists of education were really historians who lacked an adequate historical background. They sought to do what historians once did, but without their prolonged training and liberal education.

The erosion of the new sociology of education in the 1980s blurred the distinction between neo-progressives and neo-Marxists. The downfall of the new sociology of education was hastened by the arrival of the new instrumentalism and the absorption of many of the former radicals into the state educational administration the Ideological State Apparatus!

The new sociology of education did have an impact on both the study of education and on school practice. Its contribution to the former was more positive than to the latter. Some of the writers, notably Doug White, and some of the publications, notably

Radical Education Dossier and *Discourse*, at times contributed to a better understanding of developments in education, for instance through critiques of neo-progressive education and of the shift from content to process in the curriculum. Even the radical right could learn from neo-Marxist sociology.

Whitty claimed in 1985 that 'attempts to forge connections between sociology, curriculum studies and educational policy have perhaps been most successful in Australia'.⁶⁰ In writing this he was undoubtedly influenced by developments in Victoria. At first sight this might seem an overestimation, in view of the inability of Australian sociologists to identify an alternative curriculum; curriculum confusion continued throughout the 1980s, especially in Victoria. Their intervention produced more confusion, not less. Indeed, the new sociology of education's version of the sociology of knowledge did considerable damage to organised academic disciplines by extending the valid principle that knowledge is a social product to the invalid conclusion that knowledge produced by western culture prior to 1971 was non-educational. Yet in the late 1980s the incorporation of many radicals into the educational Establishment and the implanting of a sociological gloss into many school subjects suggest Whitty's assessment was not too astray, after all.

Yet alongside the intrusion of a sociological interpretation into a vast range of subjects, particularly the former humanities and particularly in the secondary schools, a swing against content and an emphasis on process greatly affected the curriculum, particularly in primary schools. These developments alarmed parents and ensured that the shift in enrolments from state to non-state schools which had started in the late 1970s continued throughout the 1980s. They ultimately helped provoke direct intervention by politicians and their advisers into the educational system at the end of the 1980s.

In Australia the most prestigious sociologist of education was Bob Connell. Probably the most able, however, was Doug White, who provided a steady critical analysis of trends. Don Edgar flourished modestly in a no-man's land between radicalism and official doctrine. Peter Musgrove at Monash provided a gently dissenting voice. The feminist movement, or at least the increased equality of opportunity for women over the previous few decades, nurtured a group of female sociologists of education. Jean Martin, Lois Foster, Rachel Sharp, Helen Praetz, Jan Branson and Lyn Yates are notable examples. But the feminists did not produce much in the way of educational theory.

The unimpressive quality of many Australian sociologists of education (apart from professors of sociology proper) may be

explained by several factors. One was the dilution which accompanied the rapid expansion in the number of lecturers and students. The generation entering the lecturers' ranks in universities and colleges of advanced education included many who had studied little history in secondary school, less in primary. The history they had studied was often near-contemporary history. Many sociologists of education also lacked knowledge of the history of education. Many sociologists lacked significant experience of school life. In many cases a political commitment to teachers' unions crippled their ability to recognise sociological reality. Moreover, their over-refined theoretical elaboration exceeded the understanding of many lecturers and most of their students.

The new sociologists had introduced a methodological change, one which clashed with the Aristotelian tradition in scientific method. Scientific method implied examination of facts, development of a generalisation (the inductive method) followed by application of the generalisation and confirmation or modification of it. The neo-Marxists preferred the deductive approach application of the (Marxian) generalisation, to be tested only when challenged.

A major weakness of the new sociology of education was its uncritical attitude to the new pluralist society of the 1970s and 1980s. Too often the theorists were protagonists; they rarely attempted to assess objectively the influence on education of the special interest groups, whom, indeed, they often regarded as allies. Nor did they closely scrutinise the character and influence of the white collar class, of which they themselves were members. Their major effort was directed to destroying the remnants of liberal humanist education, not to critically assessing the emerging 'multicultural' education.

Neo-Marxist theory neglected the possibility of some autonomy in education, the need to sustain the case for education in itself, irrespective of its economic or class associations. This blindness was corrected to a limited extent following the recanting of the late 1970s and 1980s. But the radical theorists found difficulty in regrouping and lost some of their adherents. What remained after the neo-Marxist phase was an eclectic radicalism incorporating many vulgarised Marxian concepts.

At the close of *Sociology and School Knowledge* Whitty implicitly conceded some strength to the assertion that the new sociology of education had betrayed working class children. Yet he nurtured the hope that the optimism of the early 1970s might be rediscovered. 61 He also recognised the increasing recruitment of social theorists into the expanding educational bureaucracy. Would the old theorists take over the new structure? And would this require the sacrifice, in whole or in part, of their radical theory?

And what affect did the new sociology of education have on the schools? Did the indoctrination attempted by some lecturers in teacher training produce significant effects on teaching methods? And if the sociology of education did leave its mark on the curriculum, how did this happen? Before considering the state of theory and practice of education today we must turn from the theory to the realities of the school performance in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Chapter Eight Education in a Pluralist Society

The Australian society of the mid-1970s to late 1980s has been variously termed 'pluralist', 'multicultural', 'corporate', or 'permissive'. A dominant social feature was the plurality of special interest groups. Political democracy was increasingly concerned with the rights of these groups rather than with the rights and duties of the individual. The use of 'multicultural' as a descriptive term emphasised the growth of ethnic cultural diversity. While this was an important feature of the new pluralist, cosmopolitan society, it was not really the essence of the matter. 'Corporate', like the other terms, suggests the importance of groups or bodies, but with an emphasis on size, as evidenced in large state corporations, large industrial corporations, large trade unions, and large media conglomerates (television-newspaper-radio).

Another term sometimes used, 'permissive', suggested a plurality of moral values. Certainly, a reduced ideological consensus characterised society. No longer did a firm dominant tradition encourage cohesion; tolerance was itself becoming a new tradition. The description 'permissive' emphasised the moral aspects of society, personal freedom, the rejection of tradition in per-

sonal behaviour, in the arts and entertainment, in the home, in the school. 1

The multifaceted character of Australian society in the 1970s and 1980s makes the analysis of the education of these years more complex than that of the 1950s and 1960s. We start with an analysis of general features of the new society, particularly the economic and social context within which older groups, notably the family, religious organisations, the state bureaucracy and the peer group, exercised their influences on education. The second part of the chapter examines the impact of the new special interest groups. Finally, we consider the effect of all these forces on the heart of education, the curriculum.

The Economic, Social and Educational Background

Economic recession, commencing about 1974, was a persistent though fluctuating element in the new social order. The recessions of 1974-75 and 1982-83 provide minor dividing points. Two political landmarks were the fall of the Commonwealth Labor Government in November 1975 and the return of Labor in 1983. The rapid social and educational change of 1967 to 1974 ceased. Unemployment was, for the first time since 1940, a major problem; this phenomenon impinged most strongly on the youth. Reduced wages were, however, not an important aspect of the deteriorating economic picture. Those in employment received good salaries. Unemployment was mainly in the private sector; state employees were protected, and their numbers continued to increase. The proportion of jobless in the 1970s 7 per cent of the workforce in 1979 was much less than the 29 per cent recorded at the peak of the Great Depression. However, because the workforce was much larger, the total out of work exceeded that in the early 1930s. Manufacturing was the worst affected 212 200 jobs were lost between 1974 and the end of 1978 while employment in community services, largely a government province, continued to grow.²

A decline in the number of births had started from 1972. However, continuing immigration disguised the inability of Australian society to reproduce itself. Nonetheless, in the 1970s the decline in births produced a decline in the school population, especially in state schools, and reduced the demand for teachers. This soon had an impact on the universities and colleges of advanced education, institutions which educated and trained teachers. The falling birth rate and continued immigration made adolescents proportionately less important in the population. The high incidence of unemployment amongst adolescents reduced their spending power and hence their economic importance.

Unemployment in the 15-19 age group rose from 12.1 per cent (May 1976) to 16 per cent (May 1978). The least educated and least skilled were the most vulnerable. In 1976 the jobless rate among those who left school at 14 was 24 per cent compared to 10 per cent for all school leavers. 3

The existence of a drug problem, particularly amongst adolescents, was now widely recognised. Marijuana, heroin and alcohol provided a form of escapism. Drug-taking spread amongst the unemployed and adolescents with low self-esteem, the habit often starting at school.⁴ Family problems were also affecting adolescents, particularly those in single-parent families; more adolescents were leaving home at an early age. A variety of aid centres opened in an attempt to alleviate this problem.

After the Liberal Party-National Country Party coalition replaced Labor in Canberra at the end of 1975, Commonwealth funding shifted away from state schools, universities and colleges of advanced education and towards non-state schools and TAFE colleges. This reflected the stronger affinities of the Liberal-National Country coalition with non-state schools, especially the corporate collegiate schools, as well as the growing importance of vocational training in a deteriorated economic situation.

Some public disillusionment with education, especially in state schools, was evident. This reduced satisfaction was accompanied by a mild reaction against neo-progressive education. The appointment in October 1974 of the House of Representatives Committee on Specific Learning Difficulties was an early expression of public concern. This committee asked the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to conduct tests of the literacy and numeracy of 10 and 15-year-olds across Australia. The ACER report was generally taken to reveal the existence of problems in Australian schools. From 1977 a shift of enrolments from state to non-state schools began. Debates in the media about educational standards underlined the political importance of education. One instance of media attention to education was the ABC Monday Conference program of 5 June 1978, in which Professor Harry Messel of the University of Sydney, Mr Van Davey, President of the Australian Teachers' Federation, and a number of other speakers locked horns over the question: 'Education: Is the system failing us?'⁵

Less favourable economic circumstances and growing discontent over the quality of schooling encouraged a reduced generosity in funding education. The Williams Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training referred in its report of February 1979 to a 'turn in the tide'.⁶ It argued that factors which had produced increased expenditure on education had changed. The proportion of those at school to those in work had fallen; the school retention

rate had slowed; the growth in the number of students in colleges of advanced education and universities had fallen; capital expenditure on these institutions had also fallen. In January 1980 prime minister Fraser complained that 'despite massively increased expenditure and lower class sizes, children were being sent out of school unable to read, write or add to an acceptable standard'.⁷ At the same time, Professor Peter Karmel who, as chairman of the 1973 Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, had injected a new impetus into reform, ruefully commented:

During the 1960s and early 1970s education was a growth industry . . . But education was oversold, both in terms of its profitability as an investment in human capital and in its capacity to produce a more equal society. Today politicians and the public all express reservations on the value of education.⁸

New forces were operating on education. While the old social groups—class, family, the churches, the state bureaucracy, the peer group, the teachers' unions—still exercised an influence, the first three were declining. The bureaucracy of educational administrators was struggling to revive its power. The peer group and the teachers' unions maintained, indeed increased, their influence. But new special interest groups—ethnic groups, feminists, neo-Marxists, Aboriginal activists and representatives of other groups classified as 'disadvantaged'—were becoming highly influential. These social groups overlapped. Thus the ethnic groups developed a bureaucracy or their representatives joined the state bureaucracy; neo-Marxists included Aborigines, teachers and feminists. This overlap produced some social cohesion, but also some tension between groups, for instance between feminists and ethnic groups.

We will look first at the weakening influence of the old groups, then at the growing influence of the new emergent groups.

Social Class and Education

The decline of the industrial working class and independent middle class was matched by the growth of the salaried middle class. Numerically, this white-collar or salaried middle class was the largest, and hence achieved some ideological and cultural dominance. Access to this class was through protracted schooling, but no particular curriculum was necessary. Credentialism, the acquisition of academic qualifications, was more relevant than mastery of specific areas of knowledge. State and Catholic comprehensive high schools served the needs of this class. While the white-collar class was better educated than the old working class, its values were vaguer, more 'flexible'. Contradictory, competing value systems developed between and often within state comprehensive

high schools, reflecting the varying characteristics of particular neighbourhoods or of different groups within schools.

The white-collar workforce grew from 1 846 500 in 1969 to 2 446 900 in 1981. The power of this force increased as it became

The Sun-Herald

SPORT and TV

PARENTS IN SURPRISE SWITCH

By PETER HARRING and TONY STEPHENS

Roman Catholic schools are attracting thousands of students away from State schools, as parents seek more traditional education methods.

Federal education authorities have found a surprising growth in the number of students enrolling at Catholic schools, compared with State schools or other private schools.

They suggest some parents may be seeking stricter discipline, more emphasis on "the three Rs" and less teacher militancy.

FULL STORY, PAGE 2

RUSH TO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Swimstar Tracey sick of having to pay, pay, pay

By ANDREW STEWART

Australia's champion swimmer Tracey Whitlock is sick of having to "pay and pay and pay" to that she can represent Australia in the Olympics.

Jockey in Cup collapse

SPECIAL: Help for the home restorer—page 137

Figure 8.1:

The drift to non-state schools

From 1977 the proportion of pupils enrolled in state schools started to decline. Across Australia 21.33 per cent of pupils were enrolled in non-state schools in 1978 and 21.79 per cent in 1979. Many middle and lower middle class families were abandoning the state systems. The swing was particularly strong in Victoria and South Australia. In NSW a Sunday paper considered the trend front page news in October 1979.

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unionised. 9 Ultimately it came to dominate the Australian Council of Trade Unions. Between 1947 and 1980 the combined proportion of the major white-collar groups professional, technical and related workers increased from about one third to about half of the total labor force. 10 This dominance was matched by the diminishing strength of the industrial working class. In the late 1970s almost 60 per cent of workers were in unions; by June 1987 only 46 per cent of Australia's 5.5 million workers were in unions. However, in the later 1980s the expansion of the white-collar or salaried middle class slowed.

The tendency of the school retention rate to rise after 1983 was partly related to the growth of white-collar occupations. The declining interest of adolescents in the skilled trades also encouraged growth in the retention rate. The influx of girls into white-collar jobs was another reason for persistence beyond the minimum leaving age. So was an increase in the proportion of children of ethnic background remaining at school. Adolescent unemployment also encouraged a rising retention rate.

The humanist-realist academic curriculum was most appropriate for those seeking entry into the ranks of the professional middle class. This curriculum was available in some state high schools, particularly the selective ones, which remained strong in Sydney, and in many non-state schools, particularly the independent corporate colleges, which were notably important in Melbourne. On the other hand, the prevalent egalitarian ideology worked against rigid class lines in school education. It was mainly at the tertiary level that differentiation now took place. The state comprehensive secondary school was at first sight non-class; but in fact these schools reflected the social character of the neighbourhood in which they were situated. While the class character of schools was less apparent than in the 1920s and 1930s, this influence still operated. The shift of enrolments from the largely free state schools towards fee-charging non-state schools reflected the anxiety of middle-class parents about the values, standards and curriculum in state schools, in which progressive education had made some headway. But in some cases the shift reflected the desire of committed Christians to safeguard the religious education of their children.

The continued need of the professional middle class for training in such specialities as medicine, law, dentistry, and architecture and the need of the employee (white-collar) middle class for training as teachers, economists, or business and governmental administrators sustained higher education in the universities in the 1970s and 1980s. 11 Advanced education more strongly vocational and technological was provided in colleges of advanced education, whose

students had a larger lower middle class or even working class component. This helps explain the higher proportion of part-time students in CAEs. 12

The Australian upper class in the early 1970s consisted of a small privileged minority of property owners and entrepreneurs. The economy was a corporate one, dominated by some 300 companies, mainly urban financial, manufacturing and retailing. The rural component was provided by mining and pastoral enterprises. Some unity was given to the upper class through the interlocking network of directorships in large companies, family friendships and intermarriage, common membership of clubs and common school backgrounds. In religion they were overwhelmingly Protestant. In the 1960s Encel found that over 70 per cent of their offspring were educated at prestigious private schools, 50 per cent at universities. Geelong Grammar; St Peter's College, Adelaide; Melbourne Grammar; The King's School, Parramatta; Scotch College, Melbourne; and Sydney Grammar were the most important private schools attended by members of the upper class. However, in the 1970s and 1980s both the middle class and the upper class lost homogeneity. Subdivisions within classes had always existed, but immigration, the rise of new entrepreneurs, and bureaucratisation helped fragment the social classes. The private corporate schools lost some of their surety. State aid made them more accessible, but state supervision brought them closer to the state schools. Their class character became less obvious. 13

Socio-economic status had most influence in the post-compulsory years of education, i.e. 16 plus. However, the influence of social class on education, including participation in higher education, was not direct and not very strong in the period 1975-1985. Fees had been abolished, student grants were available. Differing family environments were as important, often more important, than social class.

The Family and Education

The family is inevitably an educational agent, especially in the first five years of life. Caution is necessary in generalising about the Australian family structure due to differences between urban families, rural families, migrant families, and also between lower class, middle class and upper class families. Nonetheless, it is clear that in the Australia of the 1970s and 1980s the family was, by and large, in decline. Its average size was falling as the number of births declined. Divorce had become easier and more common. A remarkable phenomenon was the considerable growth of one-parent families. Within the family, child and wife abuse were, apparently,

increasing or at least the reporting of violence and abuse was increasing.

Until 1960 the size of the family had been rising, reaching a mean of 3.41 in 1956. By 1983 this had fallen to 1.94. The tendency to have the first child later in marriage increased. In 1956 the average age of a woman having her first child was 23.5 years; in 1983 it was 25.7. Between 1971 and 1975 the average number of children born to a woman throughout her child-bearing years was 2.48. By 1983 it was 1.94. 14

The disorganisation of the family is illustrated by the number of divorces and the number of one-parent families. The rate of divorce increased dramatically in the 1970s; the Family Law Act of 1975 made divorce easier by providing a single ground, 'irretrievable breakdown' of marriage. But after 1978 the divorce rate stabilised and after 1983 it appears to have decreased slightly.¹⁵ On the other hand, the number of *de facto*, rather than formal, marriages grew.

In the late 1980s 13 per cent of all families with dependent children were single-parent families. (In 1971 only 7.3 per cent were single-parent families). Nearly 90 per cent of single-parent families were headed by the mother. Approximately 12 per cent of children lived in single-parent families. Single-parent families were more common in urban areas than in rural. The average number of children in a single-parent family was 1.7, compared to 1.9 children in a two-parent family. Lone parents were more likely to have been born in Australia than to be of migrant origin. They were more likely to have left school early, to have low educational qualifications, and to be poor. Marital dissolution accounted for the majority of one-parent families. In 1982 62.8 per cent of lone parents were separated or divorced, 13.9 per cent were widowed, and 19.1 per cent had never married.¹⁶

Children from one-parent homes were likely to present discipline problems at school. Families in which both parents were working also generated educational problems. The phenomenon of latch-key children was prevalent, especially in the major metropolitan centres. For these children, television dominated their spare time. Another problem stemmed from families which did not provide an atmosphere of love and protection. Battered and neglected children appear to have increased in number, particularly in the 1980s. Groups of runaway adolescents congregated in particular suburbs of large cities. Many children growing up in a disordered family environment were unable to realise their academic potential at school.

The family structure was affected by the growing proportion of working mothers. Feminist pressures on the schools encouraged curriculum changes designed to promote new sex roles, some of

them incompatible with a strong family life. The growth of preschools and child-care centres was another consequence of the greater involvement of mothers in the workforce or of the inability or unwillingness of some parents to assume their responsibilities. The proportion of mothers of preschool children (under 6 years) who were working rose from 26 per cent in 1973 to 33 per cent in 1977 and 34 per cent in 1980. The proportion of mothers with children under 12 years of age who were working rose from 35 per cent in 1973 to 40 per cent in 1977 and 49 per cent in 1980. 17

In general, it was in large urban areas that families were most under pressure. Rural families tended to be stronger. So did migrant families. Some Catholics and many Jews retained a strong sense of family. Children of such families tended to do better at school. However, it is harder to distinguish between lower, middle and upper-class families, for class lines were not rigid, while disruption of families occurred in all classes. Religion and middle-class morality were no longer significant bonding forces for families. The spread of homosexuality and lesbianism in the 1970s also weakened family life.

Many homes now lacked the capacity to back up the educational efforts of the school. Equally, some teachers and some curricula disparaged family authority or offered values which conflicted with those of the home. In some cases, of course, these competing values were somewhat better than those of the home. Schools in Housing Commission areas, where many one-parent families lived, were notorious for their problem students. It is true that throughout Australian history there had been times when the school offered better values than those of the home. But in an age of relativism and tolerance of diversity, many teachers were hesitant about strongly endorsing particular sets of values.

The ethical problems troubling many families, as well as the general crisis in social values, encouraged the growth of personal development courses in schools. Teachers and school principals were being asked to remedy social and family problems.

The 1980s saw the revival of a phenomenon which had almost disappeared in the early years of the twentieth century formal education in the home. This was becoming known as homeschooling. Homeschooling had some support amongst fundamentalist Christian families, concerned with the moral quality of education in state schools.¹⁸ A related and stronger development, which emphasised family values, was the slowly growing number of small Christian fundamentalist parent-controlled schools. On the other hand, another social group, the peer group, was exerting an influence often strongly adverse to that of the family. We will look at these two groups in turn.

Religious Groups and Education

The Church of England was losing its dominance. Catholics were now numerically of equal importance. In 1977 a large proportion (72 per cent) of Presbyterians and almost all Congregationalists merged with the Methodists to form the Uniting Church. Another significant development was the rise in the number of people stating at the censuses that they had no religion. 19 The following table reveals the changing importance of the major groups.

Table 8.1: Major religious denominations, 1971-1986

	1976	1981 Percentage	1986
Church of England (1982, Anglican)	28	26	24
Catholic	28	26	26
Methodist (1977, Uniting Church)	7	5	8
Presbyterian	7	4	4
None or not stated	20	22	25

Thus, by 1986 Catholics constituted the largest denomination. But the second ranking creed was, apparently, agnosticism and atheism: a quarter of the population proclaimed themselves indifferent to religion.

But census figures only indicate nominal membership of denominations. Church attendance is a more accurate sign of religious commitment. Morgan Gallup polls in 1976 and 1981 asked Australians aged 14 years and over whether they had attended church in the seven days prior to the survey. The results showed that in these five years the proportion of Anglicans attending church had risen from 9 per cent to 12 per cent; the proportion of Catholics fell from 42 per cent to 37 per cent. In 1976, 16 per cent of Methodists had attended church in the previous seven days and 11 per cent of Presbyterians. In 1981, 34 per cent of Uniting Church members had attended church in the previous seven days, and 8 per cent of the residual Presbyterians.²⁰

Doctrinal differences had become less important. The reduced intensity and specificity of belief facilitated the merger of Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists in the Uniting Church in 1977. Diminished ideology also facilitated greater contact between the Catholic Church and other churches. The ecumenical spirit was a feature of the age. Yet while the Catholic Church was inclining towards principles of individual autonomy familiar to Protestantism, the small exclusive Protestant sects were growing rapidly. These changes had significance for church schools.

The Federal Labor Government had increased Commonwealth aid to church schools after the Karmel Report of 1973 and the establishment of the Commonwealth Schools Commission. A simultaneous attempt by the government to abolish aid to the leading wealthy schools was frustrated by the opposition of the Senate and of the private schools and the Catholic Church. Aid to non-state schools increased under the Fraser Liberal governments between 1975 and 1983. When Labor returned to power in 1983 it attempted to reduce aid to 41 wealthy schools. Once again the private schools and the Catholic Church joined in opposition and the move was abandoned. In August 1984 Labor introduced an extremely generous funding scheme for both state and non-state schools. This produced improved conditions in church schools, particularly Catholic ones. 21

In the later 1970s the number of church schools started to fall, though enrolments rose as state funding increased and more parents chose to send their children to independent rather than state schools. The number of Church of England schools in Australia had fallen from 101 to 99 between 1975 and 1979 and the number of Catholic from 1711 to 1694. In 1975 Presbyterian schools outnumbered Methodist 28 to 19; but after the formation of the Uniting Church the number of Presbyterian schools was considerably diminished. In the 1980s church schools increased in number, in enrolments, and in denominational diversity.

Table 8.2: Church schools in the 1980s

Denomination	1984	1987
Anglican	104	112
Baptist	19	29
Catholic	1704	1718
Jewish	16	11
Lutheran	61	68
Presbyterian	11	12
Seventh-Day Adventist	80	77
Uniting	39	43
Other (including non-denominational)	386	383
Total:	2420	2458

Most of the major collegiate schools took boarders. In 1984 201 of the 2420 non-government schools were boarding schools. Three years later the total of non-governmental schools had risen to 2458 but the number of boarding schools had fallen to 194 Catholic 71, Anglican 52, Uniting 27, Presbyterian seven, Lutheran

six, and Seventh-Day Adventist three. Twenty-eight other schools (smaller denominations or non-denominational) took boarders. Only the Anglican Church, the Catholic Church and the Uniting Church had boarding schools in all of the six states. Queensland, third largest in population and second largest in area, had 54 boarding schools, of which 25 were Catholic and ten Anglican. New South Wales, like Queensland, had a large Catholic population. New South Wales had 52 boarding schools, including 20 Catholic and 16 Anglican. Victoria, where the corporate colleges had always been strong, came third, with 34 boarding schools, but only eight were Catholic; 11 were Anglican. 22

The number of schools was not the sole measure of the strength of the Churches in education. Enrolments was another criterion. In 1976, 498 761 students were enrolled in Catholic schools, making up 16.9 per cent of all enrolments in non-state schools. In Church of England schools 50 833 were enrolled (1.7 per cent of the total). Presbyterian schools held 18 533 students (0.6 per cent) and Methodist 11 910 (0.4 per cent).²³ In the 1980s the smaller religious groups increased their educational efforts.

Table 8.3: Enrolments in non-government schools in the 1980s

	1982	1987
Catholic	546 114	584 552
Anglican	61 783	74 325
Uniting	30 371	38 462
Lutheran	8691	13 701
Presbyterian	6184	6793
Hebrew	6161	7349
Seventh-Day Adventist	5964	6530
Baptist	3713	6316

This table reveals the deteriorating position of schools associated with the major denominations and the growing educational activity of the smaller, fundamentalist denominations. The fall of enrolments in Presbyterian and Methodist schools was absolute as well as proportionate. Their schools were predominantly secondary colleges and included a proportion of boarders; but boarding schools were becoming costly and boarders fees were rising. The low proportion of students in Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist schools was some indication of the decreasing importance of social class and even religion in education. Prior to the 1960s these schools catered predominantly for middle or upper-class students. Many parents were now attracted to collegiate schools because

they believed they provided better academic standards, discipline and values rather than because of their religious character.

The intensity of the shift of enrolments from state schools to church ones after 1977 varied from state to state. It was strongest in the ACT, Victoria and South Australia, where neo-progressive education had made most advance. In some cases the motive was the religious and moral values of Church schools. But, as already suggested, non-religious motives academic standards, type of curriculum, discipline also operated.

New, smaller religious groups were opening schools. Three major groups of Christian fundamentalist schools developed in the late 1970s. They gave special attention to the Bible in the curriculum. Biblical values, including emphasis on the family and on differing roles for the sexes, were embedded in the school philosophy. The Accelerated Christian Education program, which encompassed both a curriculum and a system of study and which originated in Texas in 1970, was adopted by a number of these schools. Between 1978 and 1983 at least 73 schools using the ACE program opened in Australia, eight of them in Sydney. A second group of fundamentalist schools were the Christian Parent-Controlled Schools. By 1982 they numbered 11 in NSW, seven in Victoria, six in Western Australia, two in Queensland, and one in South Australia. A third group were the Christian Community Schools. In 1983, 11 of these operated in New South Wales and a few in other states. 24

The growth of Christian fundamentalism resulted in a campaign for the teaching of creationism, as an alternative to evolution, in science (especially biology) and in ancient history courses. This teaching was permitted in Queensland, where it was to be presented as one possible theory. It was prohibited in New South Wales in 1986.

The Catholic schools were now more like the state ones. The steady replacement of teaching orders by lay teachers helped diminish many of the basic differences between the two systems. Some lay teachers had come from state schools. This change in the teaching staff inevitably diluted the distinctive religious character of Catholic schools. With the growth of state aid, too, secular administrators in Catholic Education Offices became more important. The influence of the parish priest, once a frequent visitor to primary schools, waned. In New South Wales the religious made up 34 per cent of the teaching staff in Catholic schools in 1974 but only 13.1 per cent in 1982.²⁵ Many Catholic schools experienced similar problems to state schools and adopted similar remedies, for instance in the field of curriculum change.

A study in New South Wales in 1984 of *The Effectiveness of Catholic Schools*, sponsored by the Catholic Education Office,

suggested that the moral values of Year 12 pupils were at odds with the Church's teachings, especially as regards abortion, contraception and pre-marital sex. Yet enrolments in Catholic schools continued to rise. The proportion of non-Catholics in Catholic schools had risen from 1.4 per cent in 1972 to 10 per cent in 1982; the proportion of students born overseas from 5 per cent to 14 per cent; and the proportion of lay teachers from 57 per cent to 90 per cent, of whom 27 per cent were not Catholic. Almost one-third of all principals were lay teachers. 26 In 1985 *The Sydney Morning Herald* asked:

Have Catholic schools defeated the crisis they were in by becoming less Catholic than in the past? . . .
Having survived a crisis of morale with flying colours, the Catholic school system may be slowly heading for a crisis of identity.²⁷

In general, Sunday Schools were no longer important as avenues of religious education. Between 1963 and 1974 the number of children attending Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist Sunday Schools in Australia appeared to have halved. Only the Baptist and Salvation Army Sunday schools were growing.²⁸

Some ethnic schools, notably the Greek, could also be considered religious schools. They will be considered in greater detail below.

The Peer Group and Education

The peer group is a largely secondary school phenomenon. In the primary school it is usually more appropriate to speak of school gangs rather than the peer group. Primary school pupils are more dependent on adults or on their family, and hence an integrated peer group is difficult to form. In the secondary school the peer group encompasses a wide range of the total adolescent group. Sometimes, however, one may distinguish between the junior secondary school and the senior, sometimes between girls' groups and boys'.

The proportion of the young in the community declined in the 1970s. In 1971 boys and girls under the age of 15 made up 29 per cent of the population, in 1976 26 per cent.²⁹ Nonetheless, the 1970s saw a strengthened role for the peer group. The so-called generation gap made the peer group an anti-educational force in many schools. Child-centred teaching methods in the schools and relaxed standards at home gave more power to the peer group and increased classroom and school discipline problems. However, the character of the peer group was influenced by the geographical location of the school and the nature of the families in the locality.

Another important influence was the size and structure of the school. In schools where enrolments exceeded 800 or so, teacher impact on the individual pupil was likely to be diluted and, in consequence, the influence of the peer group was likely to be strong. On the other hand, where senior high schools existed, catering for the two final years of schooling, the peer group would be smaller and its influence somewhat less. But as the retention rate started to rise in the 1980s the composition of the peer group in the senior years of secondary school changed, often in a way unfavourable to education.

The heavily egalitarian-democratic ideology of the 1970s intensified the influence of the peer group in the administration of secondary schools. The abolition of many external examinations encouraged teachers to court the peer group, to obtain their cooperation in teaching procedures. The wider spread of subjects in an expanding curriculum led to competition for enrolments between subject departments within the school. Peer pressure was a serious factor in the choice of subjects. This affected adversely the older academic subjects. A high retention rate, with a spread of student ability, could strengthen the anti-educational influence of the peer group if coupled with electives in the curriculum. One mother found the peer group in the ACT in 1981 more insidious than in New South Wales: 'By its very nature the system of options, lack of authority and direction from parents and teachers, throws decision-making onto the students, most of whom defer to their peers for a lead in what subjects to select'.³⁰ Attempts were made to make subjects more attractive by catering for what teachers conceived to be the 'interests' of the peer group.

Youth unemployment, the emphasis of the permissive society on 'rights' (the grievance emphasis) and neglect of 'duties' (the obligations of citizenship), and the development of guilt over social and environmental problems often undermined the optimism of youth. One index of the changing values and attitudes of peer groups were the popular 'hit' tunes, which often stressed gloom and disillusion. The suicide rates for young Australians had increased considerably over 30 years. In 1956 the suicide rates per 100 000 for males were three for the 15-19 age group and nine for the 20-24 age group. By 1986 they had risen to 13 and 29 respectively. The figures for females were much smaller, though also increasing. Illicit drugs and overuse of alcohol had become major social problems.

In the 1980s an attempt was made to harness peer group pressure to develop positive values. In 1982 a Peer Support Foundation was set up in Sydney and in 1984 the Federal Government made money available under the Participation and Equity Program. The scheme also received support from Rotary Clubs. By 1986 the Peer

Support Program was operating in 240 schools, public, Church and private, throughout Australia. It was particularly strong in New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania. It worked on the 'buddy' system, older students being trained to look after younger ones. In 1984, for instance, 3480 teachers in New South Wales attended seminars after which they trained 3600 Year 10 students who would, as Year 11 students, provide friendship and support for about 21 600 Year 7 students entering high school. This attempt to compensate for the ideological and moral vacuum of the times itself had some problems. Were Year 11 students sufficiently mature to give correct guidance? Would the counselling sessions become time-wasting or devoted to trivialities? And would this tutorial activity interfere with the learning programs of both senior and junior students? 31

The issues of life to which young people wished schools to contribute, according to an Australian National Opinion Poll of 1987, were: hard drugs 76 per cent; unemployment 75 per cent; nuclear war 65 per cent; education 56 per cent; welfare 54 per cent; housing 53 per cent; family relationships 50 per cent; and soft drugs 45 per cent.³² Unfortunately, these sorts of problems were not ones which schools were designed to remedy. The introduction of a multiplicity of new 'studies' purporting to solve the problems of students as individuals and of the world in general led to a cluttered and ineffective curriculum. Peace studies, environmental studies, Australian studies, drug education, personal development, and many other social issues competed with each other for time; their multiplicity reduced their effectiveness. They helped give the curriculum as a whole a sociological cast, a process for which lecturers in the sociology of education provided a theoretical justification.

The State Bureaucracy and Education

But the sociologists of education contributed little to an analysis of the growth of bureaucracy, despite the interest this should have held for Weberians. The state, long dominant in Australian education, increased its influence over both state and non-state schools in the 1970s and 1980s. In general, the Commonwealth's power grew while that of the states and territories diminished. Bureaucratic control over state schools relaxed, but grew over non-state schools.

The power of the Commonwealth Government, exercised initially through the Australian Schools Commission, stemmed from its funding of a wide range of programs, including the Disadvantaged Schools Program, the Innovations Program, state aid to non-state schools and various youth unemployment training schemes. In 1983, for instance, the Commonwealth spent \$1232

million under the States Grants (Schools Assistance) Acts. The money went to government and non-government schools and to a number of programs open to a great variety of people and institutions. The General Recurrent Grants program accounted for two-thirds of the total funding disbursed through the Commission. The Specific Purpose Programs amounted to 14 per cent of total funding. They included some of the best-known Commonwealth initiatives in education.

In 1983 the Commonwealth Schools Commission allocated \$33 million for the Disadvantaged Schools Program in state and non-state schools. The Country Areas Program provided \$9.5 million for projects 'conducted in designated country areas that focussed on issues related to the provision of educational services in isolated country areas'. The English as a Second Language program, the largest of the special purposes programs, received \$64 million. The Multicultural Education Program received \$4.2 million, with a further \$378,000 for 'multicultural education projects of national significance' (for instance, an Australian Illustrated History for Immigrants; Parochial or Cosmopolitan View of 'Home'a study of Children's Attitudes in a Multicultural Society; Publication of Materials for the Greek Curriculum Project, and ESL Factors and Index Study). The Ethnic Schools Program provided \$3 million 'to help maintain the languages and cultures of people from non-English speaking backgrounds'. The Special Education Program cost \$25 million; the Severely Handicapped Children's Program \$3.4 million; \$2.1 million went to the Children in Residential Institutions Program; the Professional Development Program cost \$17.4 million to support the inservice education of teachers; the Projects of National Significance Program cost nearly \$2 million. 33

The new Labor Government of 1983, elected at a time of economic recession, launched the Participation and Equity Program, which between 1984 and 1987 disbursed \$127.3 million to government schools and \$14.9 million to non-government schools. In its first full year, 577 government and 113 non-government schools participated; in its last year 638 government and 176 non-government. A Victorian educationist assessed it as 'the last major thrust of naked idealism'. It was presented by the new Minister for Education, Senator Susan Ryan, a radical feminist, as the 'centrepiece' of the government's youth policies and by the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, as a 'cornerstone' of its education policy, which would attack the difficulties of disadvantaged groups. In the legislation, the emphasis was on education and training in schools and technical colleges.³⁴

Another measure of Commonwealth *etatisme* was the number

of officers employed in its educational bureaucracy. The Commonwealth administrative bureaucracy encompassed officials in both the Department of Education and the Schools Commission, located in both Canberra and the states and territories. The number of permanent staff in the state offices and the ACT office of the Commonwealth Department of Education in December 1977 was 709 permanent, 135 seasonal. This fell in 1978 but by December 1982 had recovered to 702 full-time and 57 seasonal. In 1985 most of the functions of the Commonwealth Schools Commission were transferred to the Department of Education. Staff jumped from 1467.4 equivalent full-time staff in 1984.5 to 1700.8 in 1985.6. Thirty-six per cent of staff were in the ACT and 64 per cent in state offices. 35

The Commonwealth often overleaped the local state administrations. In the early 1970s the local (i.e. provincial) state control over state schools had weakened as a consequence of the vastly reduced role of inspectors and the decline of external examinations. The reduced clarity of purpose also weakened the state administration. An important reason for the decline of control by the provincial state was the growing Commonwealth influence, through funding. While this applied particularly to the universities and colleges of advanced education, Commonwealth initiatives also operated in the schools. State departments of education also faced growing competition from other state agencies, such as ministries of education, ethnic affairs commissions, disabilities councils, parliamentary accounts committees, equal opportunity directorates, Aboriginal consultative groups, anti-discrimination boards, and so on.³⁶ The shift of enrolments from state to non-state schools which started about 1977 was another aspect of the reduction of state influence. Finally, the militant teachers' unions were also eroding the control of the state bureaucracy over the schools. (The unions themselves had developed a strong bureaucracy. So had the Catholic school system). Both a cause and a consequence of weakened state control were attempts at decentralisation. The local state faced a crisis of authority.

On the other hand, state influence over non-state schools, now highly dependent on Commonwealth and state funding, grew. Anti-discrimination legislation threatened the freedom of independent schools to control employment of staff and enrolment of students. Teachers in independent schools were now enrolled in unions and obtained salary awards which committed the funds of schools. State educational bureaucracies were exercising controls over the curriculum. From 1984 the Hawke ALP Government imposed greater restrictions on subsidies for new schools, while the

Schools Commission required more detailed information than in the past on the objectives and governance of all assisted schools. 37

In the late 1970s and early 1980s state administrations attempted to regain some of their control. Responding to the special interest groups, Departments of Education issued a stream of suggestions to the schools. The number of curriculum consultants and other non-teaching advisers increased. But while the size of the bureaucracy expanded, its effectiveness remained limited. In the NSW state system the ratio of non-teaching staff to teachers was 21.3 per cent in 1981; it reached a peak of 24.6 per cent in 1987.³⁸

Table 8.4: Classification of all Staff, NSW Department of Education

	1981	1987
Teachers	47 447	45 704
Ancillary (e.g. clerical help in schools)	3351	5357
Administration	3731	4590
Support	3046	1308

Non-teaching staff totalled 10,129 in 1981 and 11,255 in 1987.

In the ABC Boyer lectures of 1985 Professor Helen Hughes criticised the failure to assess the efficiency of the educational bureaucracy.

A vast expansion of the educational bureaucracy has unfortunately not led to the efficient management of education. But while dissatisfaction is widespread, there is almost no information about the costs of educating students to various levels of competence. Huge sums of taxpayers' money are poured into education every year without any knowledge about the relative efficiency with which it is utilised.³⁹

In April 1986 the Director-General of Education in New South Wales, R. B. Winder, admitted that many parents and members of the public had the feeling that 'no-one is in charge'. He believed that this sprang from the attempts of the schools to respond to a vast range of demands from a variety of groups.⁴⁰

But if central control was weak, perhaps local control might redress the balance. In Victoria school councils were given more control from 1976; in New South Wales efforts in 1981 to establish school councils were frustrated by Teachers' Federation opposition. In Victoria a Liberal Party Minister for Education in 1980 made a dramatic attempt to wrest power from the radical teachers' unions and to depreciate the ineffective department of education. A White Paper was issued recommending devolution of power to the schools and decentralisation of the educational bureaucracy. But the victory

of a radical-left Labor Party in the 1982 elections diverted this initiative in a new direction. The power of the minister increased vis-a-vis that of the department, but to the advantage of the teachers' unions and special interest groups rather than school self-management. Victorian education embarked on an unending process of curriculum and structural reorganisation. 41

Efforts by ministers or directors-general to restore more influence over the state school systems intensified as economic circumstances deteriorated and public discontent with state education grew. The principle of accountability was invoked; ministers of education became less friendly to teachers' unions; the powers of departments of education were reduced while those of the ministries were enhanced. But it was not till 1987 that other states began to imitate, more effectively, the reforms which Victoria had started in 1980.

The New Special Interest Groups

The older pressure groups we have been considering, the family, the churches, the educational bureaucracy, mostly had strong educational purposes. But in the 1970s new groups started to exercise an influence on the schools. They were largely driven by political or social, rather than educational, purposes. Ethnic groups were very strong. Equally strong were the Aborigines and feminists. The neo-Marxists exerted some influence amongst the new (white-collar) middle class, especially university and college of advanced education lecturers. Many of these groups overlapped. Thus a feminist could conceivably also be a neo-Marxist, Aboriginal, and even physically handicapped! While many of the new groups had a range of interests to advocate some, such as homosexuals and environmentalists, were single-interest groups.

Some of these groups were primarily ideological (e.g. neo-Marxists); some were innately created (e.g. ethnic), membership being involuntary. Not all individuals in the latter category had an ideological consciousness. It was not the existence of various social groups which was new but their strong political activity as lobbyists.

Because the old groups often performed a general educational function, their decline imposed greater responsibilities on schools. This was recognised by the minister for education in New South Wales at the opening of a series of public seminars in 1978 held under the title, 'Is it time for an educational audit?':

We live in an expanding society, a society increasing in size and diversity, increasing in its demands on individuals and in its expectations of institutions. To cope with these changes all our educational institutions . . . have expanded their responsibilities enormously . . . the role of the school can be

seen as a never-ending accumulation of responsibilities once exercised by other institutions the home, the immediate neighbourhood community, the extended family and the church. 42

Many of the new special interest groups saw education merely as one of the instruments to be used in the furtherance of their aims, as a source of power rather than as an end in itself. Their main educational interest was in the curriculum. The teachers' unions were, of course, an exception, being inextricably involved in education. They remained a strong pressure group, though their 'industrial' aims (e.g. working conditions) often contradicted educational considerations. Their power was at its maximum in the late 1960s and early 1970s, remained strong till the late 1980s, and then tended to diminish.



Figure 8.2:

The cultivation of grievance

This cartoon in *EEO Equal Employment Opportunity in the NSW Department of Education*, 1982, celebrated the Department's efforts to eliminate discrimination on grounds of 'race, ethnic origin, sex and marital status' amongst its employees and to promote equality of opportunity amongst students through multicultural, non-sexist, and Aboriginal education. The sense of guilt is strong.

'Them' carry a heavy burden: progress is impeded by a blocked road, stop signs, broken bridges, railway crossings and mountains. 'Us' are lighthearted and lightloaded: the road is straight, the sunrise lies ahead.

The Commonwealth government's Disadvantaged Schools Program had identified six major groups as disadvantaged women and girls, Aborigines, migrants, the handicapped, children in rural and isolated areas, and children in socio-economic disadvantaged

areas. The program sought to provide positive discrimination for pupils in state and non-state schools. Considerable sums of money were disbursed but the educational effectiveness of the program was never properly assessed. A discussion paper published by the Schools Commission in 1978 suggested that:

The Disadvantaged Schools Program will not raise the results of the poor in reading, writing and arithmetic to anything near the population norm . . . the Disadvantaged Schools Program is primarily concerned with making school a happier and more stimulating experience for children and a more welcoming place for their parents. 43

Many of the groups, disappointed at the slowness of change, promoted legislative intervention. Their political and social influence was strengthened in the 1970s and early 1980s by legislation aimed at equal employment opportunity, or affirmative action, The Labor Party usually took the initiative in this matter. South Australia led the way, with a Sex Discrimination Act in 1974 and a Racial Discrimination Act in the following year.

In 1977 New South Wales passed an Anti-Discrimination Act, which made discrimination on the grounds of race, sex or marital status unlawful in employment, provision of goods, and some other areas. (The Legislative Council deleted age, religious or political conviction, physical handicap, mental disability and homosexuality as grounds for protection). This Act was amended in 1980 to require government authorities to ensure absence of discrimination in employment and to promote Equal Employment Opportunity for women and members of racial minorities. In 1981 the Act was again amended to add the ground of physical impairment and to extend its provisions to other areas, including public education. In 1982 a further amendment prohibited discrimination on grounds of homosexuality or intellectual impairment. In 1983 universities and colleges of advanced education were included within the ambit of this legislation.

In 1983 the newly-elected Federal Labor Government enacted a Sex Discrimination Act making unlawful direct or indirect discrimination on grounds of sex, marital status or pregnancy in employment, education and other areas. The Act made provision for voluntary affirmative action. In June 1984 a Green Paper, *Affirmative Action for Women*, contained tentative proposals for legislation to enforce affirmative action. In Victoria the Equal Opportunity Act of 1984 extended the provisions of the relatively limited acts of 1977 and 1982 and in the same year South Australia took the opportunity to broaden the provisions of its 1975 and 1976 acts.⁴⁴

Prior to 1967 equal opportunity was conceived of as equality of individual opportunity. Now equality, or equity, was to accrue

by virtue of membership of a group. Mrs. Joan Kirner, who later became Minister for Education in Victoria and, still later, premier, expressed this philosophy in a 1984 Victorian Fabian Society pamphlet. 'If we are egalitarian in our intention we have to reshape education so that it is part of the socialist struggle for equality and social change' and 'a vital weapon in the transition to more equal outcomes for disadvantaged groups and classes rather than a ladder to equal educational opportunity for individuals'.

The outpouring of money to allay the demands of the special interest groups on the formal systems of education produced relatively little educational effect, whatever the political or vocational benefits to protagonists. By the mid-1980s voices were being heard suggesting that examination marks should be adjusted to favour members of allegedly disadvantaged groups. In October 1984 the chairman of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, Hugh Hudson, stated that less well-off students and Aboriginal pupils should have their HSC results raised to make it easier for them to get into universities and colleges of advanced education. The demoralisation of the universities was such that some of their leaders were willing to acquiesce with this proposal to undermine academic merit as the sole criterion for admission. The chairman of the Academic Board at Sydney University said a scheme to give special admission preference to students from disadvantaged groups would be welcomed, though he did warn that it might have legal difficulties; persons not classed as disadvantaged who failed to gain admission might seek legal redress. The secretary of the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee said that academics were aware that only a small number of students had disadvantaged backgrounds. However, he pointed out that there were moves to open up universities to special groups. 45

The New Groups:
The Ethnic

Politicians had become more sensitive to the political influence of ethnic groups and to their social and educational aspirations and after 1971 began to refer to Australia as a multicultural society. Their motives were directly political; those of the ethnic leaders were both political (within their own groups), vocational (gaining attractive appointments) and economic (seeking benefits for themselves and their constituencies).

Throughout the period from 1967 to 1979 immigrants from Northern Europe differed little from Australian-born in their electoral preferences. Eastern Europeans became increasingly anti-Labor. But migrants from Mediterranean countries changed from being slightly anti-Labor to being notably pro-Labor. In New

South Wales the Liberal Party created a few branches based on nationality; but most Liberal supporters of ethnic background preferred to be absorbed into the party organisation. On the other hand, the Labor Party in Victoria formed ethnic branches from 1975; Greek branches in particular became powerful within the ALP. 46



Figure 8.3:

Pressure for ethnic languages in schools

In the mid-1970s ethnic pressure groups began to demand better education.

This cartoon from the Sydney-based Italian newspaper *La Fiamma*, April 1976, marked the first of a series of weekly columns urging the use of Italian in schools. Falling stars identify children blessed by Heaven.

The concept of multiculturalism in education was complex. Five strands of multicultural education developed in the 1970s(1) teaching English to migrant children (and adult migrants); (2) bilingual education (i.e. teaching children through two languages); (3) the introduction of community languages (taken by migrant or non-migrant children) in English-language schools; (4) studies of ethnic and cultural diversity in all schools; and (5) ethnic schools.⁴⁷ 1.

Teaching English to migrant children originated from a meeting of representatives of the Commonwealth and the States in January 1970 to develop a Commonwealth-funded program. At that time Victoria was the only state making a serious attempt to deal with the education of migrant children; 338 pupils were being taught English in withdrawal classes and teachers were receiving some

in-service training. In New South Wales a small number of specialist teachers had been appointed during 1969. 48 The Immigration (Education) Act which came into force in March 1970 provided for the teaching of English to both adults and children. The Child Migrant Education Program was originally seen as a limited commitment. But in the first year of operation, 1970/71, the program cost \$1.8 million instead of the anticipated \$1 million. The number of teachers working under the program increased from 246 to 2291 between 1970 and 1976; the number of children in special classes from 8800 to 90 810; the number of schools from 199 to 1407. Expenditure rose from \$1.8 million in 1970/71 to \$13.1 million in 1974/75. Under the Child Migrant Education Program the Language Teaching Branch of the Commonwealth Department of Education developed a set of highly-structured courses and sequence of units for the Teaching of English as a Second Language. The writers of these courses had little contact with the schools, no knowledge of the materials teachers were actually using, and little experience of teaching English to migrant children.49

The number of new settlers declined after 1971, when it reached a peak of 170 011; consequently by the mid-1970s the great majority of children of migrant parents were Australian-born and most of them knew some English. Because of a tendency to stay longer at school, the need for special provision shifted to the secondary school. Here language development rather than elementary teaching of English was more necessary. Another change was that, because migrants arriving in the 1960s and early 1970s came from a greater variety of countries, it was not unusual to find schools with pupils of 20 to 30 different nationalities.

The Child Migrant Education Program came to an end in June 1976. Funds for child migrant education were henceforth provided by the Schools Commission through its grants program to the states.50

2. *Bilingual education* was, in fact, very rare. It required teachers who were themselves bilingual. Another problem was the uneven distribution of students with the same linguistic background. The case for bilingual teaching was strongest in primary schools, where its advantages for children with little or no English were immediately obvious. One purpose of bilingual instruction was to produce bilingual people; but another could be to produce monolinguals, in which case bilingual instruction was intended simply to facilitate transition from the native language to English. Transitional bilingual education was provided in primary schools in three states Greek in New South Wales and Victoria, and Italian in South Australia. South Australia had a high proportion of Italian migrants.51

3. *Community languages*, the languages of the various ethnic

groups, were widely introduced into state schools after 1975. This can be distinguished from bilingual education in that it did not involve teaching other subjects in a non-English language. The community language program was directed at both the ethnic child and mixed Anglo-Celtic and ethnic classes. In the latter case it became a fairly undemanding enrichment experience, undemanding because of the different linguistic starting points of the two (or more) ethnic groups and because the decay of basic formal grammar made even the mastery of English, let alone another tongue, difficult for many Australian-born children.

A school's approach to community languages was influenced by the geographical concentration or dispersal of particular ethnic groups. East European, German and Dutch migrants tended to disperse. Italian, Greek, Yugoslav, Spanish, Maltese and Turkish migrants tended to concentrate in well-defined suburban areas. Another important ingredient for community languages was enthusiastic school principals.

A 1975 survey of the 231 592 children from bilingual homes in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia found that only 1.4 per cent were studying their native language. At the secondary level 10 per cent of the 98 684 children from bilingual homes were studying their native language. The only widely taught languages were Italian and Greek. By 1976 Victoria offered 18 community languages at the higher certificate/matriculation level, South Australia 13, New South Wales and Western Australia each 10, the ACT nine, Tasmania eight, and the Northern Territory three. 52

Victoria had proportionately more students from non-English speaking backgrounds than the other states; but the teaching of community languages was not extensive. In 1981 there were 43 community language programs in Victorian state primary schools, including 17 in Italian and 11 in Greek. (Melbourne was the world's fifth largest 'Greek' city.) *South Australia* was the earliest and most active state. In 1975 about half the primary schools in Australia teaching foreign languages were in South Australia. In 1980, 150 primary schools offered community languages Italian in 54, Greek in 34, French in 31, and German in 21. Eight other languages were taught. Twenty-six of the schools were Catholic; they taught Italian exclusively.

Queensland was the third largest of the Australian states but, with Tasmania, had the lowest proportion of students of non-English speaking background. In 1980 only 20 government schools had community language programs; 30 non-government had them. Of these 58 programs, 27 were in Italian and 14 in French. French was not an important migrant language. The extensive provision of Italian was a consequence of funding of part-time teachers by

the Italian consulate. Despite its low proportion of non-English speaking children, *Tasmania* made some effort. In 1981, 18 primary schools five state and 13 Catholic taught community languages. The languages provided were somewhat different to those on the mainland and included Dutch, Italian, Greek, German and Polish.

One feature of community languages in *Western Australia* was unique. Primary schools offered those languages which were taught at the neighbourhood high school, thus providing continuity. Also, non-English languages were provided only in the last two years of primary school. High school teachers taught community languages in the feeder primary schools. Moreover, the primary school students were specially selected. In 1981, 97 Government primary schools were teaching languages other than English (40 French, 32 Italian, 14 Japanese, 10 German, one Indonesian). The Italian consulate supported some Italian programs. 53

In *New South Wales* 30 special language teachers were appointed to state primary schools in 1980. Community languages also developed in the secondary school after they were accepted for the Higher School Certificate in 1978. In 1981 a total of 31 492 candidates sat for the Higher School Certificate exam (i.e. took English, the compulsory subject). Of these, 451 (1.4 per cent) sat for Italian, 413 for Modern Greek, and 111 for Spanish. At the other extreme, two sat for Latvian, three for Estonian, four for Lithuanian, 12 for Ukrainian, and 21 for Serbian.

Many ethnic families were less committed to preserving the parental tongue than the ethnic leaders and the friendly Australian politicians. This is evidenced by the low percentage of students from homes in which a language other than English was spoken who were studying that language at school. In 1983 South Australia led the way, where 25.7 per cent of such students were studying "their" foreign language. In Victoria the proportion was 13.0 per cent. But in Western Australia it was only 9.9 per cent, in the ACT 8.4 per cent, in both New South Wales and Tasmania 8.0 per cent, and in Queensland 6.9 per cent. 54

A persistent problem with community languages was whether the aim was language proficiency or transmission of culture through languages or even both.

4. *Studies of ethnic and cultural diversity* came under the rubric of 'multicultural education'. This approach to schooling was enunciated by the Schools Commission in its June 1975 report:

The multicultural reality of Australian society needs to be reflected in school curricula languages, social studies, history, literature, the arts and crafts in staffing and in school organisation. While these changes are particularly important to undergird the self-esteem of migrant children they also have application for all Australian children . . . 55

The Schools Commission provided special funds to the states for 'Migrant and Multicultural Education'. South Australia took the lead in multicultural education, having an official policy by 1976. However, confusion remained over the meaning of multiculturalism in education.

Submitted to the Commonwealth Government in May 1978, the *Report of the Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services to Migrants* (the Galbally Report) was a major statement of the essential assumptions of multiculturalism. 'We are convinced that migrants have the right to maintain their cultural and racial identity and that it is clearly in the best interests of our nation that they should be encouraged and assisted to do so if they wish' (para. 9.6). It was necessary to develop a multicultural attitude in the Australian community and 'to foster the retention of the cultural heritage of different migrant groups and promote intercultural understanding'. It recommended the establishment of a national Institute of Multicultural Affairs to encourage this and the provision of funds to assist the teaching of English as a second language. It recommended support for the teaching of community languages. In January 1979 the Commonwealth Schools Commission report, *Education in a Multicultural Society* outlined the new program. The Commonwealth established a Multicultural Education Program and the Schools Commission recommended grants to each state, to be passed on to state and non-state schools and individual teachers. As a start, \$500 000 was provided for the teaching of community languages in 1979.

Anxious to gain access to the available funds, the states quickly produced policy documents. The Queensland document appeared in June 1979; the New South Wales in November 1979. The ACT Schools Authority produced its 'Multicultural Education' statement in September 1979. These documents varied greatly in form, scope, status and content. Some were long, with considerable space given to background and rationale. Others were brief statements of general principles. South Australia already had an official multicultural policy, but now produced a working party report, 'Education for a Cultural Democracy'; the SA Multicultural Education Co-ordinating Committee issued a draft policy statement, 'Education for a Multicultural Society', in 1981; the Department of Education produced 'Diversity and Cohesion: A Policy Statement on Multiculturalism and Education' the following year. New South Wales revised its 1979 statement in 1983. The West Australian Department of Education produced 'Education for a Multicultural Society' in 1981. The Northern Territory issued 'Departmental Policy: Multicultural Education' in March 1983.

A review commissioned by the National Advisory and

Co-ordinating Committee on Multicultural Education in 1986 commented: 'There is no comparability in the content of policy documents, either in terms of the number of issues covered (for example teacher development is dealt with in approximately half the policies) or the depth and detail with which issues are dealt'. The status of the documents also varied. Some were mandatory guiding statements the implementation of which could be a factor in the promotion of teachers, as in New South Wales. Others were simply funding guidelines. Others were advisory or support documents.

The development of 'multicultural education' was related to ethnic community politics whose form and strength varied from state to state. In New South Wales the 1983 policy and support documents reflected pressure for mother tongue programs and community language teaching and ethnic demands for direct involvement in policy formulation. In Victoria the frequent changes in the structure of the Multicultural Education Co-ordinating Committee reflected disputes and struggles for power. In Tasmania post-arrival services was the point of emphasis. 56

Queensland showed less enthusiasm than the other states for multicultural education. It was more homogeneous racially at the 1976 census 86.9 per cent of Queenslanders were Australian-born compared with 79.9 per cent of all Australians. Migrants were of less importance as a source of labour in what was a rural, rather than an industrial state. Queensland received a smaller proportion of migrants, being farthest of all from Europe or Asia. Finally, Queensland still retained much of the ideology of the pioneering Australia of the 1940s and 1950s. Queensland made no effort to introduce the teaching of community languages. By 1980 some 20 state primary schools and 38 non-state ones were 'teaching about languages', but specific ethnic language instruction had not developed. In state high schools traditional foreign languages, such as French and German, maintained some importance.⁵⁷

In Australia as a whole multicultural studies were to be found mainly in the state and Catholic primary schools. One of the problems in some schools was, which cultures should be studied? If a particular ethnic group was strongly represented in the school community, the answer might be easy. But if a great variety of groups were represented the decision could be more difficult.

The first comprehensive assessment of the multicultural program was provided in September 1984 when the *Review of the Commonwealth Multicultural Education Program* was presented to the Schools Commission. The review noted the lack of consensus about the fundamental concept. While it recognised some achievements, weaknesses predominated. These included the failure of about a quarter of the projects; lack of belief among teachers that

students should be made bilingual; teachers' lack of knowledge of ethnic communities; a lack of commitment by many teachers to aspects of the national heritage; evasion of controversial issues in teaching about Aborigines; and suspicion about the teaching of minority languages. 58

5. *Ethnic schools* were set up by various migrant groups. Also known as Saturday Schools, they gained state aid in the early 1970s. They were strongest in Victoria and New South Wales. By 1975 between 600 and 800 part-time ethnic schools existed in Australia, about 360 of them in Victoria.⁵⁹ South Australia was the first to provide public support. About 70 ethnic schools received a government subsidy and had access to rent-free accommodation in the day schools. When the Wran Labor government came to power in New South Wales in 1976 it increased the aid given to ethnic groups for their educational activities, including ethnic schools. The funding of ethnic schools jumped from \$10 000 to \$100 000 in 1976⁷⁷, reaching \$150 000 by 1978⁷⁹.

The growing support of the Schools Commission and state government for the teaching of community languages and multicultural education made it increasingly difficult to define the role of ethnic schools. In her 'Research Report for the National Population Inquiry', published in 1978 as *The Migrant Presence*, Jean Martin noted four views on the role of ethnic schools. One, sometimes quietly advanced by teachers in state schools, regarded them as harmful competitors for the child's time and attention. A second view was that, while ethnic communities had the right to transmit their cultural heritage through ethnic schools, this should be without public financial or other support. The third view was that ethnic schools might be integrated with day schools to help teach community languages and to foster multicultural education. Finally, there was the view that ethnic schools could teach community languages and culture on behalf of the education system as a whole, and hence could be publicly funded.⁶⁰

Jean Martin concluded:

With important exceptions, teaching in ethnic schools is uneven and often poor, the curriculum is commonly geared to religious or other sectional interests within the ethnic community, the drop-out rate is high and little appears to be learnt. In the past the schools themselves have often been short-lived. The discrepancy between what ethnic groups hope the schools will achieve and their actual impact is a recurring theme in the thinking of ethnic communities . . . It seems clear that very substantial resources would be needed to bring teaching and materials up to standards acceptable in regular schools. If such aid were forthcoming, it would almost certainly be a factor in differentiating ethnic groups from one another, because some would use it effectively to strengthen their own organisation while others would be internally divided over its use.⁶¹

Arguing against the view that ethnic schools might be incorporated into the mainstream, speakers at the July 1980 Conference of Ethnic Schools of New South Wales identified four major functions for these schools: to preserve the language; to transmit a cultural heritage; to support the ethnic family; and to support the identity of a specific ethnic social group. 62

One valuable aspect of ethnic schools was that they were community-controlled, not state nor (usually) church-controlled. Italian and Greek schools made up the majority of these ethnic schools. But the attendance rate was higher in Greek schools than in Italian.

Within the broad ethnic community, different groups had different characteristics. Greek associations, whose distinctiveness was reinforced by differences in written script and religion, were by far the strongest and most assertive. An outstanding example of this assertiveness was the protest in May 1982 over the results in 2 unit Modern Greek in the 1981 HSC in New South Wales. The Greek community monitored examination results very closely and was able to point out some errors. This, together with the discovery of some errors in the 3 unit English results, led to a parliamentary committee of inquiry into the 1988 Higher School Certificate Examination, chaired by Dr K. R. McKinnon. The matter was too sensitive politically to be left to the Board of Senior School Studies!

Yet many ethnic communities were as interested in the academic quality of education as in a cultural veneer. In 1981 the Victorian Minister for Education, Mr Cathie, attended the opening of Brunswick Grammar School, a private school supported by the Greek Orthodox Church and many members of the Greek community. The journal of the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association, *VSTA News*, voiced disapproval. 'State schools in Brunswick have a long history of asserting notions of multiculturalism and integrating community languages into the curriculum'. Yet while enrolments in state schools were falling, new private schools were opening. 'The growth of ethnic schools of this type, often in response to perceived opposition to community languages and culture in state schools, represents a threat to the state system'.⁶³ Clearly many ethnics preferred traditional-type curricula, rather than the special multicultural schemes devised by educational or political enthusiasts.

The Commonwealth's Ethnic Schools Program provides a measure of the ethnic initiative in education, Australia-wide. In 1982 various ethnic groups funded under this program maintained 1188 schools and 216 insertion classes in state schools.⁶⁴

Table 8.5: Ethnic schools and insertion classes, 1982

	Schools	Classes
NSW	424	16
Vic.	435	128
Qld.	40	39
SA	189	4
WA	70	22
Tas.	6	
NT	4	
ACT	20	7

Forty-seven different languages, predominantly European, were taught in these schools and classes. If we look at the situation not by states but by ethnic groups we find that Greek and Italian schools and classes made up over 60 per cent of the total.

Table 8.6: Ethnic Schools in Australia

Greek	432
Italian	224
Arabic	63
Turkish	52
Chinese	48
Croatian	37
Polish	37
Spanish	32
39 other groups	263
Total	1188

Next numerous after Spanish were German (28), mixed (25), Macedonian (24) and Hebrew (18). The Russian, Serbian and Vietnamese communities had 15 schools each.

What was the outcome of all this activity? Contrary to the widely fostered belief, children of immigrant parents from non-English speaking countries were not, as a total category, at a disadvantage in Australian schools. As early as 1960 a survey of teachers' views on migrant children reported the opinion that they were above average in scholarship. A 1979 study by Jean Martin and Phil Meade, *The Educational Experience of Sydney High School Students*, found that a higher proportion of students from non-English speaking background sat for the HSC than Australian and other English speaking students and their performance was

better. ('Success won despite hostility, study shows. Migrant children try harder in class' was *The Sydney Morning Herald* headline, 7 June 1979). In 1980 a survey, *Students in Australian Higher Education*, by Don Anderson found the children of migrant parents were substantially over-represented among tertiary students. Of course, different ethnic groups performed differently. While Greek and Polish students had high aspirations, the Poles realised these ambitions more effectively. Stronger family support could be one explanation. 65

Family life was usually stronger amongst the ethnic groups. But translated into a new social environment, conflict between youth and elders sometimes developed. This was most likely if the children attended a state school. The clash was not only between the values of the school and the home but an older and more widespread clash between the level of education of the children and that of their parents. On the other hand, the anxiety of migrant parents for the economic and social advancement of their children, particularly their sons, provided a firm support and a stimulus for many migrant students. 66

In the long run inter-marriage and assimilation would dissolve the specifically migrant problems. The experience of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries suggested that this was usually a three-generation process perhaps 90 years. But instant gratification was the order of the day. So in the early 1970s the policy of 'assimilation' was officially rejected. 'Integration', and later 'positive discrimination', came into vogue.

It was not till the late 1980s that recognition became wide-spread that, by and large, the children of migrants were not as disadvantaged as had been thought. In 1986 R. Birrell and A. Seitz suggested that those of ethnic origin did well in education and that the plight of Australian-born students with high potential but low achievement had been neglected. They argued that the idea of migrant disadvantage was a myth foisted on gullible policy-makers by the ethnic movement and academics sympathetic to its cause. 67 A report by the Department of Employment, Education and Training, *Ethnicity, Education and Equity*, September 1987, publicised the fact that the persistence rate into Years 11 and 12 of students of ethnic origin was higher than for Anglo-Celts, while the participation rate of students of ethnic origin in higher education exceeded that of Anglo-Celts. By this time the Commonwealth government faced the need to reduce expenditure. The golden age was over!

In 1987 Ronald Conway, a Melbourne clinical psychologist and a percipient analyst of the Australian way of life in the 1970s and 1980s, believed that the impact of the ethnic groups was limited.

The dominant old culture has overwhelmed most ethnic groups (except perhaps the Greeks) in the medium term. The influence of newcomers on our diet, dress, consumer goods and sports is undeniable. Their impact upon our emotional attitudes, business practices, political and bureaucratic structures has been negligible. Even the SBS television channel was more the product of middle-class up-marketery than of ethnic pressure. 68

At the same time, he argued, Australia had lost touch with its past without forming any clear picture of its future. And, indeed, it was a curious society which was anxious that immigrant groups should preserve their cultural heritage, while attacking its own cultural tradition.

Some of the considerable expenditure to assist children of migrant origin had produced educational benefit; some had been wasted. It had produced some political benefits for some politicians. It provided jobs for a variety of non-migrant and migrant educational bureaucrats in state and private institutions. It was an important expression of the new multicultural ideology which had developed after 1967.

The New Groups: Aboriginals

Political expediency and bureaucratic place-seeking were as much features of the Aboriginal education movement as of the ethnic. During the 1970s anyone who claimed Aboriginal descent and was accepted as such by his or her community, was considered Aboriginal. As the variety of material benefits available to Aborigines expanded, persons of even marginal Aboriginal ancestry identified with the Aboriginal community. Political activists found the Aboriginal movement attractive as an outlet for their energies and a source of state funds.

The educational needs of Aborigines varied considerably because of variations in the nature of Aboriginal communities. The National Aboriginal Education Committee, using data from the 1976 census, identified four main categories: (1) traditional-type communities, geographically and socially distinct from the rest of Australia. These would be nomadic and semi-tribal; (2) rural communities living in reserves, often on the outskirts of country towns; (3) urban communities, living in concentrated groups; (4) urban communities dispersed in the general society.⁶⁹ Moreover, three severe ambiguities afflicted Aboriginal education. The first was the definition of who was and who was not an Aborigine. The second was whether a bilingual and bicultural form of schooling should be provided for both educational and cultural reasons, or whether this would hamper Aborigines in an advanced capitalist society. The third was whether, on similar grounds, schooling for Aborigines should be in separate institutions, in an enclave within general schools, or fully integrated within the general system.⁷⁰

The definition of an Aborigine was complicated in the more developed states by the great progress of assimilation and by the freedom to identify oneself as Aboriginal. The *1980 Year Book of Australia* warns that 'statistics, even of the total Aboriginal population, should be treated with caution'. Social attitudes and the hope of economic or other benefits caused variations in the size of the Aboriginal population. In general, however, it appears to have been growing. 71 But this increase was in the three regions where tribal or semi-tribal society was strongest the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia.

Table 8.7: Growth of the Aboriginal population

	1976	1981
NSW	37 688	35 367
Vic	12 415	6057
Qld	31 948	44 698
SA	9940	9825
WA	25 565	31 351
Tas	2522	2688
NT	23 535	29 088
ACT	269	823
	144 382	159 897

The terms full-blood and half-caste were abandoned after 1965. Nonetheless, the dominance of mixed-blood Aborigines in the leadership of the militant Aboriginal movement was noticeable. Full-blood leaders had often been brought up in white families. But as Burnum Burnum, a pure-blood Aboriginal leader, commented, some Aboriginal spokesmen and women had 'a pigmentation problem'. (Burnum himself later married a Caucasian). Neo-Marxist or radical ideologies were strong amongst the leadership of the Aborigines. The Aborigines represented 0.02 per cent of the population in 1981; or more loosely defined, perhaps 1 per cent. But their political influence enormously exceeded the statistical measure. One reason was the growing recognition of their historical claim for special consideration, as descendants of the original inhabitants of the continent. The cultural collapse of 1967⁷⁴ undermined the self-confidence of the dominant society and helped engender a sense of guilt towards Aborigines.

The policy of segregation of Aboriginal children in separate schools was widespread after the introduction of compulsory education in the 1870s and 1880s. Some white parents objected to

Aborigines in the normal schools on grounds of hygiene, though racial prejudice was often an unstated but strong motive. However, some Aborigines did attend state schools with white children. In the late 1930s the policy of assimilation was adopted. The role of the school was reversed. Instead of using segregated schools to provide minimum racial contact, the integrated school was used to promote contact. After nearly three decades it became clear that putting Aboriginal children with white did not produce educational or social equality. Racial prejudice still operated. Following the 1967 referendum on Aborigines, Commonwealth involvement in Aboriginal education grew. The policy of assimilation was officially abandoned, being replaced by one of special provisions for Aborigines. Self-management and cultural diversity became official objectives. Positive discrimination came into favour. By 1966 in Australia as a whole most Aboriginal children of primary school age were enrolled at school, but less than one-third of those age range 15 to 19 years had attended secondary school, compared with about 88 per cent of non-Aboriginal children of the same age group. 72

The tumultuous years of 1967-74 produced innovation in Aboriginal education, as in education generally. Two striking developments were the emergence of bilingual education and a dramatic increase in the number of Aboriginal teachers.73

Bilingual education: This was implemented mainly in the Northern Territory, where 183 Aboriginal languages were spoken. The report *Bilingual Education in Schools in the Northern Territory* (1973) was followed by the opening of three such schools in the same year and five more in 1974. By 1985 the Northern Territory Department of Education provided bilingual education in 16 schools. In addition, there was one independent school controlled by an Aboriginal council, Yipirinya, which also ran a bilingual program. In this decade bilingual education was introduced and then abandoned in five schools. Factors leading to discontinuation included: difficulty in determining an appropriate orthography of the language; the migration of the Aborigines who spoke the elected language of instruction; and inability to retain literate Aboriginal teachers on the school staff.

The *Handbook for Teachers in Bilingual Schools in the Northern Territory* (1980) stated that the policy was to present:

an academic program in which the two languages in both the oral and written forms are used as mediums of instruction where appropriate. As the students are engaged higher up the school in the study of more Western knowledge English becomes the prime medium of instruction.74

Three other states maintained bilingual schools. Queensland had a larger Aboriginal population than any other state. But it

had only two schools with bilingual programs, both on the west coast of Cape York. The bilingual system was used only as transitional to instruction in English. South Australia had a long tradition of bilingual education in the Pitjantjatjara language. It maintained four schools which produced bilingual speakers and writers. Western Australia made some attempt to use Aboriginal teacher aides in state schools, while a few non-government schools used a bilingual program. 75

Amongst both Europeans and Aborigines opinion about bilingual schooling was divided. Some argued that a bilingual education was the right of an Aboriginal child living in a community where the native tongue was spoken. Others took the view that Australia was an English speaking country and that to achieve equal opportunity all Aboriginal children should be educated primarily in English. A third view was that a bilingual program helps the transition from the traditional culture to a more modern one, with Aboriginal features.

Aboriginal teachers: Because of the lack of Aborigines with secondary education, the introduction of Aborigines into the teaching service was not initially an easy task. But across Australia hundreds of Aborigines were given employment in schools in the 1970s as teacher aides or even as teaching assistants.⁷⁶ The 1980 *National Inquiry into Teacher Education* (the Auchmuty Report) urged the importance of increasing the number of Aboriginal teachers for Aboriginal children. In 1979 a total of 72 Aborigines who were qualified teachers were found to be teaching. On an equivalent population basis there should have been 2000. Over 200 Aborigines were training as teachers. But as the National Aboriginal Education Committee reported in 1979, teachers from one category of Aboriginal society were not necessarily effective when working in another category. The first special scheme for training Aborigines as teachers started at the Mt Lawley CAE, South Australia, in 1975⁷⁶. But by 1982 only four CAEs and no universities had special Aboriginal teachers programs.⁷⁷

The *Commonwealth Government* became involved in the early 1970s. The 1973 Karmel Report briefly discussed Aboriginal education in its chapter on 'Disadvantaged Schools'. Aboriginal families, it remarked, were typically amongst the lowest income-earning sections of the community and their children had 'a long-standing claim for positive discrimination in their favour'. The report urged the Schools Commission to undertake discussions and joint action with the several agencies interested in Aboriginal education. The Schools Commission accordingly appointed an Aboriginal Consultative Group. Its report, *Education for Aborigines*, recognised that Aboriginal communities and individuals lived

under differing conditions and had differing aspirations. It argued that Aborigines wanted the school to assist in the retention of their Aboriginality; that Aborigines should be involved in the administration of Aboriginal education, with some form of control; and that responsibility for educating Aboriginal children should remain in the hands of the States. 78

In 1976 the Schools Commission offered state departments of education funds to establish their own Aboriginal Advisory Groups. This stimulated the development of Aboriginal education policies across Australia. The major Commonwealth funding schemes, such as the Multicultural Education Program and the Disadvantaged Schools Program, included Aboriginal education in their ambit. The Commonwealth also gave grants to the states for Aboriginal education \$4 591 000 in 1974/75, \$6 174 000 in 1978/79. A National Aboriginal Education Committee was established in 1977 as the Commonwealth Government's principal adviser on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. The committee of 21 members included 14 state and territory representatives and five specialist members. It did not administer funds nor Aboriginal education programs, but provided representatives for a number of other committees and councils, such as the Commonwealth Schools Commission, whose work had relevance to Aboriginal education. 79

The policy of *positive discrimination* or affirmative action developed in the 1980s. In New South Wales the Anti-Discrimination Act of 1977 created an Anti-Discrimination Board. In November 1980 the Anti-Discrimination Board agreed to a request from the Director-General of Education that the Department be exempted from the provisions of the Anti-Discrimination Act so as to exercise positive discrimination in favour of Aborigines, by offering teacher-education scholarships to all Aborigines who had passed the Higher School Certificate and had been accepted into a teacher training course, irrespective of their order in the Higher School Certificate examination results. 80 But affirmative action raised problems. As J. J. Fletcher, the historian of Aboriginal education, remarked:

in country areas there is often resentment over Aborigines getting what is regarded as special treatment. Equality of treatment is acceptable it is part of the Australian psyche but affirmative action, which is in essence unequal treatment, has uncomfortable overtones for many people. This is an ideological problem: why should Aborigines who are badly off have greater privileges than those whites who are equally badly off? 81

Fletcher found the 'Rationale for Aboriginal Education' in the NSW Department of Education statement on *Aboriginal Education Policy* (March 1982) disappointing. He argued that a rationale for a special policy on Aboriginal education must recognise the existence

of unique problems. The unfortunate history of poor race relations has devalued Aboriginal culture. Aborigines are discriminated against in a way different to migrant groups. For a combination of reasons Aborigines are not performing as well as expected in schools, despite equality of opportunity. 'On the assumption that Aboriginal children are intellectually equal, as a group, to the bulk of the population, they appear to be heavily disadvantaged if provided only with the normal educational fare'. But Fletcher warns that the assumption that the school as an institution 'is capable of ameliorating such a situation' may possibly be unwarranted. His rationale glosses over the possibility of inherent racial differences and accepts a degree of cultural relativism. 82

Some of the *difficulties* in implementing Aboriginal education policies emerge from the introduction to the New South Wales *Aboriginal Education Policy*. The Director-General, D. Swan, mentioned a dual purpose: 'to enhance the development and learning of Aboriginal students . . . and to enable all students to have some knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Aborigines and their cultural heritage'. In addition, though the Department's policy seemed not to stress this, the schools were providing academic knowledge and some vocational training. The policy statement identified a major problem: 'the diversity of Aboriginal communities at State, regional and local levels'. This necessitated 'local Aboriginal community support for all programs being implemented for Aboriginal students'. Where there was no local Aboriginal community, efforts had to be made to obtain Aboriginal education experts for advice.⁸³

A striking problem was the low retention rate. Considerable effort was devoted to raising this. The reluctance of Aboriginal pupils to remain at school was partly because the secondary school curriculum presented an enormous cultural challenge. But this reluctance was also a product of the persisting nomadic tendency and the weakness of the family structure and home environment, all of which limited the effectiveness of schooling.

Table 8.8: Aboriginal retention rate in NSW, to Year 12

Reached Yr 12	Retention Rate %	Reached Yr 12	Retention Rate %
1978	6.9	1983	7.6
1979	9.1	1984	8.6
1980	6.4	1985	9.0
1981	7.8	1986	14.1
1982	6.7		

However, if retention is measured on the number actually sitting for the HSC, the rate is lower. In 1978 only 49 of the 63 enrolled in Year 12 sat, 5.5 per cent of the original 1973 Year 7 cohort of 915. In 1980 the number actually sitting was 57, 5.2 per cent of the original cohort, and in 1985, 111 or 7.0 per cent. 1982 was the low point in this eight year period. 84 The general retention rate to Year 12 in New South Wales was 35.8 per cent in 1978 and 44.4 per cent in 1986. Only 104 Aboriginal students sat for the HSC exam in New South Wales in 1985; 75 of them were ranked in the bottom quarter of the state. The president of the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group suggested the establishment of separate Aboriginal high schools; the head of the NSW Ministry for Aboriginal Affairs, Pat O'Shane, described the proposal as 'unrealistic'.85

For Australia as a whole, the retention rate for Aboriginal students (based on enrolments in Year 8) improved in the 1980s.86

Table 8.9: Aboriginal retention rate, Australia

	Year 11 (%)	Year 12 (%)
1980	23.8	7.7
1982	25.0	9.9
1984	31.8	13.2
1986	37.2	17.0

In the mid-1980s the attitudes of administrators and educationists, European or Aboriginal, concerned with Aboriginal education changed a little, as it became apparent that the efforts following the Karmel Report of 1973 were not bearing great fruit. A few separate Aboriginal schools were established in various parts of Australia. But this raised differences of opinion. Some saw separate facilities as essential to the development of Aboriginal self-respect and the maintenance of their identity and culture. Others, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, saw the future in terms of a system providing uniform educational opportunity for all Australian children.87

In several respects the situation of Aboriginal groups differed from that of most ethnic groups. The gap between the Anglo-Celtic culture and the Aboriginal culture was much greater. It was the gap between a people until recently paleolithic and the inhabitants of an urban advanced capitalist society. The Aborigines had to overcome a 40 000 year or at least a 10 000 year gap. They were expected to master two widely different cultural traditions, a process which might indeed imply mastering two different curricula. White prejudice was sometimes a factor in the low level of educa-

tional achievement by Aborigines. But other, stronger, factors were also operating. Educational success for Aborigines was inhibited by the absence of a strong supporting family structure. Among the still tribalised Aborigines the variety of languages was a problem. (A similar problem affected Italians, who spoke a variety of dialects.) The varying social patterns amongst Aborigines—urban detribalised, rural and semi-tribal, nomadic and tribal—added confusion to the problem and uncertainty as to an appropriate policy.

The New Groups: Feminists

The feminist special interest group cannot be equated with women as a total segment of the population. A variety of groups existed amongst women, all exerting some influence, not necessarily in a feminist direction. For instance, the policies of the Country Women's Association and rural women in general differed from those of organised feminists. So, too, did the outlook of female members of fundamentalist Christian groups. Many women in migrant families held non-feminist or anti-feminist views. An organisation known as Women Who Want to Be Women, founded in 1979 and later called the Endeavour Forum, gained some support amongst Catholics and other Christian groups. As always, a passive (or silent) majority existed, though their silence reduced their strength as a social force. Overall, the feminist influence predominated.

The new concept of equality underpinned much of the feminist program in education. As with so many special interests, the proclamation of an 'International Year' gave some impetus. The celebration of 1975 as International Women's Year stimulated the provision of government funds, both federal and state, to various women's groups and conferred political and social respectability on the feminist cause. Committees of investigation were set up to consider the relationship of women and education. A study group which included Jean Blackburn, Jean Martin, Elizabeth Reid and Susan Ryan submitted a report to the Schools Commission, *Girls, School & Society* (1975), which provided a rationale for the feminist movement in education. Each of the states produced reports: *Males and Females in the Western Australian Education System* (1975), *Victorian Committee on Equal Opportunity in Schools Report* (1977), a New South Wales report on *Sexism in Education* (1977), *Improving Education for Girls* (Tasmania, 1977, 1978), *Inequality in Education* (South Australia, 1978) and *Sexism in Education* (ACT, 1979). 88

In response to these reports, Directors-general issued policy statements: New South Wales and the Northern Territory in 1979 (both called 'Towards Non-Sexist Education'), Tasmania in the

same year ('The Elimination of Sexism in Schools'), West Australia, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory in 1980, and Queensland and South Australia in 1981.

Queensland was less enthusiastic than the others. No report was produced, only a policy statement whose title, 'Equality of Opportunity in Education for Boys and Girls', contradicted current feminist ideology. The fount of this approach may be found in the Second Interim Report of the Select Committee on Education in Queensland, 1979, (chairman M. J. Ahern):

4.14 The Committee has received recommendations that a special programme should be introduced to 'combat sexism' in the schools. However, we believe that equality should be based on opportunity rather than outcomes. We also believe that the wish of a majority of women to accept family and caring roles should not be discouraged or in any way denigrated. We reject the concept of 'role reversal' featured in certain book and poster material and recommend that this material not be used.

The Departmental policy statement issued in January 1981 referred to the 'diversity of values and wide-ranging social, economic and technological changes' in Queensland society. These, it said, were 'contributing to an increasing range of roles for men and women in both the family and the wider community'. It expressed concern at discrimination on grounds of sex. Commenting on this, a lecturer at the James Cook University of North Queensland complained that the Departmental policy statement did not directly address the problems of women in schooling and society. The concept of 'sex' changed the issue of women and education to one of education and sexual equality. This ignores the fact that men do not suffer from patriarchal domination, but flourish at the expense of women.

Are 'sexual equality' and 'women's liberation' identical? Quite simply they are not for one is a concept in the discourse of liberal humanism and the other a concept in the discourse(s) of feminism. 89

The 1977 NSW report, *Sexism in Education*, was sounder educationally than the Commonwealth's *Girls, School & Society*, for its compilers had some practical experience of teaching. But it was not well printed nor well bound and this may have reduced its influence. The NSW Department of Education issued guidelines in June 1980, called 'Towards Non-Sexist Education'. In the Preamble to this document the Director-General warned:

the policy for the elimination of sexism in education must not be used for:

- * any denigration of the traditional family roles, occupations, activities or behaviours or the traditional choices of particular students;
- * the introduction of materials of a sexual nature such as may give offence to some students, parents or members of staff.

While this statement might serve to safeguard the bureaucracy against possible protests, it also illustrated the potential clash of feminist views with those of other interests, for instance with ethnic views on the role of the sexes.

Denise Bradley, from 1977 to 1980 South Australia's first Women's Adviser in Education, stated at the May 1981 Australian College of Education conference:

After ten years the feminist critique of education has had little impact on educational practice in Australia. There have been some changes but it could be argued that such changes are no more than could have been expected at a time of more general social changes in women's role. There is little evidence that there has been much planned, systematic change in education systems. 90

'Equal employment opportunity' legislation, or 'affirmative action', became common in Australia from about 1977. By the early 1980s the feminist movement believed that it had not produced the results that had been anticipated. At its 1981 National Conference the ALP adopted an affirmative action policy and asked State branches to carry out affirmative action programs. It also adopted a commitment to non-sexist language in party publications and at party meetings.⁹¹

The five major areas of school work in contention amongst feminists were: the place of women in the teaching service; the vocational and social roles attributed to girls in the subjects of the curriculum; the degree to which girls took or were successful in vocationally-important subjects; single sex or co-education classes and schools; and relations between boys and girls within the schools.

These problems were addressed by a working party of ten women established by the Commonwealth Schools Commission in November 1981 to advise it on ways of meeting the educational needs of girls. The working party arranged a seminar in Canberra in 1982, material from which was incorporated in their report of April 1984, *Girls and Tomorrow: The Challenge for Schools*. This rather brief document of 51 pages (15 of them appendices) initiated a new offensive.

By the time this report was presented to the Schools Commission Labor was in power. The Australian Labor Party had made affirmative action a major issue in the March 1983 elections and was not slow after its victory to implement this policy. The appointment of Senator Susan Ryan as Minister for Education and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister in Women's Affairs was a significant help. In its July 1983 funding guidelines to the Commonwealth Schools Commission the Government emphasised that 'schools have a particular role to play in combating discrimination on the grounds of sex'.⁹²

Girls and Tomorrow developed some four major themes: the importance of a national policy expressed through the Schools Commission; reform of the organisation of administrative and decision-making systems in schools, in which only a small proportion of principals and deputy principals were women; the curriculum, with particular reference to girls in mathematics, science and technology, sport and physical education; and the teachers' part in sex role socialisation, having in mind the tendency of male pupils to predominate over female in the classroom. In its final chapter the report drew attention to recent suggestions that single-sex groups and single-sex schools had advantages. 'Single-sex schools are free from some of the forms of sexual harassment and are not subject to the territorial defence behaviours of boys'.⁹³ The Report called for greater funds for research. This emphasis promised opportunities for academic advocates of feminism in universities and colleges of advanced education and for a proliferating corps of consultants and advisers. But unlike research on the education of ethnic groups, research on disabilities affecting females was very uncertain in quality. It was often theoretical rather than practical. Formal academic research comprised only a small proportion; much of it consisted of addresses at conferences; and the bulk was conducted not by academics but by government-sponsored committees.⁹⁴

From 1983 on, the Australian College of Education organised a series of conferences on the participation of women in educational management, attended by people of influence in education circles. The 1985 three-day conference, co-sponsored by the ACT Schools Authority, was attended by 150 participants representing national, state government, and non-government associations of principals, teachers and parents. State and territory government and non-government systems were represented. But only 10 per cent of participants were men. As well as addresses, workshops were held, at which strategies, follow-up meetings and local networks were organised.⁹⁵

We will consider four major issues relating to girls' education in the 1970s and 1980s: co-education; women in the teaching service; girls and the curriculum; and women in universities and CAEs.

Co-Education

Co-education had always prevailed in state schools in rural areas, where the sparsity of population made specialised schools uneconomic. But single-sex departments often existed in the larger primary schools. In the 1970s greater integration of the sexes in state primary schools became characteristic, while single-sex high schools (situated mostly in more populous urban areas) were sometimes

made co-educational. Reorganisation of single sex into co-educational schools, however, involved financial costs and this slowed the process a little.

Catholic schools resisted co-education, on ideological grounds. Indeed, those private schools which adhered to the humanist aim of developing character were more likely to favour single-sex institutions. Nonetheless, in the 1970s single-sex private schools declined by one-fifth. Co-education was often associated with amalgamation of schools. The formation of the Uniting Church in the late 1970s encouraged the trend towards co-educational amalgamations. But those schools which remained under the continuing Presbyterian Church, such as Scotch College and PLC in Melbourne and the Scots College and PLC in Sydney, continued on a single-sex basis. A different path to co-education was the decision of a number of schools to admit both sexes. 96

In the 1980s the trend continued. Taking non-government schools as a whole, including Catholic schools, the proportions of pupils in boys' schools, girls' schools and co-educational schools were:97

Table 8.10: Pupils in single sex and co-educational non-government schools, Australia, 1981 and 1987

	1981	%	1987	%
Boys' schools	122 790	18.0	123 788	15.4
Girls' schools	101 572	14.8	115 314	14.3
Co-educ. schools	460 016	67.2	566 117	70.3

In 1981 roughly the same number of boys and girls attended single-sex non-government schools. However, three times as many boys as girls attended single-sex non-government primary schools. It is significant that while the proportion of pupils in boys' schools in the 1980s declined markedly, the proportion attending single-sex girls' schools declined only slightly. Educational lore had long suggested that, as regards academic achievement, single-sex education was better for girls and co-education for boys. Old truths had to be rediscovered. In the early 1980s the feminist movement, which had encouraged co-education, began to develop second thoughts. A 1982 Sydney conference on 'Expanding the Options Girls, Mathematics and Employment' heard that girls in single-sex schools performed better at the HSC examinations. In July 1985 the principal of St Catherine's School, Toorak, restated the case for single-sex education in the widely-read magazine, *The Australian Women's*

Weekly: 'In single-sex schools more girls do science and mathematics; girls are freed from the devastating option of being "silly or silent"'. In girls' schools, she added more boldly, 'we can maintain interest in the traditional female subjects'. 98

The 1984 Beazley Report on *Education in Western Australia* recommended single-sex classes. They were introduced in Victoria and the ACT. The South Australian Minister for Education promised in February 1986 that, alongside single-sex classes, the three government girls' schools would continue. In July 1987 the NSW Department of Education permitted co-educational schools to establish single-sex classes for girls in most subjects.⁹⁹ Sometimes the dual system in co-educational high schools worked well; sometimes it caused behaviour problems.

Women in the Teaching Service

The equal employment opportunity movement exerted pressure to ensure appropriate representation of women in various levels of the teaching service. However, in the early 1980s equal opportunity, enshrined in the anti-discrimination acts of the later 1970s, came to be considered inadequate. What was needed was 'positive discrimination' or 'reverse discrimination'. This was an extreme form of affirmative action. Departments of education were major employers of professional women. Hence the teaching service received special attention. A typical argument, in a 1985 description of affirmative action in Australia, referred to the position in South Australia:

For many years women have been 58.60 per cent of the teaching workforce, but have been denied access to positions of power and responsibility within the Department. Sex discrimination legislation in 1975 . . . did nothing to counter the effects of decades of such practice against women. The Department's employment profile for women showed systematic discrimination, which cannot be eradicated by anti-discrimination legislation.¹⁰⁰

'Positions of power and responsibility' was the prime objective, not improvement in the quality of educational administration. The discrimination was assumed, rather than proven. The low proportion of women in positions of power was taken, *ipso facto*, as proof of discrimination.

Equal opportunity or affirmative action in education found expression mainly with regard to the promotion of women teachers and to their working conditions. In New South Wales, for instance, service in country areas was an essential part of the system of promotion, but women, especially married women, were less able or less willing to accept country appointments. The statistical under-representation of women in certain promotion positions was assumed to represent discrimination and to justify preferential

promotion ('affirmative action'). In 1986 the Director-General of Education in New South Wales, R. B. Winder, proposed that preference be given for appointment for a target figure of 40 per cent of vacant positions, which would probably produce an outcome of 20 per cent. 101 New South Wales also adopted a common promotion scale for infant and primary teachers in the late 1980s. This permitted heads of infant departments or schools to become principals of primary schools, at a higher salary. Some of these principals, lacking experience of older children, followed policies and methods inappropriate for older primary students. Economic justice and educational standards could clash. In the ACT the Schools Authority in 1988 required that more women be promoted and on occasions when insufficient women were promoted readvertised positions.

In a 1982 article, 'Discrimination against Women Teachers: Does it Persist?', based on South Australia, G. G. Partington concluded that such discrimination seemed to exist in state primary schools but not in state high schools. He suggested three reasons—the large proportion of unqualified persons among women primary teachers, the unpopularity amongst women of country service, and the belief that promotion should depend on successful experience with higher grades, which many women lacked.¹⁰²

Girls and the Curriculum

A strong attack was launched on the traditional roles allocated to the sexes in the schools, especially vocational roles. In its extreme form it involved a scrutiny of textbooks and school books for inappropriate words and pictures, the application of rules regarding 'non-sexist language' (inappropriate use of the pronouns 'he' and 'she'), and an examination of the narrative content to ensure that the activities of boys and girls were depicted in a way favoured by feminists.

One constant critic of the feminist drive in education, while agreeing that girls had in some respects suffered disadvantages, was G. G. Partington, senior lecturer in education at the Flinders University of South Australia and active in the Australian Council for Educational Standards. In 1980, discussing the mathematical education of girls, he argued that feminists concentrated on the instrumental, vocational value of mathematics, not on mathematics as an essential element in a liberal education. In considering the relatively low mathematical achievement of girls they emphasised cultural factors rather than genetic influences.¹⁰³

In 1983 the ACT Schools Authority accused the Australian Scholastic Aptitude Test (ASAT) of bias against girls. This test was developed by the Australian Council for Educational Research and

was used in the ACT, Queensland and Western Australia to help determine a student's eligibility for tertiary education. A special committee of the ACT Schools Authority recommended in September 1983 that female scores should be adjusted by a third of the difference between the mean standardised ASAT scores of male and female students. In November the Technical Advisory Committee of the ACT Schools Accrediting Authority denounced this as 'a political decision'. Subsequently the ACER was requested to make a study. Its report, *Sex Bias in ASAT?* found the complaint unfounded. What difference existed between males and females related to English ability, confidence and experience in mathematics, and the higher retention rate of females, which implied that more lower ability females were staying on to Year 12. 104

Universities and CAEs

The feminist movement targeted universities and CAEs. The major argument at the university level was for more places for women in the higher ranks. A book by five academic women, *Why So Few?*, became a central weapon in the offensive. Published in 1983, it was based on a 1974 survey of allegedly unfair discrimination in four N.S.W. institutions (three universities and an institute of technology). Reviewing the book, G. Partington claimed that it did not offer a single example of any appointment or promotion being made of a less suitable male over a more suitable female on grounds of gender and only some hearsay evidence of four cases. He accepted the claim that some women had to choose between domesticity and motherhood on the one hand and a career on the other, while male academics rarely had to make this decision. But he pointed out that some women did combine the two roles successfully and others were happy to opt for one or the other. 105

The fact that only four per cent of professors were women was often mentioned, but little concern was evidenced that 70 per cent of primary school teachers were women. For many years departments of education, which controlled entry into teachers' colleges, maintained a balance of the sexes in the teaching service of state primary schools by allocating two-thirds of their teacher training scholarships to women and one-third to men. This allowed for the higher resignation rate of women teachers on marriage. Despite this policy, entry standards were lower for men than for women. After the 1960s this controlling mechanism disappeared. Teacher training colleges became colleges of advanced education and had considerable autonomy; the universities expanded their teacher training activities. Both institutions were anxious to accept all qualified students. Departments of Education stopped providing teacher training scholarships. In any case, regulation of the intake

by sex could be regarded as discriminatory, either against men (too few recruited) or women (higher entrance standards).

A major feminist achievement was the introduction of 'Women's Studies' at universities and colleges of advanced education. By the end of the 1970s women's studies was well established in Australian universities, sometimes as a distinct course, sometimes as a component of courses in the humanities or social sciences, such as sociology, philosophy, history and education. At Flinders University in South Australia Women's Studies started within the Department of Philosophy in 1974. The University of Western Australia established a course in Women's Studies in 1976; in 1985 that university established a B.A. degree in Women's Studies.

The professional organisation of university academics, the Federation of Australian University Staff Associations, supported the feminist cause. In May 1983 FAUSA circulated a seven-page paper on non-sexist language, prepared by Dr Bronwyn Davies of the University of New England on behalf of the FAUSA Affirmative Action Committee. The cover page of *Towards Non-Sexist Language* asserted: 'Our language is pervaded by sexist terminology and by assumptions which exclude, or can be taken to exclude, women, and which convey assumptions about the social roles of women which are restrictive, stereotyped or demeaning'. FAUSA urged its members to use the guidelines 'in collective agreements, academic calendars, policy books, reports, minutes of meetings, correspondence, memoranda . . .' Examples of undesirable words and possible alternatives were provided: man/people; manpower/staff, labour; foreman/supervisor; stewardess/flight attendant; ladies/women (except when used in parallel manner with gentlemen).

In June 1984 the Commonwealth government issued a Green Paper on affirmative action. Three tertiary institutions the Australian National University, the SA College of Advanced Education and Griffith University in Queensland as well as 28 private firms agreed to test the Federal Government's proposals in a pilot scheme. Jane Nichols, Research Officer of FAUSA, welcomed the scheme. 'That systematic discrimination against women is rife in university and CAE employment is well documented', she said. 106 In New South Wales, universities and colleges of advanced education were required to lodge equal employment opportunity plans before the end of June 1985. One point at issue in the implementation of equal employment programs was whether quotas were required, or only 'targets'. Some feminists argued that academic standards should be relaxed to permit promotion of women the traditional focus on research and publication must be changed for it constitutes a form of indirect discrimination against

women'. A change in the composition of selection committees was also needed. 107

A significant mark of achievement came when Dianne Yerbury, who lectured in Management at Monash from 1967 to 1976 and subsequently held various administrative posts, became Australia's first woman vice-chancellor, at Macquarie University in 1987.

Neo-Marxists and Education

During the 1970s and early 1980s neo-Marxist radicals could be considered as a special political group, or more accurately, a group of three or four small political parties. But neo-Marxism was also an ideological current underlying and penetrating many of the special interest groups. It was one of the strongest ideological forces in Australia. Neo-Marxism was particularly the Marxism of the white-collar or salaried middle class and its influence was associated with white-collar support for the various disadvantaged groups.

The main strength of neo-Marxism was among academics in universities and colleges of advanced education, and in the mass media. It was strong also amongst the leadership of the teachers' unions, while the leaders of the parents' and citizens' associations shared something of its radicalism. Neo-Marxism had some influence amongst the leaders of the Aboriginal and women's movements but little amongst those of the ethnic groups.

Although a distinctive neo-Marxist educational theory appeared in 1971, it was not till the Sydney conference of 1976 that the radical education movement crystallised. It found a voice in the Sydney journal *Radical Education Dossier*, in *VSTA News* and *The Secondary Teacher*, published by the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association, and, as a natural outcome of its university and college of advanced education base, in some academic journals, such as *Discourse* (published in Brisbane) and even by the late 1980s in *The Forum of Education* published by Sydney CAE. The main educational argument of neo-Marxists centred on the curriculum. The concept of 'the sociology of knowledge' was used to discredit the old liberal humanist curriculum; but they were chary of the neo-progressives' tendency to disintegrate subjects into themes or topics. They sought to inject a radical content into the established subjects but also supported various new 'studies' in the schools and universities: peace studies, women's studies, ecology or environmental studies, and so on. (See also Chapter 7)

Writing in 1982, Bob Connell, a semi-Marxist, wanted a 'middle-class' academic curriculum to be available in state secondary schools alongside a 'really useful' working-class curriculum. He suggested that working-class students might obtain access to

'formal knowledge' through the selection of 'existing school knowledge' on the basis of working-class experience, i.e. themes or topics based on such problems as economic survival, disrupted households, the new technology, personal identity, and so on. 108

In the early 1980s the growing theoretical confusion of Marxism overseas and their inability to identify an appropriate curriculum for Australian schools produced a crisis of confidence amongst neo-Marxists. *Radical Education Dossier* changed its name to the less specific *Education Links*. By 1984 some leading radicals were expressing alarm or uncertainty about the changing nature of the curriculum.

Neo-Marxism remained strong in some sections of the universities, particularly in the faculties of Arts (e.g., philosophy, English, history and sociology) and Economics. The newer universities were often more receptive to neo-Marxism than the older. The 1979 Williams Report, *Education, Training and Employment*, warned (mainly with student activism in mind) that universities must reassure the public 'that academic excellence and rational methods of inquiry and discussion will be carefully cultivated'.¹⁰⁹ In the early part of 1984 *The Australian* published close to 40 letters on the subject of Marxist infiltration of the lecturing staff in universities, the major target being Murdoch University in Western Australia. But during the 1980s many Marxist academics became pragmatists, 'weighed down by heavy scepticism'.¹¹⁰

Law faculties also provided a fertile field. In September 1983 a leading member of the Bar of New South Wales, Roderick Meagher Q.C., complained in an outburst at the Commonwealth Law Conference that in the whole of Australia there were only one or two academic teachers of value in real property, in contracts or in torts, yet there were about 17 law schools.

There are, to be sure, multitudes of academic homunculi who scribble and prattle endlessly about such non-subjects as criminology, bail, poverty, consumerism, computers and racism. These may be dismissed from calculation: they possess neither practical skills nor legal learning. They are failed sociologists.

Meagher criticised the conduct and organisation of practical courses, mostly conducted at colleges of advanced education for students who had gained their law degrees.¹¹¹ In July 1987 public attention was drawn to neo-Marxism in legal education when a report prepared for the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, *Australian Law Schools*, recommended that Macquarie University's Law School be closed or radically restructured. But the dispute at Macquarie between the traditionalists, who taught 'substantive law' and the neo-Marxists, who

taught 'critical law' and were in a slight majority, dragged on year after year. 112

Homosexuals

Single interest groups also exerted some influence on education, but usually of a more intermittent nature. Homosexuals were such a group. Lesbians provided a link between homosexuals and feminists. 'Gay' teachers' associations were formed in the 1970s. Their main concern was with their rights as teachers, but they had some interest in the curriculum and in ensuring that homosexuality and lesbianism received sensitive treatment in courses on personal development and sex education.

In New South Wales the Gay Task Force, an organisation of lesbians and male homosexuals, presented a submission to the Committee to Examine Teacher Education in May 1979. They did so because 'homosexual women and men are an oppressed group in society and the education system contributes to this oppression'. They claimed that 'approximately half our group have undergone or are presently undergoing teacher training'. Their submission was confined 'to a discussion of discrimination based on sex role stereotyping and the assumption of universal heterosexuality, though we recognise discrimination in the forms of racism, classism and ageism'.¹¹³

Late in 1982, defending an amendment to the Anti-Discrimination Act which extended its protection to homosexuals and the intellectually handicapped, the Labor premier of New South Wales, Neville Wran, asserted that this would not overturn standards of proper conduct expected of teachers and students. He said the Anti-Discrimination Board report on which the bill was based estimated that some 10 per cent of the population was predominantly or exclusively homosexual about 370 000 adults. The president of the Federation of Parents and Citizens Association, Mrs Shirley Berg, attacked the decision to exempt non-government schools from the legislation arguing, remarkably, that this exemption would turn more people away from government schools.¹¹⁴

Homosexuals became more important in the later 1980s when AIDS began to spread and 'Aids Education' was attempted in schools. (The first Australian died of AIDS in 1983). Some lesbians, of course, were active in the feminist movement. Homosexuals, lesbians, feminists and neo-Marxists could be overlapping categories.

Teachers and Teachers' Unions

The teachers' unions were by far the strongest pressure group in education, despite some reduction of influence after the mid-

1980s. Various factors explain this strength. In New South Wales compulsory union membership in state schools strengthened the financial and numerical sinews of the Teachers' Federation. But compulsory membership did not exist in other states such as Victoria. Teachers' unions were strengthened where state departments of education deducted membership fees on their behalf from teachers' salaries. The unions developed a large and powerful bureaucracy of full-time officers who exercised some power over members but also became isolated from them. The New South Wales Teachers Federation in 1985 was an organisation of 64 521 members and was the largest industrial union in that state. In 1975 it employed 25 administrative officers who, by 1986, had increased to 39. 115

Good relations with Labor governments reinforced the influence of teachers' unions, though after the mid-1980s these relations often became strained. In general, the teachers' unions supported the Labor parties, but neo-Marxists and radicals in the leadership were willing to criticise Labor from a left-wing position. During the 1982 elections in Victoria the three major teachers' unions supported the Labor Party with funds, and received some benefits soon after the Labor victory.¹¹⁶ In most states the special representation given to teachers' unions on a various boards and committees, part of the administrative structure of education, strengthened their power.

A conflict was always latent in union policy between educational principles and industrial interests, i.e. between the needs of education and the economic and other vocational interests of teachers. Such clashes of interest included resistance to moves in the late 1970s and early 1980s to increase accountability; resistance in New South Wales and Victoria to the establishment of senior high schools (which would diversify types of teachers); resistance to school councils in New South Wales; resistance to dezoning of school enrolment areas in New South Wales; and, in all states, resistance to specialised secondary high schools, largely on egalitarian grounds. In New South Wales the Teachers' Federation was able to frustrate the recommendations of the McGowan Report of 1981. In the later 1980s clashes of interest occurred amongst teachers over equal employment policies, which attracted more support amongst the leadership than amongst the mass of teachers.

Indeed, as in many unions, a gap existed between the membership and the leadership. The secretary of the NSW Teachers' Federation, Jennie George, agreed in an interview in 1981 that Federation policy on subjects such as homosexuality and abortion 'appears to be well in advance of the consensus among teachers'.¹¹⁷ Commenting on the situation in the later 1980s, David McRae, the

Victorian teacher unionist and educational consultant appointed to assess the Participation and Equity Program, pointed out that some of the former radicals were now in power and were promoting initiatives, so that the base of radicalism was now not in the schools but in the system, 'apparently out of reach or command of classroom teachers'. Some teachers were ideologically and professionally demoralised. McRae quoted a South Australian teacher:

I began teaching in 1972. I had marched my way through a university course, and demonstrated through Dip. Ed. For the first couple of years my classes were sit-ins. Ah, the certainty of it all. I wish I knew as much now as I did then. 118

During the 1970s the resignation rate of teachers in state schools dropped because of the economic recession. Once 14 per cent, it was by 1981 about 4 per cent. This meant that many teachers were disgruntled, unwilling members of the profession. Moreover, promotion within the service was largely on seniority rather than merit. And because of relaxed recruitment standards and the reduced attraction of teaching, some 5 per cent or 10 per cent of teachers were incompetent but could not be dismissed.119

In the Catholic system the increasing number of lay teachers, many of whom had taught in state schools, led to the establishment of stronger unions of non-state teachers and to a growth of militancy. In New South Wales, for instance, a new leadership came to power in the Assistant Masters' and Mistresses' Association in 1968⁷⁰ and this organisation gained its first wages award in early 1970. The AMMA was reformed as the Independent Teachers Association in 1973. In 1974 the ITA encouraged the formation of an Australian body, the ITFA and in subsequent years provided the bulk of the finances of this body.

By 1983 ITA membership, just on 1000 in 1972, had risen to 8500 and the organisation had a full-time staff of eight.¹²⁰ The growing militancy of the ITA ultimately provoked a senior Catholic education official in 1985 to express publicly, for the first time, strong criticism. The head of the Catholic Education Office for the Diocese of Wagga Wagga accused the union, which represented about 11 000 teachers in private schools, 70 per cent of them in Catholic schools, of acting irresponsibly, denigrating the employers (the Catholic Church) and trying to secularise Catholic schools.¹²¹

Despite the success of their unions, even in some respects because of this success, public esteem for teachers was falling. Surveys of 16 professional occupations in 1977 and again in 1984 reveal this. Respondents were asked to select five occupations, from a list of 16, which had the greatest esteem in their view. The

nine which received 28 or more mentions in 1977 are listed below, together with their popularity in 1984. 122

Table 8.11: Popularity of the professions, 1977 and 1984

Occupation	1977	1984
Physician	70	63
Lawyer	40	45
Clergyman	47	44
Chemist	36	39
Engineer	35	37
University professor	31	36
High school teacher	44	36
Primary school teacher	41	34
Industrialist, private business	28	33

High school teachers ranked third in popularity in 1977 but equal sixth in 1984; primary teachers fourth in 1977 but eighth in 1984. Teachers' strikes and threats of strikes, resistance to educational testing, relaxed standards of dress and demeanour, discipline problems in the classroom, and over-friendliness with pupils were some of the factors calculated to reduce the professional prestige of teachers. Indeed, the leaders of teacher unions sometimes argued that teachers were professionals, sometimes that they were part of the working class. Teachers' salaries started to decline relative to those of other occupations in the 1980s. As teaching became a less attractive vocation, so did its prestige as a vocation.

Groups Favouring Traditional and Academic Education

Supporters of liberal humanist education, some of them unreformed Christians, might also be considered special interest groups. Concern over academic standards prompted the foundation in Melbourne in October 1973 of the Australian Council for Educational Standards whose journal, *Aces Review*, appeared four or five times a year until December 1988. Active in the ACES were Professor Leonie Kramer of the Department of English, Sydney University, Professor James McAuley of the Department of English, University of Tasmania, Professor D. A. T. Gasking of the Department of Philosophy, Melbourne University, and Dr F. Just of the Department of French, Melbourne University. ACES exercised some influence by making representations to committees of enquiry,

presenting its views in newspapers, and promoting debate amongst educationists. In Sydney the literary journal *Quadrant*, edited by McAuley and Peter Coleman, also supported traditional liberal education.

The interest of Christian fundamentalists in education centred on the sustaining of basic literacy, the teaching of religion in schools, and the quality of the moral values inherent in various subjects in the curriculum. The Festival of Light, whose main strength was in Sydney, organised conferences on educational standards. In Queensland Rona Joyner was the leader of two Christian fundamentalist right-wing organisations, STOP (Society to Oppose Pornography) and CARE (Campaign Against Regressive Education) which published bulletins, canvassed politicians, and maintained a strong criticism of progressive education. This movement had considerable influence on the Queensland Government's education policy, for instance in successfully opposing the MACOS (Man: A Course of Study) and SEMP (Social Education Materials Project) courses. 123

In South Australia parents and educationists concerned at the apparent neglect by many primary school teachers of talented children formed an Association for Gifted and Talented Children in February 1978. A Victorian Association for Gifted and Talented Children was set up at a public meeting in June 1978. It was probably not accidental that this initiative first came in states which had been leaders in embracing progressive education. A New South Wales Association was formed in 1979 and a Queensland one in the following year.¹²⁴ The First National Conference on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children was held in Melbourne in August 1983.

Of course, some elements within state educational bureaucracies still evidenced concern over standards. In 1985 the Queensland Director-General of Education, George Berkeley, told the Queensland Chapter of the Australian College of Education that over-emphasis on the needs of minorities could divert efforts and funds from 'the important needs of the majority'. He acknowledged that in speaking out he was inviting accusations of being uncaring, elitist, right-wing, unrealistic and even sadistic.¹²⁵

The Media and Education

The medianewspapers, television, radiowere an important source of education, of information (correct or incorrect), of values (often contradictory). The media were also an important source of educational comment.

The media set the policy agenda, particularly for state schools.

This was possible because education was now a major political and social issue. The educational policy of politicians responded to the public ventilation of problems whether it was the enrolment of a girl in a boys' school, the closing of a school, the curriculum, or some bungling in the organisation of the Year 12 public examination. Television crews and newspaper reporters did not hesitate to enter schools and interview teachers or pupils. The media represented, shaped and, to some extent, replaced public opinion. The old independent public intelligentsia had been absorbed into university academic posts or into journalism. By the 1980s university educationists were no longer an important source of information or ideas about education. Serious students of education had to look to journalists for an explanation of what was going on in education.

The media's critical stance to the new education started in the mid-1970s and gradually strengthened. The *Nation Review* opened the offensive on 31 January, 1975, with a front page on 'School Today: Corrupting the Innocents', a theme elaborated within the journal by Dr Max Teichmann of Melbourne University. The November 1975 cover of *Quadrant* depicted 'Barry Humphries' Radical School Teacher', young, bearded and militant. In *The Bulletin* Peter Samuels was an assiduous critic. 'Australia's Education Scandal: We're Turning Out Millions of Dunces' was the front page story of 15 May 1976. The cover of 12 March 1977 had a similar message 'The Scandal of our Universities', with the supporting sentence: 'The tertiary education system has grown so far, so fast, that academia has become an enormous island of privilege, populated in considerable measure by drones and parasites'. The daily newspapers also participated in this frequently adverse scrutiny of education. On 26 and 27 August 1976 *The Age* ran an 'Insight' analysis of 'The Great College Perks: Academics Ride the Learning Boom in the New Cloisters of Paradise'. The next month *The Australian* reprinted an article from *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, London, saying that the academic paradise had come to an end; the universities might survive, many CAEs might not. As *The Bulletin* became more reticent, *The Sydney Morning Herald* editorials in the 1980s became more critical, while *The Australian* also took its place as a foremost critic of the public system.

But many education editors took a neo-progressive line. After all, they had to cultivate those powers who provided their copy: the administrators, the teachers' leadership, the lecturers in education. In Melbourne Geoff Maslen of *The Age* was usually supported the progressive Establishment. But in *The Australian* Sydney-based Greg Sheridan and Tony Abbott (formerly of *The Bulletin*) were scathing in their criticism, including in their ambit the teachers unions as well as state Departments of Education. 'The Lies they

'Teach our Children', by Greg Sheridan in 1983, caused a long-remembered stir. A few academics James McAuley (until his death in 1976), Leonie Kramer, Lauchlan Chipman of Wollongong University attracted public attention when they launched occasional critical shafts. But the journalists took the lead. Many of these education specialists were the products of the old minorities, Jews or Catholics, who had made good, rising through the old 'educational ladder' which promoted talented individuals on academic merit.

A few journals with a more limited circulation exerted an influence on individual opinion-formers, notably *Aces Review*, published by the Australian Council for Educational Standards, 1973-1988; B. A. Santamaria's *News-Weekly*, published in Melbourne by the National Civic Council; and *Quadrant*, published in Sydney by the Australian Association for Cultural Freedom.

Confusion in the Curriculum

During the NSW election campaign of 1981 *The Sydney Morning Herald* denounced both the Labor and Liberal Parties for their failure to make any serious comment on education, the single largest area of Government expenditure. This was despite innumerable reviews of education, widespread public concern, and doubts about the quality of the teachers. The leader of the Liberal opposition proposed to reintroduce a public examination for the School Certificate and to restore 'standards and content and discipline'. But what, asked the *Herald*, was to be examined? The 'crucial matter of content' had not been discussed in detail at all. 126

By the early 1980s the old liberal or general curriculum, the humanist-realist compromise established at the beginning of the century, had gone. This had been the prime objective of the sociology of knowledge. But a variety of social factors had also helped produce confusion in the curriculum. These included the adoption by many teachers, educational administrators, and lecturers of the principles of progressive, child-centred education; the recasting of segments of the curriculum to accommodate the ideologies of various special interest groups, particularly the Marxist, feminist and ethnic; and the hostility to academic study which the disruption of home and family life had engendered amongst students. The values and technical tricks of television programs had changed the interests and reduced the attention span of many youngsters.

During the 1980s the rising retention rate in Years 11 and 12 changed the constituency of the senior secondary years of state and Catholic schools, affecting the sort of curriculum provided in these

schools. The growth of youth unemployment encouraged a swing towards semi-vocational subjects throughout the secondary school.

The major overall changes were: the disintegration of the humanist subjects (concerned with the human world) and lowered standards in the realist subjects (concerned with the natural world); a renewed interest in vocational subjects, but also a theorising of these subjects; a shift from emphasis on content (mastery of knowledge) to emphasis on process (development of mental skills and techniques, allegedly so that pupils could acquire knowledge for themselves); and an increased multiplicity of secondary school subjects, even in the senior years. This was a response to the greater variety of pupils in schools and to the pressure of the special interest groups.



Figure 8.4:
 Attempts to revive standards
 In many western democracies throughout the 1980s, politicians of both the right and the left made efforts to raise standards. Until the late 1980s these efforts had little success. A report on initiatives in England, France, America and New South Wales appeared in *The Sun-Herald*, Sydney, in February 1985.

The general acceptance of the 'validity' of the various special interest groups encouraged relativism and weakened long-established educational criteria governing the curriculum. The principle of school-based curricula (often teacher-based and occasionally peer group-based), coupled with attempts by the central authority to sponsor particular studies, also encouraged confusion. School-

based curricula, stronger in some states than in others, made it difficult to say exactly what was being taught in state schools, particularly in the primary and junior secondary years. In the senior years the external examination still exercised some curriculum control. The dominance of particular textbooks also had a strong impact on the curriculum. To the old question, 'What knowledge is of most worth?' the new age could produce no clear answer.

The *ethnic groups* certainly sought the incorporation of linguistic and cultural studies in the school curriculum which would sustain their distinctive traditions. But apart from this, they were happy to endorse the long-established subject-curriculum which would lead to the economic, vocational and social advancement of their children, particularly their sons. In state schools they encouraged a diversity of ethnic studies; in Catholic schools the variety of ethnic groups was reduced by self-selection, as some minorities would not seek entry into Catholic schools for their children, while the Catholic ethos encouraged a degree of community coherence amongst their students. The *neo-Marxists* or radicals tended to favour change in the former humanist subjects like history or English literature which tended to be vehicles for ideology. They were less disposed to modify instrumental subjects like mathematics or science, though new approaches titles like 'mathematics in society' or science and society did open possibilities for ideological indoctrination.

The *feminists* came close to the hard-headed neo-Marxist line, talking about the development of 'knowledge, skills, and attitudes'. The 1984 Commonwealth Schools Commission's Working Party on the education of girls was quite forthright:

In any society the selection and transmission of knowledge are controlled by the dominant group. There is a growing awareness in Australia that the human experience transmitted to students in schools is in fact male experience. The school curriculum is now perceived to be a vehicle for perpetuating a reality defined by men. Women's contribution and their social and psychological experiences are either omitted or presented as less valuable than those of men. 127

No problems here about education for its own sake, a liberal education, the transmission of a cultural heritage, the diffusion of knowledge, and so on. The feminists inverted the neo-Marxist line, which saw the curriculum as the product of a dominant class, to present it as the product of the dominant sex. They did not contemplate the possibility that the school might have educational aims of its own which the 'dominant group' could not over-ride; nor that the dominant group might be divided in its views or unable to impose them. Because of their vocational emphasis, they did not limit their attention to the ideological subjects, such as

history or English literature, in which the activities of women had usually been under estimated. Rather, they concentrated on the instrumental subjects such as mathematics, science, technology and sport.

Socio-economically disadvantaged groups were now more prominent in the schools, especially in state secondary schools. Automatic progression from primary to secondary school and the raising of the minimum school leaving age to 15 in the 1960s; the abolition of the remaining specialised secondary schools (such as technical schools) in favour of comprehensive schools and the increasing proportion of children from disrupted households (often single parent ones, often lower class ones, often impoverished ones) in the 1970s; and the flight of the 'middle class' from state to non-state schools after 1977 increased the weight of non-academic students in many schools. This generated a new two-class curriculum, one for those interested in and capable of mastering 'academic' subjects who would work in, or manage, the new white-collar tertiary industries and one for those who would gravitate to the residual semi-skilled or unskilled jobs in secondary industry or would adopt a life of semi-employment. 'The division is increasingly between a highly abstract curriculum from mathematics and physics to computer languages, and a participatory alternative which is not intended to go anywhere'. 128 The watered down subjects often had 'society' tacked onto their names, to suggest 'relevance'. Or they provided an entertainment course.

One way of lending respectability to the amorphous tendencies of the age was to adopt a very broad definition of curriculum. 'All the planned experiences which a student has at school' said the 1975 report, *Girls, School & Society* and this was endorsed in *Girls and Tomorrow*, 1984. The preference for 'experiences' (long popular amongst progressives in the United States) rather than subjects or disciplines shows how far things had gone since the spread in the 1960s of Jerome Bruner's 'structure of disciplines' approach (see also Chapter 4). But the adoption of a 'broad definition' did not solve the problem of the proliferation of subjects, studies, perspectives and the like. A more elaborate version of this remedy was the core curriculum. In Tasmania a 1977 report, *Secondary Education in Tasmania*, urged a core curriculum. In 1980 the Victorian Department of Education issued a 'Green Paper' which included a proposal for a core curriculum. In 1980 also the Curriculum Development Centre in Canberra, a strong advocate of the progressive/radical curriculum, published a booklet, *Core Curriculum for Australian Schools*, in an effort to retain some foothold for school-based curricula. It nominated nine 'areas of knowledge and experience', but the definitions were so wide that almost anything

could be fitted into them. 129 In 1981 the Senate Standing Committee on Education criticised school-based curriculum development and urged the development of a core curriculum.¹³⁰ Yet another approach was to edge cautiously back towards a syllabus, through guidelines, frameworks, support documents and the like. In the ACT, where the schools had freedom to develop their own curricula, the ACT Schools Authority identified six broad curriculum areas in 1983. The following year it decided to develop 'non-prescriptive curriculum guidelines'. These failed to have any effect, but from 1985 a number of 'frameworks' for particular subjects were developed. Frameworks appeared in Victoria about the same time.¹³¹

In its 1981 report the Senate Committee stated that schools did not appreciate the educational needs of industry or commerce. It accepted the view that 20 to 25 per cent of school leavers lacked an adequate standard of education and, in particular, the fundamentals of literacy and numeracy. It believed this deficiency originated in the early primary school and handicapped subsequent secondary education. It attributed declining standards in the primary school to changes in the composition of the teaching profession. The proportion of male primary teachers had fallen remarkably and the average of age of teachers had also fallen. While women could teach many subjects adequately, their lack of mathematical skills led to inadequate teaching of mathematics. The report might have added that teachers sometimes omitted mathematics lessons. While less definite about English, the report suggested many primary teachers lacked the techniques for teaching reading and neglected reading and writing skills in other sorts of lessons.¹³²

The informal methods favoured by child-centred educationists retained some strength in primary school English, despite arguments that the learning of reading would be improved if phonics were re-introduced and despite complaints of the neglect of spelling. Process writing (or conference writing) was launched in New South Wales in 1980 during a visit to Sydney by Professor Donald Graves of the University of New Hampshire, USA. Under this scheme children chose their own topics for their writings (the word 'composition' was no longer used). They would have brief 'conferences' with their teacher, who was moving around the classroom. Spelling and syntax were not to interfere with the flow of ideas; several drafts were to be written; the student's work would ultimately be 'published' (exhibited on a classroom display board). Too often this approach permitted students to write constantly on the same topics; it encouraged classroom noise; it subjected the work of talented students to the crude assessments of their less talented classmates.¹³³

What of the humanities in a post-humanist society? English, the central subject of liberal humanism, suffered especially. In 1977

Garth Boomer, then Principal Education Officer of the South Australian Department of Education and member of the National Committee on English Teaching, recalled that in the late 1960s English had been clearly defined and safe. Secondary pupils studied set poems, plays and novels. They wrote comprehension exercises and essays. But now 'all is changed, irrevocably changed'. The old English had almost lost its identity. The sociology of literature and the anthropological view of oral literature in tribal life suggested that literature should have a central place in the curriculum. But instead of 'petty debate' about literary quality there will be debate about the values, attitudes and outlook inherent in 'a piece of literature or a folk story or a song'. 134

In the senior years of secondary high school, where the university still retained some influence, remnants of the old English survived. Neo-Marxist literary criticism had not yet eroded academic English. Many of the lecturers in the English departments of Australian universities came from Britain and many sustained a liberal humanist approach to literature. Occasionally a forthright exposition of neo-Marxist ideas appeared. At the 1980 Australian Universities Literature and Language Association Congress Professor Ian Reid of the School of Humanities, Deakin University, argued that 'a radical uncertainty' existed about the nature of English. He wanted English Departments to pay 'due heed to Marxist and structuralist and feminist and other upstart methodologies'.¹³⁵ Yet new approaches, particularly those promoted by the Schools Council in England, were influencing senior secondary years. English as 'cultural studies' suggested the importance of studying contemporary literature; English as 'communication' put more emphasis on students expressing their own views a more student-centred approach.¹³⁶ The confusion of values produced controversy over set texts. In 1980 the Country Women's Association of NSW urged the Education Department to set books of better moral value, complaining of Huxley's *Brave New World* and Kenneally's *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*. In 1985 the leader of the Liberal opposition in New South Wales called 'A Stretch of the Imagination', a play set for HSC study, 'just a litany of urination, of fornication, of swearing, of windbreaking'. In 1986 the Board of Senior School Studies defended itself against criticism from a National Party parliamentarian of Peter Kocan's *The Treatment and the Cure*, set for the 2 Unit General English HSC course. 'HSC study books chosen for literary merit, not to scandalise, says board' *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported on 11 February 1986.

In history, too, the emphasis was on students finding things out for themselves. Increasing attention was devoted to contemporary history. The influence of the English Schools Council History

Project was seen in the popularity of themes, rather than narrative content organised into rationally linked topics, and in the emphasis on investigatory skills, rather than acquisition of knowledge. An emphasis on empathy became popular; the ethos of the welfare state in the 1980s favoured feelings rather than rationalism. In Australian history, diminished confidence in the Anglo-Celtic heritage and the sense of guilt regarding 'disadvantaged' groups encouraged some denigration of the Australian achievement. The New History started to appear about 1976/77. In Victoria the visit of an American history educationist, Jack Fraenkel, in 1976 helped this. History changed:

Unlike the old history as story approach, the new textbooks were broken into short gobbets of text broken up by pictures, cartoons, maps, diagrams, and time-lines. Passages of authorial narrative are interspersed with real or even made-up documents, questions, 'things to make and do' . . . The enquiry method, with its short paragraphs and abundant questions, embraces a pedagogy arguably more appropriate to the children of the television age with their insatiable need for visual stimulus and their short attention spans. 137

In science a shift away from the hard sciences, such as physics and chemistry, towards more personal sciences, such as biology, occurred. In the late 1960s and early 1970s American packages for particular sciences (chemistry, physics, biology) were imported. They emphasised pupil activity and laboratory work rather than book-oriented or teacher-directed courses. The English Nuffield project was less popular in Australia, though it was used in Victorian and West Australian primary schools. It put greater stress on the teacher devising his own courses by using a range of approaches, equipment and materials. In the 1970s the Australian Science Education Project adopted the core plus options approach. The weakness in all these schemes was the failure to train teachers for their implementation and the shortage or great cost of special materials. They were devised 'from above', on the assumption that more money would improve science teaching.

Sex education provided a nexus at which several sociological factors operated the deteriorating influence of the family, the pressure of feminists and homosexuals, the spirit of the permissive society expressed through the peer group, television and otherwise. In 1977 the Royal Commissioners on Human Relationships, Judge Elizabeth Evatt, Anne Deveson and Archbishop Felix Arnott, recommended that 'education courses should reflect a view of homosexuality as a variation of sexuality' and that 'education should be given about homosexuals in schools, to parents, teachers and medical schools and that selected homosexuals should be involved in such programs'.¹³⁸ South Australia was one of the leaders in the

new sex education. As early as 1976 a *Teachers' Handbook on Health Education Years 8 to 13* (i.e. for ages 13 to 15) suggested that 'guest speakers from relevant community groups be invited to present points of view for discussion on such topics as homosexuality, abortion, family life, venereal disease, etc'. Writing in 1985 on *The Treatment of Sex in South Australian Education* Geoffrey Partington of Flinders University speculated on the likely impact of such advice:

In better times one would support wholeheartedly a wider devolution of responsibility for the curriculum to the individual teacher. In any case the follies of the average teacher are at present likely to be less than of those who make the decisions on sex education at Department of Education level. 139

Even radicals were becoming alarmed at the incoherence of the secondary school curriculum. In 1983 Anne Junor, a research officer for the NSW Teachers' Federation, commented in the Federation journal, *Education*, on the widespread feeling that peace studies, women's studies, computer education, media studies, career education, living skills, politics, environmental studies, legal studies and so on should be added to the curriculum. She warned that the curriculum would be overcrowded and that the basic subjects would suffer:

How valuable is a weekly timetable consisting of at most two periods of English, maths, science, history, geography, art, music, language, Aboriginal studies, health, P.E., legal studies, consumer education, environmental studies, multi-cultural studies, computer education, women's studies, peace studies, technics, home economics, textile and design, commerce, computer studies, careers . . .?140

Victoria was in the lead in the constant attempts to produce a new curriculum; in 1981 and 1982 the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education organised conferences to encourage school-based curriculum development. But by 1982 the social engineers had developed some caution. Dr Ken McKinnon, formerly chairman of the Schools Commission and now Vice-Chancellor of Wollongong University, warned that schools could probably not change the position of whole groups in society. Dean Ashenden reflected that while he and his colleagues who compiled *Making the Difference* had urged working class schools to 'buy out of the academic competitive curriculum' this position probably had 'some fatal flaws'. Jean Blackburn conceded that it would be impossible to select the content of the curriculum 'without some commitment to the intellectual and artistic culture which is commonly considered our human heritage'.141

Yet this did not prevent a disparate group of ideologues

Dean Ashenden, Jean Blackburn, Bill Hannan, Doug Whitesponsoring in 1984 a 'Manifesto for a Democratic Curriculum'. The consortium noted that the rapid increase in numbers staying on to Years 11 and 12 had produced two conflicting propositions: that the curriculum should become more diverse, or that it should provide a common experience in which diversity was acknowledged. They opted for 'a very broad definition of curriculum'. They hesitated to use conventional subject names (history, English, mathematics) for these suggested specialist teachers and 'adequate relationships' required fewer specialist teachers. So they opted for four major 'areas': language and humanities; science and mathematics; cultural activities; and institutional practices. The democratic school had to reject assessment which selected pupils. It must seek excellence by assuming 'an overall success for participating students'. This required changes in the subject matter and teaching methods. The consortium was disturbed about pluralist arguments which 'addressed genuine differences and imponderables in knowledge and morality', but neglected the fact 'that we all have to live in one society'. 142

Confusion over the content of the curriculum was one reason for the shift of emphasis from content to process. This was especially marked in the primary school, which had few specialist teachers committed to preserving the territorial boundaries of their subjects. Exponents of process argued that content was not important, for the purpose was to provide mental skills. The development of empathy was another way of reducing attention to knowledgefeelings were to be developed rather than factual recall of accumulated information. By 1987 educationists were hard put to say, except in very general terms, what the school curriculum was.143

Conclusion:

The Pluralist Society and Education

The pluralist society generated contradictions in education between interest groups which were as strong as, sometimes stronger than, those arising out of older class antagonisms. The special interest groups were divided amongst themselves; they were united mainly in their demands for state funds and their opposition to the traditional curriculum. Aboriginals might be divided by religious or by social differences, ethnic groups by feminist doctrines or generation gaps (age differences, peer group differences).

Another inherent contradiction was that between educational purposes and social or ideological. Feminists, Marxists and progressives among the teachers were likely to urge 'relevance' in the curriculum. But this could be at the expense of acquisition of objective knowledge. In secondary school co-education could

restrict the educational achievement of girls. In universities the proponents of feminist or Marxist studies favoured commitment and relevance and scorned the tradition of 'disinterested enquiry', of the striving for objectivity, of the value of knowledge for its own sake.

The objective of adapting education to the needs of a multicultural society addressed only one aspect of pluralism, the cultural/ethnic aspect. The favoured principle was now not assimilation but integration, not the melting pot but the salad bowl. But differences in objectives between groups produced contradictory pressures. By the 1980s some observers believed that state aid for the various groups had promoted excessive division within the community. In 1982 Ray Nilsen, president of the Victorian branch of the Council for the Defence of Government Schools, expanded his opposition to aid for Church schools to include opposition to aid for ethnic schools. He asserted that Australian children were being divided by creed, country, culture and colour. State aid, instituted in 1963 to assist Catholic schools, now assumed a new function. 'Instead of building bridges between the large variety of migrant peoples inhabiting Australia, state aid is erecting walls between them'. Ethnic schools were encouraging in Australia the divisions and disputes of Europe, the Middle East and the Far East. 'Political expediency is leading to social madness'. 144

The new pressure groups produced a new form of egalitarianism equality of groups rather than of individuals. Intellectually, this encouraged a growth of relativism. The multiplicity of pressure groups frustrated the efforts of the schools to achieve what was demanded of them. The schools were given wider responsibilities than ever before. They were being asked to do too much. A wide range of social groups were seeking to implement their aims through the schools. The increased weakness of older educational institutions, such as the family or the churches, added to the pressure under which schools and related formal institutions operated. The motives of the various groups varied. Some were concerned with increasing and widening vocational opportunities for their constituents. Some were concerned with developing a particular sub-culture. Some were concerned with developing personal self-respect and social esteem. Some were even genuinely interested in education!

The existence of these pressure groups deterred frank and free examination of educational problems. They imposed a sort of censorship. For instance, the possibility that genetic or innate psychological factors conditioned the academic performance of girls or Aborigines or various ethnic groups was not to be entertained. It was something which social democracy could not accom-

moderate ideologically. Somewhat bitterly, Ronald Conway wrote in May 1987:

We have a society which now, officially, if not always actually, discriminates in favour of women, Aborigines, conservationists, ethnic minorities, single parents, the defiantly illiterate, the boozed, the drugged and the corporately greedy. Long on the unofficial, but actual, hit list for shafting have been both motherhood and fatherhood, the single-income nuclear family, farmers, monarchists, small businessmen, Christians (never Jews or Muslims), law-and-order, educational excellence, returned servicemen, male bonding, the sober and the industrious in fact straights and squares everywhere. 145

This was exaggerated. And even as Conway wrote attitudes were changing. Nonetheless, this perception was not completely wide of the mark.

A major product of the great variety of interest groups acting on education was the flood of investigations, reports, guidelines and directives. To some extent these were also protective devices, to placate the variety of groups. They were also the result of the growth of a vast bureaucracy of non-teaching theorists, educational administrators and consultants who made a living by spawning committees, reports and policies. But this great flood of documents and policies was too much for teachers or schools to digest and implement. Demoralisation and ineffectiveness was the result.

At the 'educational audit' seminar of April 1978 mentioned earlier, the NSW Minister for Education, Eric Bedford, reasserted an old sociological principle:

We must keep in mind the fact that society is not made by schools: schools reflect society and are effective to the extent that they reinforce the values of society. If society places multiple demands upon schools such that all cannot be met, then the purpose of school loses definition and schools appear to be ineffective. 146

If this stage had been reached, he said, society must guide the administrators and the teachers by setting an order of priorities.

Eight years later, in April 1986, the Director-General of Education in New South Wales, R. B. Winder, was stating much the same. The public suspected that control of the schools was at issue, they sensed that no-one was in charge. He quoted a visitor to Australia, Professor Michael Kirst of Stanford University, who argued that American schools, particularly the public high schools, had been required to respond to each newly perceived problem in society: poverty, destruction of the environment, drugs, youth problems, illiteracy and ethnic disadvantage. But the attention was short-term. The school system achieved reform by addition. The media was particularly important in raising issues. 'Schools don't determine the agenda they are media driven'. The traditional

groups once supportive of the schools, parent-teacher organisations and teachers unions, were now much more critical:

He points out that many single-issue interest groups have arisen whose attachment to and association with public schools is often only incidental to furthering their own interests. Human rights, discrimination, environment, peace, safety, nutrition. It is a jungle there is no sense of corporate goals no mission . . . 147

The increasing financial stringency of the 1980s threatened to promote disputation between the various groups for a share of a shrinking cake. Yet in the long run the economic crisis would force the educational leadership to exercise more control over the educational systems, with a consequent reduction, in some measure, of the influence of the groups. The deteriorating economic climate also emphasised the importance of basic skills in the primary school and vocational training in the secondary. Two ministers who took the lead in attempting to strengthen state control were Rod Cavalier in New South Wales and John Dawkins in Canberra. Introducing the 1987 Education and Public Instruction Bill, Cavalier claimed that while the government listened to the major interest groups, it led and shaped the agenda for educational reform. 'We are in control of events'.¹⁴⁸ Six months later Dawkins, recently appointed Minister for Employment, Education and Training, warned the groups that their influence was diminishing. 'Mr Dawkins made it clear that although the Government would listen to the views of interest groups, it would not be dominated by those views'.¹⁴⁹

Australian education, like Australian society, was on the verge of changes precipitated by an intensifying economic crisis. In the next chapter we will examine changes in educational ideology, sociology and theory in the late 1980s and early 1990s, following this with a companion chapter examining, from a sociological perspective, educational practice in the same period.

Chapter Nine The Sociology of Education in an Instrumental Context

In the late 1980s the economic crisis of the welfare state transformed educational policy. A new reform movement began to restructure the organisation and administration of state school systems, as well as attempting to reform the control and nature of the curriculum. New concepts like administrative devolution, school self-management, a national curriculum, skilling for Australians and a 'Unified National System' for higher education institutions were propagated. These changes in policy and practice, the outcome of an economic, social and educational crisis, affected the strength and content of the sociology of education.

Open recognition of a deep-seated economic crisis may be dated to 14 May 1986 when the federal Treasurer, Paul Keating, spoke of the 'international hole' in which the country found itself. The price of Australian commodities on world markets was as bad as in the Great Depression. A tremendous effort was needed to restructure manufacturing. If growth slackened and unemployment rose, Australia would become a banana republic. 1 From this point onwards the relation between education and the national economy became a constant preoccupation of politicians.

The appointment in the re-elected Hawke Labor government of John Dawkins in July 1987 as federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training, together with the accession of Dr Terry Metherell as Liberal Party Minister for Education in New South Wales in March 1988, marked the advent of a new era in Australian education. Dawkins indicated that while he would still listen to special interest groups, they would no longer dominate policy. Both ministers turned to non-educationists for their advisors. In New South Wales a policy of devolution was launched. Both the Commonwealth and New South Wales devised plans for a 'national' (or statewide) curriculum in which improved basic standards and vocational skills were to play a large role. An important element in devolution was greater school self-management, which included greater school responsibility for managing funds. Soon the remaining states and territories were experimenting with similar reforms. 2 Victoria had attempted a policy of devolution from 1983 onwards, but a change of government resulted in a takeover of education by the 'Socialist Left'. Existing neo-progressive influences were reinforced by neo-Marxist policies, producing a crisis in Victorian education which persists, with no end in sight.³

This dramatic educational revolution paralleled similar reforms in England, New Zealand, the United States, and other overseas countries troubled by economic crisis, low educational standards and a confused curriculum.

Alarmed by the new instrumental, utilitarian, vocational policies, residual radicals began to argue that schools need not reflect society completely and talked of the need to defend liberal education. In 1991, for instance, Professor R. E. Bates, Dean of Deakin University's Education faculty, denounced the instrumental curriculum and devolution at a NSW Teachers' Federation conference.⁴

In addition to the new instrumentalism and devolution, changes in higher education also affected the sociology of education. John Dawkins announced the end of the 'binary system' of universities and colleges of advanced education in September 1987. Following a Green Paper on Higher Education in December 1987 and a White Paper in July 1988, considerable pressure, primarily through funding arrangements, was put on institutions of higher and advanced education to merge in what was called a 'Unified National System'. The merger of colleges of advanced education with universities (in many cases not initially in the form of full integration), the merger of colleges of advanced education with each other (producing integrated, instant universities), affected sociology in various ways. A more practical, vocational spirit spread through educational institutions, encouraged by official

statements of new educational purposes, by state funding policies and by the promotion of desired curriculum changes. Tourism, for instance, was included in some sociology courses. Teaching loads often became heavier, inhibiting research and writing. Research funds were more readily available for practical projects. Sociology textbooks sought a more neutral or objective stance. As R. E. Young of Sydney University suggested in an article on 'The New Right and the Old Left', for many sociologists it was a case of 'a plague on both their houses'. 5

Teacher training courses, responding to the demand for improved standards in education and to the more difficult circumstances of teaching in the 1980s and 1990s, reduced the time allocated to theory, including the sociology of education. In addition, the sociology of education itself attempted to adopt a more practical, vocational guise. The contraction in the sociology of education occurred especially in colleges of advanced education. But former lecturers in this field were able to sustain radical ideology in other courses, such as curriculum studies or policy studies.

Nevertheless, the sociological heritage of the preceding decades survived, particularly in the universities proper. The influence of the pluralist society was seen in the diversification of sociology and the sociology of education into specialised topics. Theoretical approaches or interpretations encompassed a wide gamut, most of the conflicting theories of the last two decades surviving in transmuted form. Another product of pluralism was the ideological commitment of many educational sociologists to the principle that, in whatever aspect of educational activity they were investigating, they should accord weight to the interests of special interest groups.

The Pattern of Studies

An analysis of courses in the sociology of education at various universities in 1989 reveals the predominance of micro-sociological studies, concerned with the special interest groups of a pluralist society, rather than broad, macro-sociological courses. It also suggests attempts to link the sociology of education with practical classroom problems. The history and sociology of education, two diminished fields of study, were sometimes merged.6

Monash University: Social Foundations of Schooling; Education in society

La Trobe University: Causes of Educational Inequality; Classroom Interaction, Teacher Expectation and Educational Inequality

Contemporary World and the Classroom; Education and Social Ideals in a Global Perspective

University of Melbourne: Gender and schooling; Education and Socio-Economic Change; Youth, Culture and Class; Public and Private Schooling in Post-War Victoria; Sociological Problems in Cultural and Educational Studies; Family, Class and the History of Compulsory Education

University of Adelaide: Themes in Educational History; Culture, Education and Society

University of Queensland: Class, Gender and Schooling in Australia

University of Tasmania: Sociological Perspectives and Schooling

University of Wollongong: Educational Sociology 1; Gender Studies 1; Gender Studies 2; Gender Studies 3; Women and Australian Education: Historical and Comparative Perspectives

Flinders University: Youth in Australia; History of Australian Society: Twentieth Century Issues.

The most frequently used texts in the sociology of education in universities, according to Partington, were those of Professor R. W. Connell of Macquarie University, alone or in collaboration with other neo-Marxists (using this term loosely); the most favoured overseas text was *Learning to Labour* by Paul Willis, the English neo-Marxist and ethnographic enthusiast. Pavla Miller's neo-Marxist history of South Australian education appeared on sociology as well as history of education booklists in several states.

In many colleges of advanced education the sociology of education had become absorbed into the corpus of curriculum studies, reflecting and strengthening the sociological slant now found in many school subjects. But some CAEs still maintained separate sociology of education courses. At the Western Australian College of Advanced Education a sociology of education strand was taught at the Churchlands campus, and a different one at both Bunbury and Mt Lawley campuses. The developing Joondalup campus did not provide sociology of education. Sociology usually came late in the students' training program. At Bunbury the Education 4 unit,

part of the Diploma in Teaching core subjects, occupied four hours of lectures and tutorials per week. Its content was closely aligned with the official educational policies of state schools. The objectives in the course outline for second semester 1989 included 'Aboriginality, multiculturalism, equality of opportunity, gender equity and cultural transmission'. These accommodated not only the ideology of special interest groups in a pluralist, corporative society but also the principle of cultural transmission and social order. Relativism was evidenced in the expectation that students would 'develop further their appreciation of the cultural diversity which exists in school situations'. The topics in this unit included the teacher's role in society, educational inequalities, 'educational advantage?', multicultural Australia, Aboriginality, gender and equal opportunity and 'youth: casualties [sic] of change'. In tutorials students discussed three approaches to sociology: functionalism, conflict, interactionism as well as the hidden curriculum and parent participation. The recommended text was L. E. Foster's second (1987) edition of *Australian Education: A Sociological Perspective*.

Courses differed according to the different ideologies of individual lecturers. In marked contrast to the course at Churchlands were those in the BA (Primary Education) at Bunbury and Mt Lawley. The theme in Education 4 (four hours per week) was 'Schools, society and social justice'. The listed objectives claimed that on completion of the unit students would be able to (amongst other things) 'explain how life in Australian schools and classrooms is influenced by the structural inequality, institutionalised discrimination, cultural diversity and ideologies of the wider society they serve'. The text was Henry, Knight, Lingard, and Taylor's *Understanding Schooling* as well as a college production, *Education 2400 Reader*. The list of 'selected references' included a melange of veteran neo-Marxists and semi-Marxists, such as M. Apple, Branson and Miller, the Connell/ Ashenden/Kessler/ Dowsett consortium of *Making the Difference*, Rachael Sharp (*The Culture of the Disadvantaged*) and P. Willis (*Learning to Labour*). But alongside these could be found Lois Foster, King and Young (*A Systematic Sociology*) and P. Robinson (*Perspectives on the Sociology of Education*). What the average West Australian trainee teacher would make of this is doubtful.

Many colleges of advanced education were reticent about what went on in sociology of education courses. The 1989 *Handbook of the Mitchell CAE* (Bathurst), for example, revealed that sociology of education was provided in Stage 2 of the Bachelor of Education degree course, but the course outline simply stated that it 'introduces concepts, theories and methodologies of sociology that are

useful in a study of education and schooling. Students will examine and evaluate the traditional procedures, assumptions, beliefs and values that guide educational practice in Australian schools'. From this one can deduce that the outlook was 'critical' and that the course sought to be practical. Whether students, lacking experience as teachers, were qualified to evaluate such matters is questionable. The calendar of the Hunter Institute of Higher Education (Newcastle) revealed no distinct, separate courses in the sociology of education, though courses such as 'Current Issues in Education' and 'Aims and Values of Australian Education' might incorporate sociological interpretations.

Catholics and the Sociology of Education

In the late 1980s some Catholic educational theorists belatedly discovered neo-Marxism, in its debased, sub-Marxist, form. Until the mid-1960s Catholic educational theorists opposed both the progressive education associated with John Dewey and the exiguous Marxian influence in education. The 1960s brought the onset a doubt, fostered by the cultural upheaval of 1967⁷⁴ and the Second Vatican Council. As the proportion of lay teachers in Catholic schools grew, so did the ability of Catholic educationists to accept not only neo-progressive sociology but even neo-Marxist sociology. After all, some segments of Catholic theologys-called liberation theology had been able to accommodate Marxism.

Yet most Catholic schools hesitated over the new sociology of education. But by the 1980s most Catholic teachers were members of the Independent Teachers Association, which was under radical leadership. Even Catholic Education Offices and Catholic teacher training colleges were becoming acclimatised. So, at a time when neo-progressive and neo-Marxist ideology had become intellectually discredited in state systems though not fully abandoned in school practice a remarkable revival occurred in the Catholic system. This may well have been stronger in regions like Victoria and the ACT, where radical education had gained a measure of official approval. Thus we find Dr Kath Spence, an officer of the Victorian Catholic Primary Schools Association, disclosing that 'the sociology of education has revealed the massive forces for tradition and conservatism that prevail in schools where change has not been adequately prepared for and where it is not wanted'. She tells teachers that 'the traditional middle-class values of individual achievement and competition often inculcated in our primary schools will also need to be replaced by a new focus on joint endeavour and co-operation'. She blames the 'disproportionate amount of time and effort expended in the past on developing

fluency, clarity and elegance in handwriting' on 'the record-keeping requirements of an ever-expanding bureaucracy'. Finally, 'teachers need to be aware that knowledge is not value-free and neutral but is conditioned by class and political factors'. 7

In 1988 a study of a Christian Brothers school (Lawrence Angus, *Continuity and Change in Catholic Schooling*) investigated whether a school can be made more socially transformative rather than reproductive. The author invoked Gramsci's concept of hegemony, employing an eclectic theoretical approach embracing Bourdieu, Goffman and Habermas.8

Catholic teacher training colleges preferred sociological studies of specific educational problems to general overarching surveys. The units at the Castle Hill campus of the Catholic College of Education, Sydney, in 1989 were markedly addressed to practical teaching Teaching Strategies for the Pluralist School; Classroom Communication and the Pluralist Society; Sociological Perspectives on Schools and Classrooms; Secondary Schools and their Cultures; Aboriginal Education: a Cultural Overview; Youth in Contemporary Society; and so on. A couple of political units were offered Educating for Peace and Justice; and Politics of Australian Education.

Another Catholic institution, Signadou College of Education, Canberra, was more cautious. The 1989 Bachelor of Education Handbook listed two courses in the sociology of education. One, called 'Social Education: Issues in Curriculum', was intended to assist the teaching of social science in the primary school. The second, 'School and Society in 19th century Australia', acquainted students with the issues of state and church in education, while also attempting to strengthen skills in historical analysis and interpretation. The 1990 Bachelor of Education handbook listed a course on 'Sociological perspectives' (three hours per week for one semester) which was more in the mainstream of sociology, paying particular attention to the family, social class, ethnicity, geography, gender, social change, the Christian dimension of schooling, and the teaching profession.

Seventh-Day Adventists and the Sociology of Education

The Seventh-Day Adventist School of Teacher Education at Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, adopted a cautious and practical approach to the sociology of education. Avondale, being a College of Advanced Education, had to submit a course review to the New South Wales Higher Education Board. The Bachelor of Education course review of December 1987 reveals that between

1982 and 1986 119 students graduated as specialists in primary education; 79 per cent of these were employed in SDA schools. The same number graduated with secondary school qualifications, 76 per cent finding employment in Adventist schools. In third year the 'Education Studies' taken by all students were Sociological Perspectives in Education and Philosophy of Christian Education. The same lecturer took both courses. Each course occupied three hours per week (two lectures, one tutorial).

The sociology course paid considerable attention to the individual schoolchild, to the school as a social system and to group dynamics in the classroom. It had four modules: (1) Some sociological perspectives (e.g. nature and control of groups, role theory); (2) Socialization and the developing child (e.g. the processes and agencies of socialization and their influence on child development, especially the family, social class, the peer group and television); (3) The school as a social system (e.g. social interaction within the school); (4) Group dynamics in the classroom. This was the most developed module, treating five aspects (e.g. handling group conflict). The textbook was American Richard A. and Patricia A. Schmuck, *Group Processes in the Classroom*. 9

The strong American orientation of the text and reference books was a reminder of the American origins of the Seventh-Day Adventists, though admittedly America was the leading producer of educational theories. Other notable features of the SDA approach were that the same lecturer took both sociology and educational theory; that the lecturer had taught in both a state primary school and a SDA secondary school and held postgraduate degrees; that the sociology of education course had a strongly practical nature and was oriented to the individual school pupil; and that the course was offered at a late stage, third year, in the students' progression.

Textbooks on the Sociology of Education

The flow of textbooks on the sociology of education had become a mere trickle. They were often more neutral or non-committed ideologically, with a stronger orientation to classroom and school practicalities. In the second edition of her *Australian Education: A Sociological Perspective* (1987), Lois Foster employed many features of a textbook, to cater for the level of average tertiary students. It had suggestions for activities, questions for discussion, and case studies. The references to Bourdieu were reduced from 21 to eight; the nine references to M. Apple fell to three, while Bowles (of Bowles and Gintis), cited 14 times in the first edition now disappeared. On the other hand, Althusser had expanded from two citations to five and R. Connell from 13 to 16.

R. J. R. King and R. E. Young's *A Systematic Sociology of Education* (1986) was more specifically classroom-oriented, but harder reading. After three theoretical chapters, the focus was on practiceSchool systems and the administration of education, schools as organisations, families, communities and education, and classroom processes. Althusser was mentioned once only; so were Bernstein and Bourdieu, while Bowles did little better, with two. On the other hand, Habermas (mentioned once in Foster) is cited four times by King and Young.

Understanding Schooling (1988) is a remarkable example of an attempt to rehabilitate neo-Marxism through a practical orientation. Written by a cluster of Brisbane radical sociologists, Miriam Henry, J. Knight, R. Lingard and Sandra Taylor, it is presented as an 'introductory sociology of Australian education'. Theory is now impregnated throughout the chapters. M. Apple, R. Bates (of Deakin), and especially R. W. Connell loom large in the author index. The chapter headings suggest practical problemsBeing a teacher, What makes a classroom?, The problem of school knowledge, Understanding the system, Students in context, and so on. The authors appropriate the term 'neo-Marxist' for the 'more comprehensive explanations, synthesising a wide range of theoretical concerns' which appeared after the 'crude reproduction theory' of the early 1970s. Contemporary sociology, they explain, also attempts a more adequate understanding of the way in which gender and ethnicity, in conjunction with social class, affect social experiences and life chances. Their book, they say, 'sits firmly within these most recent developments'.
10 A postscript notes with concern the advent of the educational instrumentalism of John Dawkins, with its emphasis on vocational (in inverted commas) and economically productive education. This proves that 'all educational provision is essentially a political process'. Yet one would have thought that vocational education would improve 'life chances' and that *Understanding Schooling* is itself political and instrumental (i.e. practical) in its character.

Persistent insecurity about the content of the sociology of education provoked a constant but fruitless search for suitable textbooks. Ken Johnston of Macquarie University welcomed *Understanding Schooling* as the solution to this searchat the same time revealing something of the methodology of lectures in the sociology of education.

For almost twenty years I have been teaching the sociology of education in Australia and in all that time there has not been one book that I have been happy to use with my students as a standard text in introductory courses. Like many others teaching the sociology of education in Australian colleges and universities, I have had to stitch together my own 'text' by asking

students to read chapters from this book and that, and an assorted range of journal articles. 11

Less Marxian and more friendly to structural-functionalism was *Schooling and Society in Australia: Sociological Perspectives*, its title carefully referring to schooling rather than education. Published in 1990 and edited by Lawrence Saha of the Australian National University and John Keeves of the University of Melbourne, it contained 14 chapters from 12 contributors. They discussed various sociological interpretations and looked at school systems, processes and structures. The book examines facets of Australian education somewhat neglected by earlier sociologists, such as educational administration, the classroom and higher education.

The neo-Marxist 'resistance' theories of Willis and others had challenged the earlier 'correspondence' theories of Bowles and Gintis. Neo-Marxist historians of education began to praise nineteenth century truanting; sociologists saw adolescent lads as part of the proletarian struggle. Feminists believed girls also could resist. The 'resistance' interpretation produced negative effects on young teachers, for whom the struggle to control classes in the 1980s was difficult enough anyway. Now a reaction was developing against these theories. Dr J. C. Walker of Sydney University produced in 1988 a major ethnographic work, *Louts and Legends*, which was 'an admirable attempt to describe and explain the behaviour and values of adolescent boys in Sydney in a non-reductive way. He picks out distinctive aspects of youth culture, of schools, and of other institutions . . . and does not seek to reduce all facets of life in terms of a single dominating factor or of a determining social structure'.¹² Lawrence Angus' ethnographic study of a Catholic boys' college in a Victorian town (mentioned above) combined a practical, school-centred approach with the case study methodology, employing a variety of theories associated with the new sociology of education.

Even phenomenology occasionally gave evidence of life, though its impact was limited and it produced no books. In 1989 a writer in *Discourse* discussed 'Reparative Justice in School Discipline' from a phenomenological point of view. He argued that a school rule should be grounded in 'the perceived, lived world of the student, should be understood so the obligation specified in the rule is felt'. In education, reparative justice (i.e. justice by making reparation) 'should concern the inner being of the offender and the self-conscious awareness of having done something wrong that can motivate the conscious desire to make it right again'.¹³ Such highly subjective, personalised approaches contributed little either to the sociology of education or to effective classroom discipline.

An Exhaustion of Sociological Ideas?

The new academic environment encouraged by the merger of universities and colleges of advanced education offered little opportunity for the development of educational theory. While the conditions of former college lecturers were likely to improve somewhat, those of former university lecturers were likely to deteriorate. Heavier teaching loads and larger classes reduced opportunities for non-empirical educational research and educational theory. Partington makes the mischievous suggestion that one of the few consoling features about the spate of mergers imposed on universities and colleges of advanced education was that 'purveyors of hitherto mutually-supportive but parallel forms of educational radicalism will be brought into close proximity and will find each other extremely disagreeable'.¹⁴ Of course, even in separate institutions divergent theorists managed to live side-by-side; but now the tensions might be greater.

For a variety of reasons, then, most sociologists of education seemed to have exhausted their reservoir of new ideas. Old theories were being recycled: equal outcomes, education as politics, the importance of liberal education, the relative autonomy of schools, and so on.

The *Australian Education Index* provides a rough measure of declining activity. In 1985 writings in the sociology of education reached a peak of 223 out of the 3966 items listed (5.6 per cent). The subsequent decline was both relative and absolute.

Table 9.1: Items in Australian Education Index classified as Sociology of Education

Sociology of Education Entries	Total entries	%
1986 188	3806	4.9
1987 161	4314	3.7
1988 124	4240	2.9
1989 182	5055	3.6

By the beginning of the 1990s the desolation of educational theory throughout Western culture was obvious.¹⁵ The last of the classical theorists Fred Clarke, John Dewey, Maria Montessori had all died in 1952. In America Jerome Bruner was a late swallow, bringing a momentary revival of educational theory in early 1960. In the 1970s came the sociologists, but by the mid-1980s they too had run their course. The decline of academics as educational

theorists and analysts was balanced by the emergence of journalists as sources of educational information and interpretation. The increased social importance of education, and its putative economic importance, encouraged this. In 1990 the NSW Chapter of the Australian College of Education inaugurated an annual award for 'Excellence in Educational Journalism'.¹⁶ On the other hand, intercourse between academics and journalists grew. Academics needed an opportunity to show that their research was in accord with the doctrines of 'relevance' and 'accountability' now being applied to higher education. The journalists welcomed startling discoveries which could fill blank space in newspapers, provide television material, and plug gaps in radio programs. In 1992 Donald Horne sponsored an 'Ideas for Australia' group to encourage collaboration between the two professions.¹⁷

Outside the universities private research institutes ('think tanks') and a growing number of independent consultancy firms, sometimes associated with particular political or economic interest groups, were developing. A prime example was the Education Research Unit of the Institute of Public Affairs, Melbourne, which organised conferences, produced study papers, and published *Education Monitor*. The spread of word-processors and desktop publishing made it easier for new groups to challenge the academic dominance of educational theory. It could be that, as in earlier historical epochs, leadership in intellectual life was moving away from the universities, despite the to-do they made about their research function.

What were the reasons for the debilitation of educational theory and of the sociology of education? Disillusion with the practical outcomes of neo-progressive and neo-Marxist (radical) education was an obvious influence. Another was the economic crisis, growing after 1974 and endemic from the late 1980s. The political and social collapse of communism in Eastern Europe disconcerted Marxists in western countries. The pluralist society, with its cultural relativism engendered by the variety of special interest groups, discouraged a single coherent, dominant, sociological or educational theory. A new conservatism had developed as the pluralist and permissive society began to produce its own problems. Caution was now the style.

Sociology was in disrepute. The Head of religious broadcasting at the ABC said he would be happy to scrap sociology as a discipline in every university in Australia. 'They don't seem to produce anything'.¹⁸ But the president of the Australian Sociological Association wrote to *The Australian* complaining of the adverse attention sociology had been getting in its columns. He believed that the social sciences and the humanities had been hardest hit by

the government's systematic reduction in finance over the last decade and suggested that these studies were troublesome to bureaucratic inclinations because, at their best, 'they provide their students with an analytical and critical ability which provokes questioning of the received wisdom of the day'. 19

The reaction against neo-progressive and radical education encouraged a reassessment of educational aims. Attempts were made to rehabilitate 'education for citizenship' as one of those aims. The Senate in March 1988 requested its Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training to enquire into 'education for active citizenship in Australian schools and youth organisations'. This provoked an outburst from a lecturer in the School of Humanities and Applied Social Sciences (an interesting combination) at Nepean College of Advanced Education, NSW. 'The active citizenship which the senators want our children to learn will no doubt be based on classical liberal-democratic theory . . . It will encourage our students to believe in the justice and power of the parliamentary system'. But, wrote Dr Michael Symonds in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Australians know better than to be fooled by that sort of guff:

They know politics has nothing to do with liberal-democratic ideals of rational, disinterested representation . . . Australians know that the limits of the State's functions are not set by the electorate but by 'bosses' (these can be capitalist, union or criminal, depending on your point of view). Here lies the real power in society.²⁰

And here lay evidence that a residual sub-Marxism was still extant in some sociological circles.

The Legacy of Neo-Marxism

Reviewing a Marxian reassessment of Bowles and Gintis, Walker criticised Marxists and neo-Marxists for their tendency to seek prime causal factors and their view that an explanatory theory is faulty if it does not provide ground for belief in the possibility of desired social changes in short, for political optimism. 'The truth of a theory, then, hinges on its capacity to tell us what we want to hear rather than to help us understand the world so that we may try to change it'.²¹

Yet the radicals persisted. Expounding in 1988 on 'The Politics of Educational Research: From a Philosopher's Point of View' Dr Kevin Harris of the University of New South Wales, while not endorsing neo-Marxism, perpetuated the radical critique of the validity of transmitted knowledge, asserting that 'Knowledge statements are not the object of knowledge; they are theory-laden sociohistorically determined constructs about the objects . . .' Harris

attempted to provide scope for historical alongside sociological influences. But this was often given relativist implications. The possibility of disinterested enquiry is scornfully dismissed. Late, debased, neo-Marxism, better described as sub-Marxism, continued to assert the political character of research. 'All research, in the sense of practical activity within social-historical contexts . . . is political'. 22

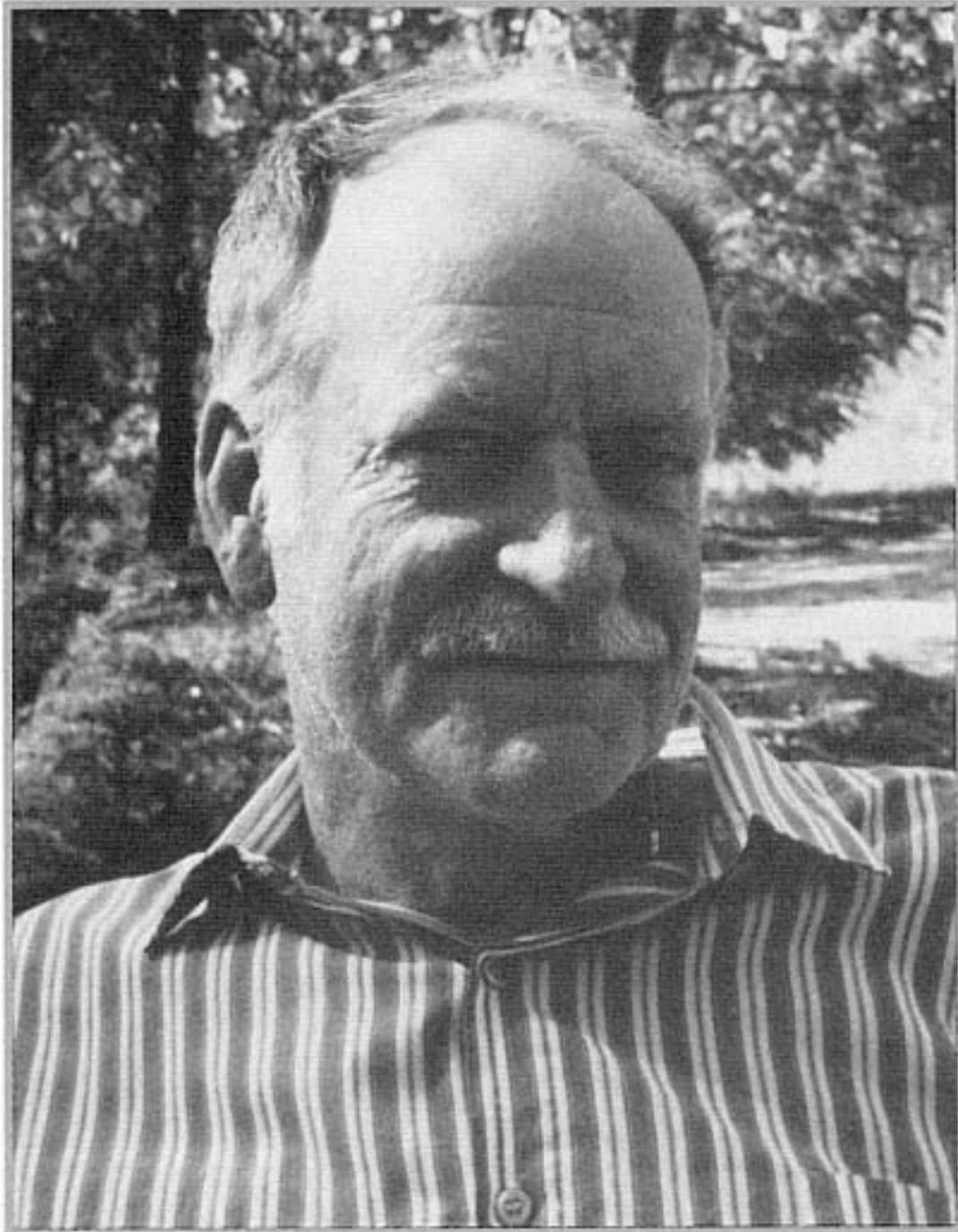


Figure 9.1:

Doug White, left-wing critic of education

Doug White taught in Victorian state secondary schools and worked in the Curriculum and Research branch of the Department of Education before joining La Trobe University in 1970. He was a member of the editorial board of *Arena*. For more than twenty years he provided, largely from a classical Marxist position, a running commentary on the theories and policies of both the educational 'establishment' and neo-Marxist and other assorted dissidents.

Academics in a few training colleges, notably in Brisbane and Adelaide, clung to sub-Marxism. Indeed, the desire of many academics to distance themselves from the discredited 'marxist' regimes of Eastern Europe made 'critical theory' a popular substitute term.



Figure 9.2:

Public awareness of sociological philosophies

The new ideological theories gained public attention, and often disapprobation, long after their emergence in education circles. Popularised accounts of Althusser's life and ideas helped discredit radical educational theories. In 1992 a biography of Althusser was reviewed prominently in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and the Melbourne *The Age*.

Memories of the 'sociology of knowledge' prolonged the opposition of some educationists to the liberal, academic curriculum. The Brisbane lecturers who produced *Understanding Schooling* still attacked the 'Competitive Academic Curriculum.' 23 A Curriculum Studies Conference in July 1991, which was organised from the South Australian CAE, had as its theme: 'Is education an oppressive or a learning force in Australia?' The sponsors had a pretty clear idea of the answer to their question. 'This conference will look at ways in which the curriculum itself needs to be liberated the forces which make it oppressive and inflexible'.²⁴

In the larger universities situated in capital cities such as Sydney and Melbourne, neo-Marxism had yielded ground to classical Marxism. Doug White, who had only briefly deviated from classical Marxism, proclaimed some value in liberal education. Kevin Harris, recently an unreformed, reductionist neo-Marxist,

now raised the desirability of defending general, liberal, education. Former neo-Marxists, who had once dismissed the humanist-realist curriculum with withering scorn, were inclined to defend liberal education, conceding that education might and should possess a degree of 'relative autonomy'.²⁵ This was an alarmed reaction not only to the new utilitarianism but also to the encroachments of the state on the autonomy of academics.

Four Victorian radicals, writing in *Education Links* at the end of 1991, noted that since Dawkins liberal education had seen something of a revival. 'Beyond liberal education?' they asked. Answering their own question, they remarked that from the mid-1970s the New Right attack on standards in public education was based on defence of traditional liberal curricula, said to be rigorous, respectable and useful. Was it now possible for Left activists to defend liberal education?

In thirty years, liberal education has been turned from being an enemy of a just and democratic education to being its foundation and buttress. It has come to be seen as social good, rather than discriminatory practice. How do we understand this change?

The answer was not simple. 'It looks to us as if what is underway is a major educational revolution'. Liberal education was not simply good, nor was all training bad. Rather than reasserting the need for liberal education, 'we need to problematise it'. Understanding liberal education meant recognising, among other things, that schools were only one site of educative activity. TV, videos, popular culture, families and work were also educational agencies. The educative significance of post-fordism, post-colonialism, and post-Stalinism had to be considered. 'Is everyone a liberal capitalist now? If not, what are our values?'²⁶

Had it really needed 30 years of upheaval, a full generation, to come to this?

Radicalism Without a Program:
Foucault, Post-Modernism

While attacking liberal-humanist culture, classical Marxism and even neo-Marxism had projected an alternative vision. Their successors continued the attack, but lacked any positive solution.

During the 1980s J. Habermas had acquired some theoretical leverage. A textbook by two Sydney University academics, R. J. E. King and R. E. Young, *A Systematic Sociology of Australian Education* (1986), owed something to the ideas of Habermas. But in the late 1980s it was the turn of Michel Foucault. His *Discipline and Punish*, a historical survey of the French prison system, was

published in France in 1974 and in England in 1977. It harmonised with the spirit of the post-structuralist movement which emerged in France in the mid-1970s and which was anti-Marxist, or at least non-Marxist. Foucault died in 1984, reputedly of AIDS.

Foucault's main concern was with the distribution of power. He saw prison wardens, the police, doctors, psychologists and teachers as controlling people by classifying them and judging them against norms. Power was distributed throughout society, it was diverse and not centralised in the state. Hence, contrary to the Marxists, one does not seek to overthrow the state apparatus, even if one accepts with Althusser the existence of a multiplicity of state apparatuses. In any case, by the late 1970s it was clear that many of Althusser's Ideological State Apparatuses, the family, the church, even the schools were in disarray, if not decay. Marxism had forgotten the individual. Foucault argued that, in a variety of ways, often unconscious, individuals exercised power. He provided a justification for working through the established institutions, for infiltrating the administrative structure. Thus radicals could validly join government committees, accept state money to undertake research or to devise new educational programs. They could use state resources to change the state.

Foucault's use of historical material engaged the interest of historians of education, now in search of replacement theories for neo-Marxism. In *Family, School and State in Australian History* (1990) Foucault was cited seven times, less than 'feminist theory' (ten references) but equal with Marx and Marxism; in 1991 the *History of Education Review* devoted an issue to debate on Foucault. 27 Foucault rifled history in search of alternative ways of examining contemporary problems and in the interests of relativism and eclecticism. The first book primarily devoted to applying his ideas to education appeared only in 1990. *Foucault and Education. Disciplines and Knowledge* was edited by Professor Stephen Ball of King's College, London. Two of its chapters were written by Australian sociologists of a neo-Marxist persuasion, but now apparently prepared to embrace Foucault.²⁸ The opening pages of this book emphasised Michel Foucault's refusal to align himself with any of the main traditions of Western social thought. His aim was to show that accepted knowledge and accepted institutions could be criticised.

Post-modernism (the hyphen caused some debate amongst post-modernists) was another exotic ideological flower which sprang up as Marxism decayed. It originated in literature but, like Foucauldism, in due course spread to education. By 1988 the former strongly Marxist 'sociology of literature' had almost disappeared. Certainly it had been greatly weakened by the swing in literature

away from purely literary concerns to various cultural topics, such as art, film, music and popular-culture. Moreover, sociologists who had once confidently examined literature to explain it through social and economic factors were now confused by the approach of Derrida and others who rejected social factors, arguing that 'there is nothing outside the text'. 29

A symposium on 'Practising Postmodernism' at the University of Newcastle in November 1991 had some highly esoteric sessions.

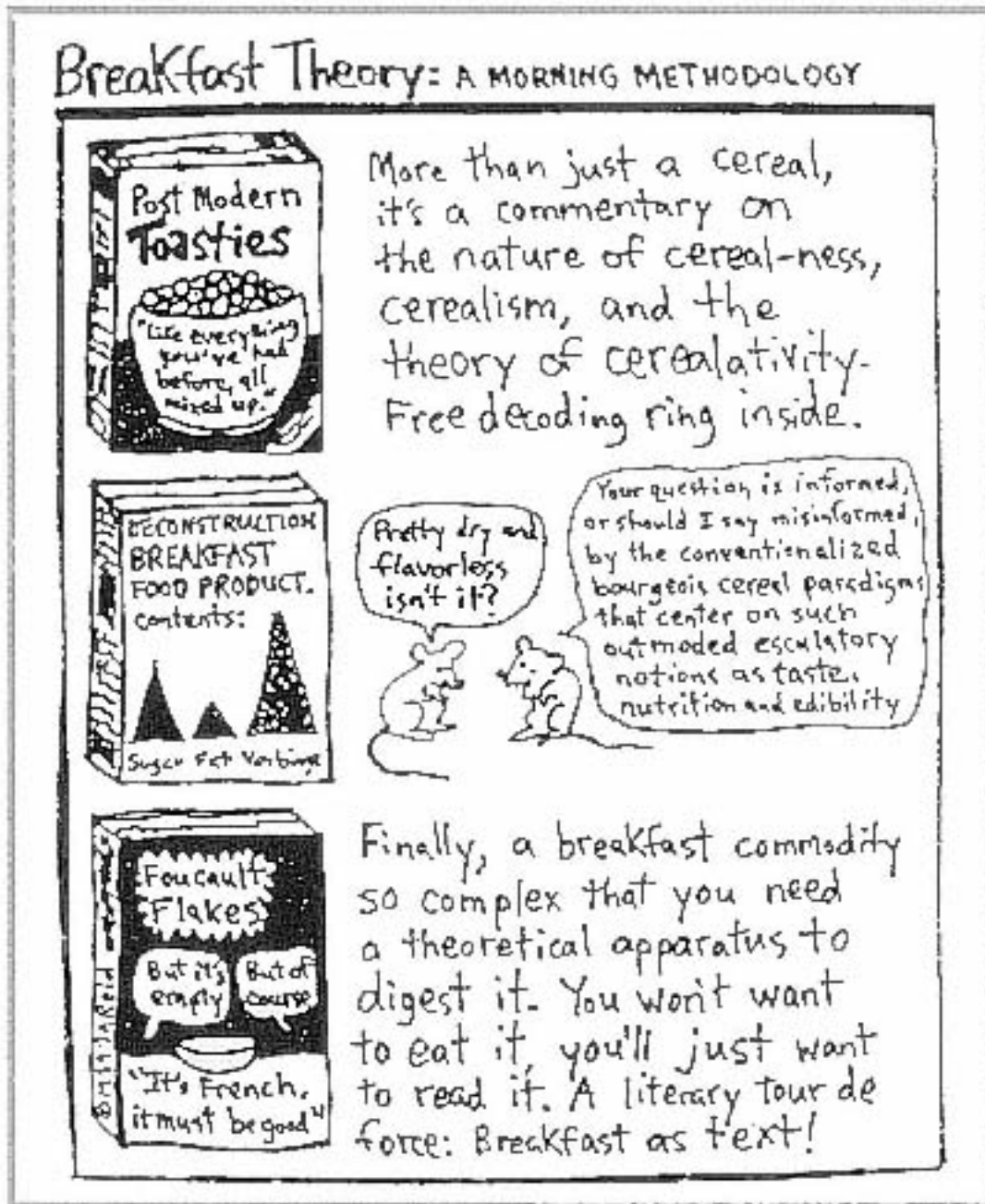


Figure 9.3:

A satirical view of post-modernism

Neo-Marxists were very serious about their beliefs. But the relativism of their left/radical successors (post-modernists, post-structuralists, critical theorists, and so on) encouraged self-doubt, which was reinforced by the short life-expectancy of most theories. Some theorists could enjoy a joke at their own expense. This cartoon by J. A. Reid, circulating in university Departments of English and Education in recent years, originally appeared in an American radical weekly, *In These Times* (Chicago) in 1989.

A lecturer in English provided the following summary of his talk on 'Nietzsche's Physio-Semiology of Morals and the Political Economy of the Body':

The body has recently emerged as a site of increased interest in recent studies concerned with the topics of power, the law, and the constitutive role of signifying practices. In his paper, [the speaker] wishes to draw attention to Nietzschean genealogy and what he terms his 'physio-semiology' of morals as a method useful in disclosing the relations of power inscribed in particular sociocultural configurations within which the body is articulated and made available as an object of knowledge. He focuses, in addition, on the manner in which the corporeal figure in the Nietzschean text serves not only to interrogate and debunk the Cartesian disjunctive dialectic between mind and body, but also to delineate the often literal manner in which the body politic intextuates itself dermographically on the epidermis of the subject. 30

This paper was not intended as a parody. In fact, translated into plain English it would have been quite impressive. But much modern literary theory looks like a vast, unconscious satire. Another paper was 'Let's Do the Time Warp Again: Performance and Postmodernity', offered by a lecturer in the Drama Department. Her summary opens: 'How do we contest our own becoming in a warped timescape across which its trajectory is always already fuelled by late capitalist panic?'

A new bandwagon was on the move. The first issue for 1991 of *Education and Society*, published in Melbourne, was dedicated to 'Postmodernism, Post-colonialism and Pedagogy', the guest editor and contributors being Americans. The table of contents is itself evidence of the crisis in educational theory: Border Pedagogy and the Politics of Postmodernism; Postmodernism, Critical Theory and the New Pedagogies; Teaching on Uncommonground: the Ideal of Community; Postmodernism's Utopian Vision; Skinned Alive: Towards a Postmodern Pedagogy of the Body; and Post-structuralist Pedagogy as Counter-Hegemonic Praxis.

One trouble with both Foucault and Derrida was their exotic language, the technical jargon considered essential for any new theory. As R. J. W. Selleck of Monash University, Australia's outstanding historian of education, complained, Foucauldian thought involved its disciples in 'disciplines, spaces, surfaces, genealogies, archaeologies, populations that have been normalised, ethical substances that have been specified, modes of subjection, ascesis and other elitist mystifications'.³¹ For the average undergraduate, for the average teacher, indeed, for the average lecturer something simpler was required. This was provided by another new movement, 'social justice in education'.

Social Justice and Curriculum Theory

Social justice surfaced as a political and educational aim about 1987. Long an important component of Catholic social theory, it now provided a new ideological support for radicals in a post-Marxist world. The Victorian Premier, John Cain, claimed his government's *People and Opportunities* statement of 1987 was the first Australian strategic approach to achieving a fairer and more just society. Social justice, he said, sought fairness in the distribution of economic and social resources, fair access to goods and services, opportunities for participation, and the protection of people's rights. A 'sound comprehensive education' was essential for this. 32

Social justice was a poorly defined but multi-purpose term. Sometimes 'equity' was used as a synonym. The concept of justice involves two possibly disparate notions: needs and deserts; social justice emphasised needs. The concept was taken up especially by the Labor Party, but was accepted by all parties and most churches. In education it implied consideration for the various disadvantaged minorities. The Victorian social justice framework for schools issued in February 1991 identified seven groups whose needs should be monitored: females, Aborigines, poor students, those from low social status families, migrants, and students with disabilities. It stated that 'success in the curriculum should not be defined exclusively in academic terms'. The West Australian social justice policy issued in June 1991, however, sought 'optimum educational outcomes for all students', not only those in special groups. Guidelines for the use of bias-free language were included in the policy. 'The policy contains nothing radically new'.³³ Teachers seeking positions in state schools in Victoria and South Australia were expected to know, and support, the social justice statements.

The radical education journal, *Education Links*, devoted an issue in 1989 to Social Justice. The editorial noted the difficulties of the concept. 'Coming to grips with the disturbing and perplexing connections between schooling and social inequality has proved an elusive task for teachers, researchers and policy makers alike'. The instrumental curriculum being fostered by John Dawkins gave the old liberal education a new appeal. Looking for 'A Socially Just Curriculum' Kerry Barlow, a lecturer in the sociology of education at the Institute of Education in Sydney, criticised vocationally-oriented courses and argued that 'in the transition to a socially just curriculum we need to go back to the competitive academic curriculum subjects and claim them for our core'. Lindsay Fitzclarence, lecturer in curriculum studies at Deakin University,

commended 'classic, liberal, notions of education'. But the social justice issue of *Education Links* incorporated many apparently incompatible ideas. Other writers warned of that standardised testing harmed disadvantaged groups and objected to 'oppressing' students for bad grammar or vague writing. 34

In Queensland a new Labor government had come to power; social justice was in fashion. A conference in Brisbane in June 1990, attended by 480 delegates and sponsored by the Ministerial Consultative Council on Curriculum and the Australian Curriculum Studies Association, examined 'the interface between a social-justice perspective on education and the economic rationalist viewpoint'. Professor Robert Connell gave a keynote address on 'Curriculum and social justice'. Connell who had popularised 'competitive academic curriculum' as a pejorative phrase in the 1980s, did not show any inclination to rehabilitate liberal education; he adhered to many of his long-held principles about the curriculum. He argued that social justice in education was a key issue because organised knowledge was growing in importance; that a standard basic provision in the curriculum was no longer adequate; and that knowledge is socially constructed. Social justice required taking the standpoint of the disadvantaged 'we can move past "compensatory" curriculum logic and "oppositional" logic to an attempt to reshape the mainstream curriculum'. This 'counter-hegemonic' curriculum would seek to generalise the point of view of the disadvantaged, to generalise an egalitarian notion of the good society across the mainstream.³⁵

But while some of the Left were rediscovering the virtues of liberal education and others continued to support a curriculum for 'disadvantaged' minority groups, 'conservative' advocates of radical reform, including the instrumentalists, were suggesting that liberal or general education and vocational or instrumental education were merging. In 1989 the Committee of Review of NSW Schools, chaired by John Carrick, urged that 'the traditional concept of general education be broadened to include economic, technical and practical knowledge within the context of maintaining continuity of the essential knowledge and experience of the past'.³⁶ The Finn Report of 1991, *Young People's Participation in Post-Compulsory Education and Training*, commissioned by the Australian Education Council, stated that the Anglo-Saxon tradition which saw vocational and general education as separate was atypical, and that the tension between vocational and general education could be resolved through a general education which focussed on processes and skills, rather than content.³⁷

The Bankruptcy of High Theory; The Survival of Commonplace Ideology

Most Australian educationists were now conditioned to the sensitivities of a pluralist society. As Partington observed in 1990, 'The new orthodoxy is that a society affords equality of educational opportunity only if the proportion of people from different social, economic or ethnic categories at all levels and in all types of education are more or less the same as in the population at large'.³⁸ The plurality of society and the associated growth of relativism undermined general theory. The new corporate society, in which membership of a group was the avenue for self-expression, was unable to impress any firm general ideology. Into this vacuum came a new instrumentalism in the late 1980s. The economic crisis and social changes of the welfare state provoked concern over the mediocre performance of the schools and the inadequacy of the curriculum content.

The reform movement extended to teacher training. The initial response of training institutions was to give their courses a more practical character by increasing the time allocated to practice in the schools and by reducing the place of theory. The 'foundations subjects' history of education, philosophy of education, sociology of education, educational psychology, comparative education withered, though some educational theory found refuge in 'curriculum studies' and 'policy studies'. But this was just the beginning. Then came proposals to move the bulk of teacher training away from the colleges and universities, into the schools. This threatened the very existence of the teacher educators.³⁹

While sociological theory was widely discredited, its influence did not disappear. The old radicals were well ensconced in universities and the educational bureaucracy. As a writer in the social justice number of *Education Links* remarked 'the Left, as we have known it, has been increasingly incorporated into the very orthodoxy of the State'.⁴⁰ Hence deteriorated versions of sociological ideologies ('critical theory') and of progressive education persisted both in teacher training and, through acolytes in the middle and lower ranks of the educational bureaucracy, in the development of curriculum policies. This was highly significant when, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, attempts were made to reform primary, secondary and tertiary education. It is to these attempts that we now turn.

Chapter Ten Schools, Education and Society Today

As Australia entered the 1990s evidence of economic, political, social and moral crisis was pervasive. 1 This general malaise was matched by a crisis in education so serious that its existence was publicly recognised. Those who spoke of a crisis in educational values and standards were no longer cursorily dismissed as right-wing reactionaries or social elitists. Labor Party politicians were as alarmed as Liberal. The immediate area of concern was the disarray of the curriculum, exemplified in strange 'areas of study', uncertain standards in basic primary school subjects, confusion over the place of general subjects (liberal education) in the secondary school, doubts about the efficacy of vocational studies, and the shift of emphasis from mastery of content to skills arising from process.

A new feature in educational policy was the overweening influence of politicians. Moreover, federal politicians now advanced reform policies, alongside their state counterparts. But contradictions bedevilled these policies. One major objective, in response to the the economic crisis, was to limit or even reduce educational expenditure. At the same time, politicians were anxious to see more pupils remain at school, either to improve their

vocational skills or to keep them out of the labour market. The main medicines the politicians prescribed were devolution of control to local schools or clusters of schools, coupled with considerable central control of the curriculum, particularly with respect to those subjects deemed significant for the economy. Thus intervention 'from above', or from outside, involved a politicisation of the curriculum, which operated alongside an earlier politicisation which had given many subjects a sociological or political coloration. This latter could be considered politicisation 'from below', or from within, in that it was the outcome of progressive or radical education theories accepted by many teachers, educational administrators and academic educationists. Yet, since many educational administrators and teachers were responding to the influence of social and political pressure groups, it might be considered politicisation from 'outside'.

A major phenomenon was the spread of bureaucratisation over both state and non-state schools. To elucidate this called for the skills of a Max Weber, but few educationists aspired to this role. Too many were aligned with the bureaucracy through their association with the state administration or their acceptance of state funds. Too many were committed by their ideology to support for state education and for the bureaucratized teachers' unions. Too many lacked that broad knowledge of the history of Australian education or the practical experience of schooling which might have given them a detached basis for critical assessment.

The proportion of educational advisers and administrators to teachers remained high. On the other hand, attempts were being made by the states and territories, but not by the Commonwealth, to break up the inefficient centralised bureaucracies. This was another aspect of devolution, alongside allocation of new responsibilities to schools. Yet indirect state control operated on both state and non-state schools through funding. In this respect the tremendous financial subventions of the Commonwealth Government increased its control over education. Curriculum reform was also moving towards increased central control. Thus the reform movement revealed considerable ambiguity.

Teachers were still an important pressure group. But the teachers' unions had lost much of their potency. Educational reform required the co-operation of the teachers. Some of their leaders favoured the political thrust now developing; Labor politicians in the Commonwealth sphere and in Victoria benefited from teacher union support. But many teachers were disillusioned and fearful of change. The unhappiness of many parents about schooling encouraged a continuing drift of enrolments to non-state schools. This was partly a flight of middle class families from the

state system; to a lesser extent it was a rejection by fundamentalist Christian groups and some ethnic groups of the values and culture of state schools.

This chapter opens with an examination of the general crisis of the pluralist society and the parallel crisis in education. It then considers a vital element in the provision of education the teaching service. This leads on to an examination of the educational bureaucracy which operated alongside and above the teachers. The Commonwealth's penetration is seen as a vital element both in control and change. We next turn to the curriculum, the centrepiece of schooling. The ecological movement is considered as a new influence on the curriculum. The remainder of the chapter focuses on attempts to reform education, starting with the restructuring of school systems. We next examine the strenuous attempts to reform the curriculum. The restructuring of higher and advanced education receives special consideration. The chapter closes with some broad generalisations about the problems associated with reform.

The Economic and Social Crisis of the Pluralist Society

'There is a growing feeling', said a 1990 report, *The Australian Dream*, 'that Australia has now entered a difficult period in its economic and social history when it must begin paying for the excesses of the 1970s and 1980s'.² In education, policy-makers felt a constant pressure to respond to the needs of the national economy and to problems associated with deep-seated social change.

Economic imperatives operated on Australian schools in four ways: (1) attempts were made to raise standards in existing subjects, particularly those related to basic vocational and economic skills; (2) new vocationally important subjects were introduced into the curriculum; (3) attempts were made to reduce adolescent unemployment by encouraging prolonged attendance at school; and (4) efforts were made to reduce the cost of education. The heightened concern of the Commonwealth Government over the national economy enhanced its concern over education.

The existence of an economic crisis was not widely acknowledged until May 1986, when the Treasurer, Paul Keating, spoke of the 'international hole' in which the country found itself. He warned that a tremendous effort was needed to restructure manufacturing. If growth slackened and unemployment rose, Australia would become a 'banana republic'. The stock market crash of October 1987 was another warning that economic conditions were changing. For some years Australian prosperity had been maintained by overseas borrowing and capital inflow. The foreign debt

had grown from \$A 7 billion in 1980 (11 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product) to \$A 81 billion (48 per cent of the GDP) by 1986. Australia's interest bill was increasing while her capacity to repay decreased. Australians imported an excessive amount of goods because local industry could not match the need in quantity or in quality. 3 Yet by March 1990 the total foreign debt had reached \$124 billion; the balance of payments deficit for the financial year 198990 rose to \$21 billion.

In February 1988 the Australian Chamber of Manufactures and the Chamber of Manufactures of NSW jointly called on the Federal Government to increase Australia's intake of skilled and business migrants. They argued that the development of some manufacturing sectors was being retarded by shortages of people with trades and professional skills.4 In 1990 a survey of the NSW labour market found labour shortages in 49 of 64 skilled occupations, with another 17 trades and professions suffering from a chronic undersupply of labour. Employers were being forced to look overseas for skilled employees.5 According to the minister for

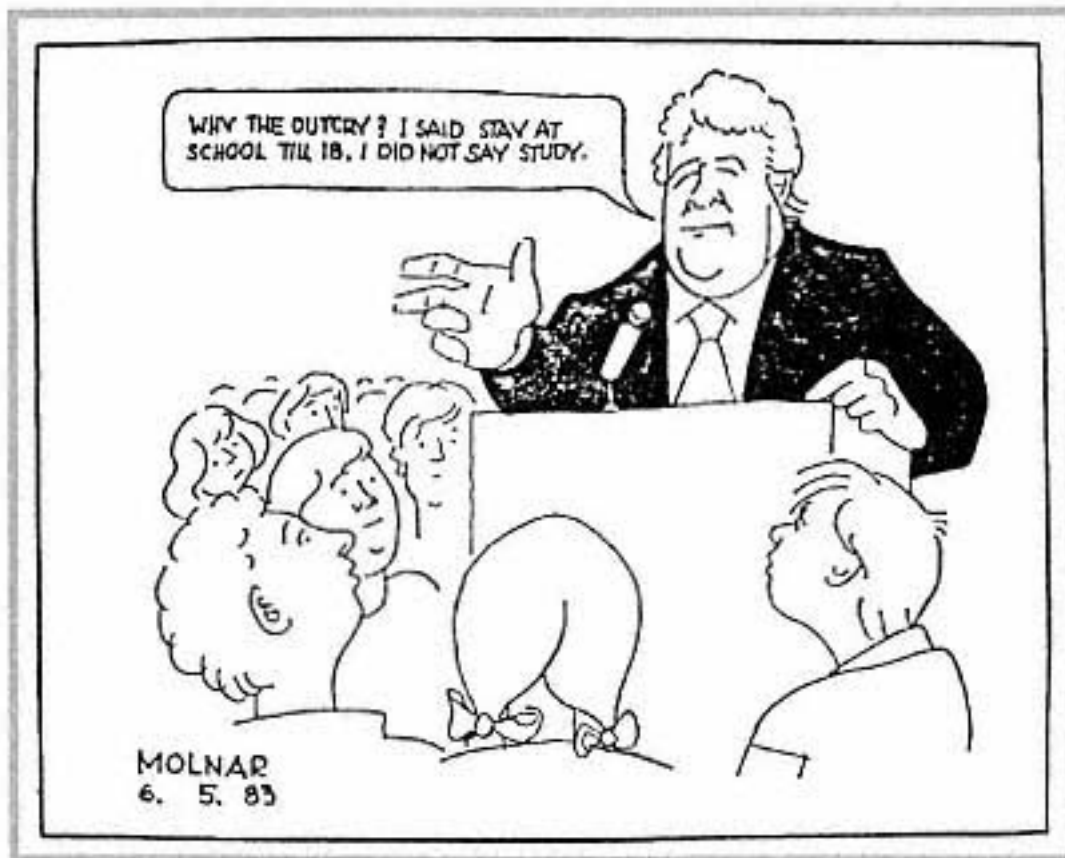


Figure 10.1:

A dubious view of school retention

In NSW the retention rate to Year 12 reached a peak of 35.8 per cent in 1978 and then fell. In May 1983 Brian McGowan, a Labor MLA, said that a minimum leaving age of 15 did not suit a technological society and should be raised to 18 by stages between 1985 and 1990. Opposition was voiced by the Teachers' Federation, the Parents' and Citizens' Association, the Minister for Education and others. Persistence to Year 12 rose after 1983, but the legal minimum leaving age remained 15.

education in New South Wales, 10 to 15 per cent of all trade and general studies students in Technical and Further Education Colleges lacked basic literacy and numeracy. They had bluffed their way through school. 'The level of semi-literacy through apprenticeship courses is very, very disturbing'. 6

Rising unemployment, more than 10 per cent of the work-force by 1992, differed from that in earlier recessions because it was no longer mainly affecting the working class. The white-collar class was also suffering. By 1991, indeed, the recession had become a depression. Unemployment encouraged a rise in the school retention rate. Enrolments in universities and colleges of advanced education also rose.

In this environment a new utilitarianism, a new economism, was permeating Australian education at all levels, tertiary, secondary and primary. When in July 1987 John Dawkins became Federal Minister of a new, restructured, Department of Employment, Education and Training he swiftly initiated educational policies intended to grapple with the economic crisis.

No longer did a simple analysis of society into a few major social classes—lower, middle, upper—carry conviction, not even with the further sophistication of subdividing each class into urban and rural components. The corporate society consisted of an intermesh of social groups. Structural change was reducing the demand for unskilled and semi-skilled labour and encouraging vocational training and education for adolescents. On the other hand, the shift to the service industries increased the importance of the new (salaried) middle class. Within that class a variety of sections could be discerned. Notable amongst these were the state bureaucracy and the bureaucracy of large corporations.

Apart from social class, the structure of the family was relevant to the educational malaise. The 1989 Carrick Review of New South Wales Schools restated an old but neglected axiom: 'In most cases the family more than the school will influence the child's educational outcome'.⁷ A new Minister for School Education, Mrs Virginia Chadwick, remarked that parents, rather than teachers, should shoulder much of the blame for the increasingly anti-social behaviour of many NSW school children. Many parents no longer took responsibility for the nurturing, support and education of their children 'as strenuously as perhaps they should'.⁸ The weakened structure of the family found expression in many ways. A large proportion of married couples had previously been married. A large proportion of those marrying had already lived together for some time. The proportion of single parents had risen. Perhaps 500 000 Australian children were in single-parent families. Pregnancies among adolescent girls were falling, due to improved

methods of contraception and greater availability of abortion. But the number of teenage parents receiving Commonwealth Supporting Parents Benefit'brides of the state'doubled in a decade, reaching 9948 in 1987. In earlier days most of these mothers would have offered their babies for adoption. The population of Australia rose by 9.2 per cent, from 15 393 500 to 16 806 700, between 1983 and 1989; the recipients of Supporting Parents Benefit rose by 34.6 per cent. 9

The late 1980s saw some growth in the birthrate and in the size of families. In 1989 the divorce rate per 1000 of the married population was 2.5, representing 41 383 divorces. Between 1981 and 1985 the divorce rate had averaged 2.8. But the significance of these figures is uncertain when for many couples cohabitation made divorce unnecessary. Second divorces had increased to 15.6 per cent for men and 14.7 per cent for women.10 The emotional stress associated with divorce was affecting an increasing number of students. A speaker at the bicentennial conference of the Australian College of Education warned: 'The turn of the century is likely to see in our schools a higher proportion than currently of vulnerable and disturbed children'.11

The prolongation of formal education was in some ways a problem. The Director of the Institute of Family Studies, Dr Don Edgar, remarked in 1989: 'We have produced the useless child, excluded from the productive life of the community, brought up as a privileged guest who is thanked and praised for helping out rather than one responsibly sharing and contributing to family and the community's well-being'. Youth unemployment or prolonged formal education had extended the period of adolescence, which now ranged from 13 to 25 years. This hiatus between childhood and adulthood was a source of severe problems.12

The Political Crisis

Reduced public confidence in the established political parties became apparent in the late 1980s. The restrictive measures necessitated by the economic crisis was one reason. But changes in the nature of the major parties Labor and Liberal also undermined old allegiances. The distinction between the two parties diminished, as both came under the influence of the new salaried middle class. Both parties looked to large business corporations for funds. Their election expenses were now helped by state subventions, with a consequent diminution the role of party members. Some voters transferred their support to smaller single-issue parties. The importance of charisma in political leaders, particularly as projected through television, emphasised personality and downgraded

policy. Political cynicism was facilitated by the neglect of citizenship education (noted in the Senate Standing Committee Report on Citizenship of February 1989), by cultural pluralism in the schools, and by radical criticism of the Anglo-Celtic humanist tradition. The bicentennial celebrations of 1988 produced remarkable evidence of national insecurity, uncertainty and doubt.

The willingness of politicians of all parties to respond to the pressures of special interest groups, their persistent consultation of public opinion polls on both significant and ephemeral issues, was further evidence of loss of principles and reinforced the cynicism of the electorate. As confidence in traditional political parties waned, as the residual appeal of Marxist and semi-Marxist ideology evaporated following the collapse of communist regimes in 1989/90, many activists turned to ecological or environmental movements. The growing interest in the environment affected not only politics but also economic policy and even the school curriculum.

The crisis of the pluralist society was also a crisis of multicultural policy. It was to some degree a social crisis, but mainly a political one. The widespread assumption that all migrants suffered serious disadvantages had opened the way for political lobbying and pressure-group strategies.¹³ Yet many Australians distrusted multiculturalism, while even some ethnic groups were worried about the policy. In 1984 Professor Geoffrey Blainey, a historian at Melbourne University, suffered considerable public vilification when he suggested that the level of intake of Asians into Australia could jeopardise social cohesion. Policy fluctuated. As an economy measure, the federal budget of August 1986 scrapped the Multicultural Education Program and reduced funds for English as a Second Language programs in schools (though the latter cut was modified as a result of vociferous complaints from ethnic leaders). The Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs was closed; but an Office of Multicultural Affairs was established within the Prime Minister's Department in 1987, with more than 40 bureaucrats and a budget of \$3 million for 1987/88. The Report of the Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies (1988) noted public concern and confusion about immigration policies and the funding of ethnic groups.¹⁴

The economic crisis in the late 1980s encouraged policies which threatened the influence of the special interest groups. As noted in the previous chapter, when John Dawkins became federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training he stated that the Government would listen to the views of pressure groups but would not be dominated by those views.¹⁵ In New South Wales another Labor Education Minister, Rod Cavalier, had said much the same slightly earlier. The September 1987 report of the

Department of Education, Employment and Training, *Ethnicity, Education and Equity*, suggested that, by and large, students of non-English speaking background were not disadvantaged in their education; their participation in post-compulsory education was better than that of Anglo-Celtic Australians. In May 1989 Dr Brian Bullivant of Monash University commented:

The current pluralist crisis can be interpreted as one facet of a much deeper legitimisation crisis facing the government caused by loss of public confidence in its policies. Lacking the knowledge and expertise necessary to fully understand the economic situation, the public has displaced its dissatisfaction onto the more tangible immigration policies and the frequently propagandised multicultural ideology to make this loss of confidence known. 16

One positive feature persisted. Despite the growth of state power, Australians believed they would maintain their democratic freedoms. Indeed, the pluralist society, source of so many other problems, encouraged this political commitment.17

The Moral and Ideological Crisis

Australians shared in the moral crisis of Western civilisation. Pornography was a growing problem. The report of the Commonwealth Joint Select Committee on Video Materials (Chairman R. Klugman), which concentrated on pornography, did nothing to resolve the problem. Although X-rated videos were banned in all States in 1984, this was not done in the ACT. In 1991 a *The Sydney Morning Herald* writer commented:

Each week, 10,000 unmarked envelopes are mailed from the small Canberra suburb of Fyshwick to homes throughout the country. Sealed inside are pornographic videotapes the products of a thriving and lucrative industry that has turned the national appetite for sex into a \$25 million-a-year operation.

The view of some experts was that sexually explicit films did not have a detrimental affect on viewers, but films which combined violence with sex did.18

In April 1990 Richard Neville, the leading figure in the June 1971 *Oz* obscenity trial in London, a central episode in the victory of the permissive society, wrote a recantation. His *The Sydney Morning Herald* article was reprinted in other states. He expressed concern at the excessive preoccupation of many films and books with immorality. Neville hinged his article on Peter Greenaway's film, *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*. He recognised the paradox that he was part of the generation which had spent its formative years fighting for freedom of expression. But 'in art, as in life, this is not the time for nihilism, sadism or spiritual defile-

ment'. The need was to cleanse the atmosphere and rid the soil and the sea of pollutants and poisons. 'This also applies to our culture'. Neville questioned the impact on society of stage, television, cinema, books and magazines. Did they simply reflect values and attitudes or did they foster a moral pestilence? 'The critical vacuum isn't working. It is like watching something die, something more precious than a lake or a mountain stream'. 19

One might equally apply Neville's questioning to the schools. Were the values fostered in schools merely reflective? Or could they engender a moral pestilence? How strong was rationalism and critical enquiry in the schools? Perhaps rationalism waned and criticism had waxed. Or had feelings, empathy, outweighed reason, rationalism? What were the moral implications of courses in personal development, health and hygiene, values clarification, sex education indeed, of a whole range of educational projects? Did teachers present an appropriate moral model?

Another expression of the moral crisis was the growth of crime. Between 1974/75 and 1984/85 the national crime rate per 100 000 population for murder was steady, at 1.67 and 1.68, but rose remarkably for other crimes for serious assault from 21.75 to 58.77; for rape from 5.25 to 12.12; for robbery from 21.21 to 42.88; for breaking and entering from 890.93 to 1746.67; for motor vehicle theft from 360.73 to 663.18; and for fraud from 225.18 to 437.29. The number of sexual assaults against women increased by more than 45 per cent between 1985 and 1988. Nationwide there were more than 9000 such offences in 1988. A widened definition of assault might have affected these figures. On the other hand, only 26 per cent of women over the age of 18 reported the offence to police.²⁰

Two ideologies, communism and Christianity, whose confrontation in the 1950s had contributed to moral uncertainty, were now in disarray. The pluralist society had encouraged the diversification of radicalism into a range of special interests. The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and its diminished credibility in China weakened the Marxist core of radicalism. The decline of Christian belief was less dramatic, but more prolonged. This, too, reflected the ideological confusion of pluralism and the operation of special interest groups. The radicals and the churches had both adapted to current fashions. They found homosexuality acceptable; sometimes, especially in Canada and America, homosexual clergy or priests were tolerated.²¹ In the churches, feminism produced a movement for the ordination of women; in politics feminism was an ally of radicalism. Another contemporary phenomenon, the growth of bureaucracy, afflicted the Catholic Church more than the Protestant ones. The church administration, rather

than the leadership, exercised power. The churches shared the aims of the welfare state, so that their social concern often seemed to exceed their religious. Television programs favoured religious scepticism. James Murray, an Anglican clergyman and religious affairs correspondent for *The Australian*, commented in April 1990 that while the ABC's religious broadcasts did praiseworthy things, 'they seem often to be mistaking religion for sociology. They are treating religion as a sociological phenomenon nowadays, rather than as faith'.²² In important sectors of the television, radio and newspaper worlds radicals occupied positions of importance. The Churches lacked a well-educated Christian intelligentsia, an outcome of the disintegration of liberal humanism in the schools and the reduced attraction to educated people of religious vocations.²³

The social character of the intelligentsia in the English speaking Western world had changed profoundly. In the United States, wrote the eminent American sociologist, Daniel Bell, now retired, there was no longer an intellectual centre. The independent intelligentsia identified by Max Weber, the 'socially unattached' stratum of intellectuals admired by Karl Mannheim, had disappeared. A well-educated general public existing outside the universities was no longer significant. In England the last residue of this intelligentsia persisted. Such an intelligentsia had never been very strong in Australia. Research, policy analysis and, in literature, 'theory' had replaced intellectual thought and discussion. Intellectual life had been absorbed into institutions. It was specialised, professionalised, jargonised, and often esoteric.²⁴

The Educational Crisis

The Australian of 6 January 1989 declared that 'education in Australia is nothing short of a disaster'. The Mackay Report for 1990, *The Australian Dream*, observed that Australians dream of better education, although they cannot agree as to how it can be provided.

Two areas in which the educational crisis was most apparent were standards in the basic subjects and the incoherent character of the curriculum. The problem of standards was evidenced in the number of adolescents leaving school without basic literacy, despite the vast sums spent on education and despite 10 or more years of formal schooling. A significant proportion of students entering technical colleges and even universities lacked basic skills in expression and comprehension. They were unable to speak well, to write clearly, to read quickly and to understand what they read. Defenders of state schools argued that the deterioration in standards merely reflected the wider contingent of lower-ability students

proceeding into secondary school and persisting beyond the minimum leaving age. But even amongst higher-ability students standards seemed to have fallen. Incoherence in the curriculum was evidenced in the intrusion of a vast number of dubious non-academic subjects; in the inadequate mastery of content; in the uncertain articulation of cumulative subjects such as science or languages; and in the confusion in values. The school-based curriculum had proved a failure.

A third problem was discipline. In Victoria a newly-elected Labor government abolished corporal punishment in May 1983. (Corporal punishment was abolished in New South Wales at the end of 1985). Writing in the Melbourne *The Age* on 25 April 1989, the editor of its 'Education' page, Geoff Maslen, remarked on the crisis confronting schools. 'Across Australia, the classroom has become a daily battleground for teachers as they try to maintain some semblance of control over increasingly mutinous students'.²⁵ Other behavioural problems included uncouth language and even violence in the classroom and playground. Violence demonstrated on television or in the home itself engendered disturbed and violent children. Yet at a 1987 seminar in Canberra on 'Crime at School' Professor Maurice Balson of Monash University denounced 'outdated notions in psychology' which encouraged teachers to label children as maladjusted or deviant. He condemned those who attributed bad behaviour to social conditions (deprivation, unemployment) or home conditions (divorce, child abuse).²⁶ But a NSW delegate remarked that over the last 10 years public property, such as railway carriages and schools, had come under guerilla attack. Small groups had plundered the property of teachers and destroyed valuable school equipment. Fire was sometimes used to disguise the original crime. This was costing the NSW taxpayer \$16 million a year.²⁷

At the beginning of the twentieth century it had been generally accepted that the central pivot of education was morality, both social and individual. 'The supreme aim of education is the development of human character' said the Knibbs-Turner Commission into NSW education in 1903. Schools aimed to give pupils 'the moral and physical training and the mental equipment . . . to meet the demands of adult life', said the 1905 NSW primary school syllabus.²⁸ At the end of the century such surety had disappeared.

One important outcome of the crisis was a flight from state schools to non-state. Between 1979 and 1989 the proportion of students in non-government schools increased from 21.4 per cent to 24.6 per cent in Queensland; from 14.7 per cent to 18.8 per cent in the Northern Territory; from 28.4 per cent to 33.6 per cent in the ACT; from 16.5 per cent to 22.1 per cent in Tasmania; from

18.1 per cent to 24.1 per cent in Western Australia; from 21.0 per cent to 27.5 per cent in New South Wales; from 25.6 per cent to 32.8 per cent in Victoria; and from 15.1 per cent to 23.3 per cent in South Australia. 29 A mixture of educational, social and ideological motives contributed to this shift in enrolments.

Another outcome of the crisis was a revival of formal domestic education. Home schooling associations sprang up after about 1983, receiving some stimulus from the visit of an American educationist, Dr Raymond Moore, in 1976 and again in 1988.³⁰ The coordinator of the NSW Home Schoolers' Association estimated that about 80 families in New South Wales legally educated their children, nearly all of them at primary school age, while another 150 families did so without permission. The 1989 Carrick Committee appointed to review NSW education devoted part of a chapter to the parental role. It estimated that only 120 students (0.01 per cent of the total) were being schooled at home in New South Wales. The number was probably higher in Victoria. By 1990 possibly some 3000 children were being educated at home in Australia. Religious commitment was an important reason for formal education in the home.³¹ While about 85 per cent of homeschoolers in America were Christian, in Australia only 50 per cent were. Other motives were concern over the influence of the peer group, and the isolated location of the parental home. Many parents undertaking home-schooling were former teachers who felt they could offer a better curriculum and standards than state schools.

What were the sources of the crisis in education? Some lay within the educational system itself. The nature of the population in state schools was changing. The transfer of many middle-class pupils to non-state schools exacerbated the very trends against which it was a protest. The retention beyond the minimum leaving age of pupils of limited ability, many of them not interested in the acquisition of knowledge, generated problems of curriculum and of behaviour. The abolition of the dole from January 1988 for adolescents below the age of 18 increased the retention rate, but also increased problems in the senior secondary school. Changes in the teaching service (to be examined in more detail below) was another factor. A flight from teaching had developed; the resignation rate in NSW state schools had reached 14.0 per cent in 1969/70. In the 1970s it slowed down as employment reduced the number of alternative vocations open to teachers. But the relative decline in the salaries of teachers encouraged some teachers to seek alternative employment. The ability of teaching to attract high-quality candidates was also reduced. Low teacher morale was a serious problem.

But social factors also contributed to the crisis. The September 1989 *Report of the Committee of Review of New South Wales*

Schools, chaired by Sir John Carrick, a former commonwealth minister for education, believed that the problem of school and society in Western countries arose from the plethora of new functions and conflicting pressures with which schools were beset:

Much more is expected of schools in regard to the socialisation of students . . . schools must now cope with the influence exercised by the media, in particular, television. The high proportion of dual working parents, changes in family structures, the higher education of parents themselves and the rapid spread of micro-technologies in the home all present the school and its teachers with new challenges. These factors render the purposes of schooling far less certain and at the same time are increasing the pressure for greater accountability. 32

The new demands distracted schools from their major tasks. A central problem was how to balance academic requirements against provision for the social needs of students.

A vital factor in the provision of quality education was, of course, the teaching service.

The Teachersa Sociological View

School teachers were the largest single professional group in Australia. They numbered some 250 000nearly 200 000 in full-time equivalent terms (The second largest group were business professionals; the third, building professionals and engineers). Three-quarters of teachers were employed in state schools, but the proportion in non-state schools was increasing more rapidly than in state ones. Two-thirds of the teachers were women, 62 per cent of them married, many with their own children. The proportion of female teachers was higher in Catholic schools than in state ones. In contrast to the early 1970s, many teachers were now middle-aged. New entrants had declined to some 5 per cent of the profession annually. Eighty per cent of teachers came from families in which English was the first language for both parents.33

The NSW Teachers' Federation had by far the largest membership. However, membership of teachers' unions included former teachers, teacher trainees, lecturers in colleges of advanced education, and others.

In Victoria, a moderate union of some 1500 members, the Victorian Teachers' Federation, struggled to survive. Since 1984 the three militant unions had collaborated as the Teachers' Federation of Victoria. But in 1990, as full amalgamation approached, a struggle for power within the new union bureaucracy produced a split between the Victorian Teachers' Union and the Technical Teachers' Union on the one hand and the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association on the other. Within the VSTA a bitter

struggle broke out between the 'Maoists', who were in control, and the Trotskyists, who challenged them. The two more moderate unions formed a Federated Teachers' Union of Victoria in September 1990, with a membership of 33 000 in the primary schools, former technical schools and TAFE colleges. The VSTA survived with 14 000 members.
34

Table 10.1: Membership of state teachers' unions and number of teachers in state schools, 198635

Teachers' unions	Union members	Teachers in state schools
ACT Teachers' Federation	3100	3000
NSW Teachers' Federation	62 000	48 800
NT Teachers' Federation	1500	2000
Queensland Teachers' Union	22 800	24 000
SA Institute of Teachers	19 100	15 800
State School Teachers' Union of WA	12 300	14 000
Tasmanian Teachers' Federation	5000	5500
Technical Teachers Union of Victoria	9500 }	
Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association	13 000 }	41 900
Victorian Teachers' Union	21 800 }	
Victorian subtotal: 44 300		

Membership of unions was compulsory in many states (including New South Wales and South Australia), but not in Victoria. The proportion of teachers joining unions in Australia as a whole had fallen slightly in the 1970s; it was 71 per cent in 1979. The unions' leaderships were notably left-wing, but by 1990 their position might be better described as sub-Marxist rather than neo-Marxist. At elections the unions officially supported the Labor Party rather than the LiberalNational Coalition, though between elections they were quite willing to attack Labor from a left-wing position. For many years teachers' organisations had been unsure whether they were professional associations or trade unions. Because of low pay, poor promotion prospects, and loss of professional self-respect, they had assumed the features of trade unions. Paradoxically, the willingness of teachers to strike weakened their claim to professional status. Indeed, neo-Marxists encouraged the concept of the 'proletarianisation of teachers'.

In many states some leaders of teachers' unions were becoming absorbed into the state administrative bureaucracy. In Victoria the power of teacher-union activists was so great as to suggest a take-over of the system. The haemorrhage of leadership to the

state educational bureaucracy produced a shortage of talent in teachers' unions. 36

By 1990 evidence of a crisis in the teaching service, particularly in state schools, was strong. 'Industrial conflict in every school system in the country is merely the most visible of signs that teaching is now a deeply unhappy profession' wrote Dean Ashenden, educational consultant, in a paper for the Victorian State Board of Education.³⁷ The high proportion of teachers taking early retirement was another sign of malaise. Teaching was becoming a less attractive profession. Four major reasons for the reduced attraction of teaching were: increased discipline problems; the reduction in prestige; the increased difficulty of teaching; and poor remuneration and working conditions.³⁸

The poor morale of teachers was a matter of frequent comment in educational reports, newspaper articles, and even on television. *The Sydney Morning Herald* suggested that teachers' unions shared the blame. The NSW Federation's 'single-minded tactic of rejecting virtually every initiative designed to bring more professionalism into the school system is a major cause of the loss of morale'.³⁹ The 1990 *Report of the Management Review: New South Wales Education Portfolio* stated that 'while some of the causes of low teacher morale were external (such as stress associated with societal and economic pressures), many were endemic to the system of administration (such as frustration, lack of acknowledgement and reward, and declining self-esteem)'.⁴⁰ Apart from discipline problems, other reasons for declining morale included the confusion caused by the multiplicity of aims (which significantly increased the difficulty of teaching), the demands of school-based curricula, the innumerable meetings, and the obscurantism of official educational jargon. The Victorian consultant whose assessment of the Participation and Equity Program was published in 1988 mentioned 'frustration with the apparent permanence of change, anger and cynicism about having their responsibilities unrealistically increased, bitterness about uninformed public criticism, and fatigue from getting old in a job that requires energy'.⁴¹

Similar problems deterred the recruitment of high quality trainees, notably the reduced academic appeal of teaching in secondary schools; the fall in community esteem; the fall in job satisfaction; and inadequate remuneration. Deterioration in the quality of candidates was not restricted to those seeking appointment in state schools. But non-state schools were often better able to attract and select high quality teachers.

Initiatives to reform teacher training were launched at both the Commonwealth and state levels. The Australian Education Council established a working party under Dr Fred Ebbeck, which

produced a draft report, *Teacher Education in Australia*, in February 1990.⁴² The Schools Council prepared a report, *Australia's Teachers* (December 1990), for the National Board of Employment, Education and Training. A frequent proposal for improving teacher training was to reduce attention to educational theory and lectures in training institutions and to give more time to practical work within the schools.

The leadership of the teachers' unions, the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the governments talked of restructuring the teaching profession. But such restructuring was impeded by the discontent, impatience, and suspicion of the mass of teachers. The ACTU was anxious to see the number of teachers unions reduced, even contemplating a merger of the teachers' associations serving independent and state schools. On the other hand, devolution threatened the centralised character of the unions. Local school management would make local union branches more important.

Teachers were responding to sociological processes but were also agents of such processes. Changing social influences on teachers included the lower academic level of entrants, the flight from teaching evidenced by a high resignation rate, and the feminisation of the teaching service (partly an outcome of the two preceding factors). One study found that in 1987, 17 per cent of young teachers in NSW state schools quit within their first two years, the dropout rate for secondary teachers being about twice that of primary school teachers.⁴³ Teaching was becoming a 'woman's career', said the Head of Newcastle University's School of Education in August 1990. Particularly in the primary school, the predominance of women deprived children of a needed male role model.⁴⁴

In the first half of the twentieth century teaching had offered a pathway for social mobility over two generations, the father rising to teaching, his son to the higher professions. By contrast, teaching in the free kindergarten movement had attracted women who were already members of the middle and upper-middle class; it was an acceptable form of social philanthropy as well as providing an auxiliary income until marriage.⁴⁵ But by the last decade of the twentieth century the much wider range of vocations available to educated persons and the relative deterioration in salaries and conditions made teaching an insignificant avenue of social mobility. The abolition of teacher scholarships in the early 1980s limited the recruitment of children from working-class families into teaching.⁴⁶

The Changing Educational Bureaucracy

Alongside the teaching service there flourished a vast, multi-headed hydra, the educational bureaucracy. This bureaucracy was begin-

ning to lose the characteristics acquired during one hundred years of growth. It was becoming decentralised. The professional educators who formed the leadership were losing their power to determine policy. A lay, non-educationist, bureaucracy was beginning to exercise administrative responsibilities in education, under the control of politicians. Similarly, the Commonwealth educational bureaucracy, built up from the 1960s to the 1980s, was also yielding power to a bureaucracy political rather than educational in orientation. In addition, the ability of the permanent officials of teachers' unions to influence the running of state school systems had been severely reduced. Even the growing number of educational consultants employed by the bureaucracies could be considered part of a (semi-) educational corps of bureaucratic administrators. Individuals moved with relative ease from one segment of these bureaucracies to another.

A struggle for control of education was underway between the political and educational bureaucracies. Officially in a subservient position, the educational bureaucracy could fight back by taking over the official aims but imbuing their own, modified, educational content.

A rough estimate of the size of the educational bureaucracy is suggested by the proportion of non-teaching staff to the total teaching and non-teaching staff. Non-teaching staff, in schools, head office and regions, includes technical and clerical/secretarial officers as well as educational consultants and educational administrators. 47

Table 10.2: Full-time equivalent teachers and all non-teaching staff, state schools, 1988

	F/t equiv. teachers	Non-teaching staff	% of non-teachers
NSW	48 445	11 256	18.9
Vic	40 311	7390	15.5
Qld	23 895	6238	20.7
SA	13 777	3931	22.2
WA	12 788	3735	27.6
Tas	4811	1808	27.3
NT	2008	876	30.4
ACT	2870	869	23.2

For Australia as a whole, the total number of full-time equivalent teachers was 148 905 and the total of non-teaching staff was 36 102, giving a combined total of 185 007. The proportion of non-teachers was thus 19.5 per cent.

The prolonged upheaval in Victorian education produced a tremendous corruption of the quality of administration and tremendous financial waste. Dr Ron Ikin, President of the Institute of Senior Officers of the Victorian Education Services, publicly protested towards the end of 1990. Since 1980, he said, there had been five restructures and one extensive 'fine-tuning'. There had been eight ministers for education, each creating a new regime, and seven Permanent Heads. 'Absurdly, after ten years of utter chaos, during which time most "out of school" staff have lost their jobs at least three or four times and faced re-assignment, demotion, redeployment or relocation, the system now has a structure almost identical to that proposed in 1980!'

Rival teacher unions, and sometimes parent organisations, have jostled for positions of power. Teacher activists, who have gained senior union positions, have then used these positions as stepping stones through the union-dominated selection panels to gain senior administrative positions in the Ministry.

Hundreds of millions of dollars had been wasted. 48

In non-government schools the bureaucratic and administrative sector was more modest than in state schools. The total of non-teaching staff for Australia as a whole in 1986 was: government schools 39 054 and non-government 18 970, of which 10 792 were in Catholic schools, and 2707 in Anglican. The proportion of non-teachers to all staff in non-government schools was 16.6 per cent. Between 1984 and 1986 the number of non-teaching staff (all schools) increased from 46 139 to 58 024. In the same years the total number of students fell from 3 017 603 to 3 001 389. The number of senior executive officials in state systems rose from 846 to 904.49

The growth of educational consultants was a remarkable phenomenon of the times. In the 1960s and early 1970s many teachers had escaped from the classroom to more attractive conditions as lecturers in education in universities and colleges of advanced education. Now some lecturers in education were abandoning academic life in favour of the higher remuneration and reduced responsibilities of consultancy. Instead of providing a critique of educational practice or developing educational theory or even educational sociology, they were involved in contract work and projects, they were advisers on policies.⁵⁰ In 1988⁸⁹ the list of 'external consultants' in the *Annual Report* of the Department of Employment, Education and Training ran to 18 pages, and ranged from individuals to groups in colleges of advanced education, universities, or a variety of business firms. Their projects extended from matters related to Schools and curriculum (13 consultants) to Higher education (11 consultants), TAFE and skills formation

(14), Community and Aboriginal programs (27), and International (16). Apart from these fields directly related to education, other areas were Client services, Economic and policy analysis, Systems management and various projects for state and territory offices. 51 The use of consultants on an *ad hoc* basis rather than of educational bureaucrats permanently employed in statutory bodies (like the Commonwealth Schools Commission) or educational professionals in departments of education greatly strengthened the position of the political leadership in education.

Doug White of La Trobe University wrote in 1988 that 'the most striking feature of modern education is the manner in which political and bureaucratic control had become one'. Ministers of education had become, in effect, directors of education. 'The bureaucracy follows political instructions'.⁵² But this is too simple a view. In fact, various pressure groups continued to exert their influence on education and the bureaucracy might give lip-service to the latest political policies while, in practice, subverting them. And despite the restructuring, doubt existed whether the size of the bureaucracy had diminished. In New South Wales, said *The Sydney Morning Herald* in April 1991, there was a widespread perception that the Senior Executive Service in the Department of School Education 'has been manipulated by the bureaucracy so that the same old jobs (but differently named) are carried out by the same old bureaucrats (who are more highly paid)'. On the other hand, the State government claimed that the number of bureaucrats *directly administering* the system had dropped considerably, while the salary levels for contract bureaucrats did not differ much from those of inspectors a few years ago.⁵³

The vast range of Commonwealth programs for education, many of them operating in conjunction with the states, helped swell the educational and administrative bureaucracy.

The Commonwealth Penetration of Schooling

The Commonwealth Government's influence on Australian schools sprang from its importance as a source of finance. In 1988⁸⁹ its five major funding programs, all directly or indirectly related to the social and political interests of special groups, were: (1) Participation retention and general competencies; (2) Assistance for disadvantaged schools and students; (3) Languages and multicultural studies; (4) Teaching and curriculum development; (5) Overseas students. The first four programs were effected through the States Grants Acts and provided money for government and non-government schools in the states and territories. Total disbursement on the Participation, Retention and General Competencies program

was \$1.749 billion in 198889. Assistance for disadvantaged schools and students cost \$210 million; Languages and multicultural studies \$14.8 million; Teaching and curriculum development \$4.4 million; and Overseas students \$2.5 million. 54 In addition, \$2.6 million was expended on the three higher education programs (Higher Education system; Targeted Research and scientific development; International students) and \$498.3 million on four training programs (Skills formation; Technical and further education; Trade training system; Industry training support).

By 1987 the Commonwealth had abolished the agencies to whom it had delegated responsibility and assumed direct control. The major functions of the Commonwealth Schools Commission had been transferred to the Department of Education on 30 November 1985, the Commission being reduced to a policy-forming organisation. When the Department of Employment, Education and Training was created in July 1987 the Commonwealth Schools Commission disappeared. However, as already noted, a Schools Council was one of four advisory councils assisting the National Board of Employment, Education and Training. Important objectives in this reorganisation were to bring the Department under closer Ministerial control, to effect economies, and to strengthen the vocational and instrumental aspects of the school systems.⁵⁵ But supervision of expenditure had always been a problem. Referring to the funding of ethnic and multicultural activities in general, the Advisory Council for Intergovernment Relations stated in Report 10, 1986, that research 'failed to discover any attempt by governments to develop a methodology for estimating the expenditures associated with providing direct and indirect services to immigrants'.⁵⁶

The Australian Education Council (consisting of the state, territory and Commonwealth education ministers) was now an important avenue for Commonwealth policies. In 1988 Commonwealth initiatives on school issues galvanised the Council, which held four meetings that year and received reports from 17 working groups, on a wide range of topics Basic skills, State-Commonwealth co-operative structures, Copyright law, Commonwealth-State funding arrangements, Course standards and structures, Gifted and talented children, National goals in education, and so on. In 1987 it had met twice and had appointed 11 working parties; four years earlier it had also met twice, with only six working parties.⁵⁷

In 198889 the strongest special program of the Commonwealth Government was the Assistance for Disadvantaged Schools and Students Program. This encompassed a variety of sub-programs previously listed independently English as a second language (\$43.8 m); disadvantaged schools (two-thirds of the students being in primary schools); country areas (70 per cent of the students being

in primary schools); special education (\$51 m); and Aboriginal education. The Disadvantaged Schools Program, which had originated in the Karmel Report of 1973, had been a major responsibility of the Australian Schools Commission. The Report for 1988⁵⁹ estimated that the DSP helped about 422 750 students, 14 per cent of the national student population, in 1389 government schools and 308 non-government schools.

How effective was this program? The equivalent American program was strongly oriented towards individual student learning. But from its beginning the Australian program was oriented to improving school facilities. In 1973 the Karmel Report had suggested that improved learning was unlikely to eventuate from the special programs.

However, if the ten years or more of life that a person spends in school can be lived in pleasant surroundings, in a satisfying community, and in a program of activities which is meaningful to its participants besides being relevant preparation for a later interest in work and learning, then this must justify the expenditure of additional resources.⁵⁹

Expenditure on the DSP remained steady at from 2 per cent to 3 per cent of Commonwealth outlays on schools. It reached about 15 per cent of enrolments in metropolitan areas and 10 per cent in non-metropolitan. The schools classified as disadvantaged changed. In 1986 only 33 per cent of government schools had been on the program since 1976, and only 53 per cent on non-government schools.⁶⁰ In 1988 DSP expenditure per child per year was \$98. Schools were expected to stay on the program for three years, but might not be funded after that. Thus it was necessary to appear to achieve goals in three years. The official aims of the Program changed over the years. In May 1988 a Schools Council report stated:

The rationale for continuing and strengthening the Disadvantaged Schools Program is the observable and persistent pattern of social inequality in Australian education, both in terms of the total resources available to particular groups of students and the pattern of educational outcomes; and the significant educational disadvantages experienced by students in those schools which serve the poorest communities in Australia.⁶¹

The view of the Karmel Report 15 years earlier that schools were unlikely to remedy educational deficiencies had been forgotten. Indeed, in 1989 the Schools Council Report, *Strengthening the Disadvantaged Schools Program*, proposed an extra dimension for the program 'to improve retention in communities characterised by poverty and low educational achievement'.⁶² The *Commonwealth Programs for Schools Administrative Guidelines for 1989* widened the program's area of action to include 'programs to develop the economic, political, organisational and technological knowledge

and understandings necessary for students to function effectively in society'a tall order indeed! 63

The Sociology of the Curriculum

Although one could occasionally find neo-Marxist and neo-progressive ideologues and theorists who enthusiastically pontificated about the sociology of knowledge, they rarely directly addressed the quite distinct matter of the sociology of the school curriculum. The sociology of knowledge sought to analyse the social basis of what passed for general knowledge. This analysis could be applied to a certain extent to what was taught in schools. It was essentially 'critical' or destructive, being aimed at the remnants of liberalhumanist culture. But by 1990 humanist culture had little purchase on the school curriculum. The sociology of the curriculum, by contrast, would require a specific analysis of the school program. In particular, it needed to grapple with the role of social groups in fashioning the curriculumthe role of the pupils; the teachers; the family; the various special interest groups (e.g. ethnic, feminist); vocational groups (e.g. business); and the state. Certainly, the sociology of the curriculum had to assess society's concepts of what is to be valued as knowledge. But it must also recognise that some educational and other non-social factors help fashion the school curriculum.

To make matters more complex, one must distinguish between primary and secondary school curricula. The mental capacity of the pupils differs at the two levels, the vocational possibilities differ, the freedom of the teachers to influence the curriculum varies (freedom both from state supervision and pupil pressures), and the academic and pedagogical capacities of the teachers vary at the two levels. One may also distinguish between the curriculum in state schools, Catholic schools, independent corporate colleges, and small fundamentalist schools. In private schools parental or religious influences on the curriculum might be stronger.

The starting point must be the credit balance of subject disciplines accumulated over two thousand years of western civilisation, the elements in the cultural heritage considered appropriate for children and adolescents at school. By the opening of the twentieth century the evolved curriculum tradition rested on subjects providing general or liberal knowledge, vocational skills, aesthetic appreciation, and moral values. Most subjects served several of these roles. In the late 1960s and early 1970s this tradition collapsed.

Politicisation of the curriculum had proceeded during the 1970s and 1980s. This politicisation was 'from below', through the medium of teachers and textbooks, responsive to current

ideological fashions. A radical political/sociological content was introduced into many subjects. Particularly in secondary schools, neo-Marxist ideas had imparted a sociological hue to many subjects in the curriculum. 64 By 1990 this had deteriorated into a sub-Marxist ideology embodying crude concepts of social class, applied (perhaps strangely, considering the vogue of the new sociology of education) in a structural-functionalist manner. Alongside this, particularly in the primary school, neo-progressive ideology engendered a curriculum which emphasised process rather than content: content-free subjects, process learning, integrated studies, pupil activity. This was a more personal-development type of curriculum. Underlying both approaches was a deterioration in the quality of students, because of home background, sometimes further undermined by faulty preparation at earlier levels of schooling.

A second major drive towards politicisation of the curriculum came from the politicians and the managerial class in the corporate economic institutions of the late 1980s and early 1990s. In the main, this was not an attempt to impose ideology in liberal subjects, but to restore content to skill subjects and to develop new vocational subjects. It, too, was modified by the quality of the students.

It had become very difficult to determine what the curriculum was, particularly in state primary schools. It was more difficult in some states than in others. To clarify matters the Australian Education Council published in March 1989 a survey of curriculum policies, *Mapping the Curriculum*. In the primary school some seven very broad curriculum areas were identified: English language, mathematics, social studies, the arts (music, art, craft, drama), science, and health (physical education, personal development). These were not so much subjects as 'areas of knowledge' in which content was often less important than activities. Much the same group of learning areas could be identified in the secondary school. However, in Years 11 and 12 the curriculum was still organised in subjects; learning areas and thematic approaches were not much used.

The consultancy team which conducted this survey found varying forms of control over the curriculum of state schools. In some states the schools designed a curriculum in the light of departmental guidelines and policy statements. In others, the department or ministry issued syllabuses, but the schools were free to modify these. In the ACT, the Schools Authority approved individual school programs. Tasmania and New South Wales organised mandatory testing in literacy and numeracy, thus exercising some control over these two areas of the curriculum. The other form of control in many states was the residual external examinations at the end of Year 12.⁶⁵

The depreciation of acquisition of knowledge in favour of process and acquisition of mental skills meant that in many schools workbooks replaced textbooks in the grades up to Year 10, which coincided roughly with the minimum leaving age. Years 11 and 12 were influenced by the need for accreditation, which might even include some element of external examining. The social interpretation imposed on many subjects was often no more than popular opinion or perhaps slightly better the values of television script-writers and producers. In place of mastery of content, in many school 'studies' development of feelings (empathy) was now an important element. The personal approach was strong in the curriculum. These 'soft' subjects students sometimes gave them fancy names, like 'vegimaths' sat alongside more demanding, harder subjects. They often incorporated 'society' in their name in New South Wales 'Mathematics in society' (HSC candidates might be asked to calculate how many quinella bets are possible in an eight-horse race); in Victoria 'Physical science, society and technology'. Pupils were expected to undertake social analyses which required a very demanding and challenging approach; this could easily become a simplistic view designed to cater for often uninterested pupils. 66

By the early 1980s sociology was well established as a secondary school subject in England. These courses involved more sociological theory than earlier social science courses.⁶⁷ In New South Wales Sol Encel succeeded in the late 1980s in having a 'Culture and Society' course introduced for Years 11 and 12. In 1987 the course encompassed nine depth studies: Adolescence; Intercultural communication; Political processes; Religion and belief; Rules, rights and laws; Social inequality; Prejudice and discrimination; and Work, sport and leisure. Pretty heavy stuff! It seems that enrolments were not high and that most candidates came from non-state schools. But sociology was entering the secondary school in another guise as an ideological coloration across a wide range of subjects. English literature, French, art, science and other subjects were given a heavy sociological slant in which contemporary issues loomed large.⁶⁸

Evidence of deterioration in the senior school curriculum in Victoria was suggested by the objections in 1990 of a Melbourne University spokesman to particular Victorian Certificate of Education subjects.⁶⁹

Dance styles; Theatre studies; Drama: in no way an adequate preparation for the fairly academic studies like law or commerce.

Commerce in society: the faculties of economics and commerce are much more interested in adequate preparation in basic mathematics and basic skills.

Agricultural and horticultural studies: the faculties which would be interested in these, like agricultural science, are more concerned to have students skilled in physics and chemistry.

Contemporary society: not very useful preparation for studies in particular courses.

Health education; Home economics; Outdoor education; Physical education: students should select studies that are going to maximise their chances of doing well in the university.

Systems and technology; Technological design and Development: science and engineering are specific about what they want maths, chemistry, physics, geology and biology.

In New South Wales Contemporary English, a course for the Higher School Certificate introduced in 1989, reduced the attention to literature, with two books being studied in Year 11 and again in Year 12, instead of six in each year. The emphasis shifted from classic English texts to contemporary 'relevant' books. Indeed, history and English literature, the essential core of humanism, were changed remarkably. A new history syllabus in Tasmania (1990) required four topics in Year 9, at least one of which should be Australian. Other suggested topics were Ugandan history, the history of Hong Kong, and Greek history. 70

The nature of the pupils influenced the sociological character of the curriculum. When pupils entered the schools their culture was already shaped by the intellectual environment of the home, their innate mental capacities, the values of television, and the values of the peer group. The deficiencies of an increasing number of students, as well as their tendency to persist in schools beyond the minimum leaving age, encouraged an erosion of content in the curriculum. In some cases an entertainment curriculum emerged. Whether this was inevitable or simply an abandonment of responsibilities by teachers and school systems is a matter for debate. Vocational studies also increased because they appealed to many pupils. By 1983 these less academic students had gone as far as Year 11 and, to cater for them, terminal Year 11 transition to work courses were devised.⁷¹ But by 1990 such pupils were persisting to Year 12.

The teaching force also helped shape the social character of the curriculum. The ability of teachers to foster learning was reduced by the frequent interruption of lessons by announcements, assemblies and special activities, as well as by the large amount of paper work imposed on teachers by a bureaucratised system. The combination of the deteriorating educational background of teachers, the difficulty of attracting highly qualified people into teaching, and the radicalism or ideological confusion of some teachers encouraged an erosion of organised academic content in

the schools. On other hand, some Marxists were alarmed at the erosion of content and at the new instrumentalism.

Some ageing radicals had lost their enthusiasm for the curricular revolution. At its 1987 conference the Australian Teachers' Federation revised its 'Curriculum Policy'. It now argued that schools should not have the discretion to remove major areas of knowledge from the common curriculum and that while traditional academic subjects presented conservative social and political assumptions, the response should not be to jettison intellectual work. 'While needing renovation, the conventional disciplines are also a source of knowledge that is in itself empowering and useful'. They were 'necessary for credentialling purposes and access to further education'.⁷² Doug White, writing in *Discourse*, a Queensland journal favoured by neo-Marxists, called for 'reformation of a certain independence of schooling from society'.⁷³ The school should help the development of the child, while recognising a distinction between the child and the adult. The process was necessarily hierarchical, recognising 'ordering levels in knowledge and society' pretty old-fashioned stuff, offering little comfort to 'romantic' child-centred progressives who favoured a personal development type of curriculum or one negotiated between pupils and teachers.

But other radical teachers, especially in Victoria, especially those teaching geography, economics or the humanities, did not hesitate to write or use politically-committed textbooks. A chapter in *New Wave Geography*, a series developed by the Geography Teachers' Association of Victoria, was summed up by a Melbourne 'educational correspondent' in *The Age*. The message for Year 9 students was:

uranium bad, the rich bad, the poor good, forests good, loggers bad, toxic waste bad, multinational corporations bad, men bad, Third World men (with Australian men not far behind) real bad, tourists bad, Australian tourists in Bali appalling, the human race disgusting.⁷⁴

But not all teachers nor textbooks were as radical as Victorian.

Catholic schools not only shared the inclination of the secular curriculum to emphasise social messages but developed similar propensities in religious education. Several factors encouraged this. By 1992 less than 5 per cent of teachers in Catholic schools were members of a religious order; religious education was conducted mostly by lay teachers. The lay staff were probably better trained and better educated than most of the religious. Changes had also occurred in the nature of Catholicism (an English Catholic novelist, David Lodge, wrote: 'Around about 1970, Catholics ceased to believe in Hell').⁷⁵ The outlook of students (some 10 per cent were non-Catholic) had also changed; they were more sceptical. According to *The Bulletin*:

Religious education in Catholic high schools today typically covers areas of theology, ethics, faith and church history. They also spend time discussing notions of social justice and applying the religious philosophy that underpins their education to social issues such as divorce, abortion, drug abuse and world problems. Most Catholic educators hope students leave their schools with some grounding in thinking about and analysing such issues. 76

One *vocational* influence on the curriculum was tourism, which by 1990 was Australia's single biggest exchange earner, bringing in \$6.061 billion and employing 600 000 people or 6 per cent of the workforce. The largest group of visitors came from New Zealand (441 900) with Japan second, and Britain third.⁷⁷ Tourism, Japanese, and related studies developed as secondary school subjects, notably in Queensland. A related vocational influence was a new emphasis on Asian languages. In 1989 the most popular foreign languages at Year 12 were French (5906 took examinations, Australia-wide), followed by German, Italian, Modern Greek and Chinese. John Dawkins issued a Green Paper, *The Language of Australia*, in December 1991, seeking to encourage the learning of foreign languages. Some competition existed in the schools between 'trade' languages, 'community' languages and the older 'cultural' languages (French and German).⁷⁸

The *special interest groups* remained a persisting influence on the curriculum. The Scott Report on *School-Centred Education* (March 1990) suggested that their influence on NSW state education was encouraged through the large number of special programs for disadvantaged children, country areas, Aboriginal education, English as a second language, community languages, and so on. It listed the groups with whom the Department held regular meetings, such as the Parents and Citizens Association, the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, the Domestic Violence Committee, the Ethnic Affairs Commission, and the Council for Intellectual Disability. Occasional consultations were held with at least 23 other groups (Australian Women's Education Coalition, Country Women's Association, Asthma Foundation and so on). In June 1989 38 Special Focus Programs existed, grouped into 14 categories.⁷⁹ Eight were funded by the Commonwealth, seven by the Commonwealth and state jointly, 18 by the state alone, and five by other sources. The multiplicity of these special focus programs promoted confusion in the curriculum. Their aims were diverse and sometimes contradictory. Assessment of their implementation was nigh impossible. But their administration provided employment for a large bureaucracy.

Australia seemed to be edging towards the United States, where 'a curriculum of inclusion' was becoming popular. This was a response to the alleged needs of every politically significant minority,

one which discountenanced 'Eurocentrism'. The Balkanisation of the curriculum, was the description given in *Time* magazine. Appropriate adjustments of history courses and textbooks were urged, to strengthen the self-esteem of minority youth. 'This is ideology masquerading as education and aspiring to psychotherapy. It demands outright lying'.⁸⁰ In Australia matters had not yet reached this extremity. But in 1992 a new history syllabus for the junior years of NSW secondary schools required the study of problems rather than historical periods; female and Aboriginal perspectives were to be given special attention. The draft of a companion geography syllabus became a matter of public controversy when the principals of two private schools protested that it sought to 'change our Judaeo-Christian mind-set' by requiring attention to Aboriginal perceptions. The Board of Studies modified this to require attention to Aboriginal 'perspectives'. Aboriginal and ethnic groups protested; the minister for education asked that the syllabus be made 'more inclusive'; and the Board reverted to its original formulation. 'The board undertakes extensive consultation with interested community groups', stated its president. 'This ensures that the community's views are reflected in syllabuses'.⁸¹ But what if different sections of the community held different views? And what if the community's views were anti-educational?

Another special interest group, the homosexuals, occasionally exerted some influence on the curriculum. An indirect influence came through the association of homosexuality with AIDS. But the Victorian guide to teachers, *Sexually Transmitted Diseases: Prevention Education*, released in January 1987, did not concentrate exclusively on the AIDS virus. *The Bulletin* referred to it as a value-free sexuality package which other states had imitated. It concentrated on 'safe sex'. To avoid sexual diseases, adolescents should talk to their partner(s), use condoms, have regular medical check-ups, and look for symptoms. Students could engage in roleplay situations where they could practise 'saying no'. Sex education for Years 10/12 at the Methodist Ladies College, Melbourne, included a visiting puppet show. Sexual hygiene and contraception were treated through 'a procession of cocks, tits, bums and condoms'.⁸²

The launching of a second anti-AIDS campaign in June 1990 led *The Australian* to comment that society had few qualms about imposing its moral views on drug addicts, drug abuse being a crime and being regarded as anti-social. But sexual promiscuity was another matter. 'Adultery and fornication have never been crimes under Australian law and homosexuality has become widely decriminalised'. The idea that promiscuity can be a health risk upset a permissive society; the homosexual role in AIDS was widely

ignored.⁸³ By 1990 there was a compulsory 40 minute class in AIDS education for Queensland students at Year 12 level, while in New South Wales four hours in one year were allocated for students in Years 7 to 10.

One relatively new pressure group with growing strength in the curriculum deserves separate considerationthe ecology/environmental movement.

The Ecological Movement and the Curriculum

Reduced philosophical distinctions between the major political parties, the collapse of Marxism as a world philosophy, and the weakened commitment to traditional Christian religion produced cynicism about politics. The inability of politicians to prevent economic deterioration increased this disillusion. Ideological/political enthusiasm was diverted into the environmental movement. The origins of this movement went back more than two decades. The Australian Conservation Foundation was formed in Melbourne in 1965; in 1974 branches of Friends of the Earth began to emerge in Melbourne; in 1976 a National Wilderness Society was established, with strong support in Tasmania and Sydney. Two years later the World Wildlife Fund and Greenpeace arrived in Australia. Henceforth five national environmental organisations competed vigorously for funds, public attention and the ear of governments. By 1985 the ACF had 13 384 members, Greenpeace 3000, and the Wilderness Society 4800. By 1990 the five groups had 115 000 members, many of whom had enrolled in the previous year. They were controlled by young university graduates, with a full-time staff of 150, plus hundreds of part-time staff and thousands of volunteers. They administered budgets approaching \$12 million.⁸⁴ They ran seminars, opposed some economic developmental projects, generated television programs, produced educational material for schools and infiltrated government departments and political circles. Departments of the environment were set up at Commonwealth and state levels.

The term 'environmental education' was first used in an official context in Australia at the 'Education and the Environmental Crisis' conference convened by the Australian Academy of Science in April 1970. This conference was told that environmental education in Australian schools was incidental and totally inadequate. In 1978 the UNESCO issued a report of its 'Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education', held in the USSR in October 1977. The objectives set out therein were taken up by the Curriculum Development Centre in Canberra, which distributed *Environmental Education for Schools* to all schools in 1980.

The West Australian and Queensland departments of education issued their policy statements on environmental education in 1977, the Queensland one being revised in 1988 and again in 1989. South Australia issued its policy statement in 1987. The NSW Department issued a curriculum statement on environmental education in 1989. Victoria was in the process of producing a policy document in 1990. The Federal Government launched a national environment education strategy, 'Learning for our environment', in November 1989. 85

Education Links (Sydney) devoted its Summer 1989/90 issue to environmental education. The editorial revealed a more critical, sophisticated approach amongst former neo-Marxists.

Think of a social problem and you can rest assured that at some time or other public figures have proposed an educational solution. Drugs, road accidents, teenage pregnancies, war, family breakdown, violence on the streets, racism, sexism, poor dietthe list goes on and on.

Now the environmental problem was being referred to schools, colleges, and universities. The editorial reminded its readers that 'any exercise in environmental education in either the media or the schools which ignores questions of power and conflicting social interests becomes ideological'a statement indicative of the journal's own ideological commitment. *Education Links* reprinted an article from *Green Teacher*, a British journal whose sociological comments, while apt, revealed a more sophisticated Marxist orientation. Nonetheless, liberal supporters of the ecology movement were shepherded in a Marxian direction.⁸⁶ 'Much green literature of education is a blend of utopian environmentalism and progressive, child centred or utopian notions of education', they were told. The catechism continued:

8. *Do you regard schooling as a primary agent of social change?* Contrary to the hopes of progressive and many green teachers, schools are not primary agents of social change. They are essentially conservative institutions which serve to reproduce society as it is.

9. *Why might you have become green?* Sociological writing on the green movement suggests that greens are essentially members of the new middle class. Employed largely in the welfare or non productive service sector . . . they are marginal to normal economic relations . . . Their utopian environmentalism represents the guilt of the already privileged . . .

The article suggested that green teachers must anchor their proposals to the real world of the restructuring of the economy and the restructuring of schooling. And, indeed, the environmentalism now permeating many Australian geography, science, economics and other school textbooks was often employed anti-capitalist propaganda.

Reforming the Schools: Administration and Control

After the re-election of the Hawke Labor government in July 1987 the new Commonwealth Minister for Employment, Education and Training, John Dawkins, launched an educational reform movement. Dawkins initially directed his attention to the universities; only in May 1988 did he turn to the schools. But in March 1988 the Liberal Party had won power in New South Wales, after 12 years in opposition. A reforming minister, Dr Terry Metherell, galvanised the school system with a rapid series of dramatic reforms. The Liberal Party in Victoria had stated a program of reform about 1980, but this became bogged down when left-wing Labor got into power. In the late 1980s educational reform swept through Australia, Dawkins using the Australian Education Council to widen his influence. But Victoria remained impotent to resolve its education crisis.

The reform movement was made possible by community discontent with the quality of the education and disillusion with the teachers unions, educational administrators and educational theorists. The economic crisis concentrated this discontent to the point of action. The economic crisis necessitated financial stringency and better vocational training in the schools. The reduction of unemployment and the improvement of the productivity and international competitiveness of industry were prime objectives. The driving forces for change were not, as in the past, educational administrators or teachers' unions but politicians, businessmen, the state administrators (as distinct from the educational bureaucracy) and even the general union movement (as distinct from the teachers unions). Devolution (local school self-management, a reduced and decentralised bureaucracy) was seen as likely to restore some control over the schools. It might also produce financial economies. But alongside devolution came attempts at central control of a basic core curriculum. Both moves threatened to reduce the influence of the teachers' unions over policy and the autonomy of teachers in the classroom.

We consider structural changes first and curriculum changes later. 87

At the *Commonwealth* level, the creation in July 1987 of the Department of Employment, Education and Training under John Dawkins was followed in October 1987 by the creation of a National Board of Employment, Education and Training. The Board announced in December that a key issue was to develop 'an appropriate balance between the humanities and science and between vocational and non-vocational education in primary,

secondary and tertiary education'. The Board had four advisory councils: the Schools Council, the Higher Education Council, the

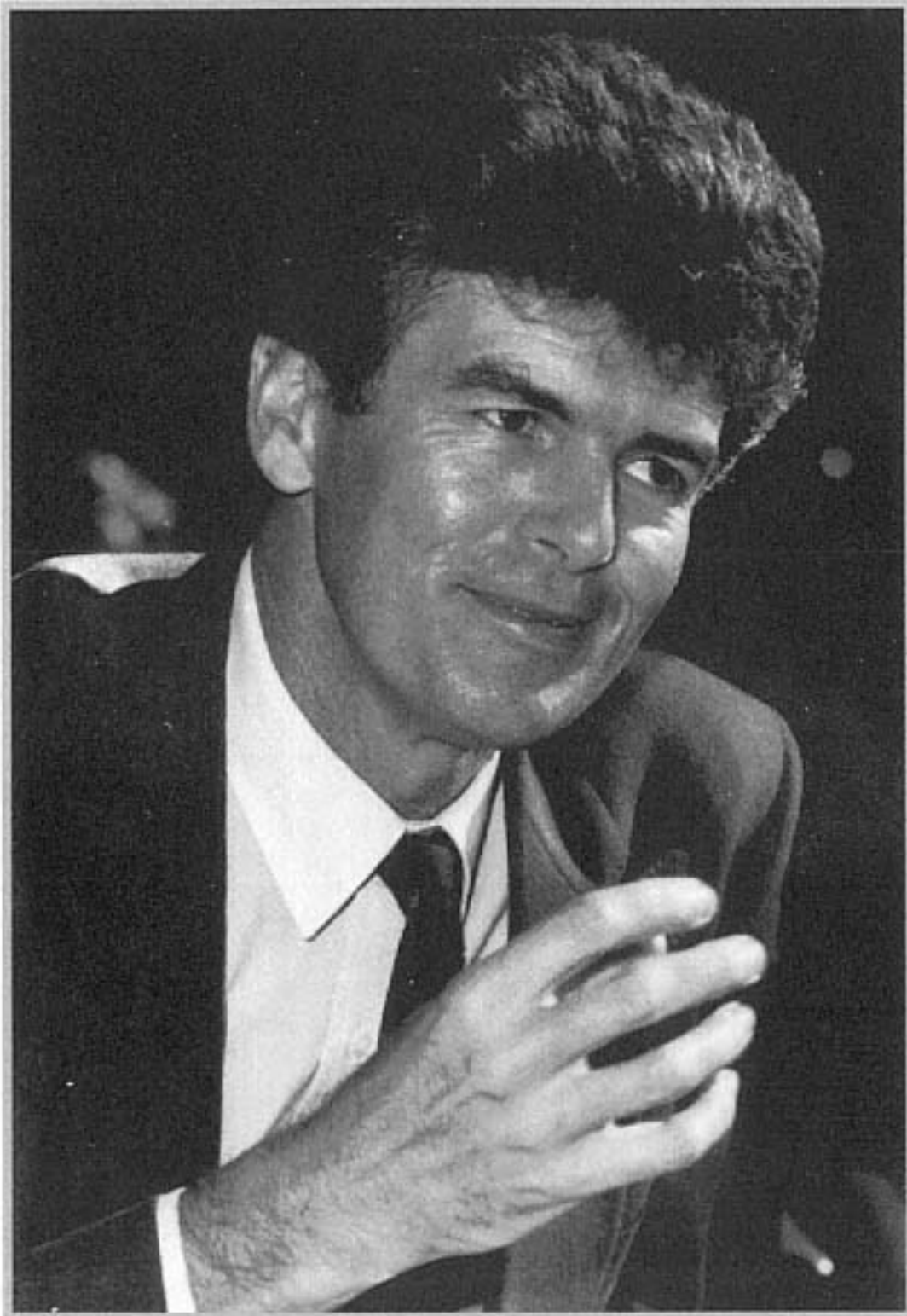


Figure 10.2:

Terry Metherell, initiator of reform

When in March 1988 the Liberal Party won office Dr Terry Metherell became NSW Minister for Education. His success in reforming the state school system owed much to the speed with which he introduced changes and to the supremacy of the Ministry of Education over the Department. Metherell was helped by the weakened state of the Teachers' Federation, which his Labor predecessor had tamed. Dr Metherell resigned in July 1990.

(Photograph by courtesy of the *Newcastle Herald*).

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Employment and Skills Formation Council, and the Australian Research Council. The Schools Commission and the Tertiary Education Commission ceased to exist. 88

Dawkins gave priority to tackling the universities and colleges of advanced education, initiating fundamental changes after the White Paper of July 1988. Tertiary institutions were easier to target because they were heavily dependent on Commonwealth finance. They also seemed to relate very directly to economic improvement. But in May 1988 Dawkins announced 'it is now time to turn our attention to the schools of Australia'.⁸⁹ The Commonwealth could not directly alter the management of schools. Its main drive was channelled through the Australian Education Council (the various ministers of education) and was directed at the curriculum.

New South Wales was the leader in school reform. Administrative reorganisation was a prominent objective. A small Ministry of Education had been formed in 1969. After the Liberal Party won the elections of March 1988 and Dr Terry Metherell became Minister for Education, the status of the ministry grew rapidly while that of the department diminished. Metherell abolished the Higher Education Board establishing an Office of Higher Education within the ministry. The Education Commission was also abolished, its central planning and co-ordination functions being absorbed within the ministry, as also its status, for industrial purposes, as employer of primary, secondary and TAFE teachers. These changes strengthened the direct control of the minister.⁹⁰

Dr Metherell was impressed by the reform program in England, where the Education Reform Act of July 1988 was producing remarkable changes. After a month in office he appointed a Management Review Force under Dr Brian Scott to examine all aspects of his portfolio. While awaiting this report Metherell modified arrangements governing the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate, created new types of high schools, and announced tests of basic literacy and numeracy. The Department of Education became an agent of the Ministry. Policy was made by the Minister, not the administrators. The speed of these initiatives aroused intense resistance from the Teachers' Federation and hostility to Metherell personally. Partly to mollify this opposition, the Premier, Nick Greiner, appointed in September 1988 a committee under Sir John Carrick to review NSW education. The committee submitted its report in September 1989.

The first fruits of the Scott investigation was *Schools Renewal*, a 40-page booklet subtitled 'A Strategy to Revitalise Schools within the New South Wales Education System', which was released in June 1989.⁹¹ A second report, *School-Centred Education: Building*

a More Responsive State School System, was presented in March 1990. Later that year the findings of the Carrick and Scott reports and the report of a Curriculum Review Committee were implemented in Education Reform Act. This created a Department of School Education and for the first time delineated the school curriculum in legislation. An autonomous Board of Studies was set up to control the curriculum and examining. Significantly, the Board's authority extended to the long-neglected primary schools.⁹² In late July 1990 Dr Metherell resigned as minister following an infringement of taxation requirements. His successor, Mrs Virginia Chadwick, adopted a more conciliatory style but did not alter the general course of reform. By the end of 1991 the number of state selective high schools had increased to 21. Alongside the long-established conservatorium high school new specialised schools were set up by the end of 1991, 27 new technology high schools, 17 language high schools, a sports high school, a performing arts high school, and a senior high school. New South Wales, which had no tradition of school councils, possessed 500 by the end of the year.

Victoria had been the first state to attempt restructuring, but the process was interminable and ineffective. In *Victoria* state schools had been long neglected. The very high proportion of non-English speaking migrant children, particularly in Melbourne, made the situation in some state schools desperate. The ravages of neo-progressive and radical education had become extreme. The Department had lost control over the curriculum. When they came to office in May 1979 the Liberal Party Minister for Education, Alan Hunt, and his assistant minister had good reason for declaring that the department was 'in a mess', finding duplication of functions and inefficiency. They looked to 'outside' people, management consultants, to develop new directions. The government believed, in the words of Professor Brian Start, that no-one 'would do as good a job of that restructuring as local business theorists who knew nothing about education'.⁹³ A White Paper (1980) committed the government to devolution and decentralisation, and wider participation by parents, community members and teachers in the control of education. In 1981 the Education Service Act and the Education (Amendment) Act weakened the power of the Director-General of Education.

But the elections of March 1982 returned a Labor government dominated by the 'Socialist Left'. It endorsed the principles of the White Paper but changed their character. The power of the minister increased, but so did the influence of the special interest groups. A State Board of Education was set up in 1983, responsible to the Minister but independent of the Education Department. The

inroads of neo-progressive and neo-Marxist education continued and, indeed, intensified as radical teachers found jobs in the educational bureaucracy. The Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association wielded tremendous power. School committees or councils had existed in Victoria since 1911. In February 1984 the powers of School Councils were increased, but the teachers took over the councils. In November 1985 a new minister, Ian Cathie, abolished the department and set up what he called a 'corporate style' Ministry of Education. The Director-General of Education became the Chief Executive, the directors of education became general managers, the regional directors became regional managers. Cathie attempted a second restructuring in 1986.⁹⁴

The financial situation necessitated reduced expenditure. Yet regionalisation seemed even more expensive than centralisation. Nor did it end duplication. Despite the rhetoric of devolution, central control was strong; regional offices simply brought the bureaucracy closer to the schools they sought to control.⁹⁵ To resolve the conflict and to encourage 'the devolution of powers and functions to schools', Cathie, appointed a Ministry Structures Project Team early in 1986. Its report of June 1986, *Taking Schools into the 1990s*, envisaged an increase of central powers while giving the schools power to select principals, appoint and promote teachers, develop curricula, employ consultants, and undertake expenditure. The Regional Offices, the agents of the Schools Division, were to be reduced in number and strengthened. Statewide guidelines over the curriculum would be issued.

The reaction of the parents and teachers' unions to increasing the powers of schools was so hostile that the minister abandoned this, in *The Government Decision on the Report of the Ministry Structures Project Team*, November 1986. Central appointment and promotion of staff would be retained. A victim of the hostility of the special interest groups, including the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association, Cathie was replaced as minister by Caroline Hogg in December 1987.⁹⁶

The Labor government had, in effect, accepted the corporate management model of its Liberal precursor but had permitted radical pressure groups to dominate the administration. Leading figures in the teachers' unions had penetrated the administration, obtaining positions of power in policy formation and control of state education. It was a classic exposition of the Gramsci strategy except that the new socialist bureaucracy lacked Gramsci's concern for high standards in the curriculum.

Matters became even worse after Mrs Joan Kirner of the 'Socialist Left' became education minister in October 1988. She appointed a new chief executive, Ann Morrow, who was not a

teacher professional. The Schools Division was renamed Office of Schools Administration, but its budget came under the control of the chief executive. Mrs Kirner also contributed to the confusion over the curriculum. In a 1988 address to primary principals she said she would like to blur the boundaries between 'academic' and 'non-academic' education; she would like a curriculum which was 'socially inclusive'. Public disillusion increased. Despite more generous funding of state schools under Labor, the movement of pupils to non-state schools continued. Finally in 1990 another restructure, motivated by the need to reduce expenditure, was promoted by a new minister, Pullen. His portfolio was renamed the Ministry of Education and Training. When the Ministry moved to a new building, the Rialto, in 1990 the school centre support staff named their satirical bulletin *The RIALTO* (Reorganise Incessantly And Leap Towards Oblivion). 97

Several sociological factors explain the cataclysmic situation in Victoria. Most middle class parents had for long sent their children to private rather than state schools, and were hence less concerned about the decline in basic skills and humanist subjects in the state system. The existence of separate technical schools limited the deterioration in vocational skills, and hence made effective reform less vital. The radicalism of the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association was another important element. The existence of a left-wing Labor government also helped the VSTA.

In *Western Australia* Bob Pearce, Labor Party Minister for Education from February 1983 to February 1988, increased his administrative power in the mid-1980s. From 1985, when a President of the State Teachers Union friendly to Pearce retired, the Union lost its influence with the government. As part of a general examination of the public service the Functional Review Committee of the WA Government issued a *Review of the Education Portfolio* in August 1986. This set the tone for changes within the educational administration. On the resignation of the Director-General of Education, Bob Vickery, in September 1986, his successor was given the new title of Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Education. The old department was absorbed into the ministry. The power of the Chief Executive Officer and of the educational administrators was less than the former Director-General and the Education Department. About 50 highly experienced school administrators, mainly superintendents (i.e. inspectors) who did vital work monitoring and assessing schools, were squeezed out of the education ministry. Many senior ministry positions were filled by career public servants with limited experience in education. The loss of the experienced superintendents and the appointment of senior administrators without a strong educational background caused discontent among teachers.98

Soon after its establishment, the Western Australian Ministry of Education issued a program, *Better Schools in Western Australia* (1987), whose basic principles were identified as: self-determining schools; maintenance of educational standards; community participation in school management; equity; responsiveness to change; and enhancement of the professionalism of teachers. Schools were to receive a cash grant to undertake specified activities; school principals were to have new powers; schools could select their own teaching staff; and a reformed system of promotion would reduce movement of teachers between schools. Within the Central Office a Curriculum Directorate would provide schools with curriculum guidelines and syllabuses. 99

The government offered the State School Teachers' Union improved salaries and conditions in return for support for the reform program. It reduced the size of classes, reduced teaching time, increased salaries, and offered better career prospects. The union allowed greater variation in class sizes, backed the plan for 'self-determining schools', and accepted reviews of the work of teachers and students. But early in 1989 the arrangement collapsed when for the first time in 50 years, state teachers went on strike. Two-thirds of them, 10 000, jammed the steps of Parliament House, cheering and jeering. In Western Australia, as in other states, the teachers' union, once a strong critic of bureaucratic inertia, now opposed the bureaucrats' efforts at reform.100

The election of a more moderate Teachers' Union executive in November 1989 brought a new salary agreement and acceptance by the union of devolution as a key strategy. The 'Memorandum of Agreement' published on 24 April 1990 identified four 'significant features of a devolved system' recognition of the school as a key decision-making unit; participation of a wider group in school decision-making; recognition of a broader professional role for teachers; and acknowledgment that professional teachers accept responsibility for their decisions. Teachers soon enjoyed benefits from the new regime. From June 1990 they were no longer required to submit their teaching program to school principals. Individual teacher planning was now 'a professional responsibility, rather than a legal requirement'.101 An act in 1990 required the establishment in all state schools of School Decision Making Groups, consisting of equal numbers of parents and staff, and the school principal. The Decision Making Groups helped formulate school policy but had no authority over finance or employment, which remained with the Ministry or with Parents and Citizens Associations.

As in many other Australian systems, devolution in the *Australian Capital Territory* was associated with an initial administrative change. Government representation on the ACT Schools

Authority was increased, and the Chief Education Officer became a ministerial appointment. Following *A Management Review of the ACT Schools Authority*, the Council of the ACT Schools Authority was abolished in September 1987, the Chief Education Officer being invested with all its powers. When in May 1989 a new ACT local government system came into existence, it established a Ministry of Industry, Employment and Education. The department issued an 'Information Paper', *Extended School Self-Management*, in October 1989. This proposed to extend the control of School Boards and principals over school budgets. A pilot scheme started from the second term/semester 1990 in 12 schools of various types (primary, high, secondary colleges). The remaining schools were to adopt the system in 1991/92. The assumption was that this restructuring would save money. In pursuit of the same objective, a number of small local schools were closed in 1990. Public furore over the closure of these schools was so great that the Department of Education decided to proceed more slowly with its school self-management scheme, but a measure of school self-management was introduced in senior secondary colleges. 102

In *Tasmania* a 'White Paper on Tasmanian Schools and Colleges in the 1980s' (May 1981) noted that hardly any schools had established a Board of Advice and urged that all schools and colleges set up school councils by 1985. But the Labor Government lost the 1982 elections and the White Paper was not implemented. Yet in the early 1980s state schools in Tasmania had a higher degree of responsibility for allocating resources than anywhere else in Australia. Labor again took office in June 1989 and swiftly recognised that the state was facing a severe financial crisis. In June 1990 it appointed a Melbourne management consultant firm, Cresap, to investigate the Department of Education. The Cresap report, *The Review of the Department of Education and the Arts*, released in September 1990, suggested the replacement of the existing three-region level of bureaucracy by eight districts and the removal of much of the head office's power.¹⁰³ 'Politically difficult decisions such as the closure of 47 economically unviable schools will be thrust upon school communities and those would come under increasing pressure through changes to funding formulas', reported the *Hobart Mercury*. Eleven hundred job cuts were to be equally divided between teaching and non-teaching positions. As in Western Australia, the old education leadership was weakened. 'Redundancy packages will wipe out almost the entire top echelon of the Department of Education'. The Cresap Report produced a shrill outcry from parent and teacher organisations. The President of the Tasmanian Teachers' Federation expressed alarm at the loss of leadership, knowledge and skills.¹⁰⁴

The drive for devolution was weaker in the Northern Territory and Queensland. The large size and uneven distribution of population in these regions, coupled with a social pattern comparable with that of nineteenth century pioneering Australia, encouraged centralisation rather than devolution.

In the *Northern Territory* the Country-Liberal Government followed a policy of appealing to the electorate on educational matters, rather than relying on the professional educators. In 1987 the government issued *Towards the 90s: Excellence, Accountability and Devolution*. A second volume appeared in the following year. In 1988 the Northern Territory moved to devolve additional management functions to school councils. One objective of the 'Action Plan for School Improvement' was to develop a collaborative process of self-evaluation involving parents, teachers and students. The 1989 Department of Education document *Teaching in Tomorrow's Territory* also endorsed the principle of restructuring. In November 1991 the Northern Territory Department of Education issued a *Standard Devolution Package: A Practical Guide to Education Decision Making for School Councils*. An education act to increase the powers of school councils was forecast for 1992. 105

In *Queensland* the government established a Public Sector Review Committee in December 1986. This committee pressed government departments, including education, to improve their efficiency. Funding was being reduced in real terms because of the current financial difficulties. The Education Department produced three documents known collectively as *Meeting the Challenge* (198788), which promised a reappraisal of the administration of education. The Department was restructured, administrative devolution occurring quite rapidly. A significant number of senior officers opted for early retirement, 'taking with them a wealth of knowledge, experience and sheer ability'. While the Government wished to push devolution at a fast pace, the Queensland Teachers' Union and some school principals feared too much responsibility would be placed on schools. When Labor came to power in December 1989, after 30 years in opposition, the new Minister for Education, Paul Braddy, initiated a short review process. The Departmental report, *Focus on Schools: the Future Organisation of Educational Services for Students*, recommended the redeployment of 50 per cent of Head Office staff and a shift in decision-making to the regions and schools. The Department of Education's annual report hailed 1991 as 'a period of unprecedented change for education'. Central office staff were reduced, 11 administrative regions were created, 47 school support centres were set up, and 20 school advisory councils were to be trialled.106

South Australia, like Victoria, had enthusiastically adopted

progressive and radical education in 196774. As in Victoria, devolution was no easy matter. But from 1972 generous direct grants to schools permitted a significant degree of school-based budgeting. After Labor regained office in 1983 an administrative reorganisation eliminated some executive positions and relocated others in regional areas. Driven by the need to economise, further relocations and retirements took place in 198688. By the end of 1990 11 out of 15 senior officers (directors or above) had retired or had been redeployed. A scheme for 'School Development Plans' in 1987 gave schools new responsibilities in self-management. An Education Review Unit was set up in October 1989 to provide 'independent professional advice and judgment' on aspects of education affecting students' learning in schools and to conduct 'reviews and evaluations of the Department's policies and programmes'. In 1991 the Education Department proposed reducing the central bureaucracy and giving further administrative and financial power to schools, including the school councils, over the next four years. The South Australian Institute of Teachers was dubious about devolution, fearing it would reduce industrial standards. 107

A characteristic element in the restructuring of state school systems was the initial weakening or dissolution of the old educational administrative bureaucracy, centred on the departments of education. A major reason for this was the belief that the bureaucracy had lost effective control of the schools, and hence was unable to raise standards in the curriculum or strengthen the teaching of the basics. Politicians, business people, parents and public service administrators were important sources of the reform movement. The need to achieve financial economies gave additional urgency to the drive for administrative devolution and local control; economic accountability was to match educational accountability. A major contradiction was that while restructuring required the co-operation of teachers, teachers unions harboured the not-unfounded suspicion that restructuring would bring deterioration in conditions of employment or in remuneration. On the one hand, successful restructuring needed a professional approach by teachers; on the other, many teachers were demoralised or disgruntled.

Devolution took different forms in different state systems. If school councils had some control over finances, over the appointment of teachers, and over promotion, salaries and the curriculum, local control could be effective and centralised bureaucratic control could be minimised. If the councils were dominated by radical teacher unionists, they could even intensify the problems which the reform movement sought to remedy.

A central task of reform was to do something about the curriculum.

Reforming the Curriculum

The curriculum was the second arena of reform. While the thrust in the reform of school administrative systems was towards local school self-management and decentralisation of the bureaucracy (with the hoped for corollary of reduction in size), the thrust in the reform of the curriculum was away from school-based curricula towards centralisation (with the hope of improved vocational preparation). Reform of the school curriculum involved three major sectors: the much neglected primary school, the junior years of secondary school, and the senior years of post-compulsory schooling. The most successful efforts were in New South Wales. The most disastrous were in Victoria. But first we will examine the Commonwealth Government's initiatives.

The May 1988 statement by John Dawkins, 'Strengthening Australia's schools', called for a 'common curriculum framework' which would emphasise higher levels of literacy, numeracy and analytical skills. The Minister added that this common framework should be complemented by 'a common national approach to assessment'. His efforts to reform the curriculum centred particularly on vocational or instrumental (once called 'realist') subjects. The Curriculum Development Centre, which on 1 January 1988 had become a unit within the Schools and Curriculum Division of the Department of Employment, Education and Training, shifted its emphasis away from progressive education towards mathematics, science and vocational projects. 108 Dawkins, working through the Australian Education Council, put pressure on the states and territories to fall into line. Independently of this, New South Wales and Western Australia also launched moves to reform the curriculum. In June 1990 the Australian Education Council endorsed a national framework for the mathematics curriculum and agreed to develop similar guidelines in science, technology and social sciences. This 'national approach' to school curricula was described in *The Australian* as 'the first step to a centralised system'.¹⁰⁹ But guidelines were one thing; classroom practice another. The reforms had to rely on the co-operation of the teachers and of educational administrators if they were to be implemented. Hence, as in England, they were in grave danger.¹¹⁰

About the same time as Dawkins announced the need for curriculum reform, a new Liberal Party Minister for Education, Dr Terry Metherell, took control in New South Wales. As we have seen, soon after taking office in March 1988 Metherell instituted wide-ranging reforms, many of which were highly relevant to the curriculum and its assessment. He increased the number of selective state high schools, a move likely to strengthen academic standards.

In June 1989 he announced the opening of 25 Technology High Schools in the following year. Specialised secondary schools favoured a more instrumental curriculum, as well as assisting standards. In June 1990 the Minister announced that 15 secondary language high schools would open from the beginning of 1991. Dr Metherell stated that more Australians needed to speak a second language if Australia was to take its place in the global economy of the next century. 111 In state primary school basic skills tests in English and mathematics at Years 3 and 6 started in 1989.

In November 1988 the Ministry of Education had released a Discussion Paper on the curriculum. More than a thousand submissions were received. The November 1989 White Paper on curriculum reform, *Excellence and Equity*, reorganised the curriculum into Key Learning Areas (six for the primary school, eight for the secondary). It recommended that the proposed new Board of Studies reduce the number of Other Approved Studies (not publicly examined nor included in the HSC aggregate) in Years 11 and 12. Priority should be given to modern languages, technology and design, and health and personal development. Australian history and geography were to be mandatory for two years during Years 7 to 10. The establishment of a Board of Studies in 1990 with responsibilities in both primary and secondary education meant that, for the first time since the abolition of departmental syllabuses and inspection in 1967, the primary school curriculum was subject to surveillance.

Victoria, on the other hand, persisted with its radical-progressive approach to the curriculum. Mrs Joan Kirner, then Minister for Education, told the Hobart meeting of the Australian Education Council in April 1989: 'I haven't come here to support a national curriculum unless I am absolutely convinced that it is in the best interests of the kids. I am not yet convinced'. 112 The Blackburn Report of March 1985 (*Ministerial Review of Post-compulsory Schooling*) had recommended that the HSC at the end of Year 12 be replaced by a Victorian Certificate of Education for Years 11 and 12. This initiated a prolonged and agonising debate. The Victorian Certificate of Education finally eventuated in 1991. It sought to perform the impossible task of providing a common credential at the end of Year 12 for a vast range of student interests and abilities. Public controversy raged, involving the universities, teachers' unions, educational journalists, educational administrators, politicians and the general public. In November 1991 the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board agreed to modify the two most controversial subjects - mathematics and Australian Studies. Following an independent report into mathematics, it was reorganised into five new units and made more sequential.

And Australian Studies was to be made optional instead of compulsory. 113

While New South Wales adamantly pursued a radical course of curriculum reform and Victoria obstinately adhered to its ideological commitment to a sub-Marxist and progressive curriculum, the other states were largely content to await the outcome of Commonwealth initiatives. In April 1989 the Australian Education Council decided to establish a Curriculum Corporation of Australia, the ministers for education becoming the Board of Directors. The Corporation was established in Melbourne, but its terms of reference were innocuous and New South Wales did not participate. At a conference of directors-general and directors of curriculum in 1991 the states and territories reaffirmed their control of the curriculum, reducing the role of the Curriculum Corporation to assistance and publications. In the meantime another initiative of the AEC, the production of national curriculum statements, was also making heavy going. By September 1991 the national statement on mathematics had appeared and work was continuing on technology, science, and studies of society and environment. A member of the Australian Council for Educational Research commented:

While the proposed national statements are generally described as relating to 'curriculum areas' or 'areas of learning', they are in fact a curious mishmash of traditional school subjects (mathematics, English, science), groups of subjects (languages other than English), broad curriculum areas (human society and environment, technology, the arts), and areas disguised as subjects (health, which is defined as including personal development and physical education). Then there are the oddities of miscegenation and separation: the combining of social and cultural studies with environmental studies, for example, in apparent disregard of the very different disciplinary bases on which the two sets of studies would have to draw, or the separation of science and technology. The former suggests a peculiarly New South Wales influence; the latter a peculiarly Victorian one.¹¹⁴

It is significant that it was in the important instrumental subjects mathematics, English, science, foreign languages that the traditional subject/discipline approach survived.

An important element in defining the curriculum is the mode of *assessment*. Assessment can set standards and give specific definition to a syllabus. Central to the success of curriculum reform was a system of testing or examining. It is an old dictum that 'He who examines, controls'. However, only New South Wales, Tasmania and the Northern Territory were prepared to actually test what was allegedly being taught. Teacher union opposition diverted efforts into other channels. Queensland, which had abolished all external examinations in 1971, took a step in the other direction by introducing from 1992 a Core Skills Test at the end of Year 12.

In May 1990 Dawkins called for national common assessment procedures, presumably to give impetus to the lethargic progress of the national curriculum. A budget for the Australasian Cooperative Assessment Program was approved by the conference of Directors-General in September 1990 and by the Australian Education Council in December 1990. The mathematics and English/literacy profiles were to be completed by the end of 1991. The development of profiles, by describing the outcomes which might be expected of students, would help define the curriculum. Yet another complication was the question of the relation of the national curriculum frameworks with assessment frameworks being developed in some of the states, such as the mathematics and literacy profiles in Victoria, the attainment levels in South Australia, and the Primary10 assessment frameworks in Queensland.

Thus different segments of the educational bureaucracies were working in divergent directions. In Australia, as in England, the educational bureaucracy was quietly trying to moderate the politicians' reform initiatives.

One gets the impression . . . that the real issues of national curriculum are still sleeping, and that current initiatives are more attempts to bypass them than to address them. Whether they can be successfully bypassed in the long term, however, is the fascinating political question that will keep national curriculum watchers intrigued in the coming years. There are some indications of a growing impatience on the part of at least some of the ministers with what they perceive as bureaucratic evasion of the issues. Historically in such situations the bureaucracies have usually won out, particularly when, as in this case, they have shown a united front; but one senses also, in the current context, a new determination on the part of the ministers to reassert their position as the arbiters of policy. 115

Educational bureaucrats would put it differently. Garth Boomer, now Associate Director-General of Education (Curriculum) in South Australia, remarked in 1992 that 'Australian educators cannot sit on their hands . . . current accumulating pressures for better assessing and reporting will not go away'. Educators had to 'take the vanguard and the control' and develop the best possible systems. 'I want to see those who represent the interests of teachers, students and parents plant the flag'. Needless to say, the self-designated representatives of these three groups were the educationists; they omitted from the interests they wished to serve those who supplied the finance for education, the politicians and employers. 116

The Commonwealth struck a new blow for the employers and politicians in 1991/92 in the form of the Finn, Mayer and Carmichael reports. But before turning to these new vocationalist manifestos, we must consider the other major area of restructuring

instigated by the Commonwealth Government, that of advanced and higher education.

Restructuring Higher and Advanced Education

In the late 1980s and early 1990s higher education (i.e. the universities) and advanced education (i.e. the colleges and institutes) were dramatically reshaped. The control and organisation, the teaching and lecturing corps, the curriculum, the student body, were all transformed, in some aspects extremely rapidly, in others steadily but inexorably. Sociologically, these changes reflected the operation of economic forces, the initiatives of a bureaucracy, the aspirations of an egalitarian society, and the pressures of special



Figure 10.3:

John Dawkins, proponent of instrumentalism

Following the re-election of the Federal Labor Government in July 1987 John Dawkins became Minister for Employment, Education and Training. He swiftly reconstructed higher and advanced education and then turned to the school curriculum, working through the Australian Education Council. In December 1991 Dawkins became Treasurer, leaving considerable confusion in both the schools and the universities.

interest groups. Incompatible and contradictory elements were thrown together in a new 'higher education'. How did this happen? Why did it happen? Why did it happen so easily? We will look first at the process by which the new system was created; then at the influences which brought it into being; and finally at the results of the revolution in higher education.

How did it happen? At the end of November 1987 the National Board of Employment, Education and Training set up four advisory councils, one of which was a Higher Education Council. The Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, which for the preceding ten years had advised the Commonwealth regarding university education, advanced education, and technical and further education, was abolished. Ministerial power over policy formation became complete. Henceforth public servants, many of them with little knowledge of academic circumstances, held the initiative. 117

In December 1987 the Commonwealth Minister for Employment, Education and Training, John Dawkins, issued a Green Paper (*Higher Educationa policy discussion paper*), drawn up by an unidentified group of advisers. A White Paper in the following July (*Higher Educationa policy statement*) maintained the same basic policies. According to the Green Paper, the Government considered that 'a significant expansion of higher education will be necessary for a variety of economic and social reasons'.118

The two papers outlined the elements of a 'Unified National System'. To be eligible for membership of the Unified National System, institutions would need a minimum student enrolment of 2000 EFTSU (effective full-time student units). They were invited to accept certain principles concerning equity, research management, credit transfer, staffing arrangements and a common academic year. They were also to consider the Government's view that adjoining institutions should be combined. The White Paper asserted that an institution would need an enrolment of at least 5000 EFTSU to justify a 'broad teaching profile' and some specialised research activity. To obtain comprehensive involvement in teaching 'with resources to undertake research across a significant proportion of its profile' it would need at least 8000 EFTSU.119 The creation of large new universities started, involving mergers between universities and colleges of advanced education and between different colleges of advanced education.

Pressure was applied to encourage 'adjoining' institutions to merge. At first glance it might seem that the 46 CAEs, with 201 300 students, would overwhelm the 19 universities and their 183 100 students. But staffing figures show that the situation was more complex. The universities in 1987 had 2384 research staff, 11 875 teaching and research staff, and 21 987 general (i.e. non-

academic) staff. The CAEs had slightly fewer academic staff (12 126 full time equivalent units) and considerably fewer non-teaching staff (11 020). Two differing structures were being merged. University lecturers were likely to suffer a deterioration of their relatively favourable conditions. Some college lecturers would have the satisfaction of becoming instant professors, but most would suffer from the more stringent university conditions for promotion. No longer would all university lecturers be officially committed to research. The mergers threatened to weaken advanced education by making courses more theoretical and to weaken the remnants of humanist/liberal higher education by making it more vocational. 120 However, for the first year or so most amalgamations were federations, not integrated unions. Under the general rubric of 'university', constituent colleges of advanced education retained their distinctive structure. As the integration of university and college structures, facilities, courses and lecturers proceeded, the values of the academic body changed. While universities had a tradition of self-government and academic freedom, colleges of advanced education had a command structure in which principals exercised considerable power and lecturers exercised caution about their 'academic freedom'. The new universities were likely to adopt an intermediate character.

Some 35 universities emerged from the restructuring. Three important policy instruments were devised to provide central guidance over the universities. One was the negotiation between individual universities and the Department of Employment, Education and Training of educational profiles of the courses offered and the number of students to be enrolled. A second was a tighter policy on research funding, by removing allowances for research from the general funds given to universities. Henceforth research funds were allocated on a competitive basis from special agencies, the most important of which was the Australian Research Council. Thirdly, the DEET developed a funding formula designed to remove inequalities between institutions in the funding of teaching. The former colleges were to be evened up, the former universities evened down.¹²¹

These changes destroyed the established traditions of higher education and advanced education. The effective reasons for their introduction, as distinct from the rationale formulated in official quarters, were economic, social and political, not educational.

What were the reasons? The driving principles revealed in the Green and White Papers for this restructuring were the belief that the universities and colleges could help make the Australian economy internationally competitive; that some financial savings could be achieved through a consolidated, more centralised system; and that more adolescents should be accommodated in 'tertiary' insti-

tutions, either to increase the size of the skilled workforce, or to reduce unemployment, or to spread 'the benefits of education enjoyed by graduates' to disadvantaged groups, particularly women and Aborigines. 122

A prime egalitarian purpose was to widen access to tertiary education for 'disadvantaged' groups, notably lower class adolescents, women and Aborigines. Ethnic groups were not mentioned (a document issued early in the Dawkins era argued that, with some exceptions, students of non-English speaking background were participating at above average rates in post-secondary education).¹²³ Increased 'participation' was presumed to provide individuals with vocational and financial benefits. The Green Paper noted that in 1987 the unemployment rate for people with a degree was 3.6 per cent; for those with other post-school qualifications (e.g. trade and other certificates, associate diplomas, etc.) the rate was 5.7 per cent; and for those without post-school qualifications 11.6 per cent.¹²⁴

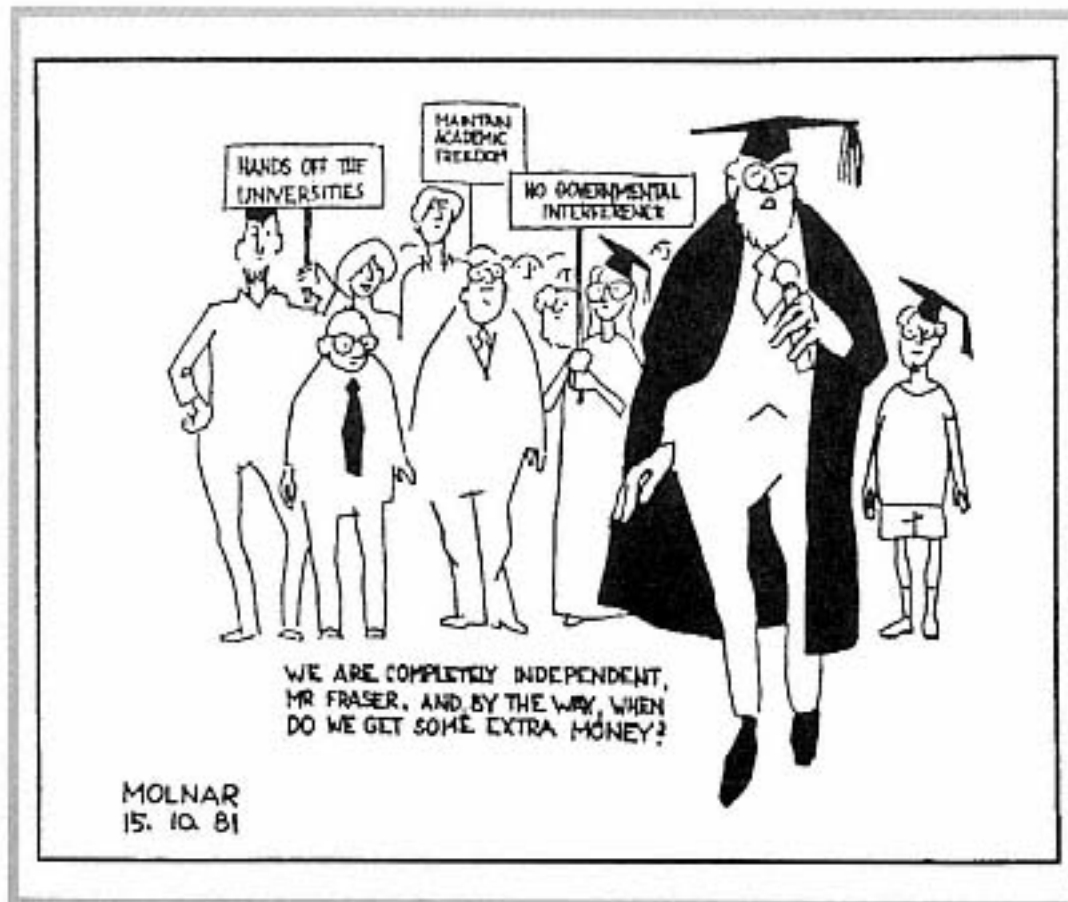


Figure 10.4:

Academic freedom and financial dependence

By the 1970s universities were financially dependent on the Commonwealth government. Academic freedom, in the sense of university self-government, eroded slowly and unobtrusively, but accelerated as the economy deteriorated in the late 1980s. Academic freedom, in the sense of the right of academics to speak out freely, was not attacked by governments, but some academics denigrated the principle of disinterested enquiry and became ideological advocates of special interest groups.

Yet for some years the universities and colleges of advanced education had leaned over backwards to increase the participation of students from 'disadvantaged groups', devising special enrolment categories for such students. They followed a similar policy in recruiting staff. 'Applications are welcomed from both women and men, including Aborigines, people with disabilities and people from non-English speaking backgrounds' said a University of Newcastle advertisement in *The Australian Higher Education Supplement*, 4 October 1989. What was happening at Macquarie University, wrote a columnist in the same paper in March 1989, was that 'positive discrimination' or 'gender balance' was being used 'to promote and establish in positions of power women who on objective criteria are not sufficiently qualified'. 125

Apart from economic or vocational benefits accruing to individuals, the objective of encouraging more students to enrol in universities also served to remove them, temporarily, from the overcrowded labour market of the late 1980s. On the other hand, rising enrolments threatened to clash with another economic objective, restraining expenditure on tertiary education.

Another egalitarian purpose, largely unstated, was to provide social mobility for colleges of advanced education, to improve the status, pay and conditions of college lecturers. Some college lecturers envied the research opportunities available to university staff. They noted their easier access to study leave, their lighter teaching load. Perhaps they envied the greater proportion of higher ability students in universities. And while salary scales were the same in the two institutions, promotion was in many ways less easy in CAEs than in universities. A generation earlier, teachers in technical, home science and commercial secondary schools had similarly envied the more attractive life of teachers in academic high schools. The creation of comprehensive schools had resolved this difficulty at the secondary level. Now the comprehensive university would solve it at the tertiary.

A major political reason for the restructuring was to facilitate central regulation of higher education by reducing the number of institutions. The politicians, their advisers and the administrators in Canberra believed it would be much easier to direct the affairs of 35 universities than of 65 universities and colleges.

Why was higher education so easily revolutionised? Initially the restructuring of the universities and colleges of advanced education aroused little protest, either from the public or from the academics themselves. The Vice-Chancellor of Sydney University, John Ward, was one of the earliest to express alarm. Only when the mergers started did resentment become general. In December 1988, rather late to have much effect, the Anglican Social Respon-

sibilities Commission described the Dawkins' White Paper as abandoning scholarship for short-term economic gains. 126 The Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training cautiously criticised the new system in its June 1990 report, *Priorities for Reform in Higher Education*.

A number of submissions to the inquiry argued that the Green and White Papers advocate a narrowly instrumentalist view of higher education in effect, the application to the whole system of the Martin Committee rationale for the college sector. The economic and managerial terminology which pervades both documents certainly lends weight to this view. The Committee believes it is nearer the truth, however, to say that the kinds of basic educational issues raised in the present report are not really examined in any depth by either the Green Paper or the White Paper. 127

But the universities had already conceded too much ground. As the Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Sydney University, David Armstrong, wrote: 'The main trouble with the Australian universities today is that they are for the most part funded, and as a result increasingly controlled, from a single central source'. The staff were unable to mount any effective opposition because, over-whelmingly, they belonged to a political tradition which saw social improvement flowing from the state. They had welcomed every increase in funding from the 1957 Murray Report on 'Canberra has finally presented the bill. Vague protestations about academic freedom are heard, along with continuing demands for more central money'. The universities shared too many of the principles of the reformers. 128

Certainly one reason for the weak response of the universities was their financial dependence on one source, the Commonwealth government. But equally important was the loss of a sense of identity and purpose. This process, which had occurred throughout much of the Western world, deserves special attention. As far back as 1973 an American analyst, Gerald Graff, described the fate of the humanities, the former liberal arts, in the post-humanist, bureaucratised curriculum of large multi-purpose American universities.

In the modern university, bureaucratic administration increasingly replaces philosophical ideas and values as the central 'meaning' of the university, a development which ideological pluralism enormously intensifies; since no world-view or theory held within the university has the authority to speak for the whole, the whole becomes so diffuse, fragmented, and incoherent that only the mechanics of administration remain as a binding force. The pluralism of the university as a whole is echoed within each of its departments. 129

By 1980 the collapse of humanist education had become evident, as the *Times Higher Education Supplement* recognised:

In one sense the last 35 years have been a golden age for higher education. The number of students has increased many-fold, new campuses have been

created, billions of dollars, pounds or francs have been invested in higher learning and research. But during the same years the idea of a university as scholarly community dedicated to the humanist pursuit of knowledge has become progressively more feeble. Higher education willingly sought and less willingly had thrust upon it many new and diverse (and occasionally perhaps alien) roles. In a similar way the disciplinary foundations of the university were undermined by specialization. Subjects came to be organised on the basis of association between theoretical preoccupations rather than of the coherence of the undergraduate curricula. General education was discredited and scholarship stiflingly professionalised. Knowledge rather than students became the primary products. 130

Australian universities shared the Anglo-American malaise. In 1988, on the eve of his retirement, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney, Professor John Ward, argued that the greatest challenge faced by universities was not lack of money nor too much government control but lack of a sense of direction. Universities were unsure of their functions. 'Liberal education itself is often a confused concept'.¹³¹ Universities had not sufficiently asserted their distinctive role of intellectual guardianship, said an associate professor in psychology at Newcastle University on his retirement in 1985. Because they had acted as 'joint mendicants deserving of further financial support' for doing what was allegedly expected of them by a tax-paying society, politicians had 'a comfortable contempt for them'.¹³² The disintegration of liberal humanism had blurred the distinction between the universities and the vocationally-oriented colleges of advanced education. In the 1980s the universities had undertaken a desperate search for justification, particularly to distinguish themselves from CAEs. This led them to exaggerate the importance of research.

What were the consequences of the restructuring of higher and advanced education? The merger of universities and colleges of advanced education impaired the effectiveness of both sectors. Some university courses became more vocationalised, while some college courses became over-theoretical, reducing their effectiveness for vocational training. The criteria for the appointment of lecturers to the new universities became too academic for the 'advanced' component, while promotion requirements, with its inevitable emphasis on research and publication, discriminated against former college lecturers.¹³³ The teaching conditions of former CAE lecturers improved while those of former university lecturers deteriorated. Teaching and administrative responsibilities grew, as did class sizes.

The bureaucratisation of higher and advanced education increased in at least three ways:

1. The Commonwealth administrative bureaucracy imposed new requirements on universities to supply information, account

for the expenditure of funds, and adjust enrolment policies to fit Commonwealth formulae;

2. Within the universities the administrative bureaucracy extended its role in decision-making, exercising strong influence on entry standards for students and the allocation of funds for academic work. The provision of data for their masters in Canberra imposed a burden on both administrators and academics.

3. The increased size of the student body and the academic staff encouraged increased bureaucratisation of the curriculum, subdivision of fields of study into small segments taken by specialist lecturers, and a complex system of interrelated prerequisites and corequisites, all within the context of large 'departments' or 'schools'. The system increased the committee work and administrative responsibilities of academics.

The limited knowledge of the new Canberra-based administrators about higher education was exacerbated by the frequency of their promotion or other movement within the public service, which often dispersed administrators soon after they became experienced. The Vice-Chancellor of an independent institution, Professor Donald Watts of Bond University, who could afford to be outspoken, referred to the 'arrogance of power within the Canberra bureaucracy which for so long has led these people to believe that a single solution exists for all problems and that these solutions are within their perception and can be managed by them'. 134

The Changing Student Body. The Green Paper made the amazing statement that 'students are admitted to higher education on the grounds that they have a demonstrated capacity to undertake studies at this level with a reasonable prospect of success'.¹³⁵ By 1990 university entry standards had fallen and in some courses were sometimes little higher than for comparable CAE courses. But the hierarchy of universities meant that the most prestigious ones (usually the older ones) could be more selective in their intake than the smaller, more recently established institutions. In August 1990 the Deputy-chairman of Senate at Newcastle University commented that the failure rate amongst first-year students was, in many areas, between 30 per cent and 40 per cent. This was comparable with such universities as Wollongong, New England, Western Sydney and, in many aspects, Macquarie. Many students enrolling at Newcastle could not communicate coherently and had poor numeracy. Newcastle students took longer, on average, to complete courses.¹³⁶ On the other hand, the Commonwealth's funding formula was biased to stimulate new enrolments. University administrators, aware of the nexus between funding and enrolments, ensured that in courses where too few students were enrolled entry standards were relaxed. 1991 saw a tremendous

jump in enrolments, both of new students and of those re-enrolling. National over-enrolment levels were between 5 and 8 per cent. The increase was especially in vocational or utilitarian courses, rather than in faculties of Arts.

Despite its assertion that students entering universities had a 'reasonable prospect of success', the Green Paper said that 'institutions should give priority to measures to improve graduation rates further'. Such measures included reducing the amount of time required for study and reviewing the length of courses to avoid unnecessary prolongation. Moreover, institutions should reconsider their traditional processes to meet 'the learning needs of the expanded range of students' and to maintain and even increase graduation rates:

More students will need to be provided with remedial materials . . . Open learning methods whereby self-instructional, self-paced materials of high quality are used in parallel with traditional face-to-face lecturing, tutorial and laboratory methods will also have greater application. 137

Many of the proposed new methods were slower means of acquiring information and understanding. New South Wales TAFE colleges introduced a self-pacing scheme in 1990, but abandoned it a year later, for it produced a slower rate of progress.138

In fact, for some time rising student numbers had been producing changes in assessment methods. The use of short-answer and objective tests had increased in universities. These developed not for educational reasons but for administrative. They saved time; they were easier to mark. The spread of the semester system in place of yearly examinations heightened the problem, since assessment had to be conducted more frequently. Of course, educational arguments could be devised to justify short-answer tests: they can cover a wider span of the course, in a short time. But they do not easily assess depth of understanding, as distinct from factual knowledge. They depreciate the ability to write essays.

To assist needy students Austudy had been introduced in 1987, replacing the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme and the Secondary Allowances Scheme. This was a non-competitive award, though a means test was applied in an effort to ensure that assistance went to the needy. On the other hand, a charge on students, the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (or Graduate Tax), began from the beginning of 1989. This was levied at the rate of \$1800 for a full-time year (in 1989 dollars). The contribution from students was approximately 20 per cent of the cost of their studies. This could be paid immediately at a 15 per cent discount, or through the Taxation Office once the graduate's income exceeded \$22 000.

From 1985, as part of a strategy to increase enrolments and

hence funding, the universities and colleges began to analyse application numbers and each year publicised the existence of an 'unmet demand'. Because of double counting and ambiguity over the meaning of 'qualified', their figures were 'extremely rubbery, put together with some very blunt instruments indeed'.¹³⁹ But in 1991 the universities over-enrolled, and not all their students were funded by the government. So in 1992 they reduced their intake, even though applications had increased because of unemployment. Entry standards rose. 'University entrance marks have rocketed this year leaving more than 20 000 NSW school leavers who applied for tertiary enrolment without a place'.¹⁴⁰ Both the universities and the Federal Government were now happy to forget the concept of 'unmet demand'. The lecturers, whose teaching load had risen, were also happy to see this mirage dissipate.

Emergence of private universities. In the late 1980s private universities appeared. On the Gold Coast of Queensland Limgold (part of Bond Brewing Holdings Ltd) and a Japanese consortium EIE-International jointly sponsored the Bond University, named after the West Australian entrepreneur, Alan Bond. The university had a strong technological bias. Lectures commenced in May 1989, with an initial enrolment of 430 students, well under expectations. By that time the partners had spent more than \$200 million on the university. The economic collapse of the Bond enterprises in 1989/1990 undermined the grandiose plans of this institution. By June 1990 enrolments were 820, a third of them from overseas. Law was the most successful of the four schools the others were Business; Humanities and social sciences; and Information and computing sciences.¹⁴¹ From the beginning of 1992 the Japanese company, EIE, assumed full sponsorship of Bond University.

A Catholic University, assisted in its early stages by another West Australian entrepreneur, Denis Horgan, was established in Fremantle, Western Australia the University of Notre Dame. The first of five colleges, a college of education, opened in January 1992 when 32 students commenced a one-year graduate Diploma in Education course. A further 45 students enrolled in two part-time masters programs educational leadership and religious education. Nominal fees for the Diploma in Education were \$11,500, but a system of scholarships funded by Catholic parishes across Australia reduced this to about \$3400 per student.¹⁴² The 'unified national system' produced a second Catholic university, the Catholic University of Australia, created through the merger of the Catholic College of Education, Sydney; the Institute of Catholic Education, Victoria; McAuley College, Brisbane; and Signadou College of Teacher Education, Canberra. This university, which came into existence at the beginning of 1991, was dependent on

the Commonwealth both for funds and for approval of its courses. The two Catholic universities had a lot to do with teacher training but not much with such traditional church interests as theology, philosophy, and the other liberal arts.

What were the educational outcomes of this revolution? The distinction between higher and advanced education became quite confused, thus undermining the quality of both forms of tertiary education. The control of the Commonwealth bureaucracy over the new higher education was direct, not mediated by professional educationists. While the increased size of tertiary institutions was quite wrongly considered likely to produce financial savings, the educational implications of size were ignored. The increase in the number of students, staff and courses reduced the sense of community. Together with the wider range of ability amongst both students and staff, it finally destroyed the concept of the university as a community of scholars. The individual student, the individual lecturer, was likely to become anonymous, lost amongst the mass. A considerable danger was that the practical courses in the 'advanced' sector would gradually become too theoretical, as the university ethos began to pervade the newly incorporated courses. On the other hand, vocationalism increased in many of the old universities. The restructuring of universities brought little educational benefit because of the variety of aims motivating the process and the variety of functions in the new institutions. But one aim, to provide a refuge for potentially unemployed youths, provided an immediate dividend.

Thus reform produced a new crisis. As *The Sydney Morning Herald* remarked in 1992, making the universities more responsive to market-place pressures inhibited many of their proper functions. It might be dangerous to restrict research to immediate and practical purposes. 'When the Colleges of Advanced Education were wound down, the role they played in providing quick, flexible diploma courses was not picked up by the universities'.

The Australian higher education system needs the equivalent of the State universities in the United States, where the emphasis is on providing courses of direct need for their community and where the teaching staff is dedicated to teaching rather than research. In the absence of the CAEs, this role may have to be forced on some of the new universities. 143

In the late 1980s a new segment of the expanding student body developed Asian students. This phenomenon also illustrated dangers in treating education as a commodity to be provided under the rules of the market-place. And it showed the inability of the administrators and politicians to regulate educational activity with an important commercial and vocational component.

Selling Education to Asians

The number of Asian students visiting Australia to learn English in secondary schools or in special colleges or to undertake a university degree increased significantly in the late 1980s. The Commonwealth Government actively sought to encourage overseas students to study in Australia, partly for reasons of foreign policy but also to assist the national economy. From 1986 publicly funded institutions (i.e. universities and CAEs) were allowed to market their programs abroad; they recruited mainly from East Asia. They were allowed to charge full fees for courses offered to overseas students. In addition, immigration requirements were relaxed for those seeking short-term non-formal courses. The Private Overseas Students Program in 1988 subsidised 3500 new places each year for overseas students, 1500 at tertiary, 2000 at secondary level. 144 Tertiary students from overseas paid 55 per cent of the full average cost of a place in 1988.

Some of the students were in Australia to learn English; others, already fluent in English, were pursuing professional studies. Some of those learning English were in the senior years of government secondary schools; others were in non-government secondary schools. Others again were in newly-established specialised English language colleges, which by 1991 numbered more than 200. Most of the new private colleges were members of ELICOS the English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students Association. The number of students enrolled in ELICOS colleges grew from 1400 in 1986 to 40 000 in 1989. In 1987 the number of full-time fee-paying overseas students in Years 11 and 12 at non-government schools was estimated at 292 in Western Australia, 117 in Victoria, 78 in New South Wales and five in Queensland.¹⁴⁵

Chinese of Malaysian origin were the largest single group of non-Australian students in the universities. A deliberate policy by the Malaysian Government to promote opportunities for indigenous Malays meant that the proportion of Chinese in Malaysian universities fell from 48.9 per cent in 1970 to 29.7 per cent in 1985. As part of this process of 'Malaysianisation' English was phased out as the language of instruction in favour of Bahasa Malaya by 1983. This created a massive demand for overseas tertiary education by Malaysian Chinese and Indian students. By the late 1980s some 11 000 Malaysian students were in Australia.¹⁴⁶ Asian students were particularly prominent at the University of New South Wales and Monash University, producing some anti-Asian racial outbursts from Anglo-Celtic students.

By contrast, the ELICOS colleges relied heavily on the People's Republic of China for its students. The number of such students

increased from 945 in 1987 to 21 000 in 1989. The decision by Prime Minister Hawke in June 1990 to permit up to 20 000 Chinese students to remain in Australia, following the suppression of the liberal-democratic movement in China in June 1989, drew attention to Chinese visiting Australia allegedly as students. It was revealed that of 15 500 Chinese nationals in Australia in 1989, 11 000 had overstayed their mostly student visas. Many students held part-time jobs in which they were exploited by their employers. Many had arrived in debt, having had to pay their course fees in advance. 'The upfront cost of their courses represents 10 to 20 years' annual salary in China. That's not the sort of investment that a lot of people would put it studying a foreign language abroad for only six months'. 147 The students were not, in the main, a highly educated group. The Chinese Students Association for Safeguarding Human Rights found that 61 per cent of 427 students they surveyed said that their reason for coming to Australia was to live in freedom and democracy. An immigration lawyer stated that the community infrastructure for migrants cost \$80 000 per person.

A considerable number of ELICOS private language colleges collapsed in 1990 and 1991, following the tightening of visa requirements in early 1990. The collapse of these colleges imposed severe financial losses on overseas students. Mr. Dawkins later confessed that he had escaped 'remarkably lightly' over the ELICOS affair. He had repeatedly ignored advice from his own department and from the Department of Immigration to tighten up the administration of this program. But Prime Minister Hawke's generosity in allowing some 17 000 Chinese to stay in Australia on four-year permits had also caused problems. These 'students' sponsored another 8000 so-called spouses and dependents between mid-1990 and mid-1992.148

Attempts to Reconstruct a Vocational Curriculum

As the Commonwealth Government's campaign for the reform of the primary and junior secondary curriculum became entangled in committee work, bureaucratic manoeuvrings and state suspicions, new initiatives were launched at the post-compulsory level. The education and training of adolescents aged 16 and over was important at a time of economic depression and youth unemployment. At the Commonwealth level the Finn, Mayer and Carmichael committees produced a flurry of debate in 1991/92.

In December 1990 the Australian Education Council had appointed a review committee chaired by Brian Finn, the managing director of IBM and consisting of two industrialists, a trade unionist, three government nominees, and two representatives of

the Vocational Education, Employment and Training Advisory Committee. The committee's report, *Young People's Participation in Post-compulsory Education and Training: Report of the Australian Education Council Review Committee*, was presented in July 1991 and released to the public the following month. It recommended that by the year 2001, 95 per cent of 19-year-olds should have completed Year 12 or an initial post-school qualification, or be participating in education or training. This promised to reduce the number of unemployed and would provide a more skilled workforce. Secondly, the Report identified six 'key competencies' essential for employment: language and communication; mathematics; scientific and technological understanding; cultural understanding; problem solving; and personal and interpersonal characteristics. This redefinition of the curriculum had implications for the lower secondary school. It emphasised vocational subjects, in accord with the statement at the opening of the report that 'both individual and industry needs are leading towards a convergence of general and vocational education'. A third proposal was that national standards in assessing and reporting key competencies be developed.

The argument was that education had a vital economic purpose, that current training courses were often too vocationally narrow, and that school curricula were too general and theoretical. But the Finn Committee failed to resolve three difficulties: where would an adequate supply of trained teachers be found for the increased enrolments in schools and technical colleges?; how would an adequate supply of teachers with appropriate vocational expertise be found?; and how would the increased costs be met?

But what were key competencies? Competency training had come into fashion in the United States in the 1960s and 70s and in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s, stimulating the production of a long checklist of isolated skills. In October 1991 the AEC assigned the task of defining key competencies for contemporary Australia to a 28-member committee, chaired by Eric Mayer, former head of National Mutual Life Association. This committee issued two discussion papers, in February and May 1992, by which time it was becoming clear that the ambitions of the Finn scheme were being modified. Key competencies were not to be seen as disciplines or subjects but rather as acquired capacities; assessment would apparently consist of the compilation of profiles revealing which skills had been achieved. 149

In the meantime, K. C. Beazley, who became Minister for Employment, Education and Training in December 1991, released yet another report in March 1992. This statement, *The Australian Vocational Certificate Training System*, was prepared by the

Employment and Skills Formation Council, chaired Laurie Carmichael. The report, described by a newspaper columnist as 'imprecise, poorly set out, excruciatingly repetitive and at times badly written', proposed a vocational certificate training system under which young workers would combine work with unpaid study leave. Skills tests would be introduced. The report also advocated the establishment of senior colleges for Years 11 and 12, something long overdue in many Australian systems. Laurie Carmichael had emerged as an important adviser to the government on tertiary education. He had been a member of the Communist Party from 1944 to 1981, rising to its National Executive in 1974. He was Assistant Secretary of the Australian Council of Trade Unions from 1987 till 1991. The vocational certificate scheme, said Carmichael, was not a short-term response to the 1991 recession or to current unemployment but a plan to make learning and training of maximum use to the restructuring of the Australian economy. Training for the Australian Vocational Certificate would be competency-based. The scheme appealed to the ACTU because it envisaged training within the award system. Trade union membership in the private sector was now only 30 per cent, and the ACTU was anxious to bolster its position, which rested to some degree on its importance in the industrial awards system. 150

Apart from serving to reduce unemployment and provide vocational skills, these initiatives in post-compulsory schooling and training reiterated the principle that 'outcomes' were as important as 'process'. But good vocational training needed a foundation of good general education and these reports did nothing to restore sound academic disciplines. Indeed, the danger was that while they might encourage some improvement in practical, vocational studies, the general or 'liberal' segments of the curriculum would be left to the mercy of assorted ideologues, progressives and educational empiricists.

A Continuing Crisis: Solutions Become Problems

The educational reforms of the late 1980s and early 1990s were introduced in the context of the economic crisis of the welfare state and of structural changes in society which steadily eroded the demand for unskilled labour while fostering the expansion of tertiary or service industries. The specific imperatives driving reform included disillusionment with the outcome of two decades of progressive education; the need to reduce expenditure on education; the need to strengthen the skilled labour force; the need to grapple with the problem of unemployed youth; and even concern at the

lack of civic/political education in the schools. Some of these imperatives were contradictory. Their operation in schools, universities and technical colleges was distorted by other pressures, such as egalitarianism, the renewed influence of special interest groups, the efforts of the educational bureaucracy to preserve its position, and rivalry between the educational and political bureaucracies. Education suffered from the multiplicity and diversity of influences endemic in a pluralist society.

Those implementing the tumultuous changes advanced no coherent educational theory; nor was reform promoted by any significant educational theorist. What theory did exist was concerned with the relative importance of liberal and vocational education and the desirability of corporative business principles as a source of efficiency in the 'education industry'. The reforms were initiated mainly by lay persons, not educationists. Politicians, parents and business people had lost confidence in the academic educationists, educational administrators and teachers. The new initiatives received some justification in a series of policy documents—the Green and White Papers on Higher Education; *Skills for Australia*; 'Strengthening Australia's Schools'; and a multiplicity of pretentious but unsubstantial documents in the various states and territories. The closest approach to a respectable educational theory was provided by the Carrick Report in New South Wales.

At a 'philosophical' level, a conflict had developed, particularly in state schools, between: (1) a heavily egalitarian concept of democratic schooling, including equality of outcomes; (2) a concept of schooling as a social service (assisting disturbed children and adolescents, keeping children off the streets, postponing their entry into the ranks of the unemployed); (3) the older concept of schooling as academic preparation for life or further education; and (4) the view of schooling as basic vocational training. The belief that schooling might include preparation for an afterlife scarcely existed.

The teaching service was a major problem. How could effective teachers be trained? More school-based training was one popular answer. How might good-quality teachers be enticed into the schools? Higher salaries, improved teaching conditions and higher prestige for the vocation were possible answers. The shortage of competent well-educated teachers was exacerbated by the increasing expansion of the formal educational system. Only a limited proportion of the population has the potential to become effective teachers. Perhaps teaching machines could provide a solution.

Curriculum reform needed a restored emphasis on mastery of content and higher standards of attainment in a basic core of subjects. A vital instrument to achieve this was the re-introduction of

assessment by an outside-school body rather than by the teachers. Here New South Wales had shown the way. But opposition to testing was strong amongst teachers' unions, sections of the educational bureaucracy and academic educationists. In England the reform movement was developing an auxiliary support to testing a privatised form of inspection. Yet even if the naturalist-scientific subjects were salvaged, the crisis of the humanist subjects presented a greater challenge. Both schools and universities showed an inclination to convert the curriculum into theoretical or sociological studies or into personal development courses.

Whether the attempts at reform will succeed depends heavily on the teachers and the administrators. But those now moving into the teaching service are the second generation of teachers to lack education in grammar, spelling or literary expression. They are the second generation of teachers lacking immersion in liberal humanist education. Moreover, the reform movement is focused on vocational subjects rather than humanist. But it is in vocational subjects that the shortage of qualified teachers is great. The educational administrators, too, have been contaminated by two decades of neo-progressive/neo-Marxist educational ideology and find it hard to discard old theories.

Many of the pupils, particularly in state schools, are likewise the second generation of disturbed children, the children of disturbed children. They are less amenable to academic education and find less support in their families.

The special interest groups are also now reaching a second stage of evolution. Many Australians of *ethnic* origin have achieved positions of importance in the universities and cultural media. By 1988 the proportion of Anglo-Celts in the 16.3 million inhabitants of the country had fallen to 74.6 per cent. Other Europeans accounted for 19.3 per cent, Asians had risen to 4.5 per cent, Aborigines represented 1.0 per cent and others (e.g. Pacific Islanders) 0.6 per cent. 151 The folk-dancing and sentimental regard for the lost homelands of the older ethnic generations is fading. What remains is religion and a respect for the education which has got them where they were. They were becoming socially assimilated, and rising to social prominence. Their family structure is, at least momentarily, stronger than the Anglo-Celtic. The *Aborigines* seem to face the choice of assimilation or a continued existence as a depressed minority. They confront a greater challenge than most ethnic groups. The gap between the varying Aboriginal cultures and the mainstream culture is greater than that between the various ethnic cultures and the western tradition. The *feminists* continue to challenge the declining male-centred Anglo-Celtic culture. Yet the leadership is uncertain about the extent of the achievement.

Women's rights were at the bottom of the mainstream political agenda, said Susan Ryan, former federal minister for education, in 1990. Women's issues, she said, had been eclipsed by the Green movement. 'Women are there, but they are not there strategically and they are not voicing feminist considerations'. By contrast, Marian Sawer claimed victory in 'the long march of feminists through the institutions in Australia. The presence of feminists in most organs of public decision-making, outside some key economic committees, signifies a quiet revolution'. 152 Two principles explain this apparent contradiction. For those who wore suits (the white-collar salaried middle class), feminism had paid off; for those who wore uniforms (the working lower classes), feminism had brought only marginal changes. Secondly, sex alone did not determine policy. The victors often succumbed to the impersonal social and economic imperatives operating in contemporary society.

The journalist 'pop' sociologist, Craig McGregor, predicted in mid-1990 that the end of the century would belong to the hippies. The 1990s would be like the 1960s. After the heady near-revolutions of the late '60s and early '70s came 'the long march through the institutions'. What we have witnessed in the last two decades, said McGregor, was the 'painful but remorseless advance of movements which have changed the lives of millions of people' the women's movement, sexual liberation, anti-nuclear movements, conservation movements. Multiculturalism is the way the whole world has to go.153

The victory of these movements will not necessarily favour academic education. In education multiculturalism is chaos. The best hope for education may lie in the locality and the family. Decentralisation promises hope because it is likely to bring parent and teacher together and because not all interest groups exist in all localities. Some localities, indeed, might generate a small revival of humanism. But the generality must await a new renaissance.

In this book we have investigated, from a sociological perspective, four phases of educational development in Australia 1949-67; 1967-74; 1974-87; and post-1987. The first period saw the decay of liberal humanist knowledge, education, and scholarship. The seven years between 1967 and 1974 witnessed a social and educational revolution, the collapse of a culture, the emergence of a new civilisation. The 1960s and 1970s brought improvement in the material circumstances of education. Enrolments grew at all levels. Vast capital resources were invested in school buildings, school libraries and teaching equipment. The size of classes fell. Many dedicated teachers made valiant endeavours to sustain standards under difficult circumstances. But the resignation rate of teachers

rose and the average quality of those joining the vocation fell.

After 1949 Australian education traversed four eras dominated by distinctive philosophies or theories. The first, the humanist-realist version of liberal education, was at its height between about 1910 and about 1950. It had struggled to sustain aspects of the Christian tradition and of middle-class values in a practical, pioneering society. It emphasised both the individual and the social and natural world, both the development of character and the mastery of a cultural heritage. A new phase, which developed in the 1950s and 1960s, applied a psychological view to education. It accorded some importance to measurement and was inclined to see education as a science. Its proponents favoured a child-centred curriculum providing increased attention to the psychological interests of the child. The late 1960s to the late 1980s were the years of the sociologists and the new egalitarians. Theory now sought to 'deconstruct' the old liberal-humanist philosophy. Finally came an era which sought to apply the principles of corporate management to education and instrumentalism to the curriculum. It produced a struggle between educational bureaucrats, favouring process rather than content in the curriculum, and political bureaucrats, favouring vocational training.

The Australian cultural environment did not necessarily parallel changes in educational practice or theory. Whether the expansion and flowering of cultural and intellectual life in the late 1950s, 1960s and 1970s owed much to the school system is doubtful. In the great periods of human culture the Greek renaissance of the Fifth century B.C., the Ciceronian renaissance of the late Republic and early Empire, the medieval renaissance of the Twelfth century, the classical renaissance of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth centuries, the Nineteenth century renaissance (1780 to 1914, and even to 1938) the systems of formal schooling were quite modest. It was after these renaissances faded that the educational systems expanded and became more elaborate. Yet Australia's late cultural flowering must surely owe something to the fading humanist education of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s.

In 1937 C. Day Lewis edited a book of essays, *The Mind in Chains*, in which a Marxian/socialist interpretation was applied to contemporary culture. The opening chapter saw education as a social construct, but also as having a certain autonomy, with rights of its own. School and college, wrote Rex Warner, are not self-contained institutions isolated from the rest of society. Education does not support itself. It is supported by money from the state or from the parents of those being educated. But the opposite was also true. Education, and culture generally, have their own standards, which may conflict with the dominant standards of society.

Education stands between two worlds. 'It is bound on the one hand to the existing social order, and on the other to the general traditions of culture'. 154 Twenty years later Dr S. H. Wyndham reiterated much the same principle when he said that there were times when the schools must stand firm in upholding values which society desired but did not always practise.155 But a decade later the whole idea of educational autonomy, together with that of a liberal education and humanist values, was being derided by neo-Marxists, radicals, and their neo-progressive and feminist allies. Today, in the face of the new instrumentalism and the encroachments of vocationalism, some educationists are rediscovering the idea of a liberal education and of the relative autonomy of education.

The resolution of this debate carries heavy implications for the future quality of our education, culture and civilisation.



Figure 10.5:

Bob Connell moves to America

Professor Bob Connell's decision to accept a chair at the University of California signalled the departure of an academic who had exercised considerable influence on the sociology of education in Australia. His career-shift was publicised in *The Australian*, 30 September 1992.

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