



PALGRAVE CRITICAL UNIVERSITY STUDIES

**PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES,
MANAGERIALISM AND THE
VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Rob Watts



Palgrave Critical University Studies

Series Editor

John Smyth
Huddersfield, Australia

Aims of the Series

Universities everywhere are experiencing unprecedented changes and most of the changes being inflicted upon universities are being imposed by political and policy elites without any debate or discussion, and little understanding of what is being lost, jettisoned, damaged or destroyed. The over-arching intent of this series is to foster, encourage, and publish scholarship relating to academia that is troubled by the direction of these reforms occurring around the world. The series provides a much-needed forum for the intensive and extensive discussion of the consequences of ill-conceived and inappropriate university reforms and will do this with particular emphasis on those perspectives and groups whose views have hitherto been ignored, disparaged or silenced. The series explores the effects of these changes across a number of domains including: the nature of academic work, the process of knowledge production for social and public good, along with students' experiences of learning, leadership and institutional politics research. The defining hallmark of this series, and what makes it markedly different from any other series with a focus on universities and higher education, is its 'criticalist agenda'.

More information about this series at

<http://www.springer.com/mycopy/series/14707>

Rob Watts

Public Universities,
Managerialism and
the Value of Higher
Education

palgrave
macmillan

Rob Watts
School of Global, Urban & Social Science
RMIT University,
Melbourne, Australia

Palgrave Critical University Studies:
ISBN 978-1-137-53598-6 ISBN 978-1-137-53599-3 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-53599-3

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016947434

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2017

The author(s) has/have asserted their right(s) to be identified as the author(s) of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, , trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made.

Cover image © TongRo Images

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature

The registered company is Macmillan Publishers Ltd.

The registered company address is: The Campus, 4 Crinan Street, London, N1 9XW, United Kingdom

Dedicated to Judith

PREFACE

I feel that, like William Clark, I need to warn the reader that ‘befitting the subject, this is an odd book’. How odd is suggested by my own introduction to the modern university. In 1967 I enrolled at Latrobe University, one of the ‘new universities’ springing up on the metropolitan outskirts of Melbourne, one Australia’s far-flung capital cities. It was showcased as a new kind of university. In a spirit of what can only be called nostalgic innovation (‘delusion’ is too strong a word), the Victorian government and its planners decided to create an Oxbridge in the Antipodes.

Their big idea was that students, most of whom would come from country Victoria, would enroll in a college rather than the university, that they would be encouraged to become college residents, wear academic gowns, eat at the college, and that each student would have an experience of a tutorial, which meant that students would engage in a one-to-one relationship with a tutor (who could be a tutor, lecturer, or even a professor).

I was a working-class boy, and just one of two students who crossed the Maribyrnong River each day to return to my home in the western suburbs, then home to Victoria’s industrial and manufacturing industries. Several things happened in quick succession.

When classes began in March 1967 there were just two buildings, Glenn College and the Library, separated by a moat which sat in a vast swirling dustbowl of what had until the year or so before been agricultural land set aside for soldier settlement farms. As a ‘day student’ I was expected to attend college dinner once a week, wearing my academic gown. I paid a vast sum for the gown, went to one dinner, threw bread rolls at other

students as part of a new ritual, and found that getting home that night a process which involved making five connections between buses and trains—simply impossible. I never attended another dinner. The gown disappeared sometime over the next few years.

In my first week of classes I experienced a state of intellectual exhilaration that hasn't stopped. My first lecture, given by the Librarian Dietrich Borchardt, was on Dante's *Inferno* and began with him intoning in his thick German accent, '*Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch'intrate*' ('Abandon all hope, ye who enter here'). The hair rose on the back of my neck.

Other early experiences had a similar effect.

Within a week or so, I was reading my first paper in tutorial to the foundation Professor of English, Derrick Marsh, fresh from a South African jail where he had finished his Ph.D. thesis on Shakespeare's last plays. Though I couldn't know it then, that first paper on Koestler's *The Sleepwalkers*, triggered a lifelong preoccupation with the philosophy of science. As we sat in his college room, he leaned back as I read. His opening remarks to me set loose another persistent preoccupation: the struggle to write well: 'Mr. Watts, I think you are quite bright but you write quite poorly', or words to that effect. I agreed to write additional ungraded papers that he would read and comment on. Seventeen years later this effort seemed to have paid off: Ronald Mendelsohn, a reviewer of my first book, opined that it was quite well written for someone employed at a College of Advanced Education.

In the middle of the year I fell in with Bromley King, a Maoist who affected a blue Mao jacket, waved a copy of Mao's little Red Book at every opportunity—and wore a cravat. Bromley, who lived in one of Melbourne's leafy suburbs and had graduated from one of Melbourne's better schools, liked to offer me small lectures about what it was like to belong to the working-class from the perspective of the theoretical works of Marx, Engels, and Mao. As I listened politely, I had a sudden vivid sense that 'theory' perhaps wasn't everything it was cracked up to be and that it might even be a synonym for 'delusion'. That thought has never quite gone away.

As for the marvelous experiment that was Latrobe University, it fell apart soon enough. Within a few years the college idea died of inanition, while the extraordinary idea that each student should experience a tutorial relationship was killed off. Interestingly, it was not killed off for economic reasons. Rather, too few of the staff in the School of Humanities supported this brave and interesting idea. Therein hangs a tale or two, to which I will return.

Since most of my adult life has been spent in universities, my enrollment at Latrobe University in 1967 makes me old enough to have experienced many of the transformations in higher education of the last half-century. Those transformations had already begun in the 1960s when a conservative Australian government made the decision to expand the provision of public universities. In the 1970s a Labour government went further when it abolished university fees and began opening up vocationally oriented higher-education institutions called Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs). A conservative government brought the expansion of higher education to a shuddering halt in 1977–78. Then in the 1980s a Labour government folded those CAE's into a new Unified National System of higher education at the same time as it unleashed a neo-liberal policy revolution. This involved cutting the level of public funding, increasing the tertiary participation rate ostensibly to promote economic growth, and reintroducing tuition fees funded by a deferred loan scheme. That Labour government also redefined higher education as an export industry, and began introducing a regime of surveillance and accountability designed to render universities more 'accountable' and 'efficient'. The effects of privatising what had been a public higher education system in Australia are still being worked through in 2016.

I have already referred to the role played by neo-liberalism, which is as loose and shifting a signifier as any in the academic lexicon. Wendy Brown (2015a: 20) has insisted rightly that neo-liberalism 'has no fixed or settled coordinates but is at once 'a global phenomenon, yet [is] inconstant, differentiated, unsystematic, impure'.

As I show in this volume, while there are important differences between the universities of Australia, Britain, and America, there are also important commonalities and convergences. This book makes the case that the public universities in these three countries are all in varying degrees of trouble as a consequence of short-sighted, even delusional, neo-liberal ideas about the value of privatising what once were public universities. That trouble was summed up eloquently by Stanley Aronowitz (2001: 1) when he remarked that it is increasingly difficult to find universities where learning, as opposed to 'education' and 'training', is the main goal.

Those ideas were promoted by politicians and bureaucrats who really should have known and done better: those ideas were picked up and amplified by people who form what I call 'the managerialiat': these were mostly academics who saw in the emergent neo-liberal idea of the privatised 'enterprise university' all sorts of possibilities for personal and institutional

aggrandisement at the expense of the people who traditionally been the university. Those people ('the professoriat') in general displayed a combination of naivete, foolhardiness, and cowardice in the face of what Raewyn Connell has called the 'neo-liberal cascade' that began crashing down around their heads from the 1980s on.

The book assumes optimistically that it is not too late. Hope can flow in a number of directions either nostalgically back to the past or toward a future that has to be better than what we currently have. I have no illusions about the problems with the old public universities. I have absolutely no illusions at all about the current mess so many universities are in. I trust that the burden of the evidence and the reasoning offered here will make the case for why we both need to and can (re)make public universities that meet their democratic obligations to large numbers of people rather than elites, and that this can be done in ways that recall the best of the old order while reimagining ways of engaging in really thoughtful teaching, learning and research.

As for any debts incurred in writing this book, I neither received nor asked for any financial support or funding grants to support my research and writing. I should thank RMIT University for paying me while I wrote the book, mostly during my annual leave.

There are many fine scholars, some of whom I have met, others not, whose work has inspired me and informed this book. They include Stephen Ball, Ronald Barnett, Pierre Bourdieu, William Clark, Raewyn Connell, Ben Etherington, Henri Giroux, Simon Marginson, Christopher Newfield, Margaret Thornton, Mats Alvesson and Martin Trow.

I have received various kinds of intellectual aid, support, and comfort from a small number of past and present colleagues like Associate Professor Debra Bateman, Professor Allan Borowski, Professor John Buckridge, Dr. Kathryn Hegarty, Mic Emslie, and Dr. Desmond McDonnell, as well as from some mostly young, mostly casual or part-time teachers like Rachel Chamberlain, Gillian Cavanagh, Janice Simpson, Belinda Johnson, Anneliese Ah-Fat, and Josh Mullan.

Needless to say, neither my university, nor any of the folk named here should be assumed to agree with anything I say in the book. Equally, they are not responsible for any errors that are properly mine. After that, as the saying goes, 'let the devil take the hindmost'.

Finally, this book is dedicated to my intellectual comrade and partner in all things Judith Bessant. Judith is a gutsy, highly intelligent, creative, critical, and courageous university teacher who has dared—repeatedly—

to speak truth to power. She found, as all who do this have done, that power doesn't like being spoken to like that. The accusation that led to her sacking in 2012—that she was both ‘politically to the left and anti-managerialist’—was not literally true, but it expressed well enough what a few senior managers at RMIT University suspected and believed justified sacking her. As usual they lacked the guts to say so, and said instead there were financial grounds for making her redundant. What then happened, it reminded us why we need both unions and the rule of law. The National Tertiary Education Union, represented by the thoughtful and resourceful Linda Gale, supported her and took the matter to the Federal Court of Australia. The Federal Court sifted truth from fiction and it reinstated her, fined the university, and issued a damning judgement on the actions of those responsible. This confirmed for those with her kind of courage, that truth will—sometimes—out. That is something that the people running many of our universities might do well to agree to again make the purpose and point of the university.

REFERENCES

- Aronowitz, S. (2001). *The knowledge factory: Dismantling the corporate university and creating true higher learning*. Boston: Beacon.
- Brown, R. (2015a). The marketisation of higher education: Issues and ironies. *New Vistas* 1(1): 5–9. http://www.uwl.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Departments/Research/new_vistas/vol1_iss1/vol1_iss1_art1_23April2015.pdf
- Brown, W. (2015b). *Undoing the demos: Neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. Cambridge: Zone.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks especially to the great editorial team at Springer

Publishing/Editorial Assistant: Eleanor Christie

Data Assistant: Stephanie Carey false

Production Contact: Fergus McKeown

Production Editor: Shriram Viswanathan

Responsible Editor: Andrew James

Project Manager: Sivaramakrishnan Velayudham

They took a messy draft and turned it in to something that was readable.

SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

The *Critical University Studies Series* has a distinct and clear agenda. The overarching intent is to foster, encourage, and publish scholarship about the university system by researchers that are troubled by the direction of 'reforms' occurring around the world.

It is clear that universities everywhere are experiencing unprecedented changes. What is much less clear—and there are reasons for this lack of transparency—are the effects of these changes within and across a number of domains, including—

- The nature of academic work
- Students' experiences of learning
- Leadership and institutional politics
- Research and the process of knowledge production
- The social and public good.

Most of the changes being inflicted upon universities globally are being imposed by political and policy elites without any debate or discussion, and with little understanding of what is being lost, damaged, or destroyed. Benefits, where they are articulated at all, are framed exclusively in terms of short-term political gains. This is not a recipe for a robust and vibrant university system.

What this series seeks to do is provide a much-needed forum for the intensive and extensive discussion of the consequences of ill-conceived and inappropriate university 'reforms'. It does this with particular emphasis on those perspectives and groups whose views have hitherto been ignored, disparaged, or suppressed.

The defining hallmark of the series, and what makes it markedly different from any other series with a focus on universities and higher education, is its 'criticalist agenda'. This means that it directly addresses questions such as—

- Whose interests are being served?
- How is power being exercised and upon whom?
- What means are being promulgated to ensure subjugation?
- What might a more transformational approach look like?
- What are the impediments to this happening?
- What, then, needs be done about it?

The series intends to foster the following kinds of contributions:

- Critical studies of university contexts, that while they might be local in nature, are shown to be global in their reach
- Insightful and authoritative accounts that are courageous and that 'speak back' to dominant 'reforms' being inflicted on universities
- Critical accounts of research relating to universities that use innovative methodologies
- Views of what is happening to universities across disciplinary fields and internationally
- Examinations of trends, patterns, and themes, presented in a way that re-theorises and re-energises knowledge about the status and purposes of universities
- Above all, publication of accounts that reposition the study of universities in a way that makes clear what alternative robust policy directions for universities might look like.

The series aims to encourage discussion of issues such as academic work, academic freedom, and marketisation in universities. One of the shortcomings of many extant texts in the field of university studies is that they attempt too much, and as a consequence, their focus becomes diluted. There is an urgent need for sharply focused studies in a number of areas, for example:

1. There is a conspicuous absence of studies that give existential accounts of what life is like for *students* in the contemporary university. We need to know more about the nature of the stresses and strains students

- undergo, and the effects that market-driven distortions have on students' learning experiences, lives, and futures.
2. We know very little about the nature and form of *institutional politics*—how they are engineered and played out, and by whom, as well what their consequences are in the neoliberal university. We need 'insider' studies that unmask the forces that enable and sustain current reform trajectories in universities.
 3. The *actions of policy elites* transnationally are crucial to what is happening in universities worldwide. But we have yet to become privy to what they are thinking, how it is legitimated and transmitted, and the means by which it is made opaque. We need studies that puncture this veil of secrecy.
 4. None of what is happening that is converting universities into annexes of the economy would be possible without a particular version of *leadership* having been allowed to become dominant. We need to know how this is occurring, what kinds of resistance have arisen (and how these efforts have been suppressed), and the forms of solidarity necessary to unsettle and supplant this dominant paradigm.
 5. Finally, taking the lead from critical geographers, there is a pressing need for studies—possibly in concert with sociologists and anthropologists—with a focus on universities as unique *spaces and places*.

We look forward to this series' advancing this important agenda and to the reclamation of universities as crucial intellectual democratic institutions.

John Smyth

Professor of Education and Social Justice

University of Huddersfield

Emeritus Professor

Federation University Australia

CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
2	Thinking About the Public University	29
3	The ‘Good Ol’ Days’: Life in the Public University	69
4	Universities Under the Sign of the Market	105
5	The Idea of ‘Marketising’ the University: Against Magical Thinking	147
6	The Rise of the Manageriat	181
7	Teaching in the ‘Marketised’ University	215
8	The Student Experience	259
9	The Fate of Knowledge in the Modern University	299
10	Conclusion: Thinking into the Future	335
	Index	353

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Knowledge and the kinds of ignorance	40
Table 4.1	United Kingdom higher-education policy	119
Table 4.2	Australia higher-education policy highlights	129
Table 5.1	Eight conditions of freedom for a ‘free’ or ‘pure’ market	157
Table 8.1	Top ten US universities 2015	263
Table 8.2	Share of commencing students low socio-economic status backgrounds, 17–24-year-olds	265
Table 8.3	University income public subsidies, student fees, and projected student debt, 2014	268
Table 9.1	Private and public goods	307
Table 9.2	Research data Australia 2014	313

Introduction

There is by now a large consensus that ‘something’ happened to the universities of the United Kingdom, United States, and Australia over the past few decades. There is less agreement about the way this should be described, explained, and evaluated. I wrote this book to make sense of what has happened to universities in Britain, America, and Australia and describe how academics and students now experience the modern university. I also wanted to evaluate what has happened. This was never going to be an easy task.

Partly, this has to do with the way we use our historical imagination to describe and evaluate any change in the way we do things.¹ We tend, rightly or wrongly, to think about change as involving either progress and improvement or loss and decline. What does historical reflection suggest about how we might think about the kind of universities that existed, say, in the 1950s and the way universities operate now?

That this is a problem is suggested by two novels about universities, one deservedly famous and written in the early 1950s, the other deserving to be better known and written in 2014.

The ‘anti-hero’ of Kingsley Amis’s (1954/2000) novel *Lucky Jim* is Jim Dixon. Dixon is a new untenured junior lecturer at an anonymous, provincial ‘redbrick university’ in the British midlands. The novel is set in a Britain in the late 1940s still governed by Atlee’s Labour government. The university is small, socially stuffy, and dominated by its professors, men like Professor Welch, depicted by Amis as vain, eccentric, incompe-

tent, absent-minded, middle class—and all powerful. Jim Dixon is none of these things. He is an outsider who doesn't feel at home in the social and cultural milieu of the post-war university: he prefers pop music to Mozart, and pubs to Welch's drawing room. Worse he feels a fraud as an academic: 'My students waste my time and I waste theirs' (Amis 1954/2000: 214). He is also a trapped man. Welch has required Dixon to do research for him at the expense of Dixon's getting on with his own research for an all-important public lecture needed to get life-long tenure in the university.

Early in the novel Dixon is confronted by Michie, an ex-serviceman and now a prospective Honours student who wants Dixon's reading list for Dixon's special Honours class on 'Medieval Life and Culture'. Dixon wants to recruit the optimal number of students to an honours class in such a way that it secures his teaching role but does not upset Professor Welch:

Clearly the more students within reason, Dixon could get 'interested' in his subject the better for him: equally clearly too large a number of 'interested' students would mean that the number studying Welch's own special subject would fall to a degree that Welch might be expected to resent. With an honours class of nineteen and a Department of six, three students seemed a safe number to try for.

Yet Dixon has to deal with Michie, who is anxious about his studies:

'What are your main ideas so far, sir, if you don't mind my asking?' Michie asked as they turned downhill into College Drive.
Dixon did mind, but said only, 'Well, I think the main emphasis of the thing will be social, you know'. ... 'I thought I might start with a discussion of the social role of the university, for instance in its social role'.

Amis has Jim comforting himself for having answered this way by the thought 'that at least he knew it didn't mean anything' (Amis 1954/2000: 28).

Sixty years later, Tessa McWatt's novel about university life is set in the years immediately after the Great Recession of 2008. Her academic 'anti-hero' Robin, a young tutor of film theory, is sitting in a meeting of academic staff in the Department of Film Studies located in a thoroughly modern, albeit fictitious London university called Thames Gateway U.

Buffeted by the Cameron government's 'austerity policies', this is a university where tenure is a thing of the past, 'restructuring' is the only certainty, and every academic is worried about job security. Robin is a 'theorist' in a department moving toward practice-based programs. Robin's head is 'filled with jargon: *research income, collaborative partners, knowledge transfer, impact*'. Robin is worried because his head of department has asked for a 'course-improvement plan based on the fact that some students don't do as well as others'. At a staff meeting described early in the novel the Head of Department is outlining the latest restructure with new job roles and titles, and a new department structure that reflects the redefinition of how film will be studied. The Head of Department ups the ante when he announces that new job specifications will be posted in the coming weeks with 'interviews and decisions' before Easter:

Interviews? Now the room erupts. Robin resists sitting forward in his chair, the panic too obvious. 'Are these new roles advertised externally', he asks. 'No, but they won't replicate the posts as they currently exists. New job specifications'.

But what will distinguish the candidates—among us? Robin asks aware that he is the most junior in the room.

'There are key performance measures', Richard says finally. 'Research, teaching community engagement—you know the deal' (McWatt 2015: 37–39)

Inevitably our judgements about what is going on in universities today depend, in part, on a range of judgements about what universities like Amis's unnamed provincial university were like and what they did. At the least, Amis's account suggests why relying on nostalgia for a 'world we have lost' is not all that edifying or secure a basis for thinking about a modern university like 'Thames Gateway U'.

Another difficulty we face when making sense of the modern university has to do with the sheer complexity of higher education. In America, as Anthony Grafton says, it is easy to see why the 6,000 American Title IV colleges and universities resist any simple evaluation. Not only do millions of people attend them, including around 40 percent 18–24-year-old Americans, along with many older students, but the mix of 'private and public, mass and elite, ancient and ivy-covered, contemporary and cutting-edge' institutions means '[n]o generalization could do justice to this vast and varied scene' (Grafton 2011: 1).²

If the British or Australian systems of higher education cannot claim a comparable degree of diversity or complexity, it is still not easy to generalise about them either. Britain has some 162 higher education institutions which receive some level of public funding, while Australia has some 40 public universities. To that complexity in scale can be added a significant level of basic disagreement about what is going on in what both advocates and critics now call the contemporary ‘marketised university’ (Williams 1995; Brown 2015a, b).

As Barnett (2011b: 33) says the ‘marketised university’ polarises opinion. Grafton (2011), for example, makes the point that much of the large, and ever-increasing pile of books, research papers, and commentaries about higher education is both politicised and polarised between furious denunciation (or what Grafton calls ‘jeremiads’), and far more accommodating, even enthusiastic, endorsements of the recent changes to higher education.

There are many commentators who think the recent changes are the ‘best thing to have come along in quite some time’. Some of these writers, for example, offer a rosy account of how ‘globalisation’ has provided the momentum for more than 17,000 institutions of higher learning in 184 countries ‘to compete in the global economy’ (Ferrara 2015: 137). Some, like the contributors to Altbach et al. (2009), appear to be enthusiasts for the new ‘globalised’ ‘knowledge economy’ and the central role universities are said to play in it. Others talk up the idea that modern universities now play a key role in ‘the creation of a high-skilled, high-waged economy by upgrading the education and skills of its workforce’ (Browne et al. 2008). The World Bank (2006: xiii) has been a tireless advocate for the idea that universities and their ‘knowledge can become the driving force in economic transformation and growth’. Others, like Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (1997), point approvingly to the way a ‘new social contract’ has been drawn up between the university and society, as public funding for the university is now made contingent upon universities making a more direct contribution to the economy. On this kind of account, modern universities have simply accepted the need to increase student enrollments because they understand they now have a functional role to play ‘in a knowledge-driven economy’ which ‘demands a larger proportion of the workforce with a university education and with access to lifelong learning opportunities (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff 1997: 3). This is a literature urging on universities the wisdom of embracing ‘the market’, competition, and acting like businesses (Lambert 2014; Craig 2015).

Equally clearly, others adopt a far more critical, even antagonistic, position. Some, like Gaita (2012: 30), are convinced that the university as a space devoted to ‘a continuing, ever-deepening exploration of what it can mean to do philosophy for the love of it’, has been killed by a plague of ‘managerial newspeak,’ a distinctive idiom and tone informed by ‘an aggressive and ubiquitous free market ideology’. Brady (344) likewise argues that factors like neo-liberal education policies complemented by the adoption of new public management practices inside universities have repositioned ‘universities as servants of the knowledge economy’ and ‘students as customers’ while eroding the ‘vital autonomy of universities by relocating power away from the academy to the marketplace’ (Brady 344). For Brady this amounts to a major ‘moral loss’ which only an equivalently major ‘moral reconstruction’—either of the universities or the broader society—can remedy. For others, like Slaughter and Leslie (1997) or Kauppinen and Kaidesoja (2014), these changes amount to nothing less than a transformation of universities into a form of ‘academic capitalism’.

Against a backdrop of benign endorsement of the modern university by some, and furious denunciation by others, my intention in this book is to address three clarifying questions identified by Sonia Livingstone: ‘what’s really going on, how can this be explained, and how could things be otherwise?’ (Livingstone 2012: 19).

My reason for focussing on Britain, America, and Australia is simple. Firstly, in spite of very different social contexts and quite different historical patterns of development, each society has developed a system of ‘mass’ higher education. The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 2014: 43) data suggests that by 2012 each of these countries had around 40 percent of adults (25–64 year-olds) possessing a tertiary education. Using Martin Trow’s (1974) famous typology, we can say each has made the transition from an ‘elite’ university system to a ‘mass university’ system. Indeed, by the start of the twenty-first century, Trow (2000) suggested each country was poised on the edge of achieving universal access.³ As Trow also suggests, this involves more than just an increase in scale: it involves increases in the numbers of non-traditional students engaged in ‘gaining useful skills and knowledge’ rather than pursuing ‘membership in a cultural elite marked by common bodies of arcane knowledge and cultivated ways of thinking and feeling’ (Trow 2000: 1).

Secondly, each of these countries embarked on a process of ‘marketing’ their ‘public universities’ though what this means precisely I defer

discussing till later. As Brady says, a good case can be made that this process began in the United Kingdom under Margaret Thatcher's government (1979–90), paralleling what was going on the United States during the Reagan presidency (1981–89) and in Australia under the Hawke Labour government (1983–) (Brady 344). Given the apparently divergent political perspectives of a Labour government in Australia and two right-of-centre governments in Britain and America, it might be thought odd that their higher education policies should converge in this way. This needs to be explored further. Here at least are several reasons to examine what happened in these three countries

However, I should immediately caution any reader expecting or wanting a conventional political science comparative study that they will need to find another book. There is more than enough complexity in the way universities in Australia, Britain, and America have evolved both generally and over the past few decades to defeat any simple or conventional exercise in comparative hypothesis framing and statistical analysis. For example, even referring, as I have just done, to 'public universities', reminds us there is more than a little complexity about the words people use. Though I will have more to say about what we mean when talking about 'universities', 'colleges', and 'public universities' in these three countries shortly, the different words people use to talk about higher education in these three countries reminds us that the history of 'higher education' in three different, yet related, kinds of societies is often complicated.

Britain is the place where Americans and Australians got many of their basic ideas about 'universities'. Like most other European countries, Britain (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland) can boast some of the oldest universities in the West: the universities of Oxford and Cambridge both have origins dating back to the twelfth century. Today in Britain there are some 168 'public' degree-granting institutions, including 'universities', 'colleges', 'Schools', and 'conservatories'. Arguably, Britain is now caught up trying to 'catch up' to America in terms of enabling more and more of her citizens to get a university education.

America has a very complex system of higher education, with some 6000 Title IV degree-granting institutions which in 2015 enrolled over 20 million students. Some 70 percent of US high school students are enrolled in higher education—the highest level of matriculation in the world (Selingo 2014: 4). The origins of this system go back to the earliest decades of Britain's American colonies: Harvard, the oldest university, was established in 1636. America now has a mix of 'public' and 'private'

‘universities’, ‘public’ and ‘private’ liberal arts colleges, and ‘community colleges’. Some community colleges offer two-year associate degrees, while some offer four-year degrees. The ‘liberal arts’ colleges are entirely undergraduate in nature and offer only four-year degrees. Universities include both teaching and research-oriented activities which provide both undergraduate and graduate programs and research degrees up to Ph.D.’s. Some universities call themselves ‘colleges’.

Australia is in every sense the ‘new kid on the block’: the University of Sydney, the first university in Australia, was established only in 1850. Today Australia has some 40 ‘public universities’ and 3 private universities, though there are also over 140 private providers offering degrees. While Australia followed the British lead by creating a second tier of higher education institutions back in the 1960s and 1970s, including some 20 Colleges of Advanced Education and 17 Institutions of Technology or Advanced Education, these were all effectively amalgamated after 1989 into a single ‘university’ system.⁴

These complexities are such that they make even generalising about one system of higher education a daunting prospect, let alone all three. Nonetheless, I think we can and should address a series of questions in way which reveal the play of quite specific historical and cultural features peculiar to America, Britain, or Australia as well as more general factors.

KEY QUESTIONS

To focus everyone’s attention there are five basic questions:

Firstly, if public universities have changed in the past decades, how should we describe this change; and are there common elements or parallels to be found when we look at universities in Britain, Australia, and the USA? As I will suggest before the 1980s universities were public universities devoted to pursuing a range of public goods. This idea requires some explaining. I make a case that the idea of a public university has less to do with the source of funding and more to do with certain distinctive characteristics of teaching, research, and knowledge itself.

Secondly, and granting there have been some significant changes in the way universities now work, how are these changes best characterised? Many writers have argued the culture of academic life has been transformed by what some call ‘neo-liberalism’ (e.g., Giroux 2014) and what others call ‘marketisation’ (Furedi 2011: 1; Brown with Carasso 2015). What this is said to mean is that increasing numbers of people in universities and

in government now use a vocabulary of ‘markets’ and ‘competition’ to describe the point and purpose of universities. This entails as Furedi says, for example, that—

at least outwardly, universities increasingly ape the managerial models of private and especially public sector corporations. Quaint academic rituals and practices have been gradually displaced by management techniques as departments mutate into cost centres often run by administrators recruited from the private and public sector. (Furedi 2011: 1)

I argue that while universities have changed, this change is not best described in terms of a ‘higher-education market’ in which universities ‘compete’ with each other in the sale of ‘educational commodities’. To talk in this way is to make a category mistake and to engage in various kinds of make-believe. In this respect this book seeks, perhaps ironically given its subject matter, to make a contribution to what is being called the ‘sociology of ignorance’ (McGoey 2014; Gross and McGoey 2015). However, what we believe has all-too-real consequences. The all-too-real result of this exercise in make-believe is what I call ‘market-crazed governance’. This is a distinctive style of policy-making *and* management driven by governments and by university managers and administrators, which has changed the actual ways academics teach and do research, to say nothing of way students now experience the university.

Thirdly, we need to ask how to best explain how both the talk about ‘marketising’ higher education and what actually goes on in universities came about. Any quick survey of recent and current research into higher education in America, Britain, or Australia will see many candidates proposed. These include ‘globalisation’, the development of new digital technologies, the shift to mass higher education, ‘neo-liberalism’, or ‘new public management’. I argue that we need to combine a number of factors, including neo-liberal government policies, new public management, and academic naiveté or cowardice to explain the far-reaching transformation of the modern university.

Fourthly, what have these changes meant for the ways that teaching staff, students, and research workers now experience our universities? That question is closely connected to the final question, how should we evaluate these changes? Allowing that there might be a number of different ways of evaluating what is now going on, are students, for example, getting the kind or quality education they ought to be getting as distinct from the kind they think they need? Is the community benefitting from

the changes made because ‘marketising’ the university has meant more high-quality education, increased social mobility and social equity, and economically valuable research?

I will suggest that the story about ‘marketisation’, while widely accepted, even promoted by governments and senior university managers, or condemned by its critics, is not true. These claims all point to certain kinds of ignorance. How to work out what kind of ignorance is operating here is a fine point for reasons identified by major contributors to the new field of ignorance studies like Jens Haas and Katja Vogt when they argue that there are good reasons to prefer ‘states of ignorance that motivate inquiry over states of ignorance that do not’ (2015: 17–23). On that, more later.

What we actually get is what we should expect to get when the professional autonomy of academics is subverted and overridden by managers and the systems of control and accountability they set up, to say nothing of the effects of handing over the majority of teaching to low-paid, ‘casualised’ teachers, or relying on student assessments of their teachers as an ineffectual proxy measure for assessing what students have actually learned.⁵

Even asking these questions threatens to foreclose on my capacity to be thoughtful. As Joshua Dienstag (2006: 34) observes, most Western thought assumes ‘that there must be an answer to our fundamental questions, even if we have not found it yet, and that the answer will deliver us from suffering’. Given the way that neo-liberals have yoked their claim to be offering us a better way of doing things to the great myth of progress set loose in the eighteenth century, we need to take Dienstag seriously. We need to take Mike Apple and his colleagues equally seriously when they argue the case for illuminating the ways in which university policies and practices are connected ‘to the relations of exploitation and domination—and to struggles against such relations in the larger society’ (Apple et al. 2010: 5).

As I make plain, my concern about what is happening in too many universities today is best summed up by amending G. Bernard Shaw’s definition of ‘the professions’: the universities of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia are fast becoming a fraud perpetrated on the citizens of these countries. The so-called marketisation of public universities is degrading the many public goods universities can and should be providing. With some important exceptions, too many students are being short-changed by grossly inadequate teaching. This is a consequence of government-imposed and management-inspired choices that are compromising the point and purpose of public universities. The good news is that none of this was inevitable, nor is it yet beyond our capacity to do better.

In framing each of these questions, and developing these arguments, I will make certain assumptions, taking a certain kind of approach which I want to outline briefly here.

APPROACH

Firstly, this is unashamedly a work of criticism. Criticism essentially looks for the gap between belief and reality, promise and performance. In this case I mean to focus on the gap between the stories told by contemporary governments, policy-makers, and university managers about universities and why they exist, and the kinds of places universities have actually become. Should we believe the OECD (1998) when its policy pronouncements on higher education represent the moves toward the privatisation and ‘marketisation’ of universities as ‘inevitable’, inexorable, even desirable? I am thinking here, for example, about the story that higher education is now a ‘commodity’ or that universities are ‘competing’ in ‘markets’ and are now delivering the benefits of higher education to more and more people.

As Cocks and Tully remind us, what is at stake here is our capacity to think well. They say theory needs to be ‘a critical activity’ that starts from the practices and problems of life, but proceeds by ‘questioning whether the inherited languages of description and reflection are adequate to the task’ (Tully 2008: 25; Cocks’s 2014: 2). This approach is exemplified in Mats Alvesson’s (2013) work which came too late to my attention to be drawn on here, but whose conclusions run in parallel with the arguments offered here. This opens up some difficult issues attached to the emergent field of ignorance studies, some to do with the politics and some to do with major epistemological and methodological issues (McGoey 2014; Gross and McGoey 2015). As for the epistemological and methodological issues which the field of ignorance studies raises, I address these in Chapter 2. Suffice it to say that the possibility has to be entertained that too many policy-makers and senior managers are engaged in various kinds of make-believe. This is why I frequently stop to push back at the way some policy-makers, university managers, and even some academics now speak about universities. This is also the prelude to paying more attention to what people are actually doing in our universities and the basis on which they say they do so.

Secondly, as Michael Walzer (1988) has made clear, the work of any critic is motivated and illuminated by love.⁶ We are properly critical of those practices (like film, painting, writing, landscape gardening, literature, scientific research, music, etc.) that we love to watch, use, or perform. In my case, I love what university teaching at its best can be and do.

I have seen and been touched by inspiring teaching and read life-changing books. I believe that it is still possible to engage in those practices essential to ‘knowledge’.

My canvas is large, as I am writing about universities in Australia, Britain, and America over the past three or so decades. I do not have the space to carry out a systematic comparative assessment of all aspects of three very complex systems of higher education in three very complex societies. For example, I do not engage with questions like how international students experience the university, or with the rise of on-line technologies in higher education. My aim is more modest. I want to try to describe what it is like to be a teacher, student, or researcher in the modern public university in these three countries. Of necessity the focus relies on a wide-angled lens.

If one of the gaps I am traversing is that between delusional narratives based on make-believe or ignorance and the current state of affairs in our universities, then there is another gap to be traversed, namely, that between what has been and what ought to be. In saying this I do not assume, as some of the many recent books written about universities do, that ‘once upon a time’ we had ‘real’ universities and now we are seeing the ‘death’, collapse, or decline of those universities. I have been around long enough to know that at no time in my lifetime at least were most universities ever places that achieved anything like the kind of perfection idealised in Cardinal Newman’s (1873/1960) famous, if self-indulgent essay, *The Idea of the University*.

Equally, if universities of the past were far from being perfect institutions, the pursuit of something more and better has rightly never gone away either. My intention here is to develop an interpretative framework which enables us to both describe and evaluate what is going on, constrained by various conceptions of truth. With John Finnis (1980), I want to find a point of ‘reflective equilibrium’ between description and evaluation by emulating his account of a kind of analytic dialectic which moves backwards and forwards between assessments of human good and its practical requirements *and* explanatory descriptions using historical, experimental, and sociological materials and methods, all applied to engaging with the modern university.⁷ Why we need to do this is suggested in Terry Eagleton’s defence of ‘tragic humanism’. Eagleton says we need to be able to look at the bad things that occur as we struggle to make things better. We can make these places better than they have now become. I will use a mix of historical materials and ethical resources to say more precisely what kind of mess many of our universities now find themselves in, why this has happened, and how we might begin to think our way out of that mess.

In terms akin to Edmund Burke's conception of 'moral imagination', one thing we can do is make the question of justice a question central again to discussion inside our universities and in the wider community. In response to Socrates's memorably framed, 'what do we owe to each other?' we need to recover our ability to ask and answer two questions: The first of these is what do our universities owe to our young people? With that goes two related questions: What do our students owe to the university? And what do our communities owe to universities? Both our communities and our governments are implicated in the kinds of answers we have given to these questions so far and how we might address them again in the future.

THE ARGUMENTS

A key premise here is that we need to understand why our universities are now the way they are. This involves avoiding abstract arguments about 'structural' factors. This matters because if we are ever to promote the kinds of changes we need, we must reinstate a proper regard for the choices people make and the beliefs they entertain.

People have offered various explanations for why our universities are in trouble or in some people's eyes doing really well. Among the key explanations some have pointed to 'globalisation' (Boyer 2010); others to the rise of the 'mass university' (Henry et al. 2001). I will examine these arguments at appropriate points in the book. If there are now some very bad and even stupid things going on in our universities, this has little to do with 'globalisation' or what some call the growth of a 'global knowledge economy' (Delanty 2001; Brown et al. 2008). It has nothing to do with the rise of the 'mass' university, which as I see it, is simply a defensible move to democratise access to higher education. What has gone wrong here is the failure to rise to the challenge of ensuring that more people enjoy good teaching and learn a great deal. Nor, it should be added, have the present travails of our universities anything to do with the alleged takeover of our universities by Marxists, feminists, or post-modernists as alleged by the outer denizens of the lunar right.

The current state of our universities can be explained by three key factors: Firstly, there have been decades of bad and short-sighted policy-making by governments in Australia, Britain, and America seized by a neo-liberal imaginary that treats education as a 'commodity' and universities as part of a 'market'. As Boyer says, everywhere neo-liberal governments

have pursued policies designed to ‘saturate the university field with market-oriented principles (e.g., knowledge as a commodity, faculty as wage labour, administration as management, student body as consumer public, university as marketplace) (Boyer 2010: 74).

Secondly, that policy agenda has enabled a transformation in the locus of authority within universities, involving a shift away from a collegial style of governance and toward a model of corporate governance. Collegial governance rested on the idea that academics could be trusted to manage the affairs of the university. This meant that staff often elected their heads of department or that academics would take a turn to manage a school of college for a few years as part of their duty to the university. This older idea is exemplified by one of the last deans I knew, who said it was both his pleasure and duty to serve the staff and students in the faculty he managed ‘because it was a public duty’. Men and women like that have been displaced by an assertive, overly-confident cohort of managers seduced by the undoubted rewards of staggeringly high incomes, bonus payments, overseas travel, and possessed of the power of decision that is now in the hands of corporate managers. If there is one sign of this, it is the extraordinary increase in the authority and reach of human resource departments and managers, who serve as a filter-cum-buffer between senior managers and academics.

Finally, it cannot be gainsaid that if more of the academic staff who worked in our universities these past decades had been clearer about why they do what they do, and had also been more courageous in standing up for a defensible idea of what a ‘public university’ can and ought to be, then our universities might not be in the kind of mess they are today. While this is said mindful of the undoubted power wielded by governments, it is also mindful of the activism of teaching staff and students at the New School of Social Research in New York protesting management arrogance, or of the movement by teaching staff and students protesting the Cameron government’s increase in tuition fees in 2010 or strike action taken by staff at University of Sydney in 2014. If these were not always ‘successful’ we should not forget how in 2009, a group of 100,000 French university teachers and students took collective action to close down universities in French cities from February 2009 on, forcing the withdrawal of President Sarkozy’s attempt to pass his neo-liberal *Liberties and Responsibilities of Universities* law (Wright and Rabo 2010).

The conjunction of neo-liberal government policy-making, corporate governance, and a mixture of academic naiveté and cowardice have produced the modern university.

Over several decades governments in Australia, the United Kingdom, and America have pursued a program of 'marketising' universities. This process involved major government cuts to public funding and investment in the universities. It has involved the growth of a new, high-income elite of managers, who have embedded a new business or corporate culture, a new purpose, and new ways of talking and thinking about universities. Instead of talking about the public benefits universities create, universities are now required and indeed eagerly describes themselves as 'selling' higher education and working in a highly competitive 'market' to provide private benefits to fee paying students. The marketisation process has involved the evolution of a business culture in universities and a reliance on increasingly onerous levels of tuition fees paid by both domestic students and international students the latter treated essentially as cash-cows.

The second and closely related process has seen a dramatic shift in authority away from academic staff and toward managers and administrators. There is, of course, a reality to be acknowledged here. As governments began insisting in the late 1980s onward on increasing the numbers of students in higher education, some change in the scale of the administration of universities was always going to be needed. What has emerged, however, has little to do with any rational or defensible increase in administrative capacity to deal with the increased scale of teaching and student numbers. The result is what some describe as 'administrative bloat', coinciding with the growth of a corporate management culture whose tasks, mostly new to universities, involve the evolution of a vast and ever ramifying 'culture of audit', the growth of public relations and marketing, the development of technological systems and the 'management of human resources'. The culture of audit works on the basis of a fundamental delusion that it is possible and desirable to measure the 'quality' of teaching and learning. As in neo-liberal regimes everywhere, this means that 'customers', in this case students, have become central to measuring learning using customer satisfaction surveys (called Course Evaluation Surveys) rather than university staff trying to directly establish what students have learned. The culture of audit has been promoted by governments and is now integral to the new managerialism, which involves an ever-ramifying reliance on performance-based data indicators like graduation rates, degree completion times, and graduate earnings.

This techno-structure is also behind the relentless push to standardise curricula, which serves not only to displace academic authority but puts at risk the value of any teaching and learning that might feasibly still go on in a university. Where once individual staff were trusted to develop curriculum, teach, and assess students, this now happens less and less. New kinds of managers now invoke various dreams of technical rationality applied to teaching and learning by, for example, talking glibly about ‘aligned curriculum’. What actually ensues is a grotesque mismatch between what managers say what ‘student-centered learning’ is *and* what seriously interesting research tells us about what ‘deep learning’ (Biggs 1987). There is a really serious gulf opening up between talking about ‘student-centred learning’ and the actual reliance on ‘thin learning’ marked by the use of on-line delivery, the reliance on cheap unskilled casual teaching staff, the use of two-and three-hour lectures in combination with assessments like standardised short answer/multiple choice tests that are ‘read’ by computers. (That said there are still important stand outs like the design disciplines which use a studio-based model, and laboratory based curriculum based in the physical and biomedical sciences).

The actual system of university teaching we now have has been driven by a lot of hype about ‘equity and access’ as governments encouraged dramatic increases in student enrollments leading to the new kind of mass university system. We have seen large increases in the total number of university students in America, Britain, and Australia. This has largely occurred at the behest of governments who want to see big increases in the total number of citizens with university or college degrees, often to disguise the destruction of full-time youth labour markets since the 1980s or else justified as part of an attack on inequality. In the United States and Australia especially this has been funded by a mixture of student debt and big increases in fee-paying students both local and international since the 1980s: in this respect the United Kingdom has been playing catch-up since 2010. The mass university is now a reality. Equally the old, elite institutions continue to secure their elite status by resisting any impulse to increase the scale of student enrolments.

This, if anything, has provided further impetus to relying on larger classes and on-line education to deliver education—as if education was just like making and delivering pizzas. There has been a dramatic reduction in the reliance on full-time teaching staff and significant increases in the use of sessional, part-time, or casual, labour to provide the majority of face-to-face teaching. Without batting an eyelid, policy-makers put the

spin on that education quality has not been sacrificed—which is precisely what has happened.

Other effects have also followed on the ‘marketisation’ project. Talk about markets has encouraged universities to get rid of or reduce basic disciplines and to allow what is called ‘market demand’ to determine what subjects universities ought to teach. The result is a scarifying process that has included cutting core disciplines in the humanities, social sciences and the physical sciences that are deemed surplus to what the ‘market’ requires.

As for the idea of the research university, drives to ‘marketise’ higher education initially gave birth to the idea that the only good research is research whose ‘quality’ can be measured, an idea promoted by managers and the culture of audit that has assumed such a dominant role in the modern university. More recently and unsurprisingly, governments have begun pushing the idea that the only good research is research that is commercially valuable. In November 2015, Australia’s Turnbull government began to overhaul the way university research is funded by hinting that it might downgrade the importance of publishing articles in little-read academic journals. The Turnbull government said it wanted to end the ‘publish or perish’ culture in which academics were pressured by managers and the culture of audit to focus on constant publishing rather than producing work with ‘commercial and community benefit’ (Knotts 2015). The government was considering entirely scrapping the use of research publications from the way it allocates \$1 billion a year in block research grants and Ph.D. research funding; in its place, the government would put more emphasis on research ‘engagement’ and ‘impact’. The aim, it was said, was to encourage universities to work more closely with the private sector to explore how their research discoveries can be commercialised. Entirely overlooked in much of the discussion—about the direction university research has taken and whether closer ties with industry has exacerbated corruption, or fake research, or plagiarism or compromised the integrity of research—is the simple but basic question, What human goods does university research advance?

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

In the first chapter, I offer a framework for thinking about ‘public’ universities that has less to do with the sources of funding and more to do with being able to say what a public university is in terms of the processes of public reasoning and the production of a range of public goods. I point

to certain tension both in the idea of knowledge and the idea of academic freedom, both of which have long haunted the university. I propose and outline an approach to thinking about the good of truth and knowledge as a project framed by certain insights now becoming available from the ‘sociology of ignorance’ (Proctor and Schiebinger 2009; Rescher 2009). As I show, the conception of knowledge outlined in Chap. 2 indicates quite precisely why any attempt to ‘commodify’ either teaching or research can only end in the kind of grief that results when pigs are encouraged to fly.

I then outline how such an idea of knowledge informed the design and development of the Humboldtian university, which specifically linked the performance of teaching and research to the idea that ‘knowledge’ is always and only about engaging with problems and issues yet to be resolved, whether in research or teaching, or in pure and applied fields. This, it should be added gives rise to a central and persistent problem—namely, what criteria ought to be used to distinguish ‘knowledge’ from mere ‘opinion’. Addressing that question is precisely what defines the very point and purpose of a university. Treating knowledge as a constant problem requires, as Humboldt also argued, the autonomy of universities, an idea subsequently taken up and elaborated as a discourse about ‘academic freedom’. Finally, I consider the ethics of the teaching–learning relationship. The implication of the idea that knowledge is a basic human good, and that universities are autonomous spaces where it is possible to both teach and research problems and issues yet to be resolved is that it is not possible to ‘commodify’ knowledge so conceived. Equally, I have made the case that if we conceive of education as a relationship of care involving different kinds of input by both teachers and by students, we again cannot imagine how this could ever be commodified.

In Chap. 3 I offer a synoptic view of the development of ‘modern’ universities in the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States from the start of the twentieth century into the 1970s. We can trace the role of factors internal to universities as well as external factors like wars and depressions and political and social factors like the rise of the Keynesian ‘welfare state’, family formation, and the changing status of women in shaping the way universities worked. Whatever else we may do, any contemporary discussion and evaluation of universities should not be grounded in any nostalgia for an imagined past. Universities have always been less than their promoters or mythologists imagined—though better than their critics thought. The chapter offers an account of how these institutions worked through the first two-thirds of the twentieth century,

highlighting what they did well and what they did less well. I also point to some significant differences in the evolution of the American, British, and Australian public university system. Along the way the chapter also dispels a number of myths about the ‘good ol’ days’ regarding things like the ‘research university’, the Ph.D., and the ‘student experience’.

In Chap. 4 I focus on the changes made in universities as the neo-liberal ‘reform’ of universities got underway in the early 1980s. This project can be traced in each case to deliberate policy-making by governments which began with cost-cutting and exhortations to universities to become more like corporates engaged in a competitive market.

In Chap. 5 I directly confront claims made by both critics and advocates of what is called the ‘marketisation’ of higher education. I outline the kinds of claims made, suggesting that governments have now created a ‘market’ in higher education or have ‘commodified’ higher education. I show how and why this is a ‘category mistake’, which occurs when one attributes a property to a thing that it can’t possibly have. We are not required to believe that we have now created a ‘higher-education market’ or that higher education has been ‘commodified’. That this is not possible owes a good deal to the nature both of higher education understood as a human good and to the idea that knowledge is also a public good. We do need, however, to worry both that many people in government and universities persist in making basic category mistakes and talk as if the marketisation of higher education has actually taken place. We also need to worry that many quite bad things are now going on in universities, which is why we need to pay much more attention to what has actually been going on in our universities over the past few decades, something that I begin to do in the following chapters.

In Chap. 6, I discuss the rise of the managerialiat and the effects that the pursuit of deeply contradictory policy objectives is having. Following Furedi (2011: 1) we can say that the policy-driven idea of ‘marketisation’ is fundamentally ‘ideological’. In spite of a lot of people being in furious agreement with each other about the ‘marketisation’ of higher education, this hasn’t happened, at least not in the ways that talking about real markets would imply.⁸ What has happened testifies more to the ability of large numbers of people to make category mistakes and to do so persistently. Whatever else universities once were, what they have become is deeply confused and deeply confusing places characterised by what I call ‘market-crazed governance’. ‘Market-crazed governance’ relies on ‘imagined markets’ and ‘imagined competition’, which meets the gov-

ernment's intentions to redesign universities as part of the 'knowledge economy' while meeting standards like fiscal austerity and accountability. 'Imaginary markets' and 'imaginary competition' help to reinforce the totalising grip of neo-liberal order discourses. Policy-makers and officials in the policy apparatus can then act as if they have actually created a higher education market *and* deliver traditional kinds of academically credible knowledge. Above all, the idea of 'crazed governance' highlights the juxtaposition of contradictory government policy objectives. I explore the ways these contradictory objectives are developed and covered up, as well as how modern universities now embark on branding and marketing campaigns as if they really are 'businesses' in a 'competitive market'.

In Chap. 7 I turn to the experience of teaching in the modern university. I describe how the shift in authority away from academics and toward a new kind of management took place and how the change was registered—and only occasionally resisted (Anderson 2006). The effect of that revolution was simple. In consequence of this shift in the locus of authority, academics came to be defined both as 'employees' and as 'human resources'. I focus on one of the distinctive features of the contemporary university and the culture of auditing found in it, namely, the emergence of a management-driven discourse that claims both to value student learning and new kinds of learning which are 'enquiry-based' or 'student-centred' (e.g., Hutchings 2006).

The chapter examines the development of a 'student-centred learning' model in the late 1980s and 1990s ostensibly committed to promoting what has been called 'deep learning'. This is supposed to describe an approach to teaching and learning based on 'self-directed enquiry or research by the student'. Frey (2007) is not alone in his utopian imagining of a higher-educational future based on student-centred, enquiry-based learning. (There is also a lot of talk about 'lifelong learning'). However, one major problem is that most academic teaching, and especially in large classes, is not student-centred at all. This is because student-centred learning is negated by so many other aspects of the modern university. These include increasingly stringent operating budgets, and the sheer impact of increasing numbers of students, many of whom bring significant literacy and numeracy problems with them. It also documents the major contradictions that are now endemic in many universities as cheap, unskilled, casual teachers take on the great bulk of teaching done in many university undergraduate programs. I

also document the often ruthless attempts to discipline full-time tenured academics who try to hold the line on the idea that the pursuit of knowledge is often difficult and demanding. This is to say nothing of how the requirement built into the 'quality assurance' regime that subject outlines, 'graduate capabilities statements', and all sorts of other pedagogical materials be prepared in such a way as to prevent student-centeredness from ever being possible. Even more astonishing is the way 'student-centredness' apparently aligns quite nicely with the interests of all of 'the stakeholders' (including governments, professional bodies, and employers) who get to say what the 'learning objectives', graduate capabilities and 'outcomes' should look like.

Finally, I address the way a 'culture of audit' has been embedded into modern universities. One basic article of faith at the heart of modern managerialism is the claim that the world becomes a better place when it is managed better. Who better to manage than managers? Where academics once pursued knowledge or truth, their managers now engage in what they call 'the pursuit of excellence'. The culture of audit with its orientation to measuring things like 'good teaching' or 'research quality', reflects an ostensible commitment to transparency and accountability, but has more to do with the shift in authority away from academics and toward the managers. This chapter describes and then assesses some of the effects of introducing auditing regimes. It asks whether 'quality assurance' regimes constitute a clear and present danger to the idea of the university as a place where language-use and regard for truth and critical reflexivity are actually valued and practised.

Chapter 8 engages some questions about the student experience. What, if anything, has changed about the university student experience? What does paying for a university education feel like? What do students actually do now? How well do they do? Is there evidence of increased student consumerism, leading to student complaints that some university subjects are 'too hard' or 'too demanding', putting pressure on academics to stop demanding too much, as Arum and Ropska (2011) suggest is increasingly the case in America, or as Hil (2015) suggests is happening in Australia? The chapter draws on a range of ethnographic research to describe how students and staff actually experience the 'delivery' of education in the online university and whether, apart from undoubted benefits like efficiency and sometimes economy, it is actually enabling more students to learn better. The chapter argues that we need to be careful to avoid blaming students for the lack of skill or preparation. It points to some real complexity in the way students think about and engage with the university.

It suggests that apart from those in elite programs and elite universities, many students are now being short-changed; and it argues that academics need to take more responsibility in engaging and challenging that majority of students who are not in elite programs or universities.

In Chap. 9 I turn to the state of research in the university. In a time when universities apparently ‘compete’ in a ‘global market’, measures of research quality and impact have come to be a core part of their ability to claim ‘world-class status’ or to claim a position on any number of ‘league ladders’ (e.g., the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2014–2015 or the Shanghai Global Research University Profile), all claiming to offer an ‘objective’ assessment of the status of a given university. Equally, the reframing of universities in terms of their economic functions has led to an increasing insistence by managers and governments that research be more practical and/or have economic utility, for example, by promoting closer links between universities and business. This also has had something to do with efforts by cartels of global publishers to create a market in lucrative international journals. Finally, it has led to a big increase in efforts by managers to encourage academics to be more ‘research active’, by which is meant bringing in more ‘research income’.

This chapter explores some of the effects of both the growth of a culture of audit and the preoccupation with the economic value of research for academics. The chapter concludes by thinking about the consequences of these effects for the capacity for those work in a university to promote truth-telling as an intellectual and civic virtue.

In the Conclusion, I step back to take a larger view of the modern university and the possibility of change. This chapter describes and briefly assesses the state of modern universities in Australia. I make the case that too many universities today offer large and increasing numbers of people a ‘virtual’ experience of being in a university without requiring them to engage in the effort, complexity, or expenditure of time that once defined the public university experience. This does not mean that some people, some of the time don’t get to experience intellectually challenging, exciting, or transformative education: it just means that it becomes less common and less likely to happen.

While it is hard to generalise about the student experience, the evidence suggests that increasing numbers of students are coming into universities with low levels of civic and cultural literacy, to say nothing of more formal kinds of linguistic or numerical literacy; are disengaged and reluctant to attend classes or to read widely or well while they are enrolled; and leave

with low levels of literacy and numeracy and frequently lacking key relevant professional capacities. Equally, a minority of highly competent and ambitious students expect more and are frequently disenchanted by many of the key features of mass higher education.

A final word: I hope this book will play some small role in helping to us begin to make our universities good places to be again.

To do this I have highlighted certain *aporia*, and encourage my colleagues, be they fellow teachers or students, to be as puzzled as I have been—and perhaps begin to do something about that puzzlement. An *aporia* is literally a puzzlement. It is what we call the realisation that things don't make sense, or that the things we thought we knew we don't actually know and that we ought now properly be intensely puzzled and curious. The book charts my own *aporia* about the way universities have been taken over by an 'unholy alliance' of governments, policy-makers, educationists, and managers inside and the consequences that have actually followed.

The promise was that 'marketising' the universities would promote both 'efficiency' and 'quality' teaching and learning. The universities haven't been 'marketised'; and while a case can be made they have become more efficient, this is an 'efficiency' no one can afford because degrading the point and purpose of higher education is the price to be paid.

This *aporia* is close, and for good reason, to the experience Yianis Varoufakis describes as the *aporia* and 'anxious disbelief' evoked in September 2008 at the start of the Great Recession. It was then that the world 'woke up' and discovered that the elaborate theories concocted by neo-classical economists like the 'Efficient Market Hypothesis' (Malkiel 1991) or the 'Rational Expectations Hypothesis' (Wallis 1980) alleged to describe the new financial markets of the late 1990s were little more than 'thinly veiled forms of intellectual fraud' in which 'toxic economic theory legitimated toxic financial products' (Varoufakis 2015: 15).

It is time for an equivalent 'wake up' on the part of academics, students, and the wider community.

NOTES

1. I am mindful of Don Aitken's (2000) review of Marginson and Considine's (2000) important study of Australia's 'enterprise university'. A decade or so before Hannah Forsyth (2014) rectified the deficiency, Aitkin noted that 'no one has written a good history of Australian higher education' as a prelude

to noting that Marginson and Considine's treatment of the changes to Australian higher education post-1988 lacked a sound historical grounding: 'judgments involve comparisons, and comparisons involve (in this case) a sound knowledge of the past'.

2. Title IV refers to the way the Federal government's *Higher Education Act* of 1965 'recognises' those institutions whose students benefit from US federal student financial aid programs. Even getting accurate data about America's higher education system can be difficult: as Blumenstyk (2015: xi) notes, apparently straightforward claims that of the 19.8 million Americans in higher education in 2013, a total of 39.3 percent are in four-year public institutions, 32.6 percent are in two-year institutions, 18.9 percent are in four-year private non-profit universities, or 6.6 percent are in four-year private for-profit institutions need to be treated cautiously. This is because more than 2 percent of students are enrolled in more than one institution while many four-year, private for-profit institutions don't submit data to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.
3. By this Trow (2000: 1) means 'the extension of access beyond a third or a half of a population to a situation in which access to some form of postsecondary education is universally available throughout life and in homes and workplaces'.
4. These origins perhaps explain why Australian universities elect to link up with institutions with similar histories like the Group of Eight (the leading research-focused universities), the Australian Technology Network (the leading technology-focused universities and former CAEs), and the Regional Universities Network which link the universities in rural and regional Australia.
5. To be very clear, I am not critical of the very large numbers of temporary and part-time academic staff who have now become so central a part of modern university teaching. The many studies of this new dimension of higher education point again to complexity in terms of the skills, experience, and even levels of remuneration. My concern is about the general tendency to pursue 'efficiency' by using this form of employment at the expense of 'quality'.
6. The idea of critic is derived philologically from the Latin term *criticus*, ie., someone who works on texts: *philology* itself denotes those who 'love' (*philia*) 'language' (*logos*).
7. As Finnis (1980: 17) points out there are certain entailments of taking this stance:

Just as there is no question of deriving one's basic judgments about human values and the requirements of practical reasonableness by some inference from the facts of the human situation, so there is no question of reducing descriptive social science to an apologia for one's ethical or political judgments, or to a project for apportioning praise or blame among the actors on the human scene...

8. Brown (2011: 17–18) argues the United States has moved to a ‘somewhat marketised’ system, which he says was possible because many of its elite tertiary institutions had a high degree of autonomy from public funding, enabling something that looks a bit like competition for the same kinds of students in the substantial ‘not-for-profit’ private universities and colleges.

REFERENCES

- Aitkin, D. (2000). Review of Simon Marginson and Mark Considine. *The enterprise university. Power, governance and reinvention in Australia*. <http://www.donaitkin.com/wpcontent/uploads/pdfs/bookreviews/%20Marginson%20review.pdf>
- Altbach, O. G., Reisberg, L., & Rumbley, L. (2009). *Trends in global higher education: Tracking an academic revolution: A report prepared for the UNESCO 2009 world conference on higher education*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Alvesson, M. (2013). *The Triumph of Emptiness: Consumption, Higher Education and Work Organisation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Amis, K. (1954/2000). *Lucky Jim*. London: Penguin Classics.
- Anderson, R. (2006). *British Universities Past and Present*. London: Hambledon Continuum.
- Apple, M., Ball, S., & Gandin, A. (2010). Introduction. In M. Apple, S. Ball, & A. Gandin (Eds.), *International handbook of the sociology of education* (pp. 1–11). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Arum, R., & Ropska, J. (2011). *Academically adrift: Limited learning on college campuses*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Barnett, R. (2011b). *Being a University*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Biggs, J. (1987). *Student approaches to Learning and Studying*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Blumenstyk, G. (2015). *American higher education in crisis? What everyone needs to know*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Boyer, D. (2010). What is driving university reform in the age of globalisation? *Social Anthropology*, 18, 74–82.
- Brown, R. (2011). The march of the market. In N. Molesworth, R. Scullion, & E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketization of higher education and the student as consumer*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Brown, R. (2015a). The marketisation of higher education: Issues and ironies. *New Vistas*, 1(1): 5–9. http://www.uwl.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Departments/Research/new_vistas/voll_iss1/voll_iss1_art1_23April2015.pdf
- Brown, W. (2015b). *Undoing the demos: Neoliberalism’s stealth revolution*. Cambridge: Zone.
- Brown, R., with Carasso, H. (2015). *Everything for Sale? The Marketisation of UK Higher Education*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Brown, P., Lauder, H., & Ashton, D. (2008). *Education, globalisation and the knowledge economy: A commentary by the teaching and learning research project*. London: ESRC.

- Cocks, J. (2014). *On Sovereignty and Other Political Delusions*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Craig, R. (2015). *College Disrupted: The Great Unbundling of Higher education*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Delanty, G. (2001). *Challenging knowledge. The university in the knowledge society*. Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.
- Dienstag, J. (2006). *Pessimism: Philosophy, ethic, spirit*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Etzkowitz, H., & Leydesdorff, L. (1997). *Universities and the global knowledge economy a triple helix of university-industry-government relations*. London: Continuum.
- Ferrara, M. (2015). *Palace of Ashes, China and the decline of American higher education*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Finnis, J. (1980). *Natural law and natural rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Forsyth, H. (2014). *A history of the modern Australian university*. Kensington: Newsouth.
- Frey, T. (2007). *The future of education*. <http://www.davinciinstitute.com/page.php?ID14170/>. Accessed 5 Sept 2012.
- Furedi, F. (2011). Introduction to the marketisation of higher education and the student as consumer. In M. Molesworth, R. Scullion, & E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketisation of higher education and the student as consumer*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Gaita, R. (2012). To civilize the city? *Meanjin*, 71(1), 29–49.
- Giroux, H. (2014). *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education*, Chicago: Haymarket Books.
- Grafton, A. (2011, November 24). Our universities: Why are they failing? *The New York Review of Books*, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2011/11/24/our-universities-why-are-they-failing/>
- Gross, M., & McGoey, L. (Eds.). (2015). *Routledge international handbook of ignorance studies*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Haas, J., & Vogt, K. (2015). Ignorance and investigation. In M. Gross & L. McGoey (Eds.), *Routledge international handbook of ignorance studies* (pp. 17–25). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Henry, M., Lingard, B., Rizvi, F., & Taylor, S. (2001). *The OECD, globalisation, and education policy*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Hil, R. (2015). *Selling students short*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Hutchings, W. (2006). *The philosophical bases of enquiry-based learning*. Centre for Excellence in Enquiry Based learning. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Kauppinen, I., & Kaidesoja, T. (2014). A shift towards academic capitalism in Finland. *Higher Education Policy*, 27, 23–41.
- Knott, M., 2105, 'Academic publications to become less important when funding university research', *Sydney Morning Herald*, <http://www.smh.com.au/>

- federal-politics/political-news/academic-publications-to-become-less-important-when-funding-university-research-20151112-gkxkgl.html#ixzz3sIxUiA00
- Lambert, M. (2014). *Privatization and the public good: Public universities in the balance*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.
- Livingstone, S. (2012). Critical reflections on the benefits of ICT in education. *Oxford Review of Education*, 38(1), 9–24.
- Malkiel, B. (1991). Efficient market hypothesis. In J. Eatwell (Ed.), *The world of economics* (pp. 211–223). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Marginson, S., & Considine, M. (2000). *The enterprise university: Power, governance and reinvention in Australia*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- McGoey, L. (2014b). Strategic unknowns; towards a sociology of ignorance. In L. McGoey (Ed.), *Introduction to the sociology of ignorance*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- McWatts, T. (2015). *Higher Ed*. Melbourne: Scribe.
- Newman, Cardinal J.H. (1873/1960). *The Idea of a University*. San Francisco: Rinehart Press.
- OECD. (1998). *Redefining tertiary education*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.
- OECD. (2014). *Education at a glance 2014: OECD indicators*. Paris: Paris Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. DOI:[10.1787/cag2014-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/cag2014-en).
- Proctor, R, and Schiebinger, L, (eds). (2009). *Agnotology: The Making and Unmaking of ignorance*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Rescher, N. (2009). *Ignorance: The Implications of Deficient Knowledge*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh.
- Selingo, J. (2014). *College unbound: The future of higher education and what it means for students*. New York: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Slaughter, S., & Leslie, L. (1997). *Academic capitalism: Politics, policies and the entrepreneurial university*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Trow, M. (1974). Problems in the transition from elite to mass higher education. In *Policies for higher education, from the general report on the conference on future structures of post-secondary education* (pp. 55–101). Paris: OECD.
- Trow, M. (2000). *From mass higher education to universal access: The American advantage* (Research and occasional paper series: CSHE.1.00). Berkeley: University of California. <http://www.cshe.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/shared/publications/docs/PP.Trow.MassHE.1.00.pdf>
- Tully, J. (2008). *Public Philosophy in a New Key, Volume I: Democracy and Civic Freedom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Varoufakis, Y. (2015). *The Global Minotaur, America Europe and the future of the global economy*. London: Zed.

- Wallis, K. (1980). Econometric implications of the rational expectations hypothesis. *Econometrica*, 48(1), 49–73.
- Walzer, M., (1988). *The Company of Critics*. New York: Basic Books.
- Williams, G. (1995). The ‘marketisation’ of higher education: Reforms and potential reforms in higher education finance. In D. D Dill & B. Sporn (Eds.), *Patterns of social demand and university reform: Through a glass darkly*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- World Bank. (2006). *Finland as a knowledge economy. Elements of success and lessons learned*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Wright, S., & Rabo, A. (2010). Introduction: Anthropologies of university reform. *Social Anthropology*, 18, 1–14.

Thinking About the Public University

In 2010 David Cameron's Coalition government launched yet another radical overhaul of Britain's universities. Stefan Collini nicely summarised a fundamental concern about the effect of these policies on Britain's universities when he insisted that what was at stake was whether universities are understood to have 'a public cultural role partly sustained by public support, or whether we move further toward redefining the university in terms of a purely economic calculation of value, and a wholly individualist conception of "consumer satisfaction"' (Collini 2010: 1). What Collini refers to as the 'public cultural role' of universities opens a rich and important line of inquiry about the nature of the 'public university' and its value in countries like the United Kingdom, America, and Australia. It also opens up issues about what we mean by the very idea of the public.

It is important to acknowledge at the outset some important socio-cultural differences between the way the word *public* is used and is understood on the one hand in the United Kingdom and Australia and in the United States on the other.¹ In this sense we see the point made by Chris Duke (2005: 7) when he rejects any essentialist idea of the university, arguing instead that, the idea of a university is a creature of time and place.² The same may be said of the very idea of the public.

As Collini (2013) noted, if Britain's oldest universities were originally chartered, the autonomous corporations they are today are 'rightly regarded as public institutions'. In both Britain and Australia the idea of 'public' is

conventionally applied to government-funded statutory agencies set up by Parliaments. For example both the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in Britain and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) are considered ‘public’ broadcasters because they are regulated by statute and receive the bulk of their funding from ‘public sources’— i.e., government taxation—and are regulated accordingly. Yet even this does not encompass the complexities at work here. Australia’s public universities are invariably the creation of governments established by statute, and for most of their history have been funded by governments. In Britain, on the other hand, universities are autonomous bodies and all but 20 are exempt charities; at the same time they receive funding directly from one of the funding councils for teaching and research.

However, in America there are important if subtle differences in the meaning of ‘the public’. For the most part the concept entails some identity between ‘government’ and ‘public’ as suggested by the establishment of public schooling, which originated in Massachusetts. The statutes of 1642 and 1647 transferred educational supervision from the clergy to the ‘selectmen’, who were elected town representatives, empowering them to assess the education of children ‘to read and understand the principles of religion and the capital laws of this country’ while holding parents and masters responsible for their children’s and apprentices’ ability to read and write (Zimmerman 1999: 15). The 1647 legislation required every town having more than 50 families to hire a teacher, and every town of more than 100 families to establish a ‘grammar school’. This began a tradition of intense local interest in the running of public schools which continues generally across many states in America.

When we turn to an entity like America’s Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) we encounter a different conception of ‘public’. The Public Broadcasting Service is an independently operated, non-profit organisation. It comprises more than 350 independent television stations, most owned by educational institutions or non-profit groups affiliated with local public school districts, ‘private’ colleges, and universities or by state universities. Up to 60 percent of its revenues come from membership donations, community fundraising, and/or philanthropic grants and donations (CPB 2005: 1). Here we see a ‘public’ organization which relies less on government and more on support from the general community.

This concept seems quite close to what is conventionally referred to in America as ‘private’ teaching-only or ‘private’ teaching and research universities that are run as ‘not-for-profit’ universities: these include

well-known elite universities like Yale, Princeton, Harvard, MIT, the University of Chicago, and Johns Hopkins. These universities are distinguished, on the one hand, from the state universities (like the University of California or the University of Oregon) that historically have been funded by state government tax-based revenue, and on the other hand, the still small number of private universities run on a ‘for-profit’ basis like the University of Phoenix.

The distinction between private not-for-profit universities and private for-profit universities adds further complexity to the idea of a ‘private’ university. This distinction can be used to indicate that private universities do not directly receive public funding and are, to a considerable extent, exempt from government regulation. However, while this is true enough, it ignores the role played by governments in respect to the regulation of higher education and the role played by state-run taxation systems in conferring charitable status on some universities and/or promoting philanthropic donations to private universities.

While paying due attention to the purposes of a university, a for-profit private university is a business like any other. Even though it may make much of its educational mission, it exists to make money for the company that owns and operates it, as well as its directors and shareholders. A not-for-profit private university is quite different: typically an educational charity, it is legally prohibited from directly allocating any part of its surplus (i.e., profit) to any other institution or individual.

Yet everywhere it seems this distinction between private and public universities is fast becoming blurred. For example, in the United Kingdom, since 2012 some universities have received little, if any, direct government subsidy and are now heavily dependent on the income from loan-backed fees. At the same time the Cameron government has also enabled private institutions to get the greater part of their revenue from exactly the same source, an idea currently being entertained in Australia in 2016.

Each of these considerations suggest that a preoccupation with the sources of funding and governance arrangements will not prove particularly insightful or useful for understanding either the recent history of universities or their present circumstances. Rather than simply accepting or working under the assumption that public universities are defined only or simply by the source of their funding or by their governance and accountability arrangements, we need a broader perspective. Collini (2010), for one, reminds us that while a good deal of the contemporary discussion about higher-education policy in places like Australia and Britain focuses

on economic issues like the level of government funding, or the scale of student debt, there are other at least as important questions that have not always been addressed thoughtfully over the past few decades.

I propose that we do not start by thinking about the public university in terms of public versus private funding but rather engage in a discussion oriented to answer basic questions like what should we value about a university and why. These questions go to the nature of the ‘public goods’ universities have long been supposed to be responsible for. The answers such questions require are both descriptive *and* ethical. Like John Finnis (1980), we need to be able to move back and forth between descriptions and explanations drawing on historical, experimental, and sociological materials and methods applied to the state of the modern university *and* assessments of human good and its practical requirements. (The word *practical* here has been ‘rehabilitated’ to its original sense from the Greek *praxis*, meaning actions oriented to some good.) In making the case that follows I am mindful of the possibility that too many academics have been unwilling or unable to address such questions over the past few decades because of some misunderstanding about what the idea of value freedom means or requires, and so have failed to either identify the public goods universities are responsible for and/or defend the university.

If there is one clear and simple idea about why universities matter, it is that they matter because knowledge is a basic human good. Equally we need to understand better what we think knowledge is—an inquiry nicely framed by recent interest in the phenomenon of ignorance. This in turn opens up some important and basic ideas about the special role universities have long played as autonomous spaces where it is possible to teach; do research; and to explore, practise, and compare various kinds of rationality.³ This argument matters because it is this capacity for both producing knowledge and teaching it, as well as the capacity to explore, practise, and compare various kinds of rationality that is now directly threatened by what many now insist is a ‘marketised’ university. The widespread discussion of that idea alone points to the serious possibility that universities have become sites of ignorance, a truly frightening possibility. Let me start with the idea that knowledge itself is a basic human good.

THE GOOD OF KNOWLEDGE

Ours is a time when all sorts of spray-on categories like budget responsibility, efficiency, accountability, law and order, quality assurance, triple bottom line, security, managing risk, or strengthening community clamour for

attention in the corridors of power and in what now passes for public deliberation. This vocabulary is part of a contemporary discourse about *what* governments do and *why* they do what they do. Though it is a terrible simplification, we can see here the effects of the role played by utilitarianism in Britain Australia and America. The utilitarian tradition says the human goods that matter involve whatever promotes or enhances our happiness or well-being. In effect, whatever makes us happy or advances our well-being is morally good. This tradition adds that as individuals we possess the rationality and the freedom to work out what this means for us personally. It should be added that what philosophers call ‘utilitarianism’ becomes, when it wears social-science clothing, what we call ‘economics’. Considering that almost every major ethical philosopher since Kant (1784)—from Rawls (1971) through Levinas (2003) to Williams (2006) and Sen (2010)—found utilitarianism to be unconvincing, we might be well advised to look for a more convincing approach to thinking about the concept of human goods.⁴

One contemporary and widely admired way of bypassing utilitarianism involves thinking about those capabilities which we need as humans to live the ‘good life’ (e.g., Sen 2010; Nussbaum 2010). Another approach which parallels the capabilities approach of Sen and Nussbaum has been offered by John Finnis (1980), who argues that the exercise of practical reasonableness will help us identify those basic goods. Let me start with the idea of capabilities.

Martha Nussbaum (1997) uses and extends the idea of a capability ethics developed by Amartya Sen (1999, 2002). Sen’s work has strengthened certain traditional liberal ideas about freedom, and both extends and grounds it. She extends the idea of freedom by reminding us that freedom is not just about being ‘negatively free’ and asks, do we really want societies to allow their citizens only the capacity to live at the bare minimum? Was not Aristotle right when he suggested, for example, that a good political arrangement is one ‘in accordance with which anyone whatsoever might do well and live a flourishing life?’ (Nussbaum 1995: 81). She (1988: 183) reminds us that, ‘Some policies of non-interference actually extinguish human freedom to choose what is valuable’. That is, someone can be free from external interference yet still be ‘radically unfree’ because of the absence of basic options (like access to food or water) or less fundamental but still valuable options (like the capacity to access education or to engage in the public life of a community). There is, says Nussbaum (1995: 81), a threshold of capability to function, beneath which a life will be so impoverished that it will not be ‘human’ at all. There is another, second threshold beneath which those

characteristic functions and activities are available in such a reduced fashion, that though we judge the life to be a *human* one, we do not consider it a *good* human life. (It should come as no surprise that Nussbaum has written one of the most eloquent defences of the idea that higher education is fundamental to living a good life [Nussbaum 1997] or that she has argued trenchantly that selling access to higher education or denying access to the study of the humanities are very bad ideas [Nussbaum 2010]).

For all of her passion for promoting the idea that governments need to do more to ensure that all their citizens actually have the capabilities to lead a flourishing life, she is less convincing when it comes to identifying the goods that constitute such a flourishing life. So what are the goods which define or enable a human life to be as a good life?

The discussion by John Finnis (1980) provides a strong answer to this question.⁵ He offers a gritty and compelling account of the nature of the fundamental human goods (and the role played by human rights in securing those goods). As Finnis announces at the start of his book, he wants to identify both the human goods and the requirements of practical reasonableness which help to constitute what we mean by a good human life. By the requirements of ‘practical reasonableness’ Finnis means to point to the obligations on our part to engage in good reasoning when we are deliberating about the human goods. It is an unfashionable book since Finnis is neither a relativist nor a classical liberal. He belongs to a tradition of natural law which grounds its claims about the good life either in a naturalistic anthropology and/or in a religious account of an order of things established by a God.⁶

Finnis offers us a profound inquiry into the kinds of goods which support human flourishing and what practical reasonableness looks like. As he says, for this inquiry to be possible the theorist has to find a point of ‘reflective equilibrium’ between description and evaluation.⁷ His account is grounded methodologically in the capacity of a theorist like himself to develop a *non-value-neutral descriptive* account of the goods which accepts that such a theorist necessarily participates in the work of *evaluation*. Finnis proposes a kind of analytic dialectic which moves backwards and forwards between assessments of human good and its practical requirements *and* explanatory descriptions using historical, experimental, and sociological materials and methods. This means Finnis requires both a descriptive–evaluative anthropology of the goods which support a flourishing life (or inform the good life), conjoined with a capacity to understand what is really good for humans and what is really required by practical reasonableness.

It is an ambitious exercise since Finnis claims there are universal human goods, albeit goods which can only be specified at a certain level of gener-

ality. Further, he claims his account is not so much a wish list as something descriptively grounded in the actual circumstances of human existence.⁸ His inquiry relies on the descriptive social sciences, which seek to tell us how people in different societies engage in their pursuit of the good life. Yet it is not put off by the inevitable discovery that people in different times and places are not equally devoted to or united in their conception of what justice or the human goods may look like. As Finnis notes, Leo Strauss (1953: 10) treated the fact that there is an indefinitely large variety of notions of right and wrong, as not so much ‘incompatible with the idea of natural right, [and more as] the essential condition for the emergence of that idea’. Equally pursuing those basic human goods needs to be informed by some well-justified judgments about all aspects of genuine human flourishing and what ‘authentic practical reasonableness’ looks like. Assessing this depends on Finnis’ ability to persuade his readers that he has made a good case. We may test the adequacy of his work by considering his claim that knowledge of truth is a basic human good.

It says something about Finnis’ courage, if nothing else, that he is writing at a time when all manner of relativisms have flourished which deny that truth matters or that reality is real. Finnis defends the proposition that the first great human good is knowledge where knowledge is conceived of as knowledge of truth. This is an important argument worth dwelling on.

This good he says (1980: 60), is grounded in a very common human activity, namely, the ‘activity of trying to find out, to understand and to judge matters correctly’. As he (1980: 61) puts it—

Commonly one’s interest in knowledge, in getting to the truth of the matter, is not bounded by the particular questions that first aroused one’s desire to find out ... In explaining, to oneself and others, what one is up to, one finds oneself able and ready to refer to *finding out, knowledge, truth* as sufficient explanations of the point of one’s activity, project or commitment. One finds oneself reflecting that ignorance and muddle are to be avoided ... ‘it’s good to find out...’ now seems to be applicable not merely in relation to oneself ... but at large ... and for anyone.

This idea of knowledge-of-truth as an intrinsic good is not limited.⁹ Saying that knowledge is a valuable activity is simply saying that the pursuit of knowledge makes intelligible any particular instance of the human activity and commitment involved in such a pursuit’. Finnis (1980: 65) proposes that knowledge is a human good, and there are no sufficient reasons for

doubting that this is the case. He allows that the truth of this claim ‘cannot be demonstrated, but then it needs no demonstration’. It is simply self-evident. This is not to say that each one of us will recognise the value of knowledge. Such a recognition is not innate and will not, for example, be experienced as such by a newborn child:

Rather the value of truth only becomes obvious only to one who has experienced the urge to question, who has grasped the connection between questions and answers, who understands that knowledge is constituted by correct answers to particular questions and of other questioners who like himself could enjoy the benefit of attaining correct answers.

Finnis (1980) argues that the basic human goods are self-evident. The good of knowledge is self-evident, obvious. It cannot be demonstrated he says, but equally it needs no demonstration (O’Connell 2000). After stating that the basic good of knowledge is self-evident or obvious, Finnis (1980) makes the following point:

The principle that truth (and knowledge) is worth pursuing is not somehow innate, inscribed on the mind at birth. On the contrary the value of truth becomes obvious only to one who has experienced the urge to question, who has grasped the connection between question and answer who understands that knowledge is constituted by correct answers to particular questions (1980: 66).

Nor can one validly infer the value of knowledge from the fact (if fact it be) that all men desire to know. ‘The universality of a desire is not a sufficient basis for inferring that the object of that desire is really desirable, objectively good’ (Finnis 1980: 66). Lastly, Finnis discounts the feeling of certitude as equivalent to his account of self-evidence:

Self-evident principles such as those I have been discussing are not validated by feelings. On the contrary, they are themselves the criteria whereby we discriminate between feelings, and discount some of our feelings (including feelings of certitude), however intense, as irrational or unwarranted misleading or delusive (1980: 69).

So when Finnis claims that the basic goods are self-evident, he does not mean we know this innately, nor is he claiming that there is unanimous agreement that the basic goods are in fact the basic goods. Nor does he mean that ‘self-evidence’ is simply some experience of a *feeling* of certitude.

Rather the basic goods are described by Finnis as activities and states that are worthwhile for their own sake. As activities and states that are worthwhile in themselves, they are ends of human activity. Since they are ends of human activity there is no need for any recourse to a further reason to explain their value. The basic goods as ends are the fundamental reasons for action. As fundamental reasons for action they cannot be inferred from more fundamental reasons or ends, for they are the first and fundamental reasons for action. They are self-evident, as they are the first and fundamental reasons for action. It is of the very nature of ends that they are self-evident, for if they are not self-evident, they are not basic goods or ends. Finally, while it is not possible to demonstrate the basic goods as goods, it is possible to demonstrate that to deny the basic goods is to fall into a quagmire of self-refutation: the basic goods cannot be coherently doubted. In this respect Finnis distinguishes between different types of self-refuting (or ‘self-negating’) propositions, including logical self-refutation (‘There is no such thing as truth’) and operational self-refutation (e.g., saying, ‘I am not opening this door’ even as I do so).

Finnis takes knowledge as a basic good and suggests that if one were to pursue the line that knowledge is not a basic good one would in fact be operationally self-refuting. That is, by engaging in the endeavour of establishing whether or not knowledge is a basic good, one has demonstrated, by the very pursuit of the issue, that one wishes to know. Thus one self-refutes when one denies that knowledge is a basic good.

If I have established the reasons that knowledge is a fundamental human good, I want now to ask how we might think about the relationship between ignorance and knowledge.

ON KNOWLEDGE AND IGNORANCE

So far I have been talking about knowledge as if we all know what it is and how to get it. The recent invention of the field of ignorance studies suggests why we need to avoid any such complacency, just as we need to avoid any complacency about assuming that all our universities are still committed to the pursuit of knowledge in the teaching and research work they sponsor.

To be clear, as Mathias Gross and Linsey McGoey suggest, even to raise this point by acknowledging and observing ‘what is *not* known is often a challenging and unpopular field of research and teaching’ (2015: 7). Both the challenge and the unpopularity it may arouse is presumably amplified when the object of scrutiny is the very place deemed central to the banishment of ignorance, the university. After all, isn’t the university

the one great institution that bears living witness to the Enlightenment idea ‘that knowledge when systematically produced through adherence to reliable methods of data collection or extraction will inevitably trump superstition?’ This, as they add, is ‘a conceit that dominates the social or physical science to this day’ (Gross and McGoey 2015:3). Yet they understand, as did Joseph Schumpeter, how the works of neo-classical economists ‘present an excellent example of how near to each other... dwell truth and error (Schumpeter 1961: 17).

Haas and Vogt start by proposing that ‘ignorance is the absence of knowledge’ (2015: 19). They note helpfully that the notion of ignorance as the absence of knowledge is philologically based on ‘I’—a negator preface attached to ‘-gnorance’ (from the Greek *gnosis*, which is both the common Greek noun for ‘knowledge’ and also points back to a special kind of religious knowledge or mystical insight). This does not, of course, go very far in specifying the various kinds of ignorance. Haas and Vogt also note that philosophers have said much less about ignorance than knowledge. This bad habit arguably started after Plato saw the trouble Socrates got into by his pursuit of others’ ignorance, courtesy of the *elenctic* irony he put to such stunning use in his dialogic inquiry (Vlastos 1994).

Haas and Vogt suggest there are four kinds of ignorance. Firstly, there is the ignorance based on choice or preference, which they call ‘preferred ignorance’. This is based on a simple desire not to know anything about things like Jane Austen’s novels, the calculus, French cooking, Bitcoin, or the Armenian genocide of 1916). However, Haas and Vogt do not go on to consider some difficult questions about the reasons we might have for preferred ignorance, for example, the fear that we might discover something that might hurt us, like the lump we have had for years that might turn out to be a cancer. I will come back to this shortly.

The second kind of ignorance is what they call ‘investigative ignorance’. This is a kind of fruitful ignorance that starts with the discovery that we don’t know something. This discovery can trigger our curiosity, which, once aroused, means that we have to follow it up and satisfy it. In physics Einstein’s puzzlement about the lack of fit between Newton’s classical mechanics and Maxwell’s laws of electromagnetics was fired by Michelson and Morley’s measurements of the speed of light (d’Inverno 1992: 20). Graham Robb (2013) tells a delightful story about his intuition, gained as he cycled repeatedly about France, that certain ancient roads in France suggested a very large puzzle about the Celts.

The third and most complicated kind of ignorance is what they call ‘presumed knowledge’. This is a special and widespread kind of ignorance

based on thorough-going ignorance but masked by the certainty that we know. Harry Frankfurt's (2005) best-selling book *On Bullshit* addresses the problem created when people talk as if they know something—when they don't. This is another kind of ignorance worth following up.

Finally there is 'complete ignorance', the kind of ignorance that is so profound that we don't even know that we don't know. Sometimes this may reflect the complete absence of anything which we might even know by discovering evidence that might give us clues to something like the origins of human language. Sometimes this complete ignorance may rest on nothing more than our unthinking reliance on certain dominant yet unexamined assumptions that serve to keep the veil of ignorance firmly in place.

This useful initial analytic suggests a certain matrix for thinking about the relation between knowledge and different kinds of ignorance both in general and in the case of universities. Let us propose that we can have knowledge because we have got something right. By this I mean firstly only to say that knowledge requires a well-justified basis for claiming that x is the case. This is the simple claim that I am entitled to say, e.g., that my little dog Panda is on the couch behind me as I type these words. It is descriptively true on the kinds of grounds recently adduced by Searle (2015). To this we might add the idea that we have a well-justified basis for saying we can 'explain' why something is the way it is (by reference to some well-documented inductive method or theory) or that we 'understand' why something is what it is (again on the basis of some well-justified hermeneutic or interpretative method).¹⁰ Finally we might say that in regard to all sorts of practical issues—like should I tell a lie? or should I kill this person who has done no harm to me?—I will know what the right thing to do is. That is, I have well-justified grounds for saying what the right thing to do. Additionally, as virtue ethicists insist, doing the practical thing will also require that we have the courage, prudence, and will to actually do the right thing.

All of these kinds of knowledge imply that we have got something right. How common is it that we get it right? It is probably far less common than we might like to believe, because ignorance plays a large and complex role in the knowledge we claim. Ignorance is the absence of or negation of knowledge. We don't know, and we may not even know we don't know. In what follows I develop the model of ignorance proposed by Haas and Vogt (2015) and suggest there here are several possible important kinds of ignorance as well as different explanations for this. The kinds of ignorance are summarised in the Table 2.1:

Firstly, ignorance can be a consequence of our own lies or the lies of another. In either case we or they know better but decide for any number

of reason to lie and to intentionally deceive. This is to say that an intention to deceive creates ignorance. I will not say much about this kind of ignorance. It is common enough and provides many instances of what Midgley (2001) calls ‘ordinary wickedness’.

The second kind of ignorance is a consequence of errors which have entered into some claim to knowledge that is technical, technological, conceptual, or even logical in nature. The ecological fallacy at work when a statistically large problem like unemployment is used to explain a statistically small problem like suicide is a kind of error that encourages ignorance of this kind. In one respect making a category mistake is another example of this kind of ignorance. This is the kind of error that Ryle says we make when we attribute a property to a thing that it can’t possibly have or mistake a thing for something else or even misattribute something to a whole class. For example, one might say that ‘the movie had too much salt in it’ (Ryle 1949: 16–17). However, this opens up many large issues which again point to the complex relationship between ‘knowledge’ and ‘ignorance’ that too frequently ‘flies under our radar’.

This is evident, for example, when social scientists and administrators try to create or deploy ‘categories of people’ (like ‘the unemployed’, ‘the poor’, ‘the homeless’, ‘the obese’, etc.). Creating categories is a practice often used to manage people as part of the normal work of government, as a means of running everything from registries of births, deaths, and marriages to granting passports, waging war, or managing people seen as a threat, or to ‘helping’ individuals seen as needing support. Ian Hacking (2002) has shed light on the way government officials, scientific experts, and professionals generate categories of people, and how those categories affect those included therein as well as how those categorised can work back on the classifications being applied to change. By ‘work back’ is meant what Anthony Giddens (1990) discussed in his account of the double hermeneutic, i.e., the notion that there is a reciprocity at work when eg., experts begin talking about others: naming people in a particular way can eg., change the way these people act or understand themselves.

Table 2.1 Knowledge and the kinds of ignorance

<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Ignorance</i>	<i>Ignorance</i>	<i>Ignorance</i>	<i>Ignorance</i>
<i>Getting it right</i>	<i>Lies</i>	<i>Error</i>	<i>Delusion</i>	<i>Preferred ignorance</i>
Having well-justified reasons	Knowing deception		Presumed knowledge	Uncomfortable knowledge

Crucially the practice of ‘making up people’ entails identifying, describing, and ‘explaining’ (often in scientific or administrative ways) certain kinds of people *based on the premise that to be in that category the people included must possess certain traits or characteristics in common*. This in turn reveals at least one fascinating and mistaken assumption. This is the assumption that there is some ‘essence’ which the definition of a thing like a ‘cat’, a political institution like ‘democracy’, or a ‘generation’ can and ought to express. Here we see the persistence of a conventional background theory of language that is still dominant in both popular culture and in the social sciences.

The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein did much to highlight what this theory assumes and the ignorance it sustains. Wittgenstein introduced his *Philosophical Investigations* by discussing St. Augustine’s *Confessions*, in which Augustine describes how he remembers learning to use language (Baker and Hacker 2005: 1; Wittgenstein 1953). Wittgenstein saw here a conventional idea about human language: namely, that (i) words name objects, and (ii) sentences are combinations of words. Wittgenstein argues this is the naïve basis of a lot of subsequent philosophical accounts of reality, language, and truth. This is not so much a theory of language or a theory of meaning as it is a common, still conventional, and widely admired framework of thought. This conception of language holds that every word has a single meaning, that this meaning is correlated with the word, and that the meaning of a word is the object it stands for. A further extension of this idea is that if the meaning of a word is the object it stands for, then a sentence is a collection of names entailing that the essential function of sentences is to describe how things are. One further implication of this is a simple theory of truth which holds that when we match up a sentence with the way things are we will have truth.

None of these assumptions actually holds true. Wittgenstein, for example, demonstrated that ‘vagueness’ and the way a word can have multiple meanings are entrenched and pervasive aspects of all languages, (1953: 104–108). In this way Wittgenstein punched the first big hole in the classical theory of categories (1953: 66–71). Classical theory says a category has *clear boundaries*, which are defined by *common properties*. Wittgenstein pointed out that a category like *game* does not meet this criterion, since there are no common properties shared by all games. Games, like any other category (like ‘animal’, ‘species’, or ‘fruit’) are similar to one another in a wide variety of ways. That, and not a single, well-defined collection of common properties, is what makes *game or fruit* a category.

This insight has led to a lot of fruitful work by cognitive psychologists like Rosch and Lloyd (1978) showing how the conventional view about language and categories doesn't work. If the classical theory were both correct and complete, no member of a category would have any special status. This is because in the classical theory, the properties defining the category are shared by all members, and so all members have equal. Rosch's (1975) research on prototype effects has been aimed at showing asymmetries among category members and asymmetric structures within categories. She pointed to basic asymmetries (called *prototype effects*). Her research subjects judged certain members of the categories as being more representative of the category than other members. The implication is that all categories, both natural (like 'species', 'atomic element', or 'dog') and social (like 'the poor', 'Christians', or 'youth') are inherently fuzzy. Lakoff (1982, 1987) has since shown how ordinary everyday language use is reliant on metaphor and that metaphor is primarily conceptual, conventional, and part of the ordinary system of thought and language. It shows that all of us rely on a vast system of metaphor that structures our everyday conceptual systems, including most abstract concepts, and that lies behind much of everyday language and its specialised use found in the physical and social sciences. The general ignorance of this constitutes a major source of error in most sciences—and again points to the complex interdependency of knowledge and ignorance.

The third kind of ignorance is a consequence of the delusion that we know something when we don't. We think we know that x is happening—or we may even think we know why x is happening—when we actually don't. This is most likely to occur because we accept the authority exercised by a powerful set of ideas, discourses, or an intellectual tradition that insists that some part of the world is to be described or explained in a particular mistaken way. This is possibly the most widespread kind of ignorance, both historically and currently.

In our time certain kinds of religious beliefs or widespread popular and authoritative intellectual traditions like eugenics, behaviourism in psychology, or neo-classical economics provide clear-cut examples of ignorance as delusion.

There is now general agreement that the economic recession of 2008 resulted from widespread delusion or folly, as key individuals and firms who competed in the financial markets developed new commodities like 'collateral debt obligations' that sold insurance against risky home mortgage debt, which in turn led others to bet against the credit-default-swap market thereby created. These financial actors legitimised their practices by referring to eco-

conomic goods like ‘rationality’, ‘efficiency’, and ‘financial innovation’ (Lewis 2011). Not only did the major financial players, including the regulators, not see what was happening—let alone understand what they were doing—neither did neo-classical economists. Equally, it is clear that the discipline of economics was actively involved in bringing about ‘modern finance’ because it was actively used to create the practices of financialisation that in turn led to new ways of packaging and selling the risk associated with low-quality residential mortgage-loan debt (Kessler 2015:338). Neo-classical economics provided a belief system that framed this activity as ‘financial innovation’. Creating and selling ‘collateralised debt obligation’ securities was legitimised as ‘socially beneficial’ by making false analogies (i.e., category mistakes) with ‘technological innovation’ (Engelen et al. 2011). More importantly, however, it became impossible to distinguish the criminally negligent and delusional practices of financial markets and organisations like Lehmann Brothers from the belief system of neo-classical economics and the kind of ignorance that was intrinsic to its foundational and constitutive assumptions, its boundaries, and its discursive performative capacity (Kessler 2015: 339; McCloskey 1994, 2002; Mirowski 1989, 2013).

The parallels between this kind of ignorance and the project to ‘marketise’ public universities seem to me overwhelming. The social harms this creates may take longer to become apparent than was the case with the great recession of 2008—though even in that case it took some decades for the relevant kind of ignorance to wreak its havoc and to become known.

The final kind of ignorance that also matters a lot is ‘preferred ignorance’ typically involving what Heffernan (2011) calls ‘wilful blindness’. This choice for ignorance occurs frequently because of social pressures that enforce conformity to a particular belief or course of action. Irving Janis brilliantly illuminated this in those policy-making processes involving what he called ‘group-think’ (Janis 1982). A terrifying example of the interdependence of ignorance and knowledge, as Milgram (1974) showed in his research on ‘obedience to authority’, is how most ordinary men and women will do terrible things to other ordinary people when told to so by a person in authority (like a scientist) in the belief that they are advancing the cause of religion, love of country, or—in Milgram’s case—scientific knowledge. Sometimes this ignorance involves outright fear of authority, leading its victims into a collective ‘state of denial’, instanced typically in cases where a state or some powerful figure in an organisation is actively causing death and terror (Cohen 2001).

Again, though we need to be careful not to overstate the parallels, there is an equivalent social and moral pressure exerted inside modern

universities to keep the illusion alive that we have actually ‘marketised’ the universities: this is perhaps more akin to Columbus’s behaviour after he ‘discovered’ the Americas. Until his death Columbus insisted that he had actually discovered a transatlantic path to India and threatened to hang any of his crew who dared disagree (Todorov 1999).¹¹

These kinds of ignorance are not tight, seamless, or well bounded. They can be states of mind that are porous.¹² For example, it remains an open question whether the ‘ignorance’ which characterised claims that the American and British governments had evidence that the Hussein regime in Iraq up to 2003 possessed ‘weapons of mass destruction’ was a result of delusion, error, or lying—or some mix of all three. The big point here is that whatever knowledge is, its relationship to ignorance is deep and complex. At the least, the argument made here suggests that knowledge is not some kind of fixed box of truths or ‘information’ to be transmitted and memorised (which is an idea promulgated by encyclopaedias, some textbooks, or TV quiz shows) so much as a collection of problems and issues yet to be resolved. It is this conception of knowledge as a box of existing truths that can be transmitted—or as we might now say ‘downloaded’ that has enabled the conceit that we can ‘commodify’ knowledge or ‘marketise’ the university to get a foothold in modern academia.

The resolution of the above-mentioned problems, which includes the meta-problem of how we know the difference between knowledge and ignorance itself, requires further examination, which I propose to do in the discussion about the special role played by universities that follows. If I have established the reasons that knowledge is a fundamental human good, and how we might think about the relationship between ignorance and knowledge, I want now to establish why universities are a space devoted to the good that is knowledge, and why autonomous universities are valuable. I want in particular to add to the discussion of ignorance and knowledge by highlighting the special role played by practices like critical inquiry, the unity of teaching and research, and deliberative reasoning carried on in public, and why it is that a Humboldtian university is best suited to be where this takes place.

THE IDEA OF AUTONOMY AND THE UNIVERSITY

In 1988 hundreds of universities worldwide signed onto the *Magna Charta Universitatum* (Bologna University 1988). Let me be clear and simple about the initial conception of ‘public’ involved here. This conception relies on what Finnis (1980) calls a ‘reflective equilibrium’ between ‘description and evaluation’.

The Bologna Charter clearly outlined the essential conception of a public university in terms of its autonomy. That idea is plainly central to the Charter's account of the university:

The university is an autonomous institution at the heart of societies differently organised because of geography and historical heritage; it produces, examines, appraises and hands down culture by research and teaching. To meet the needs of the world around it, its research and teaching must be morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic power. Teaching and research in universities must be inseparable if their tuition is not to lag behind changing needs, the demands of society, and advances in scientific knowledge [italics added].

The essential idea of public-ness here goes firstly to the extent to which a university is actually autonomous, that is, free from excessive interference, regulation, surveillance, or control either by the state or by those elements and institutions constitutive of whatever the 'market' is. Secondly, a university is public to the extent to which its core practices, that is, teaching and research, are carried out as public exercises in reasoning and engaging in the puzzles of knowledge. To draw on the terms used by the Charter, this seems to be reliant on the extent to which a university is 'morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic power'.

Why might such a conception of autonomy or freedom from 'political authority and economic power' matter? One answer was given by Immanuel Kant, an answer which still resonates in our own time.

KANT AND THE IDEA OF PUBLIC REASONING

In his famous essay, 'What is Enlightenment?' Kant (1784) made an important distinction between conceptions of the 'private' and the 'public' which matter when thinking about universities. The distinction between conceptions of the 'private' and the 'public' as he argues, has nothing to do with either the kind of space in which we operate: it has everything to do with the degree of autonomy we have to speak publicly—or not. As he notes, firstly—

The public use of one's reason must always be free, and it alone can bring about enlightenment among men. The private use of reason, on the other hand, may often be very narrowly restricted.

This is because ‘the private’ goes to the way authority works.

For Kant ‘the private’ involves a hierarchy of authority deploying a top-down logic which is both monologic and directive: it involves directions from people and offices arranged hierarchically with an expectation of obedience. It works in this way because people speaking ‘privately’ are to be obeyed because those people are themselves caught up in a longer or more extended chain of authority:

Private use I call that which one may make of it in a particular civil post or office which is entrusted to him. Many affairs which are conducted in the interest of the community require a certain mechanism through which some members of the community must passively conduct themselves with an artificial unanimity, so that the government may direct them to public ends, or at least prevent them from destroying those ends.

As Kant goes on to note, that is why a priest instructing his congregation of a thousand people in the Catechism is engaging in a ‘private’ act:

For what he teaches as a consequence of his office as a representative of the church, this he considers something about which he has not freedom to teach according to his own lights; it is something which *he is appointed to propound at the dictation of and in the name of another*. He will say, ‘Our church teaches this or that; those are the proofs which it adduces’. The use, therefore, which an appointed teacher makes of his reason before *his congregation is merely private*, because this congregation is only a domestic one (even if it be a large gathering); with respect to it, as a priest, he is not free, nor can he be free, because he carries out the orders of another.

Kant contrasts this ‘private’ speaking (and the lack of autonomy it entails) with the ‘public’ exercise of reasoning oriented to what he calls Enlightenment. For Kant, ‘public’ reasoning means ‘the use which a person makes of it as a scholar before the reading public’. To achieve this ‘nothing is required but freedom, and indeed the most harmless among all the things to which this term can properly be applied’. It is the freedom to make public use of one's reason at every point.

Kant saw scholars as people who engaged with the literate world through the public use of their ‘own reason’, a position which linked freedom and reason: ‘[the] scholar who speaks through his writings to the public as such, i.e., the world, enjoys in this public use of reason an unrestricted freedom to use his own rational capacities and to speak his own mind’ (Kant

1784:2). Saying this is to already raise implicitly some interesting questions about the way contemporary academics use the space of a lecture theatre or a seminar room and the capacity and willingness of academics to care about their students and to teach well. This goes to what I call ‘public scholarship’, which is how academic freedom is best made real.

THE UNIVERSITY AS A SITE OF PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

This Kantian conception of public reasoning has proved an attractive and defensible idea even to this day. Modern philosophers like Alasdair MacIntyre, who is no Kantian, have elaborated an idea of the university as a space given over to untrammelled public reasoning. Indeed, MacIntyre goes so far as to say that the commitment to reasoning defines the distinctive role and value of a university. As he says—

When it is demanded of a university community that it justify itself by specifying what its peculiar and essential function is, that function which if it were not to exist, no other institution could discharge, the response of that community ought to be that universities are places where conceptions of, and *standards of rational justification* are elaborated, put to work in the detailed practices of enquiry, and themselves rationally evaluated, so that only from a university can the wider society learn how to conduct its own debates, theoretical or practical in a rationally defensible way (MacIntyre 1990: 222).

The idea of the public here is understood to include scholarly practices like teaching and research, both oriented to what Kant called the ‘public use of reason’. This involves what Kant called ‘an unrestricted freedom to use his own rational capacities and to speak his own mind’. This clearly links a conception of knowledge as a public good and the university as a place devoted to both producing and teaching the ‘public good’ that is knowledge. This is to understand the university as a space given over to public scholarship

One very powerful adumbration of this idea has been developed by Jurgen Habermas and his account of the ‘public sphere’. Contemporary exponents of a neo-Kantian theory of communicative action like Habermas (1983, 1996, 2004) or Dahlberg (2000) have gone to a lot of trouble to spell out some of the protocol ideas that can give some shape to the ways we can currently engage in acts of ‘public’ reasoning. Since Kant this tradition has attempted to (re)construct the conditions for the possibility of free

and rational communicative interaction. At stake is the question, can we stipulate the kinds of conditions which a university might orient to, such that it creates the kind of ‘public sphere’ that Kant was describing in 1784?

Central to modern accounts like those Habermas (2004) and Dahlberg (2000) is the idea that ‘understanding’ (*verständigung*) is central to [all] communicative action’. At its most basic, ‘understanding’ simply means mutual comprehension, that is, that people are using the same words with the same meanings so as to achieve a degree of shared meaning and mutual comprehension. At its most elevated, ‘understanding’ means a shared consensus about the universal validity of claims people make to speak the truth or to know the good. This accomplishment, says Habermas (1983: 42), seems to require that participants need to believe that ‘a rationally motivated agreement could in principle be achieved ... provided, e.g., that the argumentation could be conducted openly enough and continued long enough’.

Dahlberg (2000: 10–15) identified six ‘idealized characteristics’ in Habermas’s account of communicative action. These elements make up what has been called the ‘ideal speech situation’ (Habermas 1996: 34). ‘Communicative action’ that enables a ‘public sphere’ involves a mix of structural possibilities and personal attitudes or dispositions.

Structurally, ‘communicative action’ requires firstly that everyone potentially affected by the claims being discussed is taken into account. This is because communicative action involves the identification of issues and reciprocal testing of problematic validity claims. This requires that the conversation take place as if everyone potentially affected by the claims being discussed is taken into account. Secondly, everyone ought to be equally able to participate because communicative action presupposes a formal and discursive equality among participants. This implies that each participant is to be given equal opportunity to make claims and question any assertion whatsoever. Thirdly, as Habermas has acknowledged, this entails social equality—granted that he allows that unequal social, economic, or cultural disparities (involving, e.g., different levels of income, cultural skills, or status) can affect the capacity of people to participate fully (Habermas 1996: 308). Fourthly, granting that both states and corporations seem to be characterised by a will to dominate using techniques of instrumental rationality, communicative action needs to be protected from both the market and the state.

Communicative action also requires certain attitudes like reflexivity, patience, and the ability to take turns. Critical reflexivity is a fifth condition.

People need to be willing to change their minds as they critically examine their own prejudices and beliefs. Finally, Habermas requires that participants in the ideal-speech setting will bring goodwill to bear—involving a commitment to honesty, an assumption of impartiality, and respectful listening—because participants seek to understand rather than provoke disagreements. Those taking part also need to remain open and sensitive to how others understand themselves and the world (Habermas 1996: 34).

This analytic decomposition of Habermas's account of 'communicative action' is a useful frame for thinking about and assessing the idea that modern universities provide a space in which the public exercise or practice of reasoning occurs—and occurs regularly.

Though this is more a digression than an argument, this account of public reasoning implies that the source of a university's funding which may affect its status as a private or a public university, is not all that significant or interesting by itself. The funding source of a public university may be supplied by a community through philanthropy or fundraising, or it may be secured through the fees paid by students, or it may be fully funded by a government. All that matters is whether the autonomy of the university is protected and enhanced—or degraded even destroyed. In each case the autonomy and the capacity to engage freely in public reasoning can be eroded or destroyed by making regulations or attaching conditions and expectations to the conduct of teaching and research, the two core functions that define the university, which has the effect of compromising the intellectual autonomy and responsibility of the university, and those whose job it is to teach and do research. To this extent, a fully government-funded university can be, in the sense that Kant made famous (but perhaps not so well known as it deserves to be), a private university (like the Russian universities between 1930 and 1989), while a conventionally defined private university like Harvard is well able to and has long acted as a public university can, and should. In each case what is at stake is an idea of 'public scholarship', an idea that was given exemplary expression by Alexander von Humboldt in 1810.

THE HUMBOLDTIAN UNIVERSITY

A conception of the university as a space of uncoerced freedom devoted to both teaching and research informed the development of the University of Berlin, the world's first modern research university, which opened in October 1810. The university was in effect designed by Alexander von

Humboldt, the great German academic reformer, and the key design principles were outlined in Humboldt's (1970) influential memorandum of 1810. In that memo we see the way a conception of autonomy was crucial to that idea of the university. In particular we will also see in Humboldt's idea of the integration of teaching and research a defensible and unified conception of knowledge as a public good, and an idea about the university as a space devoted to public scholarship.

This is spelled out in Humboldt's (1970) famous memorandum of 1810, which addressed the relationship, first, between teachers and students, and, second, between universities and the state.

LINKING TEACHING AND RESEARCH

The first proposal is based on the German concept of *Wissenschaft*. This omnibus idea embraces English terms like *knowledge*, *science*, or *scholarship* (Elton 1986). Its value lies in the emphasis on treating 'knowledge' less as a fixed entity or product and more as an activity. Humboldt uses this idea to argue that unlike a secondary school, a university understands that *wissenschaft* is always and only about problems and issues yet to be resolved, whether in research or teaching, or in pure and applied kinds of knowledge: a school on the other hand said Humboldt, is properly concerned essentially with 'agreed and accepted knowledge'. One consequence, Humboldt says, is that in universities 'the teacher is then not there for the sake of the student, but both have their justification in the service of (*wissenschaft*) scholarship'.

What Humboldt had in mind was a link between teaching and research in which both were to be carried out in the service of *wissenschaft*. The Humboldtian university was set up so that teaching and research were carried out in the same institution, primarily by the same people. In practice, we might quickly admit that an identity or unity between research and teaching of the kind Humboldt envisaged has never been established anywhere—nor is it likely to be.

However, it is useful to remember that this idea has been used recently to inform experiments in university teaching. For Lewis Elton, as for Humboldt, the key to the promotion of scholarship is the way in which research and teaching can be connected in higher education. Following Humboldt, Elton argues that research and teaching should be joined in a process whereby students work together with academics in the service of scholarship (Elton 2008b). Elton references the work of Ernst Boyer

(1990) as a leading advocate for linking research and undergraduate teaching. (Boyer talked about the relationship between teaching and research in terms of four kinds of scholarship: discovery, integration, application, and teaching and learning.) This concept of scholarship has since been elaborated by Griffiths (2004) and Healey and Jenkins (2007), among others, who have designed scholarly-based pedagogic models organised around the teaching–research nexus which they refer to as ‘research-based learning’.

As Elton (2008a) notes there have been repeated attempts to introduce this Humboldtian concept to university students through the development of programs like the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP, apparently introduced first at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and later places like Imperial College and RMIT University. However, UROP, and similar attempts at linking research and teaching (Jenkins et al. 2007) are liable to treat students as if they were actual researchers, which they are not, or at least are only rarely, except possibly in their final undergraduate years.

Connecting teaching and research at the undergraduate level has also become central to what is called the ‘student-centred model’ of learning (Ramsden 2001). This is conventionally justified by some as a useful approach to preparing students for what is called the ‘knowledge society’ (Scott 2002) as well as for developing qualities of professional expertise among undergraduates (Weiman 2004; Brew 2006). At the same time, linking teaching and research in the undergraduate curriculum is seen to have the potential to enable students to develop their ‘problem-solving’ and ‘coping skills’ for a ‘complex world’ (Barnett 2000a, b, 2006). It was not until the advent of problem-based learning in the 1960s (Savin-Baden and Howell Major 2004) that the principle of ‘learning in a research mode’ (*forschendes lernen*) became possible, first in applied disciplines, particularly Medicine and Engineering, where there are ‘real’ problems. This changed when problem-based learning was extended into enquiry-based learning, for example, in English literature, through a seminal paper by Hutchings and O’Rourke (2002), and then to a variety of disciplines in, for instance, the current programs of the Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in British Universities like Manchester, Surrey, Sheffield, Reading, and Gloucestershire. While in Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programs students learn through conducting actual research, in problem-based learning and enquiry-based learning, they learn in a research mode, something that can be carried out at any

level of sophistication. Enquiry-based learning belongs to a tradition of ‘discovery learning’ and is an approach to teaching and learning which will certainly take different forms in different disciplines, but in principle is applicable to all disciplines (see Rowland 2006).

Until the advent of performance indicators and the retreat into a ‘culture of audit’ replete with quality-assurance metrics and customer satisfaction surveys offered a real opportunity to develop the Humboldtian conception of making real the relationship between teachers and students.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

There was a second, separate part to Humboldt’s famous memorandum. Humboldt proposed that the universities in which research and teaching would be carried out should exist *in Einsamkeit und Freiheit* (‘in loneliness and freedom’). While the concept of academic freedom is well recognised, the idea that academic work should take place ‘in loneliness’ is at first glance possibly somewhat puzzling. That puzzle has been addressed by Elton (2008a: 227) who suggests that *Einsamkeit* refers to the apparently purposeless activity of universities (at least as far as the state is concerned)—activity that leads indirectly, but constructively, to the well-being of the state and the formation of citizens committed to the common good. As Humboldt (1970: 3) put it, ‘the inner organisation of these institutions must bring about and maintain an uninterrupted, always revitalising, but unforced and intentionless collaboration’. Humboldt’s prescription suggests that the best way for universities to serve the community and itself is to be left free from any interference from the state while engaging in public scholarship.

As for the modern idea of academic freedom, contemporary scholars like Fuller (2010: 279) argue that it is only by preserving the autonomy of universities, that the university’s capacity to translate research into teaching will continue to promote the good that is knowledge itself. As Fuller sees it, the university is a universalising agent explicitly dedicated to ‘manufacturing’ knowledge *as* ‘a public good’ rather than promoting the more ambiguous idea of knowledge *for* ‘the public good’.

Fuller spells out what he means when he says it is only by making research and teaching an integrated activity that this public good can flourish. That knowledge itself is produced according to the principle of public reasoning before a universal audience. Likewise, the teaching practices found in the university need also to be conducted according to the ‘as-if’ principle that

all knowledge claims are directed to a universal audience that can check or criticise those claims. Equally, linking teaching and research does not allow unresolved issues, continued controversies, and new discoveries and inventions to spread *randomly* like a virus, that is, both widely and haphazardly. Rather, controversies and new discoveries and inventions are Incorporated into a regularly reproduced body of collective knowledge as represented by the university's curriculum.¹³

Humboldt's mix of *Einsamkeit und Freiheit* accords well with the self-portrait of the traditional university and its academic staff (Middlehurst and Elton 1992). Certainly academics working in Anglo-American universities have long promoted a conception of academic freedom as central to any defensible idea of the university. This conception of academic freedom often refers to particular aspects of the public university, for example, its serving as both 'critic and conscience of society' or as a site of 'public scholarship' (Karran 2007). What is less clear is whether these conceptions are aspirational, descriptive, or something else altogether, like an elaborate defence of university governance which to outsiders can look a lot like the 'herding of kittens' or 'organised anarchy' (Cohen and March 1986).

The modern idea of academic freedom itself can be deconstructed into two related ideas. The first is the idea that universities are, or ought to be, autonomous bodies. The second idea is that the academic staff within such autonomous bodies are or ought to be free to determine what they will teach or do research on.

I think it can be said that from their origins and into the late twentieth century universities in America and Britain (and Australia to some extent) enjoyed a significant measure of corporate identity and autonomy. (This generalisation can be applied even to non-Anglo-American university systems in countries like France and Germany where the state appointed and paid professors and regulated the curriculum.) It was accepted that universities should enjoy autonomy as institutions, governing their own affairs internally and making their own decisions on academic matters. Wilhelm Humboldt emphasised 'the union of teaching and research in the work of the individual scholar or scientist' (Anderson 2010: 2). Humboldt also argued in 1810 that universities did their work best, and were most useful to society and the state, when they were freed from excessive external surveillance or control (Nybom 2012: 149). It was seen as a virtue that, like the professions, universities stood outside the system of market relations, and cultivated both higher values and 'objective knowledge' of a permanent kind. This sort of autonomy was an aspect of classic European and Anglo-

American liberalism, which saw in a civil society constituted out of self-governing institutions the best protection of liberty (Anderson 2010: 2).

Closely related to this story about institutional autonomy was the idea that academics as teachers, scholars, and scientists should be free to pursue the truth, and to teach and publish what they researched as they saw fit, constrained only by the requirements of truth. The very conception of objective knowledge, based on rigorous intellectual criteria and subject to peer review, promised to protect universities from political interference. In most democracies, academic freedom came to include the right of academics to be active citizens, and to pronounce on political questions, making universities the home of public intellectuals and a creative and independent cultural force.

In America the American Association of University Professors released a statement on the Principles of Academic Freedom and Tenure in 1940, a statement subsequently endorsed by over 180 scholarly and professional bodies.¹⁴ In the United States, the idea of academic freedom has been grounded variously in the First Amendment, contractual rights found in letters of appointment or collective bargaining agreements, and common law cases (e.g., *Perry v. Sindermann*, cited in Eugben 2002).

More recently the Global Colloquium of University Presidents (2005: 1) offered a conventional expression of academic freedom when it spoke about 'the freedom to conduct research, teach, speak, and publish, subject to the norms and standards of scholarly inquiry, without interference or penalty, wherever the search for truth and understanding may lead. As Gappa et al. (2007: 226–27) note, academic freedom has been understood to include the freedom of teachers to discuss their subjects in classrooms, freedom to conduct research and make public its results, and freedom to speak and write as citizens. This also includes the idea that academics have the autonomy to plan their courses, select the materials they will use, and decide the best methods with which to teach the materials to their students. Similarly, they can decide the best methods to examine their topics and exercise discretion in searching out funding sources for their research.

In each instance substantial autonomy is required in defining and structuring the core elements of their work. Public scholarship and academic freedom are frequently linked, as Andrews (2007: 1) points out, because of the commendable impulse to regard the work of teachers and students 'not as the isolated, self-indulgent actions of a campus segregated from society, but as the contributions of scholar-citizens with membership in a larger community'. In this light writers like Cohen and Yapa (2005: 1)

seem to go further than the Global Colloquium of University Presidents when they claim ‘public scholarship’ involves, or ought to involve, scholarly and creative work which produces ‘public goods’ like accessible and valuable research and transformative teaching. Barnett (1997: 174) goes much further still when he claims that academic freedom is essentially a ‘critical’ activity:

By subjecting the curriculum content of higher education to criticism, we subject much of society’s cognitive structure (and thereby much of modern society itself) to criticism. This ... is a condition of the maintenance of an open society in the modern age.

Etherington (2014: 1) nicely refers to this as the idea of the public university as ‘a civic institution formed around the pursuit of unprofitable truth’.

Leaving aside temporarily the question of how much this is descriptive and how much normative, I will, to simplify matters refer to this as an ‘imaginary’. Castoriadis (1998) used this category nicely to refer to what Thompson called ‘the creative and symbolic dimension of the social world, the dimension through which human beings create their ways of living together and their ways of representing their collective life’ (Thompson 1984: 6). The category of the ‘imaginary’ also decisively installs a regard for the irrational and the undecidable into any social theoretical frame.¹⁵ University academics have long constructed an imaginary construct about the university in terms variously of ‘academic freedom’ or ‘public scholarship’.

As we have already seen this imaginary construct has a genealogy going back at least to Kant (1784). Kant drew on a distinction between ‘public’ and ‘private’ to defend the normative practice of scholars engaging in untrammelled ‘public deliberation’. In our time there are still many prepared to defend this position. The idea has been tirelessly adumbrated in the United States from Arendt (2006a, b) to Cohen and Yapa (2005) and Mitchell (2008). Habermas (1991, 1992, 1996), for example, treats universities as a crucial part of the modern ‘public sphere’. Menand (1996: 4) likewise emphasises the social value of unconstrained discourse:

... academic freedom is not simply a kind of bonus enjoyed by workers within the system, a philosophical luxury universities could function just as effectively, and much more efficiently, without. It is the key legitimating concept of the entire enterprise.

Recently Docherty (2011: 4) inverted Newman's famous defence of the university when proposing the 'university of the idea':

The university is above all governed by action of discovery ... such discovery and inventiveness—the adventure that is a university—is shaped by an ongoing openness to possibility. The word that we usually give to such openness to possibility is just *freedom* ... it is through the *search* for what we call true (in science), for that which we call good (in social sciences) and for that which we call beautiful (in aesthetics, arts and humanities) that we practise this fundamental activity of extending freedom in just democracy.

So far I have emphasised the idea that knowledge itself is a basic good and that that good is best realised in an autonomous university where academic staff link teaching and research in the practice of public scholarship. Any conception of higher education as a public good also entails conceptions of freedom, autonomy, authenticity, democracy, and rational criticality (Barnett 2011a, b: 46). However, there is another consideration involving a basic idea about the value of teaching in a university, namely, the value of establishing an ethic of care.

THE TEACHING–LEARNING RELATIONSHIP

The elements of what I call an ethic of care can be traced back to Hannah Arendt's (1958) conception of 'natality' and the obligation to love the world, and to a later body of work produced by feminists like Carol Gilligan (1989), Nell Noddings (2002), and Virginia Held (2006). Central to this is the commitment to the kind of care that defines the teacher–student relationship as a pedagogical relationship.

Ronald Barnett (2011a, b) is among those who have argued for an 'ontological turn' in pedagogy centring on the quality of the relationship between student and teacher, which he says will depend minimally on the capacity of the teacher to display care for the student (Barnett 2011a, b: 48).

Barnett draws on Heidegger's (1985), conception of 'care' (which in German is *sorge*), which has the double meaning of 'anxiety' and 'solicitude'. This care for the student ought to run in parallel with the teacher's care for his or her discipline or professional field. This care is twofold: a care for the discipline or professional field *and* a care toward the student. This latter care overlaps with the former care but also goes beyond it. For in the pedagogical relationship in higher education, the teacher has an eye

to the personally edifying properties of an authentic learning experience on the part of the student (Barnett 2011a, b: 48). Authentic encounters with a disciplinary or professional field can yield a transformation in the student (such that students on graduation day may be heard to say that ‘this course has changed my life’). Higher education is able to elicit such transformations through the student being encouraged to ‘leap forth’ (Heidegger, 1985: 159) into strange, open-ended, and challenging situations. In the process, worthwhile dispositions and qualities are brought forward within the student (Barnett 2011a, b: 48). A higher education elicits ‘epistemic virtues’ (Brady and Pritchard 2003). (This is *not* to pretend that this always happens; there is much evidence to indicate that, in practice, higher education sometimes falls short of such an ideal.)

As well as exhibiting care toward the student as a knower (an epistemological subject) and as an acquirer of skills (a practical subject), the teacher also shows care toward the student as a person (Barnett 2011a, b: 49). This ontological care trumps the other two forms of care, for it is through the student coming to have a larger sense of him or herself—aided by the formation of appropriate dispositions and qualities—that the student has the wherewithal to tackle challenging epistemological and practical tasks. This is what Barnett means when he offers a distinctive notion of education which needs its own time and is identified by him as ‘pedagogical time’ (2007: 53); a time for ‘ontological’ (i.e., real) change. Students are not going to put themselves out to advance their learning—practical or conceptual—unless they have a will to do so. While there lies a heavy responsibility on the teacher to help to nurture this unfolding, the students also bear responsibility for helping themselves to develop the relevant dispositions and qualities.

Responsibility, authenticity, engagement: it is concepts such as these that help to fill out the character of the pedagogical relationship for both teacher *and* student (Barnett 2011a, b: 50). The question arises, therefore, what happens when policy-makers and or university managers start to insist that the pedagogical relationship be redefined so as to accommodate the idea that the university is now part of a higher-education market. The short answer is that it is not possible to commodify the educational relationship.

The pedagogical relationship requires, as we have just seen, a *putting-in* on the part of both the teacher and the student. In terms of an analogy, we might think of it as a relationship like that between a personal trainer

and someone wanting to get more fit or flexible or to train for something like a marathon. The putting-in required differs between the two parties.

The person who wants to get fit will need to work and train hard and practice the various physical exercises needed and do so repeatedly under the guidance and advice of the trainer. The trainer likewise will need to be able to show the trainee what they need to do by example and then to display the kind of close attention and supervision that will enable the trainee to improve over time. Both will need to display the appropriate but different emotional dispositions—like a willingness to learn and to take criticism and feedback and resilience on the part of the trainee and a combination of care and ‘tough love’ on the part of the trainer.

The ‘putting-in’ on the part of the students is toward the curriculum experiences in which they are involved—reading texts or watching films, taking notes, ‘working on their essays, contributing to seminars, thinking through their contributions, taking care in the laboratory, trying out new skills, imagining themselves afresh in virtual life and engaging with other students’ (Barnett 2011a, b: 51). This is an ‘existential responsibility’ on the part of the student (Gibbs 2004:107).

The ‘putting-in’ on the part of the teacher is more complex. It involves both designing and framing the curriculum experiences *as well as* engaging with the student. The teacher engages *with* the student in order to engage the student *on* his or her experiences. It is this asymmetry, this limited mutuality, that led Martin Buber to say of ‘the relation of education’ that it ‘is based on a concrete but one-sided experience of inclusion’ (Buber 2002: 118).

The possibility of care will be immediately destroyed by moves to ‘commodify’ the education experience (which, as I argue in Chap. 5, can only be delusional anyway). This is a different proposition to the possibility that a university might wish to sell students a qualification simply as an exchange of money for a credential without any evidence of effort, or even time spent on some activity that looks like ‘education’. Why anyone would want such an exchange is not clear.

More seriously, the possibility of care is likely to be compromised immediately and severely by any move to instrumentalise either the ‘scholarship of discovery’ and/or the ‘scholarship of learning and teaching’. Fuller (2010: 293), for example, identifies a range of harms when people are paid according to the ‘efficiency’ of their knowledge products, that is, the capacity to ‘produce more for less’. Specific forms of knowledge are instrumentalised precisely when, for example, contract-based—or worse

‘casualised’—teachers replace tenured academics, or when automated technologies replace explicit reasoning and tacit knowledge methods, when summaries and syntheses (e.g., Wikipedia) replace original works, and when short-term ‘product cycles’ replace long-term significance.

As for students, the shift to instrumentalising the educational experience results in the overcrowding of activities in time: what is lost, for example, is the time simply to think. We will return to this question in Chap. 8 when we ask how students experience the contemporary university.

So far I have been making a case that knowledge is a basic human good, and that universities have been conceived of as autonomous spaces where it is possible to both teach and produce knowledge and to explore, practise, and compare various kinds of rationality. One implication of this is that it is not possible to ‘commodify’ knowledge so conceived. Equally I have made the case that if we conceive of education as a relationship of care involving different kinds of ‘putting in’ by both teachers and by students, we again cannot imagine how this could ever be commodified. (I will return to the question of commodification in Chap. 5).

CONCLUSION

As Sharon Andrews (2007) suggests, the idea of academic freedom continues to be an important part of the modern academic’s self-image in Britain, America, and Australia. It seems that many academics want to be understood as people committed to nurturing critical thought and advancing ‘knowledge’, though whether they have the courage to do anything to secure this position is an entirely different matter. Apart from asking how much modern academics actually make such a commitment real in their practice today, we also need to ask how well has this conception of a public university been realised historically?

We need to do this if we are to understand what the modern universities have become and to understand better what they were like in the decades leading up to the 1980s. Was ‘public scholarship’ understood as the active practice of criticism and ethical reflexivity as they were understood and actively promoted in universities across the bulk of the twentieth century? How, for example, did this idea connect to the way knowledge was both taught and produced in universities in the first three-quarters of the twentieth century? How and when did this idea begin to be compromised by policy changes initiated by governments in the 1980s and since?

It is to these issues that I turn in the following chapters.

NOTES

1. I make this observation largely to warrant my unwillingness to engage with describing, let alone analyzing, the details of the governance structures and accountability arrangements for universities in each country. One example of the complexity involved will have to suffice: in Britain, unlike the United States and Australia, there are no ‘government-owned universities’. In formal terms all UK universities are autonomous bodies and most British universities are charities. In England, most (all but 20) higher-education institutes are exempt charities. In the United Kingdom ‘public’ universities received funding directly from one of the funding councils for teaching and research, while ‘private’ universities are funded by tuition fees alone. (There are only five fully privately funded universities: i.e., they receive no government subsidy). The oldest universities were incorporated by Royal Charter, while most newer ones were established by acts of Parliament and most of the newest universities are Higher Education Corporations, enacted under the *Education Reform Act* of 1988, which incorporated the polytechnical colleges. The Privy Council exercises overall control over degree-awarding powers, allowing for the granting of foundation degrees, taught degrees, and research degrees. Institutions that hold degree-awarding powers are termed *Recognised Bodies*—this list includes universities, university colleges, and colleges of the University of London. While legally, ‘university’ refers to an institution that has been granted the right to use the title, in common usage it normally includes colleges of the University of London. These include a number of institutions like University College of London, the London School of Economics, and Kings College London.
2. See Barnett (2000a, b) for such an ‘essentialist’ account.
3. That said, as I will argue later and all other things being equal, the ideal circumstance is one in which the full resources of a community are used by governments to invest in a viable system of public universities in a planned and purposeful way and in terms that clearly stipulate the value of promoting and maintaining the highest level of intellectual autonomy.
4. Among the many criticisms of utilitarianism, some philosophers have worried about making happiness the criterion for judging what is moral, while others have pointed to the sheer variability of human experience and the differences between people, which makes it hard to arrive at common view about morality. Some have pointed to the problem of ‘moral monsters’, i.e., people whose happiness consists of causing pain to others. Others have wondered what happens to the idea that happiness is the mark of the moral on those occasions when we do the right thing by our families or friends but at the expense of our well-being or happiness.
5. See also Finnis (2013), which offers an even more elaborated account.

6. To be clear, while I think Finnis offers the most complete and compelling account of the human goods that matter, I do not share the religious grounds he chooses ultimately to stand on. As Finnis (2013: 31) himself notes ‘...practical reason’s first principles can be understood and acknowledged, and their normative implications extensively unfolded into rich, substantive moral, political and legal theory without relying upon, presupposing or even adverting, to the existence of God or providential order’.
7. As Finnis (1980: 17) says—Just as there is no question of deriving one’s basic judgments about human values and the requirements of practical reasonableness by some inference from the facts of the human situation, so there is no question of reducing descriptive social science to an apologia for one’s ethical or political judgments, or to a project for apportioning praise or blame among the actors on the human scene...
8. He understands that existence in ways that the social sciences have too often seemed to forget, namely that all social activity like our interactions and relationships can be understood fully only by understanding their value, significance point or objective for those people even if necessarily, this varies from person to person and for different communities at different times and places.
9. It is not limited for example when it is accepted that not all kinds of knowledge are equally valuable, or that that not all kinds of knowledge are equally valuable for each person. Equally it is not the only good worth pursuing nor is it to be understood simply as a moral good.
10. On this Finnis (1980: 67) notes this brings every ‘controversial question of epistemology to a focus’. He presents a number of basic considerations as a guide to what might be well-justified reasons for thinking we have got it right. He appeals to following principles (i) logic—like good deductive inference—allowing, of course, that ‘no non-circular proof of the validity of these principles is possible since any proof would use them’; (ii) self-defeating or self-negating theses are to be rejected; (iii) phenomena are to be treated as real unless there is some reason not to do so; (iv) a full description of data is to be preferred to a partial description; (v) a successful method of interpretation is to be relied on in all similar cases until a contrary reason appears; (vi) successful theoretical accounts which are simple, predictively successful and explanatorily powerful are to be accepted in preference to other accounts. As he says, none of these principles are demonstrable. They can even be denied. ‘But to deny them is to disqualify oneself from the pursuit of knowledge and to deny them is as straightforwardly unreasonable as anything can be’.
11. Todorov’s book is a profound meditation on the role played by various kinds of ignorance at work in the European conquest of the Americas.

12. In a case like that of Bernie Madoff, the billionaire criminal financier (who was also a Chair of NASDAQ) ran a Ponzi scheme over decades that eventually crashed in late 2008, leaving ‘investors’ with a loss of \$69 billion. Madoff relied on the ignorance created by his and his co-conspirator’s persistent and deliberate lies (Henriques 2011). However, those lies ‘made sense’ because they were legitimised by the belief system sustained and reproduced by neo-classical economists.
13. In this context Fuller insists that ‘the competitive spirit of academics and scientists’ is oriented exclusively neither to their peers, nor to ‘the market’ but to what he calls ‘public recognition’. Public recognition involves acknowledgement of the significance of academic research work, which may be codified in specialist journals or the popular media of the day as well as in textbooks or monographs. Fuller also points to the value of the idea (variously mythic or real) that one lives on in the memory of others by having one’s name associated with a tradition/discipline of knowledge possessing permanent significance.
14. As recently as 2006, the University of Mississippi endorsed this 1940 statement, noting that: ‘the teacher is entitled to freedom in research and in the publication of his/her results subject to the adequate performance of his/her other academic duties. The teacher is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing his/her subject but he /she should be careful not to introduce in his /her teaching controversial matter that has no relation to his/her subject matter’. <https://secure.olemiss.edu/unpolicypopen/>
15. As Kavoulakos (2001: 1–5) demonstrates, Castoriadis’s account of the imaginary is designed to displace the two most prominent approaches to social theory and their attempt to explain institutions in a ‘rational’ way, namely, the ‘functionalist’ and the ‘structuralist’ traditions. The ‘*functional-economic*’ is one approach (a version of which Castoriadis takes to be Marxism) that reduces the existence as well as the characteristics of institutions to the function *they perform within the ‘overall economy’ of social life*. However, the functionalist analysis fails to define the real needs, as distinct from their historical expression, which is always closely linked to a particular, symbolically mediated social world. This symbolism, which is fundamental for the social world, cannot be reduced to the rational order of the whole system of social functions. On the other hand, *structuralism* also fails in its attempt to explain this symbolic element rationally. For Castoriadis, language and every symbolic systems do not involve just a logical organisation of the world on the basis of the binary logic of oppositions. This symbolism cannot be reduced formalistically to the ‘structure of oppositions’, to the ‘difference between signs’; rather, it refers to ‘a meaning that can never be given independently of *every* sign but which is something other than the opposition of signs, and which is not unavoidably related to *any*

particular signifying structure [...]'(Castoriadis 1987: 137). Castoriadis starts from the conviction that the symbolic carries significations which take into account both the real-rational (see Castoriadis 1987: 128), but also includes a further *imaginary component*, which ultimately stems 'from the original faculty of positing or presenting oneself with things and relations that do not exist, in the form of representation (things and relations that are not or have never been given in perception)' (Castoriadis 1987: 127). Because of this symphysis between the perceived, the rational, and the imaginary, the question 'what is it, in what we know, that comes from the observer (from us), and what is it that comes from what there is?' is, and will forever remain, undecidable' (Castoriadis 1997: 4).

REFERENCES

- Anderson, R. (2010). The 'Idea of a University' today. *History & Policy*. <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/the-idea-of-a-university-today>
- Andrews, S. (2007). *'Compromising positions': Relations of power and freedom in the Australian university*. Unpublished PhD thesis. Melbourne: RMIT University.
- Arendt, H. (1958). *The human condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Arendt, H. (2006a). Thinking and moral considerations. In H. Arendt (Ed.), *Responsibility and judgment* (pp. 97–134). New York: Schocken Books.
- Arendt, E. (2006b). *Freedom of speech* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Baker, G., & Hacker, P. (2005). *Wittgenstein: Understanding and meaning part I essays*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Barnett, R. (1997). *The idea of higher education*. Buckingham: Open University Press and the Society for Research into Higher Education.
- Barnett, R. (2000a). *Realising the university in an age of supercomplexity*. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.
- Barnett, R. (2000b). *Realizing the university in an age of supercomplexity*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Barnett, R. (2007). *A will to learn: Being a student in an age of uncertainty*. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University.
- Barnett, R. (2011a). The marketised university: Defending the indefensible. In N. Molesworth, R. Scullion, & E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketization of higher education and the student as consumer*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Barnett, R. (2011b). *Being a university*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Bologna University. (1988). *Magna Charter Universitatum*. Bologna: Bologna University.
- Boyer, E. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. Princeton: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

- Brady, M., & Pritchard, D. (2003) (Eds.). *Moral and epistemic virtues*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Brew, A. (2006). *Research and teaching: Beyond the divide*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Buber, M. (2002). *Between man and man* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Castoriadis, C. (1987). The Imaginary Institution of Society (trans. Kathleen Blamey). Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Castoriadis, C. (1997). World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination [WIF] (ed./trans. David Ames Curtis). Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA 1997.
- Castoriadis, C. (1998). *The imaginary institution of society* (trans.: Blamey, K.). Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Cohen, M. D., & March, J. G. (1986). *Leadership and ambiguity: The American College*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Cohen, S. (2001). *States of Denial: Knowing about Atrocities and Suffering*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Cohen, J., & Yapa, Y. (2005). Introduction: What is public scholarship? Blueprint for Public Scholarship at Penn State. www.publicscholarship.psu.edu/PDFs/blueprint.pdf
- Collini S. (2010). Browne's gamble. *London Review of Books*, 32(21). 4 November <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v32/n21/stefan-collini/brownes-gamble>
- Collini, S. (2013). *What are universities for?* London: Penguin.
- CPB. (2005). *Public broadcasting revenue fiscal year 2005*. Corporation for Public Broadcasting. <http://www.cpb.org/stations/reports/revenue/2005PublicBroadcastingRevenue.pdf>
- D'Inverno, R. (1992). *Introducing Einstein's relativity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dahlberg, L. (2000). The Habermasian public sphere: A specification of the idealised conditions of democratic communication. *Studies in Social and Political Thought*. www.sussex.ac.uk/cspt/documents/10-1a.pdf
- Docherty, T. (2011). *For the university: Democracy and the future of the institution*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Duke, C. (2005). Values discourse and politics: An Australian comparative perspective. In D. Palfreyman & T. Tapper (Eds.), *Understanding mass higher education: Comparative perspectives on access* (pp. 6–27). Abingdon: Routledge Falmer.
- Engelen, E., Erturk, I., Froud, J., Johal, S., Leaver, A., Moran, M., Nilsson, A., & Williams, K. (2011). *After the great complacency: Financial crisis and the politics of reform*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eugben, D. (2002). Academic freedom: Whose right? In K. Brevitz, A. Snow, & W. Thro (Eds.), *The 2003 NACUA handbook for lawyers new to higher education*. Washington, DC: NACUA.

- Finnis, J. (1980). *Natural law and natural rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Finnis, J. (2013). *Collected essays: Reason in action (I); Intention and identity(II); Human rights and common good (III); Philosophy of law (IV); Religion and public reasons (V)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Frankfurt, H. (2005). *On bullshit*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Fuller, S. (2010). Capitalism and knowledge: The university between commodification and entrepreneurship. In H. Radder (Ed.), *The commodification of academic research: Science and the modern university*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh University.
- Gappa, J., Austin, A., & Trice, S. (2007). *Rethinking faculty work: Higher education's strategic imperative*. San Francisco: John.
- Gibbs, P. T. (2004). *Trusting in the university*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Gilligan, C. (1989). *Mapping the moral domain: A contribution of women's thinking to psychological theory and education*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Global Colloquium of College Presidents. (2005). Statement on academic freedom. Report of the First Global Colloquium of University Presidents, held at Columbia University, January 18–19.
- Gross, M., & McGoey, L. (Eds.). (2015). *Routledge international handbook of ignorance studies*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Haas, J., & Vogt, K. (2015). Ignorance and investigation. In M. Gross & L. McGoey (Eds.), *Routledge international handbook of ignorance studies* (pp. 17–25). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Habermas, J. (1991). The public sphere. In C. Muckerji & M. Schudson (Eds.), *Rethinking popular culture: Contemporary perspectives in cultural studies*. Berkeley: University of California.
- Habermas, J. (1992). Concluding remarks. In C. Calhoun (Ed.), *Habermas and the public sphere* (pp. 462–479). Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Habermas, J. (1996). *Between facts and norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Heidegger, M. (1985). *History of the concept of time* (trans: Kisiel, T.). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Held, V. (2006). *The ethics of care: Personal, political, and global* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Henriques, D. (2011). *The wizard of lies: Bernie Madoff and the death of trust*. New York: Holt and Winston.
- Hutchings, B., & O'Rourke, K. (2002). Introducing enquiry-based teaching methods in literary studies. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 1, 73–83.
- Jenkins, A., Healey, M., & Zetter, R. (2007). *Linking teaching and research in disciplines and departments*. York: The Higher Education Academy.
- Kant, I. (1784). *An answer to the question: What is enlightenment?* <http://www.english.upenn.edu/mgamer/Etexts/kant.html/>

- Kavoulakos, K. (2001). Cornelius Castoriadis on social imaginary and truth. <http://www.fks.uoc.gr/english/cvs/kavoulakos/Kavoulakos%20Social%20Imaginary.pdf>
- Kessler, O. (2015). Ignorance and the sociology of economics. In M. Gross & L. McGoey (Eds.), *Routledge international handbook of ignorance studies* (pp. 338–347). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Lakoff, G. (1982). *Categories and cognitive models* (Cognitive Science Report, No. 2). Berkeley: University of California.
- Lakoff, G. (1987). *Women fire and other dangerous things: What categories reveal about the mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Levinas, E. (2003). *Humanism of the other* (trans: Poller, N.). Chicago: Urbana and Illinois University Press.
- MacIntyre, A. (1990). *Three traditions of ethical inquiry*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
- McCloskey, D. (1994). *Knowledge and persuasion in economics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McCloskey, D. (2002). *The secret sins of economics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Menand, L. (1996). The limits of academic freedom. In L. Menand (Ed.), *The future of academic*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Middlehurst, R., & Elton, L. (1992). *Leadership and management in higher education*.
- Mirowski, P. (1989). *More heat than light: Economics as social physics, physics as nature's economics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mirowski, P. (2013). *Never let a serious crisis go to waste: How neoliberalism survived the financial meltdown*. London: Verso.
- Mitchell, K. (Ed.). (2008). *Practising public scholarship: Experiences and possibilities beyond the academy*. New York: Wiley Blackwell.
- Noddings, N. (2002). *Educating moral people*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Nussbaum, M. (1988). Nature, function and capability: Aristotle on political distribution. *Oxford studies in ancient philosophy* (Supp. Vol., pp. 144–184).
- Nussbaum, M. (1995). Human capabilities, female human beings. In M. Nussbaum & J. Glover (Eds.), *Women, culture and development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nussbaum, M. (1997). *Cultivating humanity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nussbaum, M. (2010). *Not for profit: Why democracy needs the humanities*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- O'Connell, I. (2000). Self-evidence in Finnis' natural law theory: A reply to Sayers. *Australian Journal of Legal Philosophy*, 25(1), 111–119.
- Robb, G. (2013). *The ancient paths: Discovering the lost map of Celtic Europe*. London: Pan Macmillan.

- Rosch, E. (1975). Cognitive representation of semantic categories. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 104(3), 192–233.
- Rosch, E., & Lloyd, B. (Eds.). (1978). *Cognition and categorization*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Rowland, S. (2006). *The enquiring university*. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.
- Ryle, G. (1949). *The concept of mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Savin-Baden, M., & Howell Major, C. (2004). *Foundations of problem-based learning*. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.
- Schumpeter, J. (1961). In E. Schumpeter (Ed.), *History of economic analysis*. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Searle, J. (2015). *Seeing things as they are: A theory of perception*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sen, A. (1999). *On human development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sen, A. (2002). *Freedom and rationality*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Thompson, J. (1984). *Studies in the theory of ideology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Todorov, T. (1999 [1984]). *The conquest of America: The question of the other*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Vlastos, G. (1994). *Socrates*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- von Humboldt, W. (1970). On the spirit and organisational framework of intellectual institutions in Berlin. *Minerva*, 8, 242–267.
- Wieman, C. (2004). *Professors who are scholars: Bringing the act of discovery to the classroom*. Presentation at the Reinvention Center Conference, November 2004, ‘Integrating research into undergraduate education: the value added’. Available from http://www.reinventioncenter.miami.edu/conference_05/wieman/presentation.htm
- Wittgenstein, L. (1953). In G. E. Anscombe (Ed.), *Philosophical investigations*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Zimmerman, J. (1999). *The New England Town meeting: Democracy in action*. New York: Praeger.

The ‘Good Ol’ Days’: Life in the Public University

At the start of the twentieth century universities were still small, elite institutions. In 1900 even America with a population then of 76 million had a network of only 1,000 universities and colleges enrolling some 160,000 students: fewer than 30,000 college degrees were awarded in 1900. In Britain the government began to get involved in the provision of higher education with the establishment of the Universities’ Grants Committee in 1917, enabling government funding for universities. Even so, in 1950 just 3 percent of the population eligible for tertiary education (i.e., tertiary-age population) in the United Kingdom were enrolled in higher education. Drawing on Forsyth (2014), we can make the same point vividly for Australia: she notes that in 1857, Australia had fewer than 140 university students. By 1911 this had grown to some 2,445 students (2,000 of them men) out of a total population of 4.4 million (Booth and Kee 2010: 4). Even in 1946 there were just over 17,000 university students, representing barely 2.3 percent of the age group between 17 and 22.

It was only in the 1950s that governments began to require universities to provide access to more and more people. What for want of a better term we can call the ‘democratisation’ of higher education proved to be a process not without its tensions, not least of which was a challenge to the very idea of what defined a public university. In effect, what in the nineteenth century had been very small institutions staffed almost entirely by men educating a narrow social elite, again comprising mostly

men, became increasingly larger and more diverse institutions enrolling increasingly numerous and more diverse kinds of students.

What did this mean for British, Australian, and American universities? What were these universities like before the ‘marketisation’ process began in the 1980s?

I want to consider how these institutions worked through the first two-thirds of the twentieth century, highlighting what they did well and what they did less well as well as briefly discuss some significant differences between the American, British, and Australian public university systems. Along the way I dispel a number of myths about the ‘good old days’.

I begin here by quickly describing the pattern of growth that we see in the higher education systems in Britain, America, and Australia. One way of describing what universities were like before the so-called ‘marketisation’ project got under way in the 1980s and 1990s is to look at the way those universities were characterised—and defended—as the government-driven change process got under way. What we will see quickly is a fundamental problem some of academics had when resisting the discourse of ‘marketising’. What this suggests is the dominance of an academic model based on the implied premise that the task of university teaching was to reproduce an academic culture. This premise was deeply antagonistic to the project of increasing access to higher education, since it presumed from the start that a university education was not for everyone, a stance turned into a self-fulfilling dictum by the refusal of many academics to engage in the kinds of teaching practices that might have informed a democratic model of higher education. This thought in turn opens up some questions about how the idea of academic freedom was put into practice in the decades before the great disruption of the 1980s. Arguably too few academics opted to make full and responsible use of the autonomy they claimed as their due.

Finally, I outline another of the crucial ambiguities created by the democratising process. As I suggest here, the democratising impulse designed to encourage universities to take in larger numbers and more diverse kinds of students set gave rise to some important tensions or ambiguities about the value and kind of knowledge which ought properly to be found in, or produced by, a public university. By this I mean only to point to an unresolved tension between rival conceptions of knowledge—one which values knowledge for its utilitarian capacity to assist the people of a democracy in solving various economic, social, and technical problems;

and the other, which values the autonomy of the university so as to enable it to preserve and protect the value of objective knowledge.

I start with a sketch of the higher-education growth process throughout the twentieth century.

PATTERNS OF GROWTH

Most of the growth of the higher-education systems in America, Britain, and Australia that transformed an elite system into a mass system of higher education began in the middle decades of the twentieth century. The effects of government policies committed to expanding access to higher education were dramatic. In the case of Britain and Australia, major government studies like the Robbins report (1963) and the Murray report (1957) led to major commitments to increasing access to higher education.

The United States of America

In America the establishment of junior colleges in the early twentieth century along with the evolution of a system of public state universities established the basis for a mass system of higher education far earlier than in either Australia or Britain. In some states the infrastructure of institutions and a general political commitment to broad access were already in place *before* World War II (1939–45). As many scholars have pointed out, the evolution of a mass higher-education system in America did not involve a *conversion* of once-elite institutions into mass higher-education institutions so much as a continuous evolution of a highly diverse system, which enabled a significant group of elite universities to remain more-or-less intact into the twenty-first century (Douglas 2005).

America's higher-education sector expanded dramatically and earlier than it did in either Britain or Australia. If we focus only on the number of universities, the scale of enrollments, and the level of public financing, most of this growth took place firstly between 1900 and 1930 and again between 1950 and 1970. The initial impetus for growth came in 1948 with the Truman Commission on Higher Education, which concluded that America was investing too little money in post-secondary education. The Truman Commission recommended that higher education be expanded, stipulating that there was to be no restriction of admissions based on either race or religion. The state governments took primary

responsibility for responding to the Truman Commission, as the federal government was not then actively funding universities.

State and local governments provided the bulk of the increase in funding after 1948. The major beneficiaries of this growth were the state universities, founded and for the most part funded by state governments.¹ By the late 1940s, over 2.5 million Americans were enrolled in nearly 1800 colleges and universities: 500,000 degrees were awarded in 1950 by what was then a more-or-less even mix of public and private universities. In the middle part of the twentieth century this general expansion included private research universities like Johns Hopkins (est. 1876) and Chicago (est. 1890). By the 1950s the number of American doctoral degrees awarded was doubling roughly every decade.

A second impetus for growth came in the early 1960s. This was one effect of the passage of the *Civil Rights Act* in 1964, Title VI of which declared that any institutions discriminating on the basis of race, colour, or national origin would get reduced funding. This was complemented by the *Higher Education Act* of 1965, which was designed to increase equal access to higher education by supplying Educational Opportunity grants and providing direct funding to historically black colleges and universities and to women's colleges. Between 1960 and 1970 enrollment in colleges and universities grew from 3.58 million to 7.92 million; much of this growth took place in the community colleges, which grew from 500,000 students in 1960 to more than 2 million by 1970 (Lambert 2014: 39).

Britain

The British experience has some similarities as well as some important differences compared to the American case. For example If the effective monopoly of the 'ancient' universities (Oxford, Cambridge, St Andrews, Glasgow, and Aberdeen) was broken in the nineteenth century, the elite status of these universities, like that of America's elite universities in America, was largely unperturbed by the democratising trends promoting increased access to universities. Into the 1980s when the trend to mass universities was well and truly under way, Cambridge colleges like Peterhouse (established in 1284) were still fighting the admission of women undergraduates (Sisman 2010). Possibly these ancient institutions welcomed the establishment of openly utilitarian and professionally-oriented universities like King's College, London, University College London, and Durham, though they may have sniffed about the establishment of the 'Redbrick'

universities like Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, and Sheffield later in the nineteenth century (Rothblatt 1982). Certainly the British preserved the elite status of higher education longer than did the Americans: in 1950 only 3 percent of Britain's tertiary-age population were enrolled in higher education.

Major expansion in student numbers began in the 1950s and 1960s. New colleges of advanced technology were established from 1956 onward and were awarded university status in 1966 (e.g., Aston, Bath, Bradford, Brunel, City, Loughborough, Salford, and Surrey). After the Robbins Report (1963) another 13 institutions, including Hull and Leicester, both former university colleges, were granted university status in the following two decades, while seven new universities were established in the 1960s: East Anglia, Essex, Kent, Lancaster, Sussex, Warwick, and York. University student numbers more than doubled from 108,000 in 1960 to 228,000 in 1970, a process assisted by the introduction of student funding through a non-repayable grants system, which enabled students to attend university in effect at no personal cost. By 1970 a total of 8 percent of Britain's tertiary-age population were studying in a university—though this was still well behind American university participation rates.

In the context of increasing government funding support for universities from the 1940s on, and especially in the 1960s and 1970s, British governments went out of their way to reaffirm the value of autonomous universities. The idea of university autonomy was entrenched at all levels, including government, even though the system was funded both for recurrent and capital purposes by the University Grants Committee, as an agency of the British government.

As Shattock (2008) notes, since 1917, Britain's universities had been funded through the University Grants Committee, a body made up primarily of academics and characterized by Berdahl (1959) as 'a benign agency'. The University Grants Committee worked in close tandem with the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom (later the Universities UK) and with officials in the Treasury and, later again, with the Department of Education and Science) (Anderson 2006: 65–69). While the University Grants Committee was required to take account of 'national needs', it interpreted them, in practice, argues Anderson, largely as the provision of subject spread and providing for existing trends. It was significant, for example, that the University Grants Committee took no part in establishing or funding the Open University. Until 1992 this experiment in mass access to university

education received its funds directly from the Department of Education and Science (Anderson 2006: 68).

The University Grants Committee depended on what are best described as tacit understandings, delightfully expressed by Gartenberg (1972) as 'reading the tea leaves' in preference to complying with any formal policy-making process directed by ministers or officials. Evidence from the time shows that the senior civil servant in charge of higher education in the Department of Education and Science used to arrange lunches with the chairman of the University Grants Committee, in order to 'decipher' ministerial speeches referring to higher education. Even better, when the department was required to write a formal letter to the University Grants Committee, the Secretary would submit the headings for the chairman of the University Grants Committee to draft the letter himself! (Anderson 2006: 76)

However, it would become clear that as government investment increased in both scale and proportion, that this autonomy was likely to be compromised as governments expected to see more and more evidence that their investment was actually producing certain public goods. Those public goods were spelled out in major policy documents like the Robbins Report (1963).

Lionel Robbins and his report inaugurated Great Britain's version of mass higher education. The Macmillan government had commissioned the Robbins Committee to develop a plan for British higher education. The Robbins Report (1963) argued strongly for what was effectively a national system of mass higher education. The report did not simply recommend a greater supply of university places but argued that in the long run the number of places in higher education should be expanded to ensure that all who were qualified and wished to enter should be able do so (i.e., that the supply of places should expand to meet qualified demand). Robbins argued that restricted access to higher education was a major barrier to economic growth and to social mobility. The report noted that only about four in every hundred young people entered full-time courses at university, while nearly six times more young Americans enjoyed access to higher education.

The report put forth the idea that access to universities was a public good because it promoted a more just society. It accepted that denying access to able young working-class people and women was unacceptably exclusionary. The report argued that university places should be available to all who were qualified for them by ability and attainment. It maintained that having more people studying in university was a good thing and that

schools, local authorities, and universities needed to cooperate to ensure much wider access to higher education.

The report also accepted the idea that this exercise should be fully supported by the resources available to government. The report recommended financing expansion by continuing the funding regime as before. The Exchequer would finance universities, there would be no tuition fees, and the state would finance the living expenses of students.² It recommended a national student support system to replace an ineffectual and haphazard system in which 'county scholars' applied to Local Education Authority scholarships for fees and living costs (English local authorities only finally lost their residual role in assessing students for financial support in 2011–12 [Shattock 2012: 40–44]).

The report recommended establishing a new national university application system. By 1968, the Universities Central Council on Admissions was handling 600,000 applications from 110,000 candidates for 80 institutions. The report also recommended establishing wholly new universities. As Shattock (2012: 43) notes, 'This was a unique operation in British higher-education history, where the state intervened to create wholly new universities, which had no back history of predecessor institutions, on green field sites'.

Robbins focused almost exclusively on young, full-time students studying for their first degrees, and mostly living away from home. He did have concerns about post-graduate study, about part-time students, and adult education (including what he termed 'refresher courses for graduates in industry ... courses for married women wishing to start or resume their careers after bringing up a family, as well as more general courses for by the shape of the system we have in fact built'. (It is noteworthy that in the United Kingdom a majority of students since 1994–95 have not been enrolled on a full-time basis for their first degrees).

In terms that anticipate later contradictions we see also see some fundamental contradictions in the Robbins Report. On the one hand, universities were fundamental to 'the transmission of a common culture and common standards of citizenship'. To meet this objective the report insisted that universities must promote the 'general powers of the mind', to produce 'not mere specialists but rather cultivated men and women'. The Robbins Committee also accepted that while the balance between teaching and research might vary, teaching should not be separated from the advancement of learning and the search for truth, since 'the process of education is itself most vital when it partakes of the nature of discovery'.

Yet the Robbins Report also saw in the expansion of universities a basis for economic growth. Sir Geoffrey Crowther, former editor of *The Economist*, had given a lecture where he judged Britain's higher education policy to be a 'formula for national decline'. During the 1950s Gary Becker at the University of Chicago, had been developing his theory of human capital, which identified education as a major factor in a nation's economic performance. Becker claimed to show that there were good returns to higher education as an investment. University-educated people were about to be redefined as an 'input' to the 'productive process'.

Australia

Though the expansion of higher education in Australia occurred a bit later, we see something of the same pattern. In 1946 there were just six small universities, one in each of the six major capital cities, with 25,585 students enrolled, or fewer than 0.2 percent of the Australian population. By 1966 the number of universities had doubled and the student population had increased by 500 percent to 91,000, representing 7.8 percent of the aged 17–22 cohort (Little 1970: 3). By 1975 the system had grown to include 148,000 students in 19 universities. The next three decades saw no less significant increases. Between 1975 and 1996, the number of Australians in higher education rose from 273,137 (1975) to 631,025 (1996).

Australia's policy-makers, including Prime Ministers R.G. Menzies (1949–65) and E.G. Whitlam (1972–75), actively promoted the growth of Australian higher education from the late 1950s into the mid-1970s. This involved a distinctive view about the role and value of the modern university. Menzies had long supported a view of public universities as a space in which to cultivate both higher learning and personal character and a space to develop 'practical men'. In 1939, at the opening of Canberra University College, Menzies said a modern university needed to be—

- (1) be a home of pure culture and learning, (2) serve as a training school for the professions, (3) serve as a liaison between the academician and the 'good practical man', (4) be the home of research, (5) be a trainer of character, (6) be the training ground for leaders, (7) be a custodian of mental liberty and the unfettered search for truth. (Menzies 1939)

From the late 1950s to mid-1970s, the Menzies coalition government began to invest heavily in establishing new universities and expanding

enrollment in the old universities. That support was evident in the government's response to two key reports—the Murray Committee Report (Murray 1957; Forsyth 2014: 53–58) and the Martin Report (Davies 1989).

The Murray Report was produced by the Committee on Australian Universities in 1957. It recommended increasing the number of Australian universities and promoted the public value of universities in terms of their contribution to economic development, the preservation of civilisation, and the defence of democracy:

No nation in its sense wishes to make itself prone to self-delusion or to deceit by other nations: and a good university is the best guarantee mankind can have, that somebody, whatever the circumstance will continue to seek the truth and to make it known. (Murray 1957: 9–10)

Such a mission could be safely entrusted to academics because, as they are described in the Murray Report, they are men 'with no immediate practical aim or profit':

They are simply knowledge intoxicated men who will devote their lives to it if they possibly can. Though this pursuit of truth seems to many rather inhuman, and to some a rather super human kind of life, there are fortunately far more of them than most people would have thought possible (Murray 1957: 9–10).

If this seemed to augur well for the autonomy of universities, Australian Prime Minister Menzies, who was to drive the creation of new universities in the 1960s, understood well the nature of the bargain being negotiated: as he put it during a confidential cabinet discussion in 1959, 'Money is the weapon by which oversight of universities will be secured' (cited in Forsyth 2014: 59).

Menzies also oversaw the production of the Martin Report (1965) and the expansion of higher education that began in 1965. The Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia was established in August 1961 as a committee of the Australian Universities Commission and was chaired by L.H. Martin. It was commissioned to 'consider the pattern of tertiary education in relation to the needs and resources of Australia, and to make recommendations to the Commission on the future development of tertiary education'. This report, if anything, accentuated the link between tertiary education and economic growth as well as the

importance of some degree of (symbolic) diversity in Australian higher education. Martin decided not to recommend creating more universities: he had ‘heard’ Menzies’s declaration that he could ‘think nothing would be more disastrous than to allow the university structure in Australia to fall into a state of what I might call classical uniformity, as if we were still constantly building on a nineteenth century model’ (Menzies, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 1 May 1962: 1145). Unsurprisingly Martin recommended and Menzies accepted the recommendation that Australia, during the next decade, should develop advanced education colleges.

One practical effect was the establishment of a ‘binary system’ comprising universities and a new tier of Colleges of Advanced Education (Beddie 2014: 23–40). As Forsyth (2014: 90–1) pointed out, the more expensive universities would continue to protect culture, while the new, cheaper Colleges of Advanced Education could set about training the new professionals (teachers, health- and child- care workers, medical technologists, social workers, and the like. Even so the new system remained committed to tertiary education. The new Colleges of Advanced Education still required matriculation from school, while allowing people from lower social economic status the chance to get something like a university qualification. As the Minister for Education Gorton told the Senate—

... what is envisaged is not merely a bigger and better college for teaching technical subjects ... [Rather] there should be a common core of studies at tertiary level aimed at providing ... ‘breadth in education’ and the development of ‘critical imagination and creative abilities’. Students engaged in such common studies would major in ... courses ... to fit them for particular careers after they had gained their diplomas ... (Gorton, Australia Senate, *Debates*, 24 March 1965: 2234)

At the same time Gorton confusingly insisted that the new colleges would need to ‘resist the temptation to copy the educational processes and curricula of universities’ (Gorton, Australia Senate, *Debates*, 24 March 1965: 2236). As Gallagher observes (1982: 186–7), it took only a few years for the distinction between the functions of a university and the Colleges of Advanced Education to blur.

At the same time the Menzies government clearly signaled its intention to make the new system more accountable both to governments and to employers. It set up an advisory committee to advise on its funding to the new Colleges of Advanced Education, which effectively excluded the

states from the funding process. It soon became apparent that the new Colleges of Advanced Education had become a battlefield between university academics with their ideas about autonomy and government officials whose experience disposed them to pursue tight departmental control, including external development and monitoring of curricula. As Anderson (1981: 31) shows, the new Colleges needed government approval for the courses they taught and the resources they required, the proposed number of students, the levels of skill and knowledge to be reached, and the staff they employed.

As well as contending with increased government regulation and accountability, the Colleges of Advanced Education soon found themselves being required to take into account the views of employers. Houston and Harman (1978) found that academics in College of Advanced Education engineering schools viewed the influence of the Institution of Engineers on the curriculum as undesirable and a restriction to their autonomy, noting, for example, that the decision by the profession to accept only students who had done an approved four-year course had significant implications for education budgets. Soon enough universities would find a similar level of intrusive accountability coming from other kinds of employer groups.

Whitlam's 1973 Higher Education Agreement with the states codified and extended Menzies's vision of public universities. At the same time in a dramatic gesture his government abolished university tuition fees (Forsyth 2014: 86–89).

As Etherington argues, both Menzies and Whitlam had a clear understanding of the responsibilities and benefits of public universities as expressed in these reports and agreements. Australian universities were to be spaces of public scholarship in which claims to expertise could be tested and made available for the good of society. They were to serve the needs of their local and regional communities. They were also understood to be spaces providing opportunities for individual social mobility and for collectively overcoming inherited privilege (Bessant 1977). They were to be places where good practice in certain occupations and professions could be instilled and critically assessed. And as places of open debate and dissent, they were to nurture a wider democratic culture (Etherington 2014).

My question here is this: Did these public universities in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States achieve anything like these desirable objectives? And what were these universities actually like in the run-up to the great transformation that began in the 1980s?

THE ‘REAL’ UNIVERSITY

One way of getting at the question of what were universities like before the ‘marketisation’ process allegedly got under way in the 1980s and 1990s is to look at the way those universities have since been characterised—and defended. What we will see quickly is a fundamental problem some academics have had when resisting the discourse of ‘marketising’.

For some, perhaps many, academics, the decades are viewed through a prismatic dichotomy between ‘real’ universities that teach a traditional curriculum versus those degraded ‘wannabe’ universities that are offering merely ‘professional or vocational’ courses. In America this idea of a traditional curriculum is typically referred to as the ‘liberal arts’, embracing both the humanities, mathematics, and the physical sciences. In this narrative, ‘real universities’ are now under attack or, worse, dead. The story and the language of ‘liberal arts’ arcs back to a tradition originating in classical antiquity. This tradition began as an understanding of what the *liberale*, that is, the ‘free’ person needed to know in order to take an active part in civic life. Today it refers to certain disciplines or traditions like literature, sciences, mathematics, art history, philosophy, music, languages, and psychology, among others.

The temptation, especially for some academics, to characterise this change as a story of decline, collapse, loss, and ruin of the traditional, real, or ideal university has proved irresistible. Alan Barcan (1994) provided an early and exemplary Newman-esque historical narrative of the death of the ‘liberal university’. Barcan claimed that egalitarianism; the subversion of the liberal idea of a community of scholars by Marxists, feminists, and progressives; and the failure to differentiate Colleges of Advanced Education from universities explained why the ‘real universities’ Australia had once had up until the 1980s had come undone. Barcan’s work belongs to a much larger tradition of ‘conservative’ commentary that deploys ‘the idea of a university’ to say what universities once were like and what they have become. Here I draw on a small group of commentators like Sheldon Rothblatt (1995), Raimond Gaita (1999, 2000, 2011), Simon Leys (1999, 2011), and Tony Coady (2000) to flesh out this story of the death of the ‘real’ university.³

It is plain at the outset that ‘the idea of a university’ plays a major role in this conservative commentary. Rothblatt, for example, notes, apropos of his ‘history of the idea that a university derives its identity from an idea’—

The history of the idea of a university is the search for one, the striving after an ideal that must satisfy two conditions: it must be pure, like a platonic ideal and it must be lasting, superior to all apparent transformations. (1995: 1)

Rothblatt rails against the 'merely empirical', arguing that the 'idea of a university is important. Without it, a university is utterly shapeless and possesses no means of distinguishing itself from any other kind of educational institution' (Rothblatt 1995: 43).

He finds no difficulty therefore in asserting that 'American academics have had to live without an idea of a university for at least a century'. I assume that by this Rothblatt means to say that the benighted Americans have not enjoyed the benefit of having an Oxbridge tradition. An empirical approach would also merely reveal that Americans have been generally and utterly confused about the 'idea' of a university as evidenced in their references to schools, colleges, and universities. He writes that 'universities that are simultaneously regarded as a school, a college or a university, envelop structures and traditions that are contradictory, confusing and ambiguous' (Rothblatt 1995: 40). Rothblatt finds the entire history of American universities something of a disappointment: 'American forms of higher education represent a development that Newman and his successors in spirit could only deplore. Newman called the new London University a 'pantechnicon' and also a 'bazaar'. This has led to other descriptions favoured by Rothblatt like 'supermarket' and 'smorgasbord' (1995: 40).

The Platonic strategy referred to by Rothblatt is clearly at the heart of the way Gaita and Coady also deploy 'the idea of a university'. In their hands we will see something of the appeal of a monistic conception of 'the university' to say nothing of the emotional appeal of a figure like Newman himself. Coady's defence of 'the idea of a university' involves attacking 'empiricists' and 'post-modernists' alike, a process accompanied by asides about the 'ignorant' and 'unsophisticated' aspects of those who might challenge his 'normative' approach. Coady reveals himself to be no less a redoubtable Platonist and essentialist than Gaita. (The eminence behind them both, of course, is one John Henry Cardinal Newman—or at least the idea of Newman).

Coady begins in beguiling fashion, saying that he will avoid 'confrontation with the foes of essentialism' by 'recognising that what Newman meant by the word "idea" is best understood ethically or normatively rather than semantically'. Yet Coady has already presumptively asserted that—

to speak of the idea of a university is to risk contemptuous dismissal as an 'essentialist' or 'logo centric' but fear of such abuse should deter no-one, *since it is usually the result of rank but confident muddle rather than serious thinking* through of issues of definition, conceptual clarity or essential property. (Coady 2000: 4)

Coady goes on to allow that post-modernists discuss these issues but at a level of engagement that rarely reaches beyond that of slogan or cliché (Coady 2000: 4). Claiming ‘not to cling to nostalgically to obsolete views’, while accepting that we need not engage ‘in romanticism about the past’ or think there was a golden age, Coady claims that by reasserting ‘the Platonic idea of idea’, he is being—

faithful to the word’s philosophical origins, since it ultimately derives from Plato’s usage, of which Newman was certainly conscious, in which the ideas (or forms) partly serve a semantic function, but are primarily ideals or standards.

What this means soon becomes clear. Coady says,

Central to Newman’s ideal is the thought that universities would be first and foremost centers of a certain type of learning. His picture of universities is one of communities of learning devoted to the pursuit of significant truth, as an end in itself. Newman’s concept of what he calls ‘the gentleman’ or as we might say less misleadingly and offensively in a contemporary context, the ‘educated person’, invoked an ideal of intellectual cultivation and of knowledge (what he called the philosophical mind)... This goes beyond mere knowledge of items of fact, mere acquisition of information or bare proficiency of such intellectual skills as the professions may require. Newman’s emphasis is upon depth and integrated perspective and such accompanying intellectual virtues as honesty, intellectual courtesy, indifference to mere fashion in ideas and a dedication to a regulative ideal of truth. (Coady 2000: 6)

Though Gaita uses a synonym (‘serious conception of the university’), a reader paying more than the usual attention to such things ought to be struck both the resonance such a reference is intended to have with Newman’s phrase, as well as by certain characteristic emphases at work in his argument. This is apparent, for example, when Gaita argues that—

the conceptual loss we have suffered through the degradation of serious conceptions of the university is partly a consequence of a conceptual loss in characterising its treasures. The managerial Newspeak that now pervades universities is both a cause and an expression of the fact that the language that might reveal their value has gone dead on us. (Gaita 2000: 27)

Some sense of the way Newman cast his shadow is suggested by Leys when he claims that—

A university is a place where scholars seek truth, pursue and transmit knowledge for knowledge's sake irrespective of the consequences, implications, and utility of the endeavor.

Leys argues that two things only are absolutely necessary to constitute such a university, namely, a 'community of genuine scholars' and 'a good library' (and laboratories for the scientists) (Leys 1999: 247). To clarify what a university 'is not', Leys pushes on by suggesting that meeting the 'practical needs of the nation' can *never be* a proper basis for setting up a university:

Any other function—such as the service of the national interest, or the training of various experts and specialists capable of meeting the specific socio-economic demands of the community ('social plumbing') can and should be better discharged by Colleges of Advanced Education, technical Institutes, Vocational Training Centres, Professional Schools and other institutions (Leys 1999: 247)

What this implies is that many modern universities are not 'real universities', a position reinforced by metaphors like 'social plumbing' and the use of terms like 'training' and 'professional'. Gaita roundly condemns the idea of universities as a public service:

More and more vocationally oriented courses determine the ways in which people speak of what's valuable in universities. And whether in one country it takes the form of business-speak or whether in another country it takes the form of managerial newspeak, the fact is that in both places universities are turned into institutions which are meant to service something or other. (cited in Gelonesi 2002)

The dismissive effect intended by Gaita's reference to 'service' or by Leys's reference to the merely 'practical' is clearly meant to be taken seriously. Superficially, Leys's animus against 'the practical' seems to draw on Newman's famous critique of the merely 'practical and mechanical' forms of knowledge when Newman, for example, says—

there are two methods of education: the end of one is to be philosophical; of the other to be mechanical; the one rise toward general ideas, the other is exhausted upon what is particular and external.⁴

Leys is content to find that many of the so-called universities fail to deliver that liberal education said to be the mark of a true university

Colleges of Advanced Education were established everywhere in the country to teach applied disciplines and to dispense the sort of practical, vocational training that universities could not and *should not* provide since by their very definition, universities must exclusively devote themselves to liberal studies in the sense which Newman ascribed to the concept: that alone is *liberal* knowledge which stands on its own pretensions, which is independent of sequel, refuses to be informed by any end. (Leys 1999: 260)

The problem with much of this conservative defence of ‘the idea of a university’ is, firstly, that it fails to specify precisely what it is that a public university is about normatively (I have outlined such an account in the previous chapter and will elaborate on this further). Indeed, too much of this attempt to defend and define the real university is simply ‘utopian’. By ‘utopian’ I mean a dream of ‘some other place’, or as Jonathan Abbey has aptly put it, a ‘dream or vision of the past compelled again and again to wake in the present’.⁵ Worse, the disdain demonstrated by Coady or Gaita for the merely empirical leaves it open potentially to all sorts of devastating ripostes. That said, even if I were able to, I am not going to advance the kind of ‘empirical’ and historical evidence about the actual character and quality of university teaching and research over the twentieth century in a short chapter. What I can do is to point to one basic and perhaps unnerving contradiction that characterised a lot of university teaching across the twentieth century in Britain, America, and Australia, namely, the way what I call an ‘academic model’ was conjoined to a utilitarian ethos. This is one way to make sense of the way the conservative defenders of the ‘real university’ talk about the ‘good ol’ days’.

THE UNIVERSITY AS A UTILITARIAN PROJECT

Firstly, it is true enough that universities were deemed to be free institutions which possessed and used their autonomy to appoint their staff and select their students. In these universities, academic staff also had the freedom to choose course content as well as their teaching and assessment methods, and to undertake to do more, or less, research, without constraint. This, however, does not mean that most universities were not engaged in something like a utilitarian orientation to professional education.

Glyn Davis, a Vice-Chancellor who has been a key Australian advocate of the neo-liberal makeover of universities in the last two decades, argues

that the 'actual history' of Australian universities is one shaped deeply by a 'utilitarian ethos', which has meant that most students and most academics have 'always been primarily concerned with preparation for the professions' (Davis 2010: 127). Like Forsyth (2014), who has made a compelling case for the consistently utilitarian bent of Australian universities, Davis insists that—

Students enrolled in the liberal arts, and academics engaged in public debate, have always been important voices on campus, but the dominant tradition is pragmatic and vocational. It was a path chosen early, and reinforced by national policy, student choice, and academic values. (Davis 2010: 18)

Davis described the Australian universities as 'autonomous, professional, comprehensive, secular, public and commuter'. Student preferences have also remained consistent, with 70 percent of students choosing to enroll in programs of professional preparation. For many, 'university remains a means to a vocation' (Davis 2010: 19). This might seem, superficially at least, to distinguish Australian universities from the tradition of American liberal arts colleges and universities, which were set up with a view to 'shaping the self, civic, cultural and religious habits of mind and character' (Sullivan and Rosin 2008: 28).

As we have seen, there is certainly a long tradition in America of claiming that 'liberal education has always been this nation's signature educational tradition' (National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America's Promise 2007: 1). As Andrew Delbanco argues, Americans have long legitimated their higher-education system on the grounds that the university is the place 'for the development of character' and for 'fostering ethical as well as analytical intelligence', where students can be 'touched and inspired as well as trained and informed' (Delbanco 2012: 42–44).

Yet this should not, I think, gainsay the actual orientation of American higher education, like its British counterpart, to an equivalent kind of utilitarian focus on education essentially for professional and vocational purposes.

In America, Brint et al. (2005) have made an important start to addressing the actual orientations of American higher education throughout the twentieth century in ways that have not always received the kind of detailed attention they deserve. Brint et al. (2005: 120–23) ask firstly if the gradual shrinking of the liberal arts and sciences core of undergraduate education and the expansion of occupational and professional programs that became

increasingly evident between the 1960s and 1980s was a novelty or was rather a continuation of a long-term tendency evident in American higher education throughout the twentieth century. They also ask what characteristics were most strongly associated with the production of a large number of degrees in occupational–professional fields as opposed to the liberal arts and sciences.

Brint et al. (2005) make several important points that suggest a more complex picture. They show readily enough how a liberal arts and sciences model dominated the period from the 1910s to the 1920s. This was a time when higher education was the preserve of the middle and upper-middle classes, and the ‘English model’ of a college education based on liberal arts was alive and well. Equally, there were already institutions and students committed to occupational degrees. The land grant universities were oriented to occupational–professional education from the beginning, while public institutions have long educated a large proportion of American college students. The privileged position of the liberal arts model began to slip just before the Great Depression. By the mid-1930s, occupational–professional programs were significantly stronger—a pattern that persisted after World War II and into the 1950s. During this period, occupational–professional programs had larger enrollments than the arts and sciences.

Then in the early and mid-1960s, the liberal arts and sciences model—albeit briefly—took the lead, accounting for nearly 55 percent of degrees awarded. In terms of the absolute numbers of students and professors, this was a high watermark for the liberal arts and sciences model. As Brint et al. (2005) argue, the conjunction of a continuing national commitment to basic science following World War II and Sputnik, combined with promising developments in the arts and humanities, and ‘the sophisticated social criticism found in the social science disciplines’ were unusually favourable to the liberal arts and sciences model, even at a time of great expansion in university enrollments.

This long-term historical view suggests an underlying trend toward occupational–professional programs combined with shorter-term cyclical movements in American higher education. This implies that the 1960s and early 1970s represent an historically unusual period favouring the liberal arts and sciences model. Finally, Brint et al. (2005) show that the modern turn toward professional and vocational degrees dates from the time when unemployment returned in the early 1970s and began to affect the oppor-

tunities for young Americans to find full-time employment (Freeman 1976). In the 15 years after 1970–71, a clear preference emerged for professional and vocational education over arts and sciences fields, with nearly two in three degrees awarded in occupational–professional fields by 1985–86. This ‘turn to the vocational’ continues to the present day. As Slaughter (1998) argued, changes in federal financial student assistance policy in conjunction with continuing unemployment and under-employment has encouraged lower-income students to pursue vocational and professional university courses.

As to the role played by different kinds of universities and colleges, Brint et al. (2005: 165) hypothesise that the institutional designs at the time of their founding exert a long-term influence. This means that colleges like Harvard, which was founded earlier in the nation’s history; denominational colleges connected originally to the ‘liberal arts’; and specialist colleges set up to cater to women (Like Vassar and Bryn Mawr) and African-Americans (like Howard and Tuskegee) might all be expected to commit to the older liberal arts traditions in undergraduate education. And indeed, all of these colleges—not least of all places like Harvard and Yale (to say nothing of Oxford and Cambridge)—have long been valued for the lawyers, clerics, doctors, civil servants, and business leaders they graduated.

On the other hand, the state universities, shaped by the utilitarian ethos spelled out in the Morrill acts, have always been far more likely to favour a clearly defined vocational educational model. Catholic colleges were likewise founded to provide openings to professional careers for members of then-subordinate religious and ethnic communities. The data, and their analysis of it, confirms this general picture. Colleges offering only undergraduate degrees stood out for their commitment to the arts and sciences, while selective research universities also awarded comparatively more arts and sciences degrees than other institutions. By contrast, non-selective baccalaureate institutions and comprehensive institutions offering undergraduate and master’s level course work degrees were strongly associated with higher levels of occupational–professional degrees. Institutions other than elite liberal arts colleges and research universities appear to be highly market-sensitive and more clearly oriented to occupational–professional education. It was no surprise that larger institutions (as measured by student enrollment) were also more vocationally oriented (Brint et al. 2005: 169).

I think that all this indicates that a good case can be made that universities for the better part of the twentieth century were generally and increasingly oriented to a ‘utilitarian’ program emphasising professional and vocational education. Yet at the same time, those universities also supported what I call an ‘academic model’ for the better part of the twentieth century. This conjunction was both bizarre and probably unsustainable, especially as governments persisted in urging universities to increase the number of students enrolled.

THE ‘ACADEMIC MODEL’

Goodyear (2002: 52) summarises nicely the chief elements of the ‘academic model’.⁶ Among the core features of this model was the way academics asked students to ‘become competent in academic discourse with its heavy reliance on declarative conceptual knowledge, contemplative forms of analysis and use of textual (including mathematical) representations’.⁷ Much of this effort went to ‘mastering’ ‘second-order’ knowledge, the kind found in textbooks and lectures. Goodyear’s (2002: 52) key insight is the implicit assumption that either implicitly or explicitly the academics acted ‘as-if’ the aim were to induct students into the work and world of the academics and their disciplines.

As for the abilities this approach cultivated, this seems mostly to have involved the ability to ‘recall declarative conceptual knowledge and to deploy it in the construction of arguments.’ (Goodyear 2002: 52). As Goodyear also notes while this model has been contested heavily, it retains a good deal of residual as evidenced by texts like Laurillard’s (1993) ironically titled, *Rethinking University Teaching*.

At the center of this ‘academic model’ were a series of assumptions and beliefs about university education involving propositions about the role of the teacher, the core kinds of pedagogic practices that delivered ‘high-quality’ university education, as well as stories told about the relationship between the teacher and the student.

The academic model required the systematic induction of students into the dominant discipline-based relevant modes of writing (e.g., essays and scientific reports). The main kind of learning this model sustained included the ability to recall declarative and second-order conceptual knowledge in examinations and tests and perhaps to deploy it in the construction of arguments in essays and reports. The academic model relied heavily on assessment activities like examinations, essays, and short-answer tests that

called on the student's ability to recall declarative conceptual knowledge or to deploy it in various approved 'academic' ways.

The teaching practices employed presupposed the validity of teaching as knowledge transmission. They were typically reliant on formal lectures or smaller teacher-centric classes where the teacher might give a small lecture or attempt to run a 'dialogue' with the class by addressing questions or comments to individual students. Finally, the academic model sanctioned an excessive regard for what teachers did and too little regard for how alternative kinds of teaching might guide and shape the learning process. The academic model was grounded in the oldest pedagogic model we have—the idea of the master (or *magister*) who imparted the skills and knowledge that constituted mastery to an apprentice.

The kind of teacher-centred solipsism this involved captures the essential problem with a lot of the practices that defined university teaching into the 1980s. By this I mean that teachers typically taught what they knew in something defined in terms of a 'body of knowledge'.⁸

Among the key failings this led to was the assumption that the all teachers had to do was demonstrate their mastery of knowledge. This privileging of the skills and mastery of knowledge on the part of the teacher positioned the teacher at the center of all valued activity. The teacher's iteration of declarative knowledge would ensure that the student would pick up the required knowledge by osmosis. Successful knowledge transfer was accomplished when the student gave back to the teacher—for example, via tests—the knowledge that was first 'given' to the student. There was an over-preoccupation with knowledge or content. Knowledge comes in great blocks, the nature of which could be spelled out in both huge textbooks (with all the right answers inscribed) and in the course guides or syllabi that prescribed the knowledge to be transmitted and acquired.

The academic model also sanctioned an excessive regard for the academic discipline or the vocation/profession and too little regard for the valuable role that teachers themselves might play. Too many academics resisted self-description as 'teachers', preferring to call themselves whatever their profession or discipline was—like sociologist, social worker, geologist, or psychologist).

This model implied there were no formal requirements that university teachers would be trained or required to acquire or to demonstrate their professional abilities as teachers. Most did not have any kind of teacher training, though many universities began trying to make this a precondition of recruitment in the 1990s and 2000s. Few academics sought

forgot in-house training or attended professional development training. Most had little if any experience or training in good curriculum design and endlessly confused the knowledge content they wanted to transmit or teach with a curriculum. The inability to engage in thoughtful curriculum design is suggested by the way many academics continued to think that curriculum design involved the arrangement, typically in week-long bites, of clumps of knowledge/content that would somehow be transmitted to students. It was not surprising that much curriculum design was not very good, with little if any understanding of what it meant to identify the problems that might engage students' interest and lead to learning activities or assessment work that actually aligned with each other. Too often academics continued to confuse the capacity to analyse arguments or to construct good arguments with mastering the arcaneries of academic practices like referencing. Others worried more about the need for correct spelling rather than addressing the quality of reading, writing, or critical thinking. Likewise it was quite hard to find academics who could provide a clear-sighted account of why their subject as where it was in the overall degree program, let alone what completing the subject would mean for students in terms of enhancing their understanding of the world, or what practical capabilities it would develop on their part. The failure or inability to provide such a rationale pointed to the serious absence of a communal culture that invited and rewarded teachers who collaborated across their individual subjects. It also suggests some major problems in the relationships teachers had with their students.

The Academic and the Student

The unreflective solipsism at work in the academic model sustained an extraordinary set of attitudes with regard to students. The skills, attitudes, discipline, and practices of reading and research that made the academic into the academic were simply assumed to be the only kinds of skills and aptitudes needed for success. The academic culture promoted and sustained a tacit understanding that a university education was not for everyone. This sets up the student as a source of endless regret and/or blame of the 'Oh, why can't they be more like me?' kind.

For example, the academic model expected or assumed that the student would come already equipped, and certified as so equipped, by the student's prior educational experience. The discovery was soon made

that the average student was not much interested in reading and did not read widely or well. We see these attitudes captured in two surveys of academics in 1977 and 1993 (Anwyl and Bowden 1978; McInnis et al. 1995a, b). Dissatisfaction with the academic quality of students more than doubled between 1978 and 1993, with 38 percent of academics expressing dissatisfaction with students in 1993. A quarter of the 1993 sample thought their teaching effectiveness was hindered by having too many students, with 46 percent of teachers complaining about having to cope with 'too wide a range of student ability' (McInnis et al. 1995a). In 1993, a total of 70 percent of academic staff disagreed with the statement that 'students these days are less demanding of my time', while 74 percent agreed that 'most students only study those things that are essential to complete the course'.

It was discovered soon enough that the average student did not write all that well and displayed too few of the expected aptitudes for analysis, critical thought, or capacity to put together a reasoned argument within the terms defined by a teacher and prescribed as appropriate. These discoveries were rapidly enhanced by the discovery that students were not even properly engaged as a university student should be. It was within this frame then that the routine use of statistical techniques designed to 'bell-curve' or standardise the range of grades was sanctioned. This development was based on the proposition that only a small and statistically predictable number of students were actually demonstrating the kind of competence the academic model presumed to be the desired norm.

Thus a narrative developed to justify the failure of teachers to engage adequately with a mass of students, blaming the students *en masse* as incorrigibly stupid or no longer committed to reading or whatever the given subject happened to be. Another option was to locate students' hopelessness in the failure of schools to adequately equip each new class of students properly. (It was not unusual for academics to routinely assign a test early in first semester of the first year to show how little their students knew and then show the results around to colleagues to roars of laughter about the latest student 'howler' demonstrating 'their' incorrigible ignorance). Such a narrative assumed from the outset that there was no need for higher-education teachers to think and act as teachers.

The contradiction between what academics thought their educational project was about and what students wanted has been closely examined by Pierre Bourdieu (1994, 1996a, 1999). Bourdieu (1996a: 6, 11) has aptly

described the normal, if lamentable, state of affairs in many universities both in France and in Australia:

The whole system of education as a particular historical structure finds expression in the communication which takes place between teachers and students. Misunderstanding and the fiction that there is no misunderstanding, are inseparable phenomena.

Bourdieu's work offers a sustained and intensely critical-reflexive account of the problems that lurk within the academic culture. We have long had a university system which, as Gerald Graff (2003) has argued, produced 'clueless students'. Writing about and within the French university system, Bourdieu (1996a, b: 11) observed that—

When we try to make teaching more effective by clarifying its goals and the conditions needed to improve its efficiency, we clash with the pedagogical philosophy of academics whose disdain for the elementary nature of reflexive pedagogy reflects the superior level of the education system which they occupy.

Bourdieu (1994: 6–7) has said it all:

Defined by their lesser knowledge, students can do nothing which does not confirm the most pessimistic image that the professor, in his most professional character is willing to confess to: they understand nothing, and they reduce the most brilliant theories to logical monstrosities or picturesque oddities as if their only role in life was to illustrate the vanity of the efforts which the professor squanders on them and which he will continue to squander despite everything out of professional's conscience with a disabused lucidity which only redoubles his merit. By definition the professor teaches as he ought to teach, and the meager results with which he is rewarded can only reinforce his certainty that the great majority of his students are unworthy of the efforts he bestows upon them. Indeed the professor is as resigned to his students and their 'natural' incapacities as the 'good colonist' is to the 'natives', for he has no higher expectations than they just be the way they are ...

Like Gerald Graff (2003), Bourdieu points to the effect of that fear that Graff says too many academics carry with them, namely, that sometime soon there will be an 'outbreak of clarity'. Far better if students are kept in

a perpetual 'semantic fog' which confirms their sense that they are naturally incompetent and their teachers' belief that they are infinitely superior beings.

It is here that we see a failure to develop a conception of academic freedom as public scholarship.

ON ACADEMIC AUTONOMY ... AGAIN

We have already encountered the idea of academic freedom or autonomy as originally outlined by Humboldt. The actual practices of academics suggested by accounts of the academic culture have little to do with that idea. This gap or failure has been well characterised by Andrews (2007) as a failure to develop a practice of public scholarship.

As Andrews (2007) has noted, the claims by Rothblatt (1995) and Gaita (1999, 2011) that once we had 'real' universities and now we don't, establishes a binary. One upon a time, our universities were filled by free scholars engaging in pure and unfettered scholarship and teaching small numbers of students who were there because they loved knowledge. Now we have instrumentalised, vocationally oriented training institutes teaching intellectual philistines who just want a job. The effect is to sustain an idea of 'academic freedom' characterised by elitism and social irrelevance threatened by its nemesis, amass instrumental institution working in servitude to the market.

Defining the options in this restrictive way leads to a narrow conception of the university, the roles that it can and should play, and the public to whom it might properly relate. A thinned-out conception of academic freedom constructs real academic work as an activity that looks a lot like the practices associated with the 'academic model'. It suggests that academic work occurs in 'splendid isolation' and is removed from any engagement with a public outside the university. Academic teaching or research is treated as if these were private matters best conducted 'outside of the public gaze and at a distance from public affairs':

[Any] conversation is private in that it is restricted to the initiated. On this account, freedom is constructed in negative terms, i.e., freedom *from* interference in the form of demands to be useful or an assertion of authority by someone outside the institution. This model provides an intensely privatised kind of scholarship obligated only to preserve a regard for some 'great tradition' of intellectual effort (Andrews 2007: 61).

In constructing this binary, what has gone missing is a third option, namely, public scholarship, which also provides a basis for thinking about what has gone wrong.

Public scholarship, which links teaching and research, is precisely what Humboldt had in mind. It is what Jurgen Habermas understands to happen when intellectuals use—

arguments sharpened by rhetoric, intervene on behalf of rights that have been violated and truths that have been suppressed, reforms that are overdue and progress that has been delayed[to] ... address themselves to a public sphere that is capable of *response, alert and informed* (1989: 73).

Bohman (2005) too speaks to the democratic character of this conception of public scholarship:

In a democracy all must be able to exercise their reason ‘without let or hindrance’ and not simply appeal as subjects to authorised agents who respond in light of their own criteria and grant entitlements in exchange for cooperation within existing practices. In some cases it is necessary not only to criticise such norms but also to change the practices themselves (also Docherty 2011).

And it is this conception of public scholarship that MacIntyre spoke to when he identified universities as places—

where conceptions of, and standards of rational justification are elaborated, put to work in the detailed practices of enquiry, and themselves rationally evaluated, so that only from a university can the wider society learn how to conduct its own debates, theoretical or practical in a rationally defensible way. (MacIntyre 1990: 222)

Speaking in this way about public scholarship raises many questions. Were the universities of the United Kingdom, America, or Australia ever really committed to a culture and practice of public scholarship? Given the very real possibility that public scholarship has actually been more of an absence than a presence, what kinds of evidence would we need to adduce to answer this question? Does the general absence of resistance by academics to the changes that began to alter the way universities worked in the 1980s suggest that those academics who were working in the universities then were not practised in the dispositions that define ‘public scholarship’?

As I have already indicated I am not able to address these kinds of questions. What I can do is turn to one of the ways the tensions between an older conception of universities as socially and intellectually elite spaces and the idea that universities owed more to their community began to affect the conception of knowledge in ways that have proved quite puzzling.

No reader will be ignorant of the impact of recent traditions of inquiry like discourse theory or the work of Michel Foucault, which has been sceptical about the kind of arguments about the good of knowledge that I have been presented in the previous chapter and here. At the least we have to acknowledge that the modern status of knowledge is contradictory, partly for reasons pointed out with great acuity by Foucault. And to do this is to accept that the kinds of goods that knowledge is and that the teaching relationship represents are indeed potentially amenable to change—and even a slide into ignorance (as I have outlined in Chap. 2). Certainly, as I want to suggest now, this vulnerability has included the capacity of neo-liberal ‘reformers’ and the new public managers to promote various kinds of rationalising and instrumentalising processes as they pursued the phantasm of ‘marketising’ universities and ‘commodifying’ knowledge and teaching.

KNOWLEDGE AND ITS CONTRADICTIONS

The historian Hannah Forsyth argues that the change in scale from an elite system of Australian higher education to the beginnings of a mass higher-education system in the 1970s and 1980s is just one element in a complex historical process of change unfolding throughout the twentieth century. As Forsyth (2014: 4) notes, if the *idea* of the university changed, so too did some of the practices that define a university; the relations between universities, governments, and key social institutions; and even the very conception of what ‘knowledge’ is and why it is a ‘good’. What is true for Australia is true for also for Britain’s and America’s universities.

Central to this history is a problem that Michel Foucault rightly insisted needs to be thought about as a political problem: ‘the exercise, production and accumulation of knowledge cannot be dissociated from the mechanisms of power: complex relations exist which must be analysed (Foucault 1991: 165). As Lyotard (1984: 8) put it, this is because ‘knowledge and power are simply two sides of the same question: who decides what knowledge is, and who knows what needs to be decided?’ That this thought is

itself the product of long nurturance within our universities is a simple reminder—if we needed to be reminded—that universities are indeed ‘places where conceptions of, and *standards of rational justification* are elaborated, put to work in the detailed practices of enquiry, and themselves rationally evaluated’ (MacIntyre 1990: 220). Foucault has made a good case for thinking about knowledge as a political problem and indeed the need to do it: there is not much more than ordinary irony that this case has been made in the course of historical processes which continue to shape the modern university.

For much of the twentieth century public universities in Britain, America, and Australia broadly conceived of knowledge as both universal and good in itself. As Forsyth (2014: 38) puts it—

The value of knowledge was knowledge itself. What was important about this way of valuing knowledge was that it gave universities the authority to say what knowledge was—so the university could say what the nation was, what the characteristics of government were, and how society was structured. Having a university then, like having legislation, officials and government records was part of what made a nation exist—for what else had the objective knowledge to declare it to be so?

The idea of ‘objective knowledge’ and the value of this objectivity, was nicely caught when Eric Ashby (1958: 82) argued that ‘the criterion of a university subject had nothing to do with the use or lack of use: it has only to do with intellectual content ... does the subject breed ideas?’⁹

Yet this understanding of the good of knowledge and of the university itself began to confront a basic contradiction that runs through the twentieth century both before the 1980s and then during the era of neo-liberalism. That contradiction has to do with the political democratic impulse to increase the goods produced by a public university.

If it is the case that the universities of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw themselves as emblems of democracy, this implied that the knowledge that they laid claim to as both trustees and teachers or as researchers and creators was somehow implicated in the lives and interests of the people who those universities served. This idea, however, generates at least one contradiction, best framed as a question: did the value of the university’s knowledge lie in how well it served the people? or did it lie in the value of the knowledge *per se*, something which only the university itself was placed to determine?

One answer implied that knowledge needed to become more obviously 'applied', geared to helping the people of a democracy solve their various economic, ethical, social, and technical problems. The other answer implied a need to protect the autonomy of the university so as to enable it to preserve and protect the value of knowledge *per se*. In effect if the idea of the objectivity of knowledge was what gave the university its special authority and status, then moving to enlarge the sphere of applied and practical knowledge as argued for explicitly by utilitarians so as to advance the greatest good of the greatest number of people, seemed to imply certain dangers for the idea of objective knowledge and the autonomy of the university. It did so precisely because it implied that there were tests or criteria extrinsic to those tests or criteria which an autonomous system of higher education had historically applied to the knowledge claims made within the academy. Those historical tests and procedures essentially had to do with the way the disciplines making up the humanities and sciences had organised themselves (e.g., by creating learned societies, appointing well-credentialed academics as editors of journals, and/or by using peer review processes prior to publication) so as to autonomously 'authorise' the teaching or production of 'objective' knowledge. The possibility that these tests were not enough and that governments and/or markets might design and apply new tests of value to academic knowledge, whether understood as teaching or as research, clearly posed a serious threat to the idea of 'university autonomy' and the practice of 'academic freedom'.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have pointed to certain rival normative conceptions at stake when thinking about what a public university means or entails. One idea points to the need for governments or markets to apply a range of utilitarian criteria: the other idea points to a practice in which the academy continues to authorise the knowledge that is taught or produced. Conflict between a utilitarian norm conceived in terms of the utility of knowledge however defined, and a more autonomous conception of knowledge (or what Americans have persistently referred to, e.g., as the 'liberal arts'), in which knowledge is deemed a good in itself, became in increasingly an important tension that began to weigh on the public universities of America, Britain, and Australia. To be clear: as governments began to invest more heavily in public universities, they began to look for and expect evidence of that utility. And universities began to comply with

what initially were modest expectations of compliance with government policy that began to erode the much-vaunted autonomy of the public university. There is a good case to be made that an increasingly utilitarian set of expectations about universities has animated the policy-making and public discourse about universities especially in the second half of the twentieth century.

In this sense of whether a neo-liberal deluge began, as I will argue it did in the 1980s, there was every likelihood that universities would begin to experience some loss of the traditional kinds of institutional autonomy they had enjoyed, just as academic staff would also begin to experience some loss of what they had long assumed to be their 'academic freedom'. Equally, few could have anticipated the far more radical changes that neo-liberalism would unleash.

To both point to this old and persistent tension and the moves to regulate universities is to make one simple, large point. Any discussion and evaluation of the contemporary state of public universities, and especially as they have been reshaped in an era of neo-liberal policy-making cannot and should not be grounded in nostalgia for an imagined past.

It is arguably a supreme irony that in 1988 hundreds of universities worldwide signed onto the *Magna Charta Universitatum* (1988). As we have seen the Charter insisted that 'to meet the needs of the world around it, its research and teaching must be morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic power'. The irony is that the 1980s saw the beginnings of what would become a cascade of state-sponsored policy changes that would redefine the public university. These changes would thoroughly subvert the proud affirmation of the point and purpose of a public university spelled out in this 'Great Charter'. It is to those changes that I now turn.

NOTES

1. Every state has at least one state university, while the largest, like California, have 35 universities divided between the University of California system and the California State University system and Texas has 44 universities divided between six different systems. Some state universities grew from small institutions first established in the eighteenth century, like Georgia (est. 1785) or North Carolina (est. 1789). Others were established as so-called Land Grant universities (like Michigan State and Penn State), some 70 of which

were established in the wake of the Morrill acts of 1862 and 1890. Many of these colleges had a strong vocational orientation (Lambert 2014: 27–38). The Morrill acts had given each eligible state 30,000 acres of federal land to sell to finance public institutions offering professional and vocational degrees in addition to the liberal arts. The Land Grant universities in particular offered 'universalised utilitarian higher education' that helped 'further the development of the agriculture and industry, promoted adult education, and contributed to the general welfare' (Nakosteen 1965: 494–5). While many of the state universities had fewer than 1,000 students in 1900, many grew into gigantic campuses with 40,000 or more students, as well as spawning a network of regional campuses around the state like the University of California (est. 1868).

2. This decision is now conventionally derided as a 'mistake' by contemporary economists and policy-makers like Barr and Glennerster (2014). The modern conventional neo-liberal wisdom is that the report 'failed to transform the financial basis of higher education to pay for the kind of expansion the UK needed'. Barr and Glennerster argue that in the late 1980s, the participation rate in United Kingdom universities was around 14 percent, 'in part because places were largely publicly financed'. 'Welfare economists' like Barr advocated for the idea that students should pay for their own higher education via a system of student loans usually based on the Australian model of deferred student loans using an income-related payroll-deduction model. Beginning in 1998, the United Kingdom adopted this policy. It is simply staggering that these economists ignored the evidence that countries like Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Finland, Hungary, and Spain continue to provide full public support for universities and university students (including publicly funded living expenses) and that these countries have even higher tertiary participation rates than the United Kingdom.
3. To be clear, while I have some sympathy for the 'normative' approach, such an approach cannot be allowed to do all the 'heavy lifting', just as an entirely metaphorical approach cannot be trusted either. Hence my preference for Finnis's idea of pursuing a reflective equilibrium between an ethical and an empirical account.
4. Leys really should know better. Treating the idea of the 'practical' as if this refers to a low-grade 'instrumentalism' lacking any normative value displays an appalling ignorance on Leys's part about the way ideas like *praxis* and *practische* have been deployed in the western tradition, for example, consistently embodying a strong sense of the Aristotelian account of how all human action is oriented to an idea of the good.
5. Jonathan Abbey, personal communication.

6. For this reconstruction I rely heavily on texts from the 1960s and 1970s that either describe academic practices (like Bligh 1974), offer memoirs or biographies of academics (like Hacoheh 1998; Carey 2014), or accounts of student experience (like Little 1970).
7. In this chapter I am talking about the academic model in the past tense as if it were historically defunct. The possibility has to be entertained that it may still be informing what goes on in the ‘marketised’ university.
8. In saying this I do not deny that there is some value in introducing all university students to some of the elements of the academic model, including exposure to its pedagogic techniques; to discipline-based knowledge; and to academic techniques of reading, writing, and analysis. But to only do this while sustaining many of the unacceptable values and attitudes that went with the academic model was probably never all that defensible.
9. Ashby’s reference to ‘objective knowledge’ points to a tradition of ‘objectivism’, defined by Bernstein (1991: 8) as ‘the basic conviction that there is or must be some permanent, ahistorical matrix or framework to which we can ultimately appeal in determining the nature of rationality, knowledge, truth, reality, goodness, or rightness’. To pose a question about the politics of knowledge is to call into question the fundamental assumption of objectivism, namely, that there is a permanent, ahistorical framework on which we can ultimately rely to determine the truth of a knowledge claim.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, N. (1981). *Kelvin Grove forty years*. Milton: Kelvin Grove College of Advanced Education.
- Anderson, R. (2006). *British universities past and present*. London: Hambledon Continuum.
- Andrews, S. (2007). ‘*Compromising positions*’: *Relations of power and freedom in the Australian university*. Unpublished PhD thesis. Melbourne: RMIT University.
- Anwyl, J., & Bowden, J. (1978). *Social and educational roles and values of Australian academics*. Parkville: University of Melbourne, Centre for the Study of Higher Education.
- Ashby, E. (1958). *Technology and the academic: An essay on universities and the scientific revolution*. London: Macmillan.
- Barcan, A. (1994). A Bird’s Eye View of Educational Reform, Australia and World Affairs, No. 23, Summer, 1994, pp. 31–38.
- Barr, N., & Glennester, H. (2014). Preface. In N. Barr (Ed.), *Shaping higher education 50 years after Robbins*. London: London School of Economics.
- Beddie, F. (2014). *A differentiated model for tertiary education: Past ideas, contemporary policy and future possibilities*. Canberra: NVCER.

- Berdahl, R. O. (1959). *British universities and the State*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bernstein, R. J. (1991). *Beyond objectivism and relativism*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Bessant, B. (1977). Robert Gordon Menzies and Education in Australia. In Murray-Smith, S, (ed). *Melbourne Studies in education*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press: 75-93
- Bligh, D. (1974). *What's the use of lectures?* London: Penguin.
- Bohman, J. (2005). "We, Heirs of the Enlightenment": Critical theory, democracy and social Science. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 13(3), 253–267.
- Booth, A., & Kee, H. (2010, April). *A long run view of the University Gender gap* (IZA discussion paper series no 4916.) Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor.
- Bourdieu, P. (1994). *Homo Academicus*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bourdieu, P. (1996a). *Academic discourse: Linguistic misunderstanding and professorial power*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1996b). *An invitation to reflexive sociology* (with Wacquant L.). Cambridge: Polity.
- Bourdieu, P. (1999). *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market*, New York: New Press.
- Brint, S., Riddle, M., Turk-Bicacki, T., & Levy, C. (2005). From the liberal to the practical arts in American Universities and colleges: Organisational analysis and curricular change. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 76(2), 151–180.
- Carey, J. (2014). *The unexpected professor: An Oxford life in books*. London: Faber.
- Coady, A. (2000). Universities and the ideals of inquiry. In A. Coady (Ed.), *Why universities matter* (pp. 73–84). Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Davies, S. (1989). *The Martin Committee and the Binary Policy of Higher Education in Australia*. Melbourne: Ashwood House.
- Davis, G. (2010). *The Republic of Letters: The 2010 Boyer Lecture* Sydney: ABC <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/boyerlectures/boyer-lectures-2010-the-republic-oflearning/2981312>
- Delbanco, A. (2012). *College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Docherty, T. (2011). *For the university: Democracy and the future of the institution*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Douglas, J. (2005). America's path to access and equity in higher education. In D. Palfreymann & T. Tapper (Eds.), *Understanding mass higher education: Comparative perspectives on access* (pp. 211–246). Abingdon: Routledge Falmer.
- Etherington, B. (2014). Farewell to the University Overland (Winter) <https://overland.org.au/2014/05/farewell-to-the-university/>
- Forsyth, H. (2014). *A history of the modern Australian university*. Kensington: Newsouth.
- Foucault, M. (1991). *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*. New York: Semiotext(e).

- Freeman, R. (1976). *The overeducated American*. New York: Academic.
- Gaita, R. (1999). *A common humanity*. Richmond: Text.
- Gaita, R. (2000). Truth and the university. In A. Coady (Ed.), *Why universities matter* (pp. 27–28). Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Gaita, R. (2012). ‘To Civilize the city?’ *Meanjin* 71 (1): 29–49.
- Gallagher, A. P. (1982). *Coordinating Australian university development: A study of the Australian Universities Commission, 1959–1970*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press.
- Gartenberg, P. (1972). *An analysis of the budgetary process for British Universities 1962–72*. Unpublished Ph.D dissertation. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.
- Gelonesi, J. (2002, February 27). Few honours for e-degrees. *The Age*: 12.
- Goodyear, P. (2002). Psychological foundations for networked learning. In C. Steeples & C. Jones (Eds.), *Networked learning: Perspectives and issues* (pp. 49–76). London: Springer.
- Hacohen, M. (1998). *Karl Popper; The formative years 1902–1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Houston, H. S., & Harman, G. (1978). Course accreditation in Australian colleges of advanced education. *The South Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 6(1), 17–35.
- Lambert, M. (2014). *Privatization and the public good: Public universities in the balance*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.
- Lays, S. (1999). *The angel & the octopus*. Sydney: Duffy & Snellgrove.
- Lays, S. (2011). *The hall of uselessness: Selected essays*. Melbourne: Black Inc.
- Little, G. (1970). *The university experience*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.
- Liyotard, J. F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
- MacIntyre, A. (1990). *Three traditions of ethical inquiry*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
- McInnis, C., James, R., & McNaught, C. (1995a). *First year on campus diversity in the initial experiences of Australian undergraduates*. Melbourne: Centre for the Study of Higher Education University of Melbourne.
- McInnis, C., Powles, M., & Anwyl, J. (1995b). *Academic roles and values in Australia*. (Research working paper no. 95.3). Parkville: Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne.
- Menzies, R. G. (1939, April 27). Commencement address at the Canberra University College. *The Canberra Times*, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/printArticlePdf/2476699/3?print=n>.
- Murray, A. H. (1957). *Report of the committee on Australian universities*. Melbourne: Committee on Australian Universities.
- Nakosteen, M. (1965). *The history and philosophy of education*. New York: Wiley.
- National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America’s Promise. (2007). *College learning for the new global century*. Washington, DC: AACU.

- Robbins, L. (1963). *Higher education: Report of the Committee appointed by the Prime Minister under the chairmanship of Lord Robbins, 1961–63* (Cmd 2154). London: HMSO.
- Rothblatt, S. (1982). The diversification of higher education in England. In K. Jarasch (Ed.), *The transformation of higher learning 1860–1930: Expansion, diversification, social opening and professionalization in England, Germany, Russia and the United States*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.
- Rothblatt, S. (1995). *The modern university and its discontents*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shattock, M. (2008). The change from private to public governance of British higher education: Its consequences for higher education policy making 1980–2006. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 63(2), 181–203.
- Shattock, M. (2012). *Making policy in British higher education 1945–2011*. London: Institute of Education.
- Sisman, A. (2010). *Hugh Trevor-Roper: The biography*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson.
- Slaughter, S. (1998). Federal policy and supply side institutional resource allocation at public research universities. *Review of Higher Education*, 21, 209–244.

Universities Under the Sign of the Market

Since the early 1980s the public universities of Britain, America, and Australia have been subjected to a radical makeover. The consequences are epitomised by the current web page of Plymouth University, a British university which promotes its ‘vision’ to be *‘the enterprise university’*. Plymouth University avers that this has meant becoming ‘truly business-engaging and delivering outstanding economic, social, and cultural benefits from our intellectual capital’ as well as ‘creating a sustainable new model for an enterprise-led university where innovation and creativity, together with responsible business practice, underpin all our activities’ (Plymouth University 2015:). Plymouth’s mission is no less striking as it declares it is committed to ‘advancing knowledge and transforming lives through education and research’. As a ‘world-leading university’, Plymouth claims its ‘enterprise culture will deliver sustained innovation and international impact’.¹ Plymouth also promises to use ‘the knowledge we create to transform lives. We will achieve this through world-class research, excellence in teaching and learning, and through our partnerships and collaborations’.

Right at the start of the twenty-first century, in what was the first systematic study of Australian higher education since the Dawkins reforms of the late 1980s, Simon Marginson and Mark Considine (2000) documented the evolution of what they called the ‘enterprise university’. This is a model in which university missions and governing bodies start to take on a distinctly corporate character ... marketing mediates much of the relationship with

the world outside, and performance targets are superimposed on scholarly honorifics' (Marginson and Considine 2000: 4).

What this means, as the Plymouth University website indicates, is that increasing numbers of people in universities (to say nothing of people in government, the media, and the community) now use terms like 'markets' and 'competition', drawing on the idiom of public relations to describe the purpose of universities. This entails, as Frank Furedi notes, that—

outwardly universities increasingly ape the managerial models of private and especially public sector corporations. Quaint academic rituals and practices have been gradually displaced by management techniques as departments mutate into cost centres often run by administrators recruited from the private and public sector (Furedi 2011: 1).

The invitation to talk about the development of a higher-education 'market', and to treat higher education as if it is a 'commodity' that can be purchased as a 'private benefit' by students who are now really 'customers', and that research done in pursuit of some corporate's 'bottom-line' is good seems irresistible. Yet for reasons outlined in the next chapter all such talk relies on a category mistake, something which begins to indicate why our universities are now in the kinds of bother in which they now find themselves. Not the least of this bother is the way the rush to embrace an ethos shaped by the 'values' of public relations animates an insidious assault on the idea that universities are places committed to truth-seeking whose staff and students engage in various kinds of rational deliberation.

In this chapter my task is simpler. I want to ask how universities have come to be talked about (including talking about themselves) in the language of markets.

There have been many explanations offered to make sense of this change. Don Aitkin (2000: 2) for example, argued that the changes that took place starting in the 1980s in Australia 'would have happened anyway, regardless of whether [key politicians like] Dawkins, Vanstone, and Howard had pulled the levers'. Aitkin says this is so because 'much of what Australian higher education has experienced in this time has happened elsewhere, at much the same time', a process partly driven 'by increases in the scale of the system' and partly by changes 'to the very form of academic knowledge'. Others have made similar claims about the role played by globalisation. For example, Mark Ferrara (2015: 17) notes rightly that there is now a significant degree of convergence at work among the universities

of Australia, Britain, and America, which looks a lot like a move toward a kind of ‘global standardisation’. Does this mean that we can explain what has happened as a result of globalisation?

Before I directly engage that question, it is important to stress that what has happened to universities since the 1980s is not exactly novel. As William Clark (2006) shows in his wickedly funny, deeply scholarly account of the development of ‘the academic from medieval forms up to modern incarnations’, the entire history of European and Anglo-American universities can be read as a history of repeated attempts to regulate and control what Furedi (2011: 1) calls ‘quaint academic rituals and practices’ and what Clark describes as ‘the often unruly, disorganised sometimes indefensible working practices of academics’. Clark’s book casts ‘light on the twin processes of bureaucratisation and commodification—the twin engines of the rationalisation and the disenchantment of the world’ (Clark 2006: 3). His deeply subversive account stresses the role played by both states and by ideas about ‘markets’ in the transformation of academic manners over seven or more centuries. This in itself while possibly ‘surprising’ may also be for some optimism. There are irrepressible elements of the intellectual practices that inform university teaching and research that ought not and cannot be permanently repressed. Clark’s book is a constant reminder of the value of scepticism.

Because it is important not to be misled by either the language we use, or the appearances of things when we set out to make sense of this process, we need to be sceptical about some of the usual suspects relied on to explain what has happened. In what follows I start by briefly evaluating the globalisation story. I then turn to saying why we can point to the role played by neo-liberalism. While some talk about a large and ramifying neo-liberal ‘ideology’, this idea requires some explication, which I do by talking about neo-liberalism as a performative discourse to begin to make sense of the process of change. I turn to describing some of the ways the political and policy processes unfolded in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia

Yet we also need to acknowledge that what has happened in the modern university is not just the result of government policies imposed on them: it is also the effect of processes arising within the universities themselves. This involves what commentators have called the rise of new public management, which is also a kind of performative discourse adopted by managers and administrators in many universities. Let me start by suggesting why we should not be seduced by the idea that ‘globo’ made us do it.

GLOBALISATION?

Since Robertson's pioneering attempt to make it a respectable academic category (1992: 8), globalisation has become one of *the* buzz-words in contemporary social sciences. It is used to explain just about any and every kind of social, political, and economic phenomenon. Marginson (2009a: 5) seems to get the causal connection awry when he suggests that 'Globalisation has triggered the refashioning of the nation-state as a global competition state that is increasingly focused on international comparisons and advantage'. Demonstrating the knack of converting the vacuous into the portentous, Martin Albrow and Elizabeth King suggest that globalisation 'encompasses all those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society' (1990: 8). Not to be outdone, David Held et al. (1999: 2) declare that globalisation refers—

to those spatial-temporal processes of change which underpin a transformation in the organization of human affairs by linking together and expanding human activity across regions and continents ... A satisfactory definition of globalisation must capture each of these elements: extensity (stretching), intensity, velocity and impact.

They go on (1999: 2) to argue that 'globalisation is transforming modern societies in the areas of politics, economics, culture and communication, migration, environmental issues, law and military affairs'. For others, like Anthony Giddens (1990), globalisation is more about the unfolding or extension of the larger process of modernisation, and so globalisation becomes part of high, late, or even post-modernity (For an overview of the literature, see Waters 1997; Steger 2009; James and Soguk 2014).

Predictably enough, the idea that globalisation could be used to explain the changes to universities has proved irresistible. A slew of writers have insisted that globalisation is driving the convergence of higher-education policies in many western countries as well as reshaping the way universities actually work (see Pratt and Poole 1999/2000: 16; Deem 2001; Marginson and Rhoades 2002; Pick 2004: 99; Marginson and Wende 2007; Barber et al. 2013; Stromquist and Monkman 2014). Kersten Sahlin, Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Uppsala University in Sweden, likewise insists that, 'The university is in the heart of globalisation. Universities adapt to globalisation, they reinvent themselves and they channel globalisation' (cited in Garman 2009). Neil Fosskett (2011: 34) argues for example, that the growth of global trade, communications, and interconnectedness

has stimulated a global view of higher education, and the World Trade Organisation recognises higher education as a large globally traded service worth some \$200 billion per annum (Deem 1999; Breton and Lambert 2003). Slaughter and Leslie (1997) have already stressed that these processes have put significant pressure on both national HE policy-makers and individual universities to change the way they operate. Sara Slaughter (1998) argues that the convergence is reflected in the persistent diminution of government funding, increased emphasis on economic competitiveness, the channelling of resources into curriculum areas that meet the needs of the ‘marketplace’ or even a ‘global marketplace’, and creating ‘efficiencies’ in the management of the universities.

Commentators like Marginson and Der Wende (2007) claim that modern universities are caught up in a discursive web in which categories like ‘globalisation’ and ‘competition’ are deployed relentlessly by international agencies like the OECD, governments, and university managers. Certainly those responsible for marketing Australian universities have proved adept at devising terms like ‘global footprint’ to define their strategic mission or talking easily about ‘being worldly’ or claiming to possess ‘advance knowledge ... in a globalizing world’ (Raciti 2010: 35). There is little doubt about the currency of the idea that globalisation is a ‘revolutionary force for change’ involving dynamics like the transition to knowledge-intensive economies, demographic pressures, the global pursuit of talent, and ‘informed student choices and consumerist pressures’ (Hazelkorn 2015: 2).

Yet precisely what this talk about globalisation and its alleged effects actually refers to, and whether the explanation of globalisation actually explains anything, remains to be clarified. According to Glyn (1992), Albaek et al. (1996), Hirst and Thompson (1996: 2), and Weiss (1998), there are grounds to be more than a little sceptical about much of this globalisation chatter. We are perhaps better advised to agree with Marginson and Rhoades (2002: 281), as they stated some time ago, that even now ‘globalisation processes in higher education are under-studied and under-theorized’.

There are a number of questions that need to be examined. Is globalisation essentially an evaluative category for which various authors invite us to applaud or to boo, depending on whether the referent is perceived to wear a white or a black hat? Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson (1996: 176–77) usefully suggested that the representation of globalisation has been shaped by a number of political purposes. They note that globalization has been a

godsend for ‘neo-liberal’ advocates of ‘free market solutions’, justifying the widespread tendency to see the globalisation process as ‘inevitable, desirable and necessary’ (Catley 1996: 1).

There are two concerns being obliquely referred to here. One is the long-standing concern that as a theoretical category, globalisation suffers from ‘conceptual inflation’ because ‘it is made to explain too much on too weak a foundation’. Epstein (2003: 310) is blunter, treating globalisation as a floating signifier, its protean nature ‘often diluted into the proliferation of images it has generated, conjuring up a rather confused sense of changes occurring all over the world in the way people conduct business, communicate, [or] live’. To this can be added the difficulty of establishing whether we are dealing with a theoretical concept possessing descriptive value or with an evaluative category as described above. Early sociologically inflected accounts provided by Malcolm Waters (1997) talked benignly about the ‘globalizing of modernity’.

However, the more recent intellectual conversation has ceased representing a triumphant and unstoppable globalisation. Pierre Bourdieu (2003: 84), in particular, pointed to ‘a surreptitious slide from the descriptive meaning of the concept ... to a ... performative meaning’ used to justify ‘an economic policy aimed at unifying the economic field by means of a whole set of juridical-political measures designed to tear down all the obstacles to that unification’.

This critical line has been elaborated by writers like Raewyn Connell (2007, 2013a), who treat globalisation as a ‘set of assumptions and practices that underpins policy in specific fields’. This seems like a more promising line of inquiry, especially when it is grounded in a specific discursive tradition like ‘neo-liberalism’. Yet as I want to argue here, while it is true enough that neo-liberalism now provides, as Brown (2015a, 9–10) observes, ‘a normative order of reason that has become a widely and deeply disseminated governing rationality’ that works by insisting that ‘all conduct is economic conduct’, we are not entitled to simply ‘read off ‘the actual higher education policy processes we see in Australia, the United Kingdom, or America from the neo-liberal matrix of ideas. This is why, while Raewyn Connell is right to insist that western nation-states have been subjected to a ‘neo-liberal cascade’ (Connell 2013a) over the last several decades, making sense of this cascade isn’t quite straightforward.

ON NEO-LIBERALISM

On the face of it neo-liberalism seems easily characterised. Wendy Brown describes it as a ‘governing rationality’ in which everything is ‘economised’ because ‘human beings become market actors and nothing but, every field of activity is seen as a market, and every entity (whether public or private, whether person, business, or state) is governed as a firm’ (cited in Shenk 2015: 1). On this account the idea of the market becomes the central idea. Colin Crouch (2011: 17) notes that ‘the principal tenet of neo-liberalism is that optimal outcomes will be achieved if the demand and supply for goods and services are allowed to adjust to each other through the price mechanism, without interference by government or other forces...’ However, David Harvey (2005) in the course of offering a useful ‘working’ definition of neo-liberalism complicates the matter quickly when he conflates neo-liberalism with neo-classical economics (2005: 20) while claiming that neo-liberalism is a policy project *promoted by the state*. As he puts it—

Neo-liberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practice that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices (Harvey 2005: 3).

In effect, and granting that neo-liberalism is grounded in a neo-classical economic theory of the free market, we should never have forgotten that among other things, neo-classical economists presume a clear separation between economy and polity, maintaining that ‘barriers be established to prevent the political world from intervening in the economy’ (Crouch 2011: 34). To put this point more strongly, one of the central tenets of neo-liberalism is the restriction of state interference in the economy, requiring among other things that public and social policy interventions, including health care, education, social security, as well as industrial and environmental regulatory frameworks be abolished or privatised. Many writers interpret such changes as undermining the state and weakening its regulatory role (Giddens 1999; Giroux 2005; McLaren 2005). Yet implementation of this program requires significant state intervention.

This contradiction can be treated as Chang (2002: 540) does by pointing to the ‘unholy alliance’ between neo-classical economics, which provided most of the economic analytical tools, and the Austrian

libertarian tradition, which provided the moral and political philosophy of neo-liberalism. Chang is not alone in insisting there is a large gap between these two traditions as evidenced by von Hayek's (1949) scathing critique of neo-classical economics (see Plehwe 2009: 1).

But how should we understand this definition which refers to neo-liberalism as both a 'theory of the pure market' and as a 'political-economic' practice which depends on state intervention? This, as we will see, is just the first of many basic improbabilities that swirl around neo-liberalism, and that help to generate basic confusion when we try to make sense of the apparently straightforward idea that we now have a 'higher-education market' based on the commodification of teaching and learning. Let me start with an overview of neo-liberalism.

Drawing on Phillip Mirowski's clear-sighted account, neo-liberals start with the premise that their liberal vision of the good society will not occur naturally but must be constructed by dint of concerted political will and organisation (Mirowski 2009: 434–40). Neo-liberalism is both a political doctrine and deeply statist. That is why neo-liberals do not want to destroy the state so much as redefine and reshape it. Equally, neo-liberals treat the markets as the most perfect 'information processor' that humans have yet devised, which is why they insist that the market will always surpass the capacity of the state to process information. For that capacity, neo-liberals, like neo-classical economists, treat the price-setting mechanism in markets as the perfect source of this unparalleled information-processing capacity. The neo-classical economic tradition insists that prices are set as a result of constant haggling between producers and consumers—which is just one of many instances of the make-believe world of economists. At the same time neo-liberals contend with what would otherwise be an intolerable contradiction between neo-classical economics and neo-liberalism with another exercise in make believe, this time involving redefining politics as an economic or market activity. The rise of public-choice theory becomes one way of advancing this proposition, just as new public management treats citizenship as a form of consumerism and requires that public services like health or education now be redefined and treated as consumer goods.

On this account education becomes less a life-transforming or life-shaping process and more a consumer good. Neo-liberals famously insist on valuing freedom above equality. To do this they posit only that all humans are autonomous self-governing beings possessed of both rationality and unlimited self-interest. Markets enable the freest possible expression of these capacities so all may flourish. Equally, neo-liberals hold that

markets can always provide solutions to any problems—even those caused by markets. Neo-liberals do not treat inequality or poverty as such a problem or as some unfortunate by-product of capitalism because they assume that deep inequality is a functional necessity for the ideal market to do what it does best. This means capital must be protected from interference and be allowed to flow freely wherever it wants to go and do what it wants, for example, by virtue of various free trade agreements. Labour or ordinary citizens, on the other hand, enjoy no equivalent right to protect their interests.

Whatever its pretensions to offer an account of the ‘the good society’ it is also clear that neo-liberalism is an ‘ideology’ in that it represents and promotes the interests of certain elites, including corporations and wealthy individuals and families. Dumenil and Levy (2013: 1) have recently presented a wealth of robust economic data to substantiate the claim that neo-liberalism emerged in the wake of the structural crisis of the 1970s and represents the strategy of the capitalist classes in alliance especially with financial managers to strengthen their hegemony and to expand the reach of financial markets. Picketty (2013) has added a powerful empirical demonstration that the rate of capital return in countries like Britain, America, and Australia has been persistently greater than the rate of economic growth, and that this has enabled the degree of income and wealth inequality to return to the levels of inequality last seen in the late nineteenth century.² Other writers like Stiglitz (2012) and Atkinson (2014) have argued that much of the dramatic increase in inequality is a direct consequence of government policy. This is an important observation that directly contradicts some of the older simplistic claims made by neo-liberals that they have actually shrunk the state, a claim based on the assumption that some inevitable, even necessary, antagonism or contradiction exists between ‘the market’ and ‘the state’.

With this in mind, several important points need to be made. Firstly, it is states that everywhere have promoted neo-liberal rationality and universalised the norms of competition and enterprise. Secondly, we have if anything, actually become more state-centric under the imprint of neo-liberal policy-making. To be clear: neither globalisation (nor for that matter ‘the digital revolution’) has done as much to shape our social and economic landscape as governments and their policies have done.³ Neo-liberalism is what the state promotes as the ‘general commodification of society’, promoting accumulation of ‘capital by dispossession’ while serving the interests of the truly wealthy and corporations through a mixture of policies involving

commission *and* omission (Harvey 2005). The citizens of countries like the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia need to be absolutely clear that when they think about the effects of neo-liberalism: we are talking about political and ethical choices which governments are making and which they can change because their citizens want them to. Finally, if neo-liberalism is *destructive* of rights, institutions, and human goods, as Dardot and Laval (2013) argue it is, it is also *productive* of social relations, ways of living, and even people's values and sense of self.⁴ Neo-liberalism actually shapes the form of our existence, the ways in which we lead our lives and relate to ourselves and to others. It encourages generalised competition, insists on calling processes like education a 'commodity', treats social relations as if they are 'market relations', even magically transforms the person into an enterprise or a brand, and justifies even greater social inequalities. Neo-liberal discourse is like this. While neo-liberal discourse assumes that it is literally and simply describing the world, it is better understood as Wendy Brown (2015a, b: 21) insists, as a 'distinctive mode of reason' involved in the 'the production of subjects, the "conduct of conduct" and a scheme of valuation'.

NEO-LIBERALISM AS PERFORMATIVE DISCOURSE

Neo-liberalism is best understood as a performative discourse where the practice of naming and speaking brings about real actions and changes. Language as performance has the seemingly magical property of bringing about the things named and so plays a vital part in constructing the social world. This is why, as Bourdieu (1991: 106) says, the social sciences (from economics through sociology to criminology) need to be able to develop 'a theory of the theory effect'. Bourdieu asks social scientists to account for the quite real consequences of categorising and naming people, actions, and relationships even if those categories are in essence delusional, or—as I will argue later in the case of neo-liberal theories about higher education—involve different kinds of ignorance, including category mistakes.

On the power of language to become, as Austin put it 'performative' because it 'executes an action', Bourdieu is clear that this power is not contained *within language* so much as it is an expression of social and symbolic power:

The naive question of the power of words is logically implicated in the initial suppression of the question of the uses of language, and therefore of the social conditions in which words are employed. As soon as one treats language as

an autonomous object, accepting the radical separation which Saussure made between internal and external linguistics, between the science of language and the science of the social uses of language, one is condemned to looking within words for the power of words, that is, looking for it where it is not to be found.

Bourdieu insists that if we want to understand the performative or magical nature of the use of categories we must find this ‘magic power’ not in the language itself but rather in the ways people engaged in the work of entities like ‘the state’ use it to exercise symbolic power (Bourdieu 1991: 107)

Few organisations or institutions possess this capacity for authorisation to the same extent as the state. This makes Bourdieu’s use of the idea of performativity a much more political and social process than the abstracted linguistic analysis offered by Austin (1962) or the Kantian universal-rational analysis offered by Habermas (2004). As Bourdieu insists, the problem, expressed in its most apt form by Austin (and after him by Habermas), begins with the link between the specifically linguistic substance of speech the key to the efficacy of speech:

By trying to understand the power of linguistic manifestations linguistically, by looking in language for the principle under-lying the logic and effectiveness of the language of institution, one forgets that authority comes to language from outside (Bourdieu 1991: 109).

This insight is relevant to the kinds of ‘definition’ of the key ideas promoted by neo-liberals like Self (1999) when he says, for example, that neo-liberals hold—

The ‘free market’ and market-led growth are the principal and overwhelmingly the most important sources of wealth; large incentives are necessary to market efficiency; the wealth created by a free market will trickle down from the successful to benefit all members of society; the market is intrinsically more efficient than government; to gain greater ‘efficiency’, government should be redesigned according to market methods and incentives (1999: 26–8).

Gareth Williams (1995: 179) has usefully added a specification of what a neo-liberal model of higher education ought to look like:

Efficiency is increased when governments buy academic services from producers, or subsidise students to buy them, rather than supplying them directly, or indirectly through subsidy of institutions; as enrolments rise,

the private sector must relieve governments of some of the cost burden if acceptable quality is to be obtained; many of the benefits of higher education accrue to private individuals, so criteria of both efficiency and equity are served as students or their families make some contribution toward the costs of obtaining the benefits (Williams 1995: 179).

This means that governments and presumably increasing numbers of senior university managers are committed to believing that market competition will actually make universities more efficient and responsive to ‘stakeholders’. This runs in parallel with the seemingly ‘pragmatic’ proposition that because governments cannot spend through public investment in higher education (in the same way as, mysteriously, most European governments like those in Scandinavia continue to be able to do) then ‘marketisation’ is the only practical way of paying for the desired level of growth in higher education if quality is to be protected.⁵

Hence the importance of the neo-liberal insistence on categories like ‘competition’ and ‘freedom’: neo-liberalism uses the motif of freedom to try to ensure that individuals conform to neo-liberal norms *of their own accord*. This also points to the way neo-liberalism engages in a performative redefinition of public universities. What remains to be demonstrated is that we have actually created a ‘higher-education market’ or ‘commodified’ higher education or knowledge. I will postpone addressing that question until the following chapter.

Here I will tell a story about how different governments have pursued a neo-liberal ‘reform agenda’, mindful of Brown’s (2015a, b: 23) caution about the sheer plasticity and variability of neo-liberalism as a political practice. What we see here is how neo-liberalism as a governing rationality informs and grounds the transformative impulses in neo-liberalism, becoming a distinctive style of policy-making that scholars have called new public management (Ferlie et al. 1996). This approach to reforming the public sector has dramatic consequences both for the policy environment in which universities work and for the internal life-world of universities. I start with the case of Britain.

THE NEO-LIBERAL CASCADE IN BRITAIN POST-THATCHER (1979–2016)

We can trace the point at which British policy-makers began to embrace the ‘idea of the market’ as a mechanism for reforming universities back to the Ruskin College speech by Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan

(1976). The context was an economic crisis set loose by OPEC oil increases in 1974, resulting in the unexpected conjunction of historically high levels of inflation *and* unemployment ('stagflation'). Callaghan saw fit to 'explain' the crisis in terms of the failure of the education system to generate an 'educated society' in which young people had the skills and knowledge to enable them to achieve economic success. His speech triggered a national debate about the nature, purpose, and effectiveness of the education system in Britain. Callaghan indicted Britain's university system as archaic, inflexible, and in need of a shakeup. However, that shakeup only began when Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government was elected in 1979. That shakeup was to be continued under the Major (1990–97), Blair (1997–2008), Brown (2008–10), and Cameron governments (2010–).

Ironically, we can say that courtesy of Thatcher's determination that Britain's universities operate under the 'sign of the market', British higher education, 'once regarded as an example of British exceptionalism within Europe because of its independence from the state', became increasingly 'subject not just to "state steering" but to state micro-management on a scale comparable to other European systems' (Shattock 2008: 182). Here we see how the apparent contradiction between the neo-liberal insistence on the role of the free market and competitive principles and its actual status as an instrument of government was resolved: new public management provided the means to resolve the contradiction.

Through the 1980s, we see, especially in the United Kingdom (and in Australia, too), evidence of the influence of what scholars have called new public-management approaches to reforming the public sector of the economy (Ferlie et al. 1996). These elements would be applied 'indiscriminately across the health service, the social services and education', including higher education in the United Kingdom (Shattock 2008: 190). These 'reforming' impulses were undoubtedly strengthened in the United Kingdom by the increased influence under Thatcher and Blair of centralising mechanisms like the Treasury and the Cabinet Office. (We will see the same centralising logic at work in Australia since its origins in the Hawke–Keating governments.

It became conventional to argue that the role and organisation of the public sector needed radical change. Among the key factors cited were its alleged high costs, its open-ended nature, and its degree of unionisation. Accordingly, the public sector had to be 'managed' and subjected to a new economic and competitive discipline (Shattock 2008: 190). New public management was not a program as such, but 'a bundle of disparate

elements' (Pollitt and Boukaert 2000). Its slickest advocates were arguably Osborne and Gaebler (1993), who argued that a more competitive government that fostered enterprise, met the needs of customers, and measured outcomes was the only way to deal with the evidence of government failure.

There were three main themes at work on new public management. 'Modernisation' meant bringing in faster and more flexible ways of budgeting, managing, and accounting for the delivery of services. 'Marketisation' meant introducing market mechanisms like separating purchasers from producers, encouraging user responsiveness, turning citizens into customers, and making public sector organisations like universities compete with one another. Finally, there was 'corporatisation', which relied on outsourcing and pushing decision-making downwards to smaller units, under the semblance of giving them greater autonomy and encouraging an 'entrepreneurial' spirit while introducing a far-reaching culture of audit that would measure 'quality' (Shattock 2008: 190).⁶ As Osborne and Gaebler (1993: 139) put it, 'Because they don't measure results bureaucratic governments rarely achieve them... By carefully measuring results, entrepreneurial organisations can minimise the need for rules'.

In Britain the first stage of the new public-management era involved a commitment to cut budgets, freeze new appointments, campaign against waste, and tighten government controls. The second stage involved the 'marketisation' of higher education by emphasising the role of competition to promote efficiency *and* quality. The third involved introducing new auditing and monitoring mechanisms, including new key performance indicators. The history of higher-education policy in Britain in the periods 1979–1985, 1985–1992, and 1992 onwards broadly aligns with this unfolding scenario. Table 4.1 highlights the key policy shifts in the United Kingdom.

Thatcher represented the immediate problem as how to control the rising costs of a university education. A number of possible solutions were proposed to the government (Trow 1998). One involved the capping of enrollments in elite universities, while encouraging growth in the less expensive sectors of post-secondary education, the polytechnics, and further education. Another option was to encourage the development of private universities, largely self-supporting. A third involved the payment of tuition fees by students, combined with financial aid for needy students and a loan system for others who could not count on parental support. A fourth option involved the radical expansion of the Open University, and/or the creation of similar institutions, to enroll large numbers of mature part-time students in high-quality distance learning at much lower per capita costs. The new Thatcher government did none of these things.

Table 4.1 United Kingdom higher-education policy

1963:	The Robbins Report—creation of ‘new’ universities and expansion of post-secondary institutions
1965:	The Woolwich speech— creation of the Polytechnics
1972:	Wilson Labor government sponsors the James Report—reorganisation of teacher training, ‘diversification’
1980-85:	Thatcher Government makes major funding cuts— withdrawal of ‘overseas’ subsidy; universities can charge full fees to international students; Green Paper on contraction and rationalisation
1985:	Thatcher Government establishes the National Advisory Body for Public Sector HE (NAB), ‘capping the pool,’ centralisation of Higher Education local authorities
1988:	Thatcher Conservative Government introduces the <i>Education Reform Act</i> — incorporating polytechnics, central institutions, and large colleges
1992:	Major Government introduces <i>Further and Higher Education Act</i> — ending of the binary line, Funding Councils for devolved administrations, creation of the ‘new new’ universities
1997:	The Dearing Report—fees for full-time undergraduate students
2003:	White Paper
2004:	Blair New Labor introduces its Higher Education Act providing for variable fees, “new new new” universities, foundation degree awarding powers for FECs
2009:	<i>Higher Ambitions</i> —New Labour’s last higher-education manifesto
2010:	The Browne Review—higher undergraduate fees, new student contribution system
2011:	<i>Students at the Heart of the System</i> Report

In the context of a higher education sector now considered to be archaic, moribund, and inefficient, the Thatcher government decided it was necessary to create a ‘higher-education market’ to stimulate change, raise standards, and promote the creation of a mass university system. The idea that the market was an effective mechanism for the ‘management’ of the education sector can be traced back to Milton Friedman (1962), who told a story about how markets are driven by ‘consumer choice’, and why ‘choice’ means ‘competition’ between providers. In turn competition means that the supply side must continuously seek to gain advantage in the market in terms of price, quality of service, or the development of innovative products or services. This, Friedman insisted, would serve to stimulate innovation as well as promote efficiency and lower costs.

To promote the desired shift to the values of the market, Thatcher used the simple and brutal technique of cutting government funding to the universities. Three days after Thatcher took office, the new Secretary of State for Education and Science was told that £100 million was being removed from the universities’ budget (Shattock 2008: 183). A Treasury civil servant

suggested that the Secretary of State could achieve this painlessly by removing the subsidy for international students and requiring them to pay full-cost fees. This idea was adopted.

In 1981 the Thatcher government instituted the first of many deep cuts to government support grants for higher education by imposing an average 15 percent cut over three years (Reitan 2003: 105). These cuts were imposed with varying severity on individual universities, with some cuts ranging up to 40 percent. The cuts used criteria that were neither discussed nor even revealed, except for a general impression that they were based on the university's academic reputation and standing. The universities that had been promoted from the status of Colleges of Advanced Technology in the 1960s, and which had not yet lost their identity as vocational or technically based institutions, were cut much more deeply on average than the older institutions. These cuts were made by the University Grants Committee. These first deep cuts of the early 1980s had other characteristics in common with the many that were to follow over the next decades, in that they were introduced very suddenly and without consultation (Soares 2002: 78).

The Thatcher government was also faced with the problem of creating a system of mass higher education out of the variety of universities and non-university institutions already in place. Most European university systems were already undergoing massive expansion and had reached 15 percent or more per capita enrollment in universities by 1979. The Thatcher government inherited a system of post-secondary education that centred on an elite set of universities—about 40 in number—that in 1979 enrolled only about 10 percent of eligible population. The government had the option of increasing the diversity of British higher education, with different institutions having different missions and styles of instruction, different kinds of teachers and students, and different cost levels. Alternately, the Thatcher government could continue the well-established pattern of simply promoting non-university institutions to full university status. The government's choice soon became clear. Expansion of the system involved increasing the number of universities, principally by transferring the former polytechnic sector from being under local authority control to independent corporation status with the university 'title' and the development of a range of other institutions (for example, teacher training colleges) into, first, university colleges awarding the degrees of other institutions, and then into independent universities. This strategy was implemented when the Thatcher government engineered the great merger of 1992, promoting the polytechnics to full university status.

Finally, the third element of the ‘Thatcher revolution’ was the introduction of stringent new accountability mechanisms (Shore 2008: 278–86). After 1988 the relationship between the Parliament and higher education changed dramatically, as the Thatcher government radically redesigned the governance and funding structures that had been in place into the mid-1980s. The government passed its *Education Reform Act* of 1988, eliminating the University Grants Committee, traditionally conceived as the buffer between central government control and institutional autonomy. As Salter and Tapper (1994) suggest, the Thatcher government thought the University Grants Committee was a defender of the old order and would try to protect ‘traditional’ university values and practices (1994: 199–202). In 1989, the University Grants Committee was replaced by the University Funding Council. (Following its amalgamation with the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council courtesy of the *Further and Higher Education Act* of 1992, the University Funding Council was in turn replaced by the Higher Education Funding Councils.

The creation of the Higher Education Funding Councils substantially established the authority of the state over higher education. As Salter and Tapper (1994) observed—

After decades of prod and nudge politics, of wait and see, the state ... acquired powers which mark a qualitative shift in its relationship with the institutions of higher education. It is now in a position to orchestrate change on a scale and in a manner which knows no precedent.

Scott (1989) accurately predicted that what were represented as fiscal reforms would have major effects, for example, ‘universities will be bound by much tighter rules when they receive state grants, which will certainly involve more detailed auditing and performance measurement’. And that ‘universities will have to bid against each other to participate in specific initiatives for which funds will be earmarked and accounted separately’ (Scott 1989: 303). The point of this logic became increasingly sharper during John Major’s government (1990–97).

Major’s Conservative government began its ‘reform’ of universities in 1992. It introduced the *Further and Higher Education Act* of 1992 to grant university status to 35 former polytechnics and Colleges of Higher and Further Education. Between 2001 and 2013, another 31 universities were created, while a further 10 university colleges had their applications for university status approved by the Privy Council. The net result was a

mass university system with some 166 degree-granting institutions. By 2000–01, participation of English-domiciled young people had reached 40 percent. Following a further period of rapid expansion, participation stood at 50 percent for English-domiciled students in 2011–12. The total number of students in the United Kingdom grew from 1.6 million in 1994–95 to 2.3 million in 2012–13.

The Major government continued to tighten the screws of accountability. The mission of the Higher Education Funding Councils was to promote the quality and quantity of learning and research in higher-education institutions, cost-effectively and with regard to national needs (Davies 1995: 3). Within two months after the creation of the Higher Education Funding Councils, the Major government issued a series of guidelines for the reaffirming the changing relationship between government and higher education (Shore 2008: 286–88). First, the guidelines demanded that Funding Councils develop sector-wide funding methods for allocating resources for teaching and research. Second, Funding Councils were ‘to specify clearly what institutions are expected to provide in return for teaching and research while securing greater fiscal efficiencies as student enrolment expanded’ (Shore 2008: 286). Third, Funding Councils were to increase accountability of research funding from sector institutions. Finally, the guidelines declared the need for the maintenance and enhancement of quality by relating funding to the Council’s performance assessments of teaching and research quality (Davies 1995: 6–10; Brown with Carasso 2015: 5–7).

By 1993, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (Britain’s largest HEFC covering 131 institutions and established in 1992), had established a range of assessment and performance practices as funding allocation tools.⁷ The first component devised by the Higher Education Funding Council for England was a research assessment that directly linked funding to the results and performance of academic units and institutions (El-Khawas and Massey 1996). This new funding approach removed a sizable amount of funds from a predictable formula basis and gave it a new performance formulaic foundation with external governmental and peer assessors distributing a portion of the funds. This represented a major departure from the competitive federal research funding practices in the United States. Under the new English system the amount of departmental research funding became dependent on a series of performance indicators, including quality publications (to measure ‘output’), the number of citations (to measure the ‘quality’ and ‘impact’), research income, research

students, and peer review (Davies 1995: 6–10; Cave et al. 1997; Brown with Carasso 2015: 5–7).

The British government's philosophy for introducing performance-based measures into the mechanics of higher-education institutions was summarised by Salter and Tapper (1994: 18), who claimed that there were 'pressures on the state' to control higher-education's resources and force it to respond to what we have called the 'economic dynamic' that were both 'overwhelming and inescapable', which meant that 'no state could afford to leave its higher-education system to its own devices' (Salter and Tapper 1994: 18). Oddly, they never said what those pressures were. Shattock (1994) referred to this transition period as the symbolic end of the era of an 'independent academic culture' in Britain.

The second component emphasising academic performance was the quality assessment of teaching and learning effectiveness incorporated in 1993 by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (El-Khawas and Massey 1996). These quality-assessment procedures directly linked funding to judgments made about academic quality in teaching and learning (Shore 2008: 290). In 1997 the government established a new agency—the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education—which provided the basis for linking funding to quality measures. As Brown and Carasso (2015: 105–6) showed, there followed a good deal of policy refinement and the system continues to be 'tweaked' to the present time. Each of these policy changes represented important departures from previous funding schemes for higher education. In 2015 the UK Quality Code for Higher Education set out 19 expectations to be met by UK higher-education providers if they are to receive any kind of public or student loan funding.

The 1988 and 1992 acts ultimately established the foundation for the centralisation of British state control over universities signified by the introduction of new performance and 'quality standards' for higher education. It is also important to note that these changes occurred during a time when the Conservative government required that higher education double its enrollment by the turn of the century *without any additional public funding*.

Major cuts in the United Kingdom after 1990 for all universities provided the context that led to the Dearing Report in 1996–97. When the Dearing Committee was set up there was a real sense of crisis in UK higher education, emphasised by the Vice-Chancellors' 'revolt' in autumn 1995 and the threat in January 1996 to break with the convention of free higher education for full-time students by introducing top-up fees in response to the absence of additional public funds. Arguably there was

also a basic puzzlement among the major political parties about what to do. This became apparent when in mid-1996 some universities threatened to charge top-up fees. Extraordinarily the parties then colluded in order to take the issue out of the 1997 General Election (Lunt 2008). (They did the same in 2010 with the Browne Report. Britain never saw a major political party going into an election calling for new and/or higher fees).

The Dearing Report was commissioned by the Major government but implemented by the Blair government. It proved as significant as the Robbins Report not least of all because of its response to the perceived crisis in funding. The Dearing Committee made a large number of far-reaching recommendations, including the expansion of student numbers (especially at the higher national certificate and diploma (sub-degree) levels), widening participation, increased emphasis on enhanced professionalism in teaching, expanded quality arrangements, and the introduction of partial student fees (Lunt 2008: 744).

Granting that the Thatcher and Major governments had begun cutting funding per student in 1981, a chart in the report showed total expenditures on higher education in real terms rising modestly between 1979 and 1995, from about £5.4 billion to just over £7.1 billion. Recurrent expenditure and publicly resourced fees rose only slightly (from £4 billion to about £4.5 billion) while spending on capital was flat. Funding student maintenance and loans was the only area showing significant growth. To be clear, as Barr and Crawford (1998: 1) indicate, while student numbers in Britain almost doubled between 1990 and 1996, real funding per student fell by nearly 30 percent. The committee concluded that, in a context of increased spending on higher education in real terms between 1979 and 1995, no further increase was feasible. The implication was clear: domestic (and EU) students would need to begin to make a ‘modest’ contribution (about 25 percent of the costs) to their own education.

The most significant recommendation among the 93 made by the Dearing Committee was for a shift from undergraduate tuition being funded entirely by grants from the government to a mixed system in which students paid about 25 percent of the cost of tuition to be supported by low interest government loans. That they should do was by now a common-sense truth. As Barr and Crawford (1998: 2) put it, the expansion to a mass system had one major (and obvious) implication:

If public funding of a high-quality system is possible for a 5 percent system it is not possible for a mass system. Thus *a mass system requires public*

funding to be supplemented on a significant scale by private funding ... In a mass system, therefore, the only source of funding which is large and not grossly inequitable is a system which allows students to borrow against their future earnings.

After two decades of declining government expenditure per student in the 1980s and 1990s, Blair's New Labour government decisively upped the ante. The new government clearly favoured both a neo-liberal framework committed to 'a modern welfare system' based on 'the market', 'choice', 'efficiency', 'standards', and an even stronger *dirigiste* approach to policy-making (Lunt 2008: 743). As Tomlinson (2001: 85) insists, the Blair government reaffirmed the Conservative government's 'faith in choice and competition, with education developing as a market commodity driven by consumer demands ... and fuelled by league table publication'. In the campaign prior to the 1997 General Election, Blair had warned that, 'People have to know that we will run from the centre and forever from the centre' (Hennessey, cited in Jenkins 2006: 232). His elevation of the Cabinet Office (and entities like the Strategy Unit and the Delivery Unit) and his reliance on advisors in combination with a tendency to bypass his Ministers, all point to this being a real problem.

The Blair government introduced partial tuition fees for UK (and European Union) undergraduate students in the United Kingdom in 1997–78. This was justified on the grounds that the 'pressure on universities to sustain high quality teaching within diminishing resources was becoming unsustainable' (British Council 2014: 8). In England, the Blair Government introduced its Higher Education Act in 2004, providing for the full implementation of its 2003 White Paper proposals for student funding and the introduction of 'top-up' or variable tuition fees up to £3000 from 2006. Under this act universities were permitted to introduce fees provided that they signed up to an 'Access Agreement' with the new Office for Fair Access. The fees provision was accompanied by a system of student loans (which meant that no student would be required to pay fees up-front), means-tested grants, and university bursaries (Lunt 2008: 746). Scotland would later abolish fees (for Scottish and EU students studying in Scotland).

By the mid-2000s Blair's government was insisting that its policy framework for higher education simply represented its broader policy template: a representation of its 'reform and modernisation processes for the public

services' was endorsed by the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer at a National School of Government seminar involving many senior civil servants and Ministers as the principles that 'form the basis of the Government's model for public service reform'. This framework aligned well with New Labour's higher-education policies, including 'Top Down Performance Management' (using student number targets, research assessment exercise [RAE] results, quality assessment, efficiency savings) or 'Users Shaping the Service from Below' student—i.e., customer—choice, the student satisfaction survey, the publication of the reports of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) to influence the market) as well as the themes attaching to 'Market Incentives' on one side of the diagram and improving 'Capability and Capacity' on the other.

In June 2009 the Labour government's view of the relationship between universities and the economy was clarified when a Cabinet reshuffle saw Prime Minister Gordon Brown put universities under the remit of Lord Mandelson's Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. In his speech, *Higher Education and Modern Life*, given at Birkbeck College, Mandelson had described universities as 'engines of social mobility' and higher education as an 'entry ticket to the best paid employment' and 'a ticket to higher lifetime earnings' (2009). This presentation of higher education as a 'ticket' creates the sense that in attending university, students are accessing (perhaps purchasing) the status of a 'graduate'. Key neo-liberal principles like the concept of customer–provider relationships in higher education between students and institutions were enshrined, for example, in the 2009 policy document, *Higher Ambitions; The Future of Universities in a Knowledge Economy* (DBIS 2009) and even more markedly in the Browne review commissioned in December 2009, which led to the radical policies unveiled in 2010 by the newly elected Coalition government of David Cameron.

The Cameron Coalition government's (2010–2015) strategy for higher education relied on a mixture of 'austerity' rhetoric and the metaphor-cliché that it wanted to create 'a level playing field' enabling private providers to 'compete on equal terms' with 'public universities'. It was assisted by the fact that the outgoing Brown government had initiated another review of higher education chaired by Lord Browne. The Browne Report (2010) proposed a fundamental change to the way universities were not only financed but to their very nature. Among the key recommendations it proposed were—

- the almost complete withdrawal of the annual block grant that government made to universities to underwrite their teaching, worth around £3.9 billion;
- removing the £3290 per year cap on the tuition fees that universities could charge to students. There would be no cap on the fees that an institution could charge;
- the government would provide up-front loans to cover tuition fees and living costs of students. Means-tested grants would be available for students from lower income families;
- students would repay the loans after graduation, and only when they were earning more than £21,000. Repayments would be made at a rate of 9 percent on any income above £21,000. Any debt not repaid after 30 years would be written off. For comparison, the current system demands repayments of 9 percent on income above £15,000, and debt is written off after 25 years.

The proposed budget cuts were more than simply a ‘cut’, even a draconian one: they signaled, as Stefan Collini (2010) put it, a redefinition of higher education and the retreat of the state from financial responsibility for it. What was most significant was not the detail of the financial arrangements but the kind of reasoning used to justify them. Britain’s universities, it was proposed, should henceforth operate in accordance with the tenets of perfect competition theory.

Essentially, Browne argued that Britain should no longer think about higher education as the provision of a public good, articulated through educational judgment and largely financed by public funds (in recent years supplemented by a relatively small fee element). Instead, Britain should think of it as a lightly regulated market in which consumer demand, in the form of student choice, would become the key factor determining what was offered by the ‘service providers’, that is, universities. Browne saw universities attracting ‘customers’ in a ‘competitive marketplace’: there would be a certain amount of public subsidy of these consumers’ purchasing power, especially for those who do not go on to a reasonably well-paid job, but the mechanism which would henceforth largely determine what and how universities teach, and indeed in some cases whether they exist at all, would be consumer choice.

At the same time to ‘help’ universities meet the gap between revenue and cost, the Cameron government increased higher tuition fees by up to 300 percent, allowing for a maximum fee of £9000, up from the 2011–12

maximum fee of £3375. (This in turn required a dramatic increase in the provision for debt by the British government, enabling the student loan scheme to increase its liability by about £20 billion annually. Again the reality was that debt was being used to fund further expansion in higher education.

AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION POST-DAWKINS 1988–2016

It has long been conventional to describe the Australian higher-education sector as having becoming increasingly ‘competitive’, and ‘marketised’. In Australia, the genesis of neo-liberal market-based higher-education policy has arguably taken place in a more concentrated and dramatic way, effecting major changes in academia, the role of academics, and the student experience. There is also a considerable consensus that this owes much actions taken between 1988 and 1992 when John Dawkins was the Minister for Employment, Education and Training (1987–92) and so responsible for Australian higher education. Under Dawkins, the Hawke government initiated a policy process that surely merits the amended application of Schumpeter’s (1942: 82–3) famous notion of ‘creative destruction’.

Table 4.2 highlights the key policy events.

The Dawkins reforms were first proposed in a Green Paper (*Higher Education: A Policy Discussion Paper* published in December 1987 and then announced as policy in a White Paper (*Higher Education: A Policy Statement*) published in July 1988. Typically misrepresented as a process of institutional redesign that lead to the creation of a Unified National System (Croucher et al. 2013), the Dawkins policy process is far better and more accurately understood as initiating the economisation of Australia’s public universities. As the Green Paper made clear—

If we are to respond and prosper as a nation, there must be changes in attitudes, practices and processes in all sectors and at all levels of the Australian community. The education sector, and our higher education system in particular, must play a leading role in promoting these changes (Dawkins 1987: 15).

The White Paper complained too that in the past universities ‘have not paid much attention to employers’ views about course design and content’ (Dawkins 1989: 66). The case being made was clear for ‘transforming

Table 4.2 Australia higher-education policy highlights

-
- 1954: Menzies Coalition government establishes Committee on Australian Universities
- 1957: Murray Report recommends expansion of tertiary education
- 1959: Menzies Coalition government establishes Australian Universities Commission
- 1964: The Martin report recommends the expansion of post-secondary education by creating Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs)
- 1974: Whitlam Labor government abolishes university fees and establishes Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission to oversee CAEs
- 1988: Dawkins Green Paper and White Papers, *Higher Education: A Policy Statement*, define tertiary education as an export industry; reintroduce tuition fees plus a deferred loan scheme, creates a unified national system; recommends the amalgamation of CAEs into universities; abolishes Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission and establishes direct ministerial control of universities; cuts direct subsidies and encourages universities to start raising income through international full-fee-paying student intakes. Higher education is redefined as a mini-economy, in the form of a unitary competition for teaching and research funding from all sources
- 1991: Hawke Labor government Policy Statement by Peter Baldwin MP, Minister for Higher Education and Employment Services (*Higher Education Quality and Diversity in the 1990s*) introduces standardised definitions for funding purposes; output measures and data collections are installed
- 1992: Higher Education Council/National Board of Employment, Education and Training, HEC/NBEET releases report on *Higher Education: Achieving Quality*
- 1998: *Learning for Life: A Review of Higher Education Financing and Policy* (West review)
- 2002: Review of Higher Education in Australia (Nelson Review) led to *Our Universities: Backing Australia's Future*. Ministerial Statement by the Hon. Brendan Nelson MP
- 2008: *Review of Australian Higher Education* (Bradley Review)
- 2009: Response to Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education, *Transforming Australia's Higher Education System*, recommends major increase in participation for equity goal: uncapping student quotas; establishment of Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)
- 2010: Rudd Labor government releases *The Higher Education Base Funding Review: Background Paper*
- Department of Innovation Industry Science and Research, releases report on *Meeting Australia's Research Workforce Needs: A Consultation Paper to Inform the Development of the Australian Government's Research Workforce Strategy*
- 2011: *Higher Education Base Funding Review* (Lomax-Smith Review)
- Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, releases *Advancing Quality in Higher Education report* and *Development of Performance Measurement Instruments in Higher Education: Discussion Paper*
- Department of Innovation Industry Science and Research releases its report on Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) replaces Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)
-

(continued)

Table 4.2 (continued)

2012: Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency <i>releases report on Future Focus Australia's Skills and Workforce Development Needs: Discussion Paper</i>
Department of Industry Innovation Science Research and Tertiary Education releases Research Block Grants—Calculation Methodology report
Bradley Review recommendations implemented with removal of the cap on the number of university places made available within each university, which previously had been determined through annual negotiation between each institution and the federal government
2014: Norton-Kemp Review <i>of the Demand Driven Funding System</i>
The review recommended a fully deregulated system 'enabling universities to compete on the quality of teaching and student experience' and that fee-help be extended to private universities

education into a product that could be bought and sold like anything else in a globalized market' (Davies et al. 2002: 311).

The ostensible point of the Dawkins project was to create a single Unified National System which involved converting Colleges of Advanced Education into universities by upgrading them or amalgamating them with existing universities. The reforms also meant unprecedented levels of surveillance, auditing, and reporting by universities of their plans, profiles, and statistics to justify what they were teaching or doing research on.

One of the central innovations was the reintroduction of student fees, a change 'softened' by a policy designed by Bruce Chapman, an economist at the Australian National University, who created the Higher Education Contribution Scheme which gave students who could not afford to pay the fees up-front loans provided by the government at a low interest rate, to be paid back incrementally through taxes, and only after reaching an income threshold well above the minimum wage. While this device was expected to fund significant growth in student enrollments and appeared to create the conditions for a user-pays principle central to the neo-liberal ideal, the reality, as so often is the case, was more complex. (This is suggested by the level of unpaid student debt, which in 2015 exceeded \$AU34 billion). This means a good deal of the growth of universities has been actually funded by debt incurred by the federal government. In 2016 proposals to further deregulate fees and 'marketise' the universities remain possible options under the current Turnbull Conservative government.

One result of the ‘Dawkins revolution’ was that by 2015 Australia had 40 universities, and around 140 other mostly ‘private’ higher-education providers, including myriad niche ‘private providers’. Within Australia’s federal system of government, higher education is a constitutional responsibility of the six states and territories, but major responsibility has lain with the federal (‘Commonwealth’) government for several decades. In 2013, total domestic and international student enrollments exceeded 1.3 million (Department of Education 2014).

Like the ‘reform process in the United Kingdom, the chief effect of the Dawkins project was to mandate the adoption of a language of markets emphasising the central role of higher education in promoting national economic success and as a key catalyst to fundamental social change. In both Britain and Australia, governments (Dawkins 1987; Dearing 1997; HM Treasury 2006), ‘cajoled, incentivised and directed the expansion of their universities’ (Foskett 2011: 28). The central animating idea was that the key to expanding higher education effectively and efficiently was the use of market mechanisms: the watchword of ‘marketisation’ had become a central concept in modern higher education.

That said, we did not of course see the literal creation of a higher-education market. The Dawkins years encouraged policy-makers and university managers to talk about education as an economic market and education as the producer of solely private goods. This has made its mark in Australia, encouraging the adoption of talk about competitive and quasi-market systems in many areas like research funding, international students, postgraduate vocational programs, competitive bidding for projects, and innovation initiatives, etc.) Yet undergraduate education in 2016 remains tightly regulated, the much-vaunted ‘price signals’ muted by income-contingent Higher Education Contribution Scheme loans, set prices for different kinds of degrees, government subsidies, and ceilings on the number of places. Research funding also remains essentially a publicly funded exercise.

The Howard government (1997–2007) persisted with the policy directions put in place by Dawkins. The Howard government reduced funding for Australia’s university sector by something on the order of 30 percent over their term in office. In 1995–2005 Australia was the only OECD member state to reduce total public spending on tertiary education. Public funding per student fell by 28 percent, as did funding of research. The reductions in government funds for teaching forced a rapid increase in

international student numbers. This created the ‘incentive’ for universities to make up the shortfall in funding by increasing reliance on international full-fee-paying students and domestic students fees.

The Howard government enacted legislation to give universities the power to increase Higher Education Contribution Scheme contribution levels by up to 25 percent of the fees formerly set by the government. The vice-chancellors were willing partners in the Higher Education Contribution Scheme hike, and the maximum student contributions rapidly became the norm across all universities (Norton 2014: 51). Minister Amanda Vanstone furthered this agenda by goading universities to become internationally competitive, consumer-driven enterprises following concerns that Australian universities were lagging behind their international counterparts. As Marginson (2009b) points out, in 1990 there were 25,000 international students. By 2007 the number was 254,414—a total of 26.0 percent of enrollments including transnationals—the highest level in the developed world. Under Howard the number of international students in most institutions became very large. In 2006 the largest number of foreign students at an American university was at the University of Southern California, which enrolled some 7115 international students: in Australia the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University enrolled 17,894 international students. Likewise institutional dependence on international fees also rose sharply to 14.9 percent of total revenues in 2006 and close to 50 percent in the case of Central Queensland University.

The new Labour government under Prime Minister Kevin Rudd was elected in late 2007, and in March 2008 it set up a review of higher-education policy. There was a parallel review of the national innovation system. The Innovation Review reported in September and recommended full cost funding of research.

The Bradley report was released in mid-December 2008. The Bradley review recommended that government make a commitment to ensuring that by 2020, a total of 40 percent of Australians between the ages of 25 and 34 would have completed a university qualification at bachelor level or above and that 20 percent of university students should be from lower socioeconomic or disadvantaged backgrounds.

The review did recommend a modicum of funding relief in relation to the rate of funding of government places, research costs, and student living costs. Importantly, it urged the return of near-full-cost indexing of government grants, which had the potential to reduce the drivers of continuous expansion in education exports. However, the Bradley report

did not suggest changing the system of governance and regulation in a fundamental manner. Its main innovation was a recommendation for the establishment of a new federal commission responsible for the accreditation of new providers, the closer integration of universities with vocational education within a common system, a beefed-up standards regime absorbing Australian Universities Quality Agency, and the act that governed international education.

In 2011 the Gillard government commissioned the Higher Education Base Funding Review (the Lomax-Smith Review). The whole point of the Lomax-Smith Review was to ascertain the level of funding that Australian universities required in order to perform ‘competitively’. The review pointed out that in the 1980s government funding accounted for about 90 percent of university revenue; the proportion of government funding had sunk to 57 percent in 1995, and by 2011, Commonwealth funding for universities had fallen to 42.4 percent of revenue. Their view (Lomax-Smith 2011:x) also found that no discipline was found to be overfunded.

The response of the Labour government to the Bradley and Lomax-Smith findings was more deregulation and further cuts to government funding. The Rudd-Gillard government ‘uncapped’ the number of publicly subsidised course places that universities could offer (known in Australia as Commonwealth Supported Places with the introduction of the ‘demand-driven system’. Beginning formally in 2012, this change ushered in a new era of more aggressive marketing practices. This resulted in some institutions nearly doubling their equivalent full-time student numbers between 2008 and 2013.

In August 2014 the new Abbott government introduced major policy changes after promising not to do so throughout the 2013 election campaign. A review run by Kemp and Norton of the demand-driven funding system found it to be ‘generally performing well’ and recommended further cuts to public funding and more deregulation of the student places and the loan system. In response the Abbott government’s Higher Education Bill proposed to cut 20 percent of the funding to universities, partly to save money and partly to extend Commonwealth Supported Places to private higher-education providers and sub-bachelor places. Most controversial of all was its plan to increase student fees from approximately 40 percent of costs to 50 percent, based on the premise that the private benefits of a university degree far outweigh the public good that would justify maintaining current levels of taxpayer support. Minister Pyne claimed that, ‘Given the scale of costs now present in the

higher education system, it is time students picked up a fairer share of the tab for these interest charges'. It proposed to deregulate fees to allow universities and Technical and Further Education colleges to charge their own rates for courses. It proposed cutting \$174 million funding over three years from the Research Training Scheme, allowing universities to charge doctoral students fees to cover the gap. It proposed to reduce the repayment threshold for Higher Education Loan Program debts from an annual level of \$51,309 to \$50,638 beginning on July 1, 2016, and to increase interest rates on the loans to the government bond rate, capped at 6 percent (when debts had been linked to CPI since the inception of the scheme). While the proposals won the enthusiastic backing of most Vice-Chancellors, neither the electorate nor the Senate agreed: the bill was blocked repeatedly in the Senate and ultimately withdrawn in 2015 after Prime Minister Abbott was replaced by Malcolm Turnbull following an internal party coup.

AMERICAN HIGHER-EDUCATION POLICY-MAKING

Christopher Newfield (2008) provides a richly detailed account of what has happened to America's universities since the 1980s. He shows how persistent cuts to public financing, the decline of full-time academic positions, the increasing reliance on part-time sessional teachers, and the way the administrative bureaucracies of US universities have enlarged their ranks adds up to what he calls the 'unmaking of the public university'. According to Saunders, though the willingness to explain this as a result of the hegemony of neo-liberalism remains a minority disposition, he rightly says that 'the economics, structure, and purpose of higher education, as well as the priorities and identities of academic staff and students have been altered to better align with neo-liberal practices and ideology' (2009: 45).

There is general agreement about the core features of this transformation of American universities, for example, about the use of funding cuts chiefly by states (Levin 2005; Slaughter and Rhoades 2004) forcing colleges and universities to focus more on revenue generation and to become increasingly reliant on private sources of funding (Giroux and Giroux 2004; Hill 2003; Slaughter and Rhoades 2004). The development of the language of markets likewise highlighted the language of economic efficiency, supplying the rationale to replace tenured full-time staff with part-time, 'casualised', and adjunct staff (Aronowitz 2000; Horowitz 2004; Tierney 1998; Giroux 2005; McLaren 2005; Slaughter and Rhoades 2004).

The language of efficiency in turn was implicated in reshaping the patterns of university governance as collegiate styles of governance gave way to more hierarchical managerialist models (Ayers 2005; Currie 1998; Eckel 2000; Gumport 1993). This has also meant that what had once been relatively autonomous decisions about what a teacher would teach or research has given way to decisions being taken that reflect university priorities like the need to enhance revenue generation by producing more applied and commercialised research (Alexander 2001; Clark 1998a, b; Slaughter 1998; Slaughter and Rhoades 2004).

What is less clear is what role policy-making played in forcing the changes in language and practice. With regard to this problem, it needs to be added quickly that it is not possible here to do justice to the enormous scale and complexity of American society, its patterns of governance, and the interplay of these elements with higher-education policy-making. The United States has five times the population of the United Kingdom and fourteen times that of Australia. Its system of government is famously based on the separation of powers, and its federal structure is far more decentralised than is the case in either Britain or Australia. This means that the history of American higher-education policy-making since the 1970s exhibits neither the features nor the effects of centralised policy-making characterising the changes to higher education in the United Kingdom and Australia. What we do see though is something of the same neo-liberal *telos* of policy-making. I will use elements of federal government policy and the case of California to elaborate this point.

We can take two elements of higher education as the high-water point of America's commitment to public higher education. Federally, the *Higher Education Act*, first signed into law in 1965 by President Lyndon Johnson, was the direct parallel to Robbins (1963) in Britain and the Murray Report (1957) and the Martin Report (1965) in Australia. It signaled America's commitment to increasing participation in higher education. (It has been 'reauthorised' many times since then, most recently in 2008; and its reauthorisation was still under review in 2015). The *Higher Education Act* was designed to keep 'the doors to higher education open for all academically qualified students regardless of their financial circumstances' and reflected the Johnson Administration's concern not to lose 'human capital' because able students, especially minorities, were not attending college. The centerpiece of the *Higher Education Act* was the provision of financial assistance for students in post-secondary and higher education using low-interest loans to students. It also increased federal

funding of universities, created scholarships, and established a National Teachers Corps. It can be seen as the last expression of American ‘New Deal’ social liberalism.

At the state level it was matched in California by the 1960 *Donahoe Act*, better known as the ‘Master Plan for Higher Education’. In its details, the Master Plan was a complex and unwieldy piece of legislation, an ‘interlocking set of legislative benchmarks, expectations, funding commitments, and philosophical principles’ (Bady and Konczal 2012: 1). The Master Plan was essentially a blanket commitment to educate all those Californian students who wanted an education. The plan was masterminded by Clark Kerr, the President of University of California, and signed into California law by Governor Pat Brown. The Master Plan was meant to assign all college-bound high-school graduates into three streams, and to make it possible for a student to move freely from the bottom tier to the top.

The top 12.5 percent of high school graduates were guaranteed tuition-free access to the University of California (Bady and Konczal 2012: 2). The top 33.3 percent would be offered a place in one of the California State universities, which were also tuition-free. Everyone else, if they so chose, could go to one of the many California Community Colleges, which were open not only to high school graduates but also to qualifying non-traditional students. Perhaps most important, community college graduates had the opportunity to transfer to one of the University of California campuses or to one of the California State universities to finish their bachelor’s degrees, if their grades were above a certain point.

In less than a decade this experiment came under fire. Socially conservative neo-liberals like Ronald Reagan began a public campaign articulating a deep hostility to the ‘left-wing’ cultures of the University of California and to wasteful spending of public monies on this university. In 1966 Reagan was elected governor of California. In his election campaign Reagan had vowed to ‘clean up that mess in Berkeley’, warning audiences about ‘sexual orgies so vile that I cannot describe them to you’ and complaining that ‘outside agitators’ were importing left-wing subversion into the university (Newfield 2008: 51–2). In office Reagan cut state funding for higher education and laid the foundations for a shift to a tuition-based funding model: he argued for the importance of tuition-based funding by suggesting that if students had to pay, they’d value their education too much to protest. The first ‘bums’ he ‘threw off welfare’ were University of California students. As governor Reagan called in the National Guard to crush student protest, which it did with unprecedented severity. As

Newfield argues, Reagan had ‘successfully shifted the political debate over the meaning and purpose of public higher education in America’ (Newfield 2008: 113).

In 1972, the US Congress began to promote the marketisation of higher education through Pell grants, based on the principle of moving need-based student financial aid away from institutions to students. Although the initial appropriations to the Pell grants were not great, the grants were essentially student vouchers designed to foster competition among institutions by emphasising student choice. American colleges and universities were initially opposed to marketisation, urging that the US Congress give higher education funds directly to institutions, not to students, who could then choose among institutions. Universities responded by developing a high tuition/high aid policy to keep the private sector competitive with the public sector and to reduce public costs by making users who were able to pay cover a larger share of their costs. The policy called for putting much more money into Pell grants and for increasing the grant amount for students who chose high-cost private institutions.⁸

By the 1980s an early form of neo-liberal policy referred to as ‘supply-side economics’ was in the ascendancy federally (Slaughter 1998: 217).⁹ This policy involved allocating public resources away from social welfare programs to ‘economic development’ policies, primarily through tax cuts for the business sector as well as through programs that stimulated technological innovation, deregulation, privatisation, and commercialisation. As is also now well understood, the Reagan Administration attempted to reduce both taxation revenues and government expenditures to reduce the budget deficit (Stockman 2013). What the New Federalism inaugurated by President Reagan actually meant was that while taxes were cut during the Regan years (1981–88), expenditures proved harder to cut, and the Federal government moved into the long-term use of deficit budgets to deal with the political contradiction. The New Federalism also involved shifting the burden of social welfare to the states. Given the fiscal constraints imposed by supply-side debt reduction policies, along with the growth of entitlement programs, public money was less readily available for higher education.

During the mid-1980s, student assistance funds stagnated while tuition rose dramatically, undercutting the high tuition/high aid policy, and the proportion of costs born by students increased concomitantly (Leslie 1995). Moreover, the greatest growth in the tertiary sector was in community colleges, where the high tuition/high aid policy never worked

well. As the Pell grants came to cover less of the cost of post-secondary education, federal legislation promoted loans as a way to bridge the growing gap between federal aid and college costs. Pell grants were followed by the Middle-Income Assistance Act and the development of a variety of other student and parent borrowing instruments

Beginning in 1980, a bipartisan Congressional competition coalition began promoting policies fostering techno-science as a cornerstone of US global economic strategy (Smith 1990). The Bayh-Dole legislation passed by the coalition dramatically changed universities' organizational field, pushing them toward techno-science partnerships with business and government. The United States Congress (1980) allowed universities and businesses to retain title to inventions made with federal research and development monies. Research generated by faculty suddenly became 'intellectual property'. It was no longer necessarily knowledge to share publicly with a community of scholars. It signaled the inclusion of universities in profit-taking.

These policy changes, together with a host of state-level policy changes that complemented and enhanced federal initiatives made public research universities organisational exemplars of Reaganomics. Changes in student financial aid policy complemented and reinforced changes in R&D policy in that both enhanced marketisation through privatisation, deregulation, and commercialisation.

Running in parallel with these early exercises the 1980s was the beginning of a long-term decline in public support for universities and colleges, leading to increased reliance on student tuition fees. Historically, state funding of *public* higher education had been the primary revenue source. After a decline into the early 1980s, inflation-adjusted, per-student state appropriations increased for about three years, stabilised, and then turned down after 1988, and continued downward. Recalling that each percentage point change reflects more than \$1 billion, the current-fund revenues from federal sources since 1969–1970 has declined quite dramatically from 19.2 percent to 12.2 percent (Slaughter 1998: 222). As a share of collected tax revenues, the decline has been quite steady and even steeper than the decline in absolute, inflation-adjusted, per-student dollars. However, real tuition revenues have grown steadily since the early 1980s.

In 2014 the \$33 billion Pell grant program provided grants to 9million college students, making it the largest share of the federal education budget. The largest federal loan program authorized under the Higher Education Act is in Title IV, part D—the federal Direct Loan program. The Direct Loan program includes subsidised and unsubsidised Stafford

loans for undergraduate and graduate students, Parent PLUS, and Grad PLUS loans (both as described above and previously housed under the FFEL program), and consolidation loans. During the 2013–2014 academic year, total loan volume in the Direct Loan program, including consolidation loans, was nearly \$135.6 billion. Approximately 24 million students received loans that averaged \$5560. Subsidised Stafford loans are available to low-income students, and interest does not accrue on the loan while the student is enrolled in school. For eligible students borrowing under the subsidised Stafford loan program, the aggregate loan amount is capped at \$23,000. Under the HEA, all Stafford loans and Grad PLUS loans originating under the FFEL program, as well as consolidation loans, are eligible for income-based repayment (IBR). IBR allows eligible students to cap their monthly loan payments according to income and family size (Burke 2014: 13).

In America the federal government has played a less *dirigiste* role. Rather, we see a combination of federal and state government initiatives to impose funding cuts and so drive the process of marketising universities.

In the wake of the 2008 great recession, states imposed severe funding cuts. At least 43 states cut assistance to public colleges and universities, resulting in reductions in faculty and staff in addition to tuition increases (Giroux 2014: 67). At the same time and in a context where student tuition fees had been rising steeply, especially since 2000, universities again increased tuition fees. In California, the state government imposed 20 percent cuts in state funding at the University of California, the Cal State university system, and the community colleges. In 2009–10, the University of California increased tuition fees by 32 percent.

CONCLUSION

The United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia have seen persistent efforts by policy-makers to keep advancing the goal of increased tertiary participation by promoting the idea that a competitive higher-education market will produce a more efficient, high-quality mass university system. This has been especially evident in Australia and Britain.

America started with a far more diverse system of higher education than Britain or Australia. That diversity was presided over by a number of large (and small) private, not-for-profit teaching-only and research and teaching universities—which still exists. The more brutal effects of privatisation, like budget cuts, have been felt most severely in the state-funded state

universities. All have been affected by the imposition of new metrics which rank universities and colleges using ‘return on investment’ criteria instead of more traditional measures of ‘academic quality’ (Brown 2015a, b: 23).

We also need to acknowledge equally the central role played not by some process particular to capitalism or globalisation, but by state actors in unleashing a ‘neo-liberal revolution’. This is part of the hybrid status of neo-liberalism as an anti-state discourse used by governments of all political stripes to promote policy-driven change, a feature which adds certain distinctive wobbles and irrationalities to the process of change. In Britain and America the process of policy change was presided over by conservative governments, while in Australia it was the work of an ostensibly left-of-centre Australian Labour government that shamelessly albeit effectively deployed the vocabulary of ‘equity’ and ‘fairness’. The appearance of political diversity overlaid on top of a singular policy intent adds piquancy even as it begins to explain the success of this exercise, which has bamboozled most observers and those directly engaged in universities then and now.

How we should think about this is the subject of the next chapter.

NOTES

1. QS Rankings has Plymouth at somewhere between 651st and 700th in the world (2015), while the Times Higher Education Rankings places it between the top 276th and 300th best universities (2016), though the HE note reads more like public relations puffery when it says, ‘Plymouth has a strong record of excellence, enterprise, and innovation across its teaching and research activities’.
2. Piketty (2013) shows, for example, that the top 10 percent of earners accounted for more than half of America’s total income in 2012, the highest level recorded since the government began collecting the relevant data a century ago.
3. Again, to be clear: (i) This is not to deny the deference paid to the interests of capital which defines state policy, a policy line which began with the ALP-ACTU Accord of 1983 which identified restoring the share of national income to capital which had become unbalanced in the decades up to 1980 as the primary goal of ALP policy. (ii) Nor can we ignore the major role played by the Australian media and advertising industries in promoting a neo-liberal ethos. In Britain, Harris (2013) and Howker and Malik (2013: 10–12), writing about the ‘Jilted Generation’, draw on
4. opinion polling to show that people born since 1980, who have only ever known neo-liberal governments and where many, though not all young people, have been damaged by neo-liberal policies, share much of the neo-

- liberal framework and so reject propositions like ‘the government should spend more money on welfare benefits for the poor, even if it leads to higher taxes’ or give little credence to the proposition that ‘the creation of the welfare state is one of Britain’s proudest achievements’. (This compares with 70 percent of people born before 1940, who think this is right).
5. As John Gerritsen (2008) has pointed out in terms that are devastating to the neo-liberal commitment to free-market principles, if you take the number of top 500 (SJT) universities relative to population size, then four of the top ten systems are Nordic: Sweden (1st), Finland (3rd), Norway (5th), and Denmark (8th).
 6. Ironically, in Australia H.C. Coombs (1976), the greatest Keynesian economist and central banker post-1945, brokered the shift to new public management in his 1976 Royal Commission. His report, which foreshadowed many of these key features of new public management, urging a new emphasis on ‘managing for results’, increased use of market-type mechanisms, and the introduction of contracts for Senior Executive Staff (Podger 2012).
 7. In England, because most universities are charities, the Higher Education Funding Council for England is the key regulatory agency, rather than the Charity Commission for England and Wales.
 8. Pell eligibility was expanded in 1976. The Middle Income Student Assistance Act of 1978 expanded loan eligibility. The Parent PLUS loan program was established in 1980, which enabled parents to take out loans for their children’s college expenses. Borrowing limits were further expanded in 1986, and the unsubsidized Stafford loan program was established in 1992.
 9. In what follows I draw heavily on Slaughter (1998) and Newfield (2008).

REFERENCES

- Aitkin, D. (2000). Review of Simon Marginson and Mark Considine. *The enterprise university. Power, governance and reinvention in Australia*. <http://www.donaitkin.com/wpcontent/uploads/pdfs/bookreviews/%20Marginson%20review.pdf>
- Alback, E., Eliason, L., Schwartz, H., & Norgaard, A. (1996). *Negotiated adaptation: The survival of the Danish welfare state*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia.
- Alexander, F. K. (2001). The silent crisis: The relative fiscal capacity of public universities to compete for faculty. *The Review of Higher Education*, 24(2), 113–129.
- Atkinson, A. B. (2014). *Inequality: What can be done?* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bady, A., & Konczal, M. (2012). From master plan to no plan: The slow death of public higher education. *Dissent* (Fall). <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/from-master-plan-to-no-plan-the-slow-death-of-public-higher-education>

- Barr, N., & Crawford, I. (1998). *The Dearing Report and the government's response: A critique*. London: LSE Research Online. <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/archive/00000283>
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). 'Authorized language:' The social conditions for the effectiveness of ritual discourse. In J. Thompson (Eds.), *Language and symbolic power* (pp. 107–116. trans: Raymond, G., & Adamson, M.). Cambridge: Polity.
- British Council. (2014). *The higher education system in the United Kingdom*. London: British Council. www.britishcouncil.in/sites/default/files/higher_education_system_of_uk.pdf
- Brown, R. (2010). The current brouhaha about standards in England. *Quality in Higher Education*, 16(2), 129–137.
- Brown, R. (2015a). The marketisation of higher education: Issues and ironies. *New Vistas*, 1(1): 5–9. http://www.uwl.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Departments/Research/new_vistas/voll_iss1/voll_iss1_art1_23April2015.pdf
- Brown, W. (2015b). *Undoing the demos: Neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. Cambridge: Zone.
- Burke, L. (2014). Reauthorizing the Higher Education Act—Toward policies that increase access and lower costs. Backgrounder #2941 Heritage Foundation. <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2014/08/reauthorizing-the-higher-education-act-toward-policies-that-increase-access-and-lower-costs>
- Catley, B. (1996). *Globalising Australian capitalism*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Cave, M., Hanney, S., Henkel, M., & Kogan, M. (1997). *The use of performance indicators in higher education: The challenge of the quality movement*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Chang, H. (2002). Breaking the mould: An institutionalist political economy alternative to the neo-liberal theory of the market and the state. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 26, 539–559.
- Clark, B. (1998a). *Principles of political economy: A comparative approach*. Westport: Praeger.
- Clark, B. R. (1998b). *Creating entrepreneurial universities: Organizational pathways of transformation*. New York: Pergamon.
- Clark, W. (2006). *Academic charisma and the origins of the research university*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Collini S. (2010). Browne's gamble. *London Review of Books*, 32(21). 4 November <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v32/n21/stefan-collini/brownes-gamble>
- Connell, R. (2013a). The neoliberal cascade and education: An essay on the market agenda. *Critical Studies in Education*, 54(2), 99–112.
- Connell, R. W. (2013b). Why do market 'reforms' persistently increase inequality? *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 34(2), 279–285.
- Coombs, H. (1976). *Report of Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration*. Canberra: AGPS.

- Crouch, C. (2011). *The strange non-death of neoliberalism*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Croucher, G., Marginson, S., Norton, A., & Wells, J. (Eds.). (2013). *The Dawkins revolution 25 years on*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.
- Currie, J. (1998). Globalization practices and the professoriate in Anglo-Pacific and North American universities. *Comparative Education Review*, 42(1), 15–29.
- Dardot, P., & Laval, C. (2013). *The new way of the world: On neoliberal society* (trans: Elliott, G.). London: Verso.
- Davies, G. (1995). *Higher education funding, performance, and accountability*. Paper presented at the Oxford Round Table on Educational Policy. Oxford University.
- Dearing, R. (1997). *Report of the national committee of inquiry into higher education* (The Dearing report). London: HMSO.
- Deem, R. (2001). Globalisation, new managerialism, academic capitalism and entrepreneurialism in universities. Is the local dimension still important? *Comparative Education*, 37(1), 7–20.
- Department of Education (Australian). (2014). *Selected higher education statistics – Student data*. Retrieved March 2015, from <http://www.education.gov.au/student-data>
- Dumenil, G., & Levy, D. (2013). *The crisis of neoliberalism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Eckel, P. D. (2000). The role of shared governance in institutional hard decisions: Enabler or antagonist? *The Review of Higher Education*, 24(1), 15–39.
- El-Khawas, E., & Massey, W. F. (1996). Britain's "performance-based" system. In W. F. Massey (Ed.), *Resource allocation in higher education* (pp. 223–240). Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Ferlie, E., Ashburner, L., Fitzgerald, L., & Pettigrew, A. (1996). *The new public management in action*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ferrara, M. (2015). *Palace of Ashes, China and the decline of American higher education*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Foskett, N. (2011). Markets, government, funding and the marketisation of UK higher education. In N. Molesworth, R. Scullion, & E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketization of higher education and the student as consumer*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Friedman, M. (1962). *Capitalism and freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Furedi, F. (2011). Introduction to the marketisation of higher education and the student as consumer. In M. Molesworth, R. Scullion, & E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketisation of higher education and the student as consumer*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Garman, A. (2009). Marketisation, globalisation and universities. *University World News*, (106), 41–54.
- Gerritsen, J. (2008). The real Shanghai Jiao Tong winners. *University World News* (31 August). Available from <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20080828150333316>

- Giroux, H. (2005). *The terror of neoliberalism: Cultural politics and the promise of democracy*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.
- Giroux, H., & Giroux, S. (2004). *Take back higher education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hayek, F. (1949). *Individualism and economic order*. London: Routledge/Kegan Paul.
- Hazelkorn, E. (2015). *Rankings and the reshaping of higher education: The battle for world-class excellence*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hill, D. (2003). Global neo-liberalism, the deformation of education and resistance. *The Journal of Critical Education Policy Studies*, 1(1), 1–28.
- Horowitz, D. (2004, February 13). In defense of intellectual diversity. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, p. B12.
- Howker, J., & Malik, A. (2013). *The Jilted generation*. London: Penguin.
- Jenkins, S. (2006). *Thatcher and her sons: A revolution in three acts*. London: Allen and Lane.
- Leslie, L. L. (1995). What drives higher education management in the 1990s and beyond the new era in financial support. *Journal of Higher Education Management*, 10(2), 5–16.
- Levin, J. S. (2005). The business culture of the community college: Students as consumers; students as commodities. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 129, 11–26.
- Lunt, I. (2008). Beyond tuition fees? The legacy of Blair's government to higher education. *Oxford Review of Education*, 34(6), 741–752.
- Mandelson, P. (2009). *Higher education and modern life*. Department for Business, Innovation & Skills. Available from <http://www.bis.gov.uk/higher-education-and-modern-life>. Accessed 22 Feb 2010.
- Marginson, S. (2009a, January). *National system reform in global context: The case of Australia*. Paper presented to Reforms and consequences in higher education system: An international symposium. National Center of Sciences, Tokyo, http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/people/marginson_docs/CNUFM%20Tokyo%2026%20January%202009.pdf
- Marginson, S. (2009b, August 17). *The limits of market reform in higher education*. Paper presented at Research Institute for Higher Education (RIHE), Hiroshima University, http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/people/marginson_docs/RIHE_17Aug09_paper.pdf
- Marginson, S., & Considine, M. (2000). *The enterprise university: Power, governance and reinvention in Australia*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Marginson, S., & van der Wende, M. (2007). *Globalisation and higher education* (OECD education working papers, no. 8). OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/173831738240/>

- McLaren, P. (2005). *Capitalist and conquerors: A critical pedagogy against empire*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Mirowski, P. (2009). Postface: Defining neo liberalism. In P. Mirowski & D. Plehwe (Eds.), *The road from Mont Pelerin: The making of the neoliberal thought collective* (pp. 417–455). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Murray, A. H. (1957). *Report of the committee on Australian universities*. Melbourne: Committee on Australian Universities.
- Osborne, D., & Gaebler, T. (1993). *Reinventing government: How the entrepreneurial spirit is transforming the public sector*. New York: Plume.
- Picketty, T. (2013). *Capital in the twenty-first century*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Plehwe, D. (2009). Introduction. In P. Mirowski & D. Plehwe (Eds.), *The road from Mont Pelerin: The making of the neoliberal thought collective* (pp. 1–42). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Plymouth University. (2015). *Homepage*, <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/your-university/about-us/vision-mission-and-values>
- Podger, A. (2012). Beyond Westminster: Defining an Australian approach to the roles and values of the public service in the 21st century. Address to IPAA, Canberra: Australian public service Commission; <http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/archive/media-archive/podger020502>
- Pollitt, C., & Boukaert, G. (2000). *Public management reform: A comparative analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Raciti, M. (2010). Marketing Australian higher education at the turn of the 21st century: A precis of reforms, commercialisation and the new university hierarchy. *e-Journal of Business Education & Scholarship of Teaching*, 4(1), 32–41.
- Reitan, E. (2003). *The Thatcher revolution: Margaret Thatcher John Major Tony Blair and the transformation of Modern Britain 1979–2001*. Langham: Rowman & little.
- Robbins, L. (1963). *Higher education: Report of the Committee appointed by the Prime Minister under the chairmanship of Lord Robbins, 1961–63* (Cmd 2154). London: HMSO.
- Robertson, R. (1992). *Globalization: Social theory and global culture*. London: Sage.
- Salter, B., & Tapper, T. (1994). *The state and higher education*. Essex: The Woburn Press.
- Saunders, D. (2009). Neoliberal ideology and public higher education in the United States. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 8(1), 42–77.
- Schumpeter, J. (1942). *Capitalism, socialism and democracy*. London: Routledge.
- Self, P. (1999). *Rolling back the market: Economic dogma and political choice*. New York: St Martin's Press.
- Shattock, M. (1994). *The UGC and the management of British universities*. London: Society for the Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

- Shattock, M. (2008). The change from private to public governance of British higher education: Its consequences for higher education policy making 1980–2006. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 63(2), 181–203.
- Shenk, T. (2015, April). Booked #3: What exactly is neoliberalism? *Dissent*, <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/blog/booked-3-what-exactly-is-neoliberalism-wendy-brown-undoing-the-demos>
- Shore, C. (2008). Audit culture and illiberal governance: Universities and the politics of accountability. *Anthropological Theory*, 8(3), 278–298.
- Slaughter, S. (1998). Federal policy and supply side institutional resource allocation at public research universities. *Review of Higher Education*, 21, 209–244.
- Slaughter, S., & Leslie, L. (1997). *Academic capitalism: Politics, policies and the entrepreneurial university*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Slaughter, S., & Rhoades, G. (2004). *Academic capitalism and the new economy: Markets, state and higher education*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Smith, B. L. R. (1990). *American science policy since World War II*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Soares, J. A. (2002). *The decline of privilege: The modernization of Oxford University*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Steger, M. (2009). *The rise of a global imaginary and the persistence of ideology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stiglitz, J. (2012). *The price of inequality: How today's divided society endangers our future*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Stockman, D. (2013). *The triumph of politics: Why the Reagan revolution failed*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Tierney, W. G. (1998). Tenure is dead, long live tenure. In W. G. Tierney (Ed.), *The responsive university: Restructuring for high performance* (pp. 38–61). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Tomlinson, S. (2001). *Education in a post-welfare society*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Trow, M. (1998). American perspectives on British higher education under Thatcher and Major. *Oxford Review of Education*, 24(1), 111–129. doi:10.1080/0305498980240109.
- Weiss, L. (1998). *The myth of the powerless state: Governing the economy in a global era*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Williams, G. (1995). The ‘marketisation’ of higher education: Reforms and potential reforms in higher education finance. In D. D Dill & B. Sporn (Eds.), *Patterns of social demand and university reform: Through a glass darkly*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

The Idea of ‘Marketising’ the University: Against Magical Thinking

The ascendancy of a neo-liberal frame in higher-education policy dates from the early 1980s. Until then government-supported mass higher education was the ‘dominant template’ both in Europe and the English-speaking countries except for America where the situation was more complex. This template included free tuition and high levels of recurrent budget support for the normal teaching and research functions of universities (Marginson 2004: 179). Then from the 1980s on, neo-liberal policy-makers began to redefine higher education as a higher-education market selling an individual private good: in Australia policy-makers even began to talk about higher education as an ‘export industry’.¹

There can be no doubting the reality of the changes made to universities since the 1980s by neo-liberal governments operating under the sign of ‘the market’. Policy-makers and university managers alike have agreed that they introduced economic market reforms to higher education. How we understand these changes is an entirely different matter. While appreciating the point of W.I. Thomas’s famous theorem (‘If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences’ (Thomas and Thomas 1929: 572), we still need to preserve a regard for the critical gap between what we believe or say is the case, and what is actually happening.

While some love it and others loathe it, many people certainly now seem convinced that we have created a ‘higher-education market’ and commodified higher education. In what seems like an example of advocacy, Gareth Williams (1992: 138) argued early that

Markets put the power in the hands of purchasers of higher education services, so the system has to be responsive to their demands. Advocates of markets define efficiency as the satisfaction of consumer wants at minimum cost.

Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana (2007: 942) likewise have no trouble affirming that ‘recent trends in global student mobility’ have contributed to ‘a rapidly evolving market in international education, which, in turn, has created new opportunities, challenges and an increasingly competitive higher education environment’. Others go further. Clark Kerr (1988) argued that universities have always served the market:

In fact, universities began in Europe in early modern times precisely for that purpose [to serve the market] ... The cherished academic view that higher education started out on the Acropolis and was desecrated by descent into the Agora led by ungodly commercial interests and scheming public officials and venal academic leaders is just not true.

Others are eager to talk up the commodification and export of higher education. As Academic Partnerships, a consultancy company indicates-->—

Exporting American higher education can take U.S. institutions to a new level of global brand awareness, making them virtually unassailable competitors in many regions of the world. Like Google and Apple, they can become the brands of choice for millions of global citizens ...by exporting the knowledge contained within U.S. universities.

Neil Fosskett (2011: 26) extends that logic, suggesting that universities have always been part of a higher education market:

From their earliest foundation universities have operated in the marketplace. They have sought to persuade young people (or their families or sponsors) to choose to attend, they have sought sponsors to provide the funding to support scholarly activities and they have sought the brightest and best as their academic staff. In each arena the presence of ‘choice’ has obliged universities to compete with alternatives to their services and, from the moment the second university was established, to compete with other universities. Higher education markets, therefore, are at least eleven centuries old.

Even Dill et al. (2004: 327) allow that ‘competitive markets have long been a feature of higher education’ claiming that ‘students have always

competed with each other on the basis of their demonstrated academic skill for access to scarce university slots'.²

On the other side of the barricades, as it were, critics like Ronald Barnett (2000a, b) argue that 'marketisation' has promoted a trend toward the commodification of teaching and research. In America David Noble talks about how the 'commoditisation' of research and especially the commoditisation of university 'instruction' has meant that the university becomes a site for the production of commodities, and the university a market for them. For Noble this means that academics become part of a production process 'designed for the efficient creation of instructional commodities, and hence become subject to all the pressures that have befallen production workers in other industries undergoing rapid technological transformation' (Noble 1998: 362). Apple (2007: 10) points in similar fashion to the processes where higher education has been commodified because 'in order to market something like education, it must first be transformed into a commodity, a "product"'. Others argue that under neo-liberalism, markets have become the new technology 'by which control can be effected and performance enhanced, in the public sector' (Olssen and Peters 2005: 316). The neo-liberal transformation of higher education has been designed to make competition the way to increase productivity, accountability, and control because 'increased competition represents improved quality within neo-liberalism'. This is because, as Marginson (1997: 5) points out—

Increased competition is meant to increase responsiveness, flexibility and rates of innovation ... increase diversity of what is produced and can be chosen ... enhance productive and allocative efficiency ... improve the quality and volume of production ... as well as strengthen accountability to students, employers and government.

Yet some are not so sure. While acknowledging that we now see, as Amaral et al. (2003) suggest, a more 'business-like' approach in the way the higher education sector is managed, some writers prefer to talk about the creation of a 'quasi-market'. In the early 1990s, Le Grand (1990) argued that because the 'hand of government' provides significant guidance and influence on how 'the market' operates, it is better to talk about a 'quasi-market'. Le Grand and Bartlett (1993) seem to think that the markets for undergraduate 'home' students and the markets for research funding look more like a highly structured 'quasi-markets'. Pugsley (1998) talks about the introduction of a 'quasi-market' in higher education. Teixeira et al.

(2004: 6), while allowing that ‘market-type coordination mechanisms are becoming increasingly popular in higher education policy making’ also accept that ‘many of the essential ingredients of markets are not in place for higher education’ and so seem inclined to accept that at best there is a ‘quasi-market’. Likewise, Brown and Carasso (2015: 2) argue that ‘since 1979 British higher education ... has increasingly been provided *on market or quasi-market lines*’ [italics added].

What we confront today, as this sample of quite different yet representative claims about the ‘marketisation’ of universities in this case, mostly in Britain suggests, are some quite different ways of making sense of the extent to which universities are now actually functioning in a ‘higher-education market’. Some think the talk about markets is to be taken literally. Others go so far as to insist that universities have always been part of a ‘higher education market’ (Foskett 2011: 21). Still others hedge their bets, like Marginson (2007: 42), who says ‘partial marketisation’ is a feature of many, if not most national higher education systems, or else prefer to talk instead about ‘quasi-markets’ that force universities to (quasi?) compete against one another for resources and funding.

At the least, this diversity indicates why Kirp (2002: 2) says that ‘the notion that higher education is a “market” needs to be unpacked, because the system doesn’t look like the market portrayed in any Economics 101 textbook’. Let us try to get some clarity because what we call things matters. This point should not have needed to be made to my fellow teachers—but clearly it now does.

As I will also suggest here, the fact that some think universities are now actually engaging in a higher-education market, and then set about giving effect to this delusion points to a disturbing level of sheer folly, muddle, and intellectual confusion. This is why we need to ask whether we should accept, as so many writers now seem inclined to do, that higher education has actually become a business, producing and selling educational services to customers for a price, or that universities are now competing in a ‘higher-education market’ by selling education as a commodity and treating students as ‘customers’ (e.g., Winston 1999: 13). My case is simple: all such talk involves a basic category mistake.

ON CATEGORY MISTAKES

Ryle (1949) introduced the idea of the category mistake. According to Ryle, a category mistake occurs when we attribute a property to a thing that it can’t possibly have. For example, someone might say that ‘the movie

had too much salt in it' (1949: 16–17). In his view, the problem with that statement is that the only things that can have too little or too much salt are normally things that one eats or drinks. Ryle gives another example: a foreigner who observes the various colleges, libraries, and administrative offices of Oxford, and then asks to be shown 'the university'. The foreigner mistakes the university for another institution like those he is familiar with—'the way in which all that he has already seen is organized' (1949: 16)³—when in fact it is something of another category altogether.

We need to resurrect the idea of the category mistake and to put it to work as part of a larger project to inquire into the tangled relationships between knowledge and ignorance. Implicit in this is a deep concern about what has happened to universities as places which seem to have adopted a casual attitude to notions of truth-seeking. As I argued in Chap. 2, John Finnis has made a good case for treating knowledge as a fundamental human good. And the idea that there is a reality that is to be disclosed by knowledge remains a clear point of reference in that claim. This is so in spite of a good deal of confused relativism centring on the idea that reality is a 'social construction', and in spite of the fact that it is always hard to pursue the kind of knowledge of that reality and so get at the truth of things. Too many social scientists, for example, have misread Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's (1966) account of a social epistemology as an ontological story, or else have accepted too quickly John Dewey's claim to have superseded the idea that 'knowledge is a disclosure of reality, of reality prior to and independent of knowing' (Dewey 1929: 43–44). Equally, too few have read John Finnis or Simon Blackburn (2005).

As Finnis (2013(V): 22) puts it, is a certain necessity involved in 'adhering to those norms of rational inquiry and judgment which articulate what experience of discovering reality shows is needed for overcoming ignorance, illusion or error':

These norms guide all scientific inquiry and all scientific achievements and applications, and are the source equally of all inquiry, discovery and judgment in fields which lie wholly or in part beyond the methods of natural science, and fields such as mathematics, logic, philosophy, history and the interpretation of texts and conversations. In all these fields truth is found and knowledge of reality is won by hypothesizing, and then when evidence and argument fail to discomfort appropriately, concluding, to some explanation, some explanatory factor or state of affairs or reality (Finnis 2013(V): 23)

This means we do need to move beyond the kind of faddish academic relativism found mostly in the humanities and social sciences which natter on about how reality is ‘socially constructed’ and that our knowledge of that reality is therefore inherently relative, and that ‘truth’ is whatever we say it is. As Finnis says, to deny reality is to decapitate it. Denying reality is never a good idea because it enables us to avoid ‘the hard work of seeking the truth about reality’s most fundamental shape, and having raised and pursued that to shape one’s own life in line with what one has judges one has discovered about such matters’ (Finnis 2103(V): 35).

In what follows I turn first to the idea that our universities are now actually part of a higher-education market. I indicate why this is not an accurate account of what is happening and that it involves relying on a persistent category mistake. As I have shown in Chap. 2, the resulting ignorance owes much to the delusions sowed by a tradition of neo-classical economics. That tradition, which has been a fundamental source of the vocabulary employed in the service of making sense of the world, to say nothing of policy-making by neo-liberals (including higher-education policy) is better understood as a manifestation of several kinds of ignorance. Granting its discursive performative capacities, this does not bode well for what actually happens under the sign of the market (McCloskey 1994, 2002; Mirowski 1989, 2013). This critical exercise will help to clear the way to establish what is actually going on and explain why so much of what many universities now think and do is so muddled and self-negating.

THE IDEA OF ‘THE MARKET’

At the heart of neo-liberalism is a simple and beguiling idea about the free market, which since the 1980s has driven decades of political advocacy and ‘policy reform’ in many countries. To talk in this way does not require that we subscribe to some essentialist account of neo-liberalism Birch and Mykhnenko (2010: 1) point to the diversity in the implementation and embeddedness of neo-liberalism in many countries, suggesting that ‘neo-liberalism is not and never was a single hegemonic system in the first place’. Brown (2015a, b: 20) too notes the ‘inconstant, differentiated unsystematic and impure’ character of neo-liberalism. As she says, there is a profound ‘spatial and temporal variability’ about neo-liberalism which can simultaneously legitimate Swedish welfarism, the redistributive efforts of the post-Apartheid South African state, the strange mix of anti-statism and new managerialism in America, and the ‘structural adjustment ‘

policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) imposed on the poorest societies on earth. This is so for a very basic reason.

There is as I have already suggested, a very basic contradiction between the economic analytics found in neo-classical economics and the moral-political project of neo-liberalism. Neo-liberalism is grounded to some extent in a neo-classical economic theory of the free market. That theory assumes, among other things, a clear separation—even a fundamental antagonism—between economy and polity, implying, for example, that ‘barriers [need to] be established to prevent the political world from intervening in the economy (Crouch 2011: 34). Yet the neo-liberal project is a political project which has been managed from and by the state. That contradiction is a fundamental one, suggesting that either or both the neo-classical tradition of economics and neo-liberalism may not have a good grip on reality to start with. Accordingly, we should also expect additional symptomatic elisions, confusions, and muddles to follow. Let me start with the neo-classical account of the market.

Neo-Classical Economics and the Market

The neo-classical ‘theory’ or ‘model’ of a free market is easily spelled out. A market, for example, is said to constitute a means of allocating scarce resources in an economic, that is, ‘efficient’ way. The market itself is simply the idea that all sorts of individuals meet to buy and sell goods and do so on an as-needed basis. In the neo-classical account, markets exist because there are both consumers with needs and the resources (like income or credit) to pay for the goods or services they desire, *and* producers (or suppliers) to meet those needs, and that those producers have goods or services the consumers desire. In this respect the essential market mechanism is the utility-maximising (i.e., the well-being or happiness-seeking) behaviour of persons and the profit-maximising behaviour of firms (which through what Adam Smith [1775] called the ‘invisible hand’ of providence, distributes goods in such a way that no one is better off without making someone else worse off. In this view a market is a powerful, even magical, allocation system that produces what neo-classical economists call a ‘Pareto-efficient allocation of goods’. (Efficiency is simply the most ‘cost effective’ (i.e., ‘economic’) way of satisfying the needs of both consumers and producers in a world of scarce resources.

As Clark (1983: 30) says, ‘The market form ... is a type of interaction in which, in pure form, no one is in charge and matters are disaggregated.’

Since Adam Smith, economists have assumed that markets work better at allocating goods and services than any other institutional arrangement like a centralised planned economy run by the state, because markets are just vast chaotic aggregates of independent decisions by individuals, each pursuing individual happiness and seeking thereby to increase their well-being by pressing their personal advantage with full knowledge of the local situation. This, since the analysis of Ludwig von Mises (1936), is said to produce better results than might result if these decisions were being made by the state.

Crouch (2011: 30) offers one simple version of the conditions that need to be satisfied for such a pure market to exist:

- All prices are comparable and everything is for sale and tradeable
- There are no barriers to market entry with multiple consumers and producers
- There is a high volume of transactions
- Market participants have perfect knowledge
- The state and economy are clearly separated

Lorenz (2012: 602–3) goes deeper by spelling out the assumptions central to the theory of free markets. The functioning of free markets assumes the existence of privately owned companies. The neo-classical theory of the free market implies that the job of the state is to remove all obstacles to that private ownership of companies. The functioning of free markets also assumes well-organised companies. Well-organised companies are in the interest of shareholders because ‘optimal management results in optimal efficiency’, thus producing optimal shareholder value. One implication of this is that the main role of the state is to remove all obstacles to efficient management. Because management equals efficiency in neo-liberalism, it is rationally incumbent on the state to remove all obstacles standing in the way of private consumers exercising their sovereignty.

The logic of this position also requires the transformation of ‘citizens’ into ‘consumers’: ‘The citizen has become a customer and thus behaves as a consumer, obtaining maximum service for a minimum in provides the justification to abolish all interference with fair market relationships, including taxation’.

There many basic problems with the claims made by and on behalf of the neo-classical economics and its theory of markets. For one thing the ‘ideal market’ is equated with the ‘perfectly competitive market’ of

neo-classical theory (outlined above), but this is only one of many other credible theories of market. There are, to borrow Hirschman's (1982: 117) phrase, many 'rival views of market society'.

It is troubling too that the neo-classical tradition treats 'the market' as equivalent to or even identical with 'the economy'. Yet it is plain that any actual modern capitalist economy is made up of a range of institutions, including different kinds of markets which engage in exchange. There are firms both small and large that engage in economic forms of production. Further, as anthropologists like Graeber (2011) point out, the relationship between states and markets has been close and symbiotic for at least the last 5,000 years, with states playing a vital role in creating and regulating market activities. Finally, there are a vast array of other formal and informal institutions, including craft guilds, unions, philanthropic, and other non-government organisations that play an important role in economic transactions.

This last observation is troublesome for a theory that stipulates a clear separation between state and economy, a condition that seems never to have occurred anywhere or at any time. As Chang (2002: 544) says, defining 'a free market' is 'at the deepest level a pointless exercise, because no market is in the end "free": all markets are shaped by state made regulations about who can participate in which markets and on what terms'. Worse, the historical assumption made by the neo-classical economic tradition which asserts that markets came first and the state only as an afterthought, allegedly to correct for 'market failure', is historical nonsense.

This is not to deny that the Austrian-libertarian wing of neo-liberalism represented by von Mises and von Hayek has used the contractarian explanation of the origin of the state first formulated by Hobbes and Locke in the seventeenth century to great political effect. On this account, the state emerged as a 'contractual' solution to the Hobbesian problem which asserted that the state of nature before the birth of the state was an anarchic 'war of all against all'. The civil state provided law and order, especially by securing the protection of private property, which was deemed vital if markets were ever to function properly (Nozick 1974; Buchanan 1986). Anthropologists and economic historians have repeatedly shown that the state came well before the rise of markets everywhere.

We need to remember this when we turn to the neo-liberal idea that universities needed to be reformed by creating a higher-education market by the implied entailment that this would require commodifying higher education.

THE IDEA OF A HIGHER EDUCATION MARKET

It is generally agreed that the notion that it would be a good idea to create a higher-education market idea owes a lot to the advocacy of Milton Friedman (1962). Friedman provided a classic critique of the public provision of education by the state and launched the debate on the feasibility of applying market mechanisms to the provision of higher education. Friedman argued that a system of higher education monopolised or quasi-monopolised by the state could only be inefficient. He claimed that any system in which governments paid the providers of education (i.e., universities) would lead to less responsive institutions that were also underfunded and less able to respond and adapt to the rapidly changing needs of society. Likewise, the state's insistence on things like uniform wages constrained the 'competitive pursuit of excellence' by preventing performance payments to outstanding teachers. Friedman also claimed that the state's effective monopoly control of education restricted the ability of students to shape the kind of education they wanted while also thwarting the possibility of private contributions either by students or their parents.

Friedman advocated for a system of vouchers, in which governments funded students directly, enabling them to choose any university they wanted. This innovation, Friedman argued, would encourage competition between universities and so lead to a more efficient use of resources. He also thought such a system might be supplemented by students paying fees and or by others making private contributions.

As we have seen, many writers have claimed that since the 1980s we have seen the introduction of 'marketisation' policies and market-type mechanisms in higher-education systems previously characterised by a high degree of government regulation and funding (Molesworth et al. 2010; Weimer and Vining 2016). Are we required to agree with this assessment?

How well does the theory of the market align with what is actually happening? In what follows I agree with Ben Jongbloed (2003: 134) when he says, 'There is no such thing as a truly "free market" in higher education'. I look first at the relatively straightforward exercise of saying what a free market looks like and then establishing the extent to which the current operations of universities conforms, or not, to this model. I briefly consider an attempt by Massy (2004) to 'stamp his feet' and insist that we actually have markets even when the universities in question function on a not-for-profit basis. I then turn to arguments about higher-education 'quasi-markets'.

Recall first that for the neo-classical economic tradition the idea of a ‘market’ is easily outlined. ‘The *Neo-Classical Economics 101* account of ‘markets’ says markets consist of buyers and sellers of goods and services, along with other things like capital, labour, and so on (Begg et al. 1991: 8). The category of the ‘market’ itself is a shorthand expression for the process by which individuals’ (or households) act out their utility preferences by choosing between the consumption of alternative goods, while firms’ make decisions about what and how to produce, or workers make decisions about how much time to allocate to employment and for whom to work: all of these ‘utility-maximizing decisions are reconciled by the market-driven adjustment of prices (Begg et al. 1991: 8).

In each case, as Table 5.1 specifies, both producers and consumers enjoy certain freedoms. For producers these include the freedom to get into the market without restriction, to define what they will produce or provide by way of a service, the freedom to access the necessary resources to make their product or service, and the freedom to set the price. As for the consumer, they need to be free to choose the seller of the goods or services, to have the freedom to choose the product or service, and to do this, they also need adequate information about the goods or services in the market. Finally they need to be free to pay for those goods or services.

To the extent that governments do not intervene in any of these elements, we have a ‘free market’.

Applying this model of markets, we can specify what this would imply if we actually had a higher- education market. In what follows I draw on Jongbloed (2003: 114–25).

Producers or providers universities would firstly need freedom of entry: that is, there would be little if any regulation of market entry (and hence plenty of market competition including from private and ‘for profit’ providers) and there would be no subsidies from the taxpayer. Secondly,

Table 5.1: Eight conditions of freedom for a ‘free’ or ‘pure’ market

<i>For producers</i>	<i>For consumers</i>
1. Freedom of entry	5. Freedom to choose provider
2. Freedom to specify the product	6. Freedom to choose the product
3. Freedom to use resources	7. Adequate information about prices and quality
4. Freedom to set prices	8. Pay all direct and cost-covering prices

Source: Jongbloed (2003: 114)

universities would be free to specify the product and this would mean, for example, that there would be no regulatory limits on the prices charged (i.e., fees) or the numbers enrolled. Thirdly, universities would be free to use all of the available resources, entailing, for example, that the cost of teaching would be met entirely through fees which would approximate to the average costs. Finally, universities would enjoy the freedom to determine prices like the cost of fees to be met from users' (students and their families) own resources.

On the other side of the ledger, 'consumers', in this case prospective students (or their families) would need four kinds of freedoms as well. Firstly, prospective students would need the freedom to choose the university providers. As customers they would exercise sovereignty and decide what, where, and how to study on the basis of sufficient (i.e., accurate, valid, reliable, and accessible) information about the price, quality, and availability of relevant subjects, degrees, and providers. Secondly, prospective students would be free to choose the products. Thirdly, they would have adequate information about the prices and the quality of the degree. Finally, they would be free to pay for all the direct and cost-covering prices set by the university (Jongbloed 2003: 114).

I think it can be safely said that none of these conditions are being met currently in the higher-education sectors in Britain, America, or Australia.

In each case, governments are regularly intervening in ways that defeat any notion of a higher-education market being established. There is no 'free entry': governments routinely set up and maintain a regulatory framework defining university status in terms of which institutions can issue degrees or other higher-education credentials. There is no capacity on the part of would-be universities to freely specify the programs offered. Rather, there is a network of national as well as international standards contained in various codes of norms, practices, and regulatory requirements. Some of these reflect the ideas of professional associations about what a person working in a certain profession needs to know: these expectations may even be sanctioned by formal legislation. These standards are in place to ensure that students, their prospective employers, and the community more generally will be able to form an idea about the value and quality of the academic degrees offered. Thirdly, most universities are not free to select their students: usually a mix of merit-based and quota-driven regulatory frameworks are in place, and these are administered typically by a number of state-sponsored coordinating statutory authorities. Nor are universities free to employ any staff resources they want. There are

terms of employment for staff, lecturers, and other academics established by national regulations—for example, there may be prescribed salary scales and/or collective agreements in place, to say nothing of professional criteria like the requirements that staff have Ph.Ds. Finally, most universities are not free to set the prices of their tuition. In most higher-education systems, where students are required to pay a tuition fee, publicly funded universities charge a system of fees which are set by government.

As for students, they too hardly look anything like the classical free-market consumer. Prospective students are not consumers able to choose the provider of the product or service simply by paying a price to get the service: that is, prospective students cannot simply buy their way into a university. Likewise, prospective students are not free to choose the service they want. For one thing, universities cannot offer 'individualised' programs to students: instead, most universities offer a choice of a more or less 'standardised' curriculum in terms of disciplinary coverage and coherence. Apart from factors like cost, this may oddly enough simply reflect the state of knowledge in a given field or discipline. This inhibition is closely tied to a third problem: students—rightly—do not know enough to know what they want. It might be thought a waste of everyone's time if students came into a university program already knowing what they have come to find out about. If they already knew what they need to know, they would be wasting their time in that university. Higher education is an 'experience good': its value, point, and purpose to say nothing of that evanescent idea of its quality, will only be revealed once the student fully engages in the educational experience. Finally, most students do not pay for the costs of the education they receive, typically because governments are subsidising the cost of tuition.

In short, when actual higher-education systems are examined, it is evident that the expectations of several decades worth of neo-liberal reformers about creating a 'higher-education market' are nowhere near being met. As writers like Roger Brown (2011) and Nick Foskett (2011) insist, even though policy-makers and university managers talk about the higher-education market, this does not necessarily mean there is one or that policy makers have been able to create a real market in the sale and purchase of university education.

No higher-education system in America, Britain, or Australia fits the market template. First, reformed systems take the form not of economic markets as such but government-controlled and often highly regulated systems. A 'market' for higher education does not exist in Australia or the

United Kingdom because government policies effectively prevent such a market from being created (Jongbloed 2003).⁴ This is mostly the case even in America. Government ‘steering’ is a strong feature almost everywhere and is far more important overall than any imagined market relations between buyers and sellers. The fundamental driver of a capitalist market—the autonomous profit—motive is noticeably absent. As for competition there is at best a simulacrum of ‘competition’ achieved by the combination of high-profile public relations used in advertising campaigns as universities ‘compete’ with each other over their positions in various league-ladder tables ranking the ‘Worlds Best Universities’. Beyond that it is a matter of policy-makers and senior managers telling everyone ‘we are now all involved in a highly competitive market’ and hoping everyone believes them.⁵

It is therefore not surprising that writers like Teixeira et al. (2004: 6) are disposed to accept that the very idea of creating a ‘higher-education market’ might be a tad difficult, since they accept ‘that many of the essential ingredients of markets are not in place for higher education’ (2004: 6).⁶ Jongbloed (2003: 113) too has been compelled perhaps reluctantly, to draw an inevitable conclusion: ‘There is no such thing as a truly “free market” in higher education’.⁷

A QUASI-MARKET IN HIGHER EDUCATION?

These considerations, however, have not prevented Teixeira et al. (2004:6) from arguing that many governments have experimented with introducing several of the key features of markets into the higher-education system to create what they call a ‘quasi-market’. Teixeira et al. (2004: 1), faced with a basic taxonomic question—that is, do universities now operate in a higher-education market?—set out to offer a systematic analysis of the implications of ‘introducing market-oriented mechanisms in the steering, funding and organisation of the higher-education sector’. They end up making an oddly misshapen argument claiming that *at best* we see only a ‘quasi-market’ in higher education. What are we to make of this idea?

Both Jongbloed (2003) and Teixeira (2004) are keen to promote the idea that many governments have promoted the creation of a ‘quasi-market’ in higher education. These types of marketisation policies in higher education are apparently ‘aimed at strengthening student choice and liberalising markets in order to improve the quality and variety of the services offered by the providers of higher education’. In this respect it seems ‘marketisation’ is ‘aimed at encouraging providers to pay more attention to their

students and to innovation in teaching and research' (Jongbloed 2003: 113). Many economists agree, arguing that at best governments have promoted 'quasi-markets' in higher education. Massy (2004: 15) says 'quasi-markets' arise when governments fund institutions as if procuring services for their constituents (Le Grand and Bartlett 1993). Universities are not funded for their own sake, but rather as providers of specified services for identifiable groups. Students may exercise choice in deciding which institution to attend, for example, but the main element of market power is exercised by the state on their behalf. Quasi-markets substitute a well-informed buyer (the state) for under-informed ones (i.e., students).

As Jongbloed (2003: 114) sees it, a true market for higher education cannot exist in many countries because 'government policies effectively prevent such a market from forming'. However, marketisation policies try to assess the appropriate type and degree of government intervention. The premise here is that creating a quasi-market involves enabling individuals both as providers and as consumers to make more price-sensitive decisions. This is because financially motivated actors who are influenced by sufficient incentives will pay more critical attention to the decisions they make, respectively, as consumers and providers of higher education.

What are the key elements of these quasi-markets? Teixeira et al. (2004: 4–5) indicate that the introduction of quasi-markets in higher education relies on three main 'market logics'. The first is the promotion of competition between higher-education providers. This is because deregulatory policies increase competition between providers of higher education. Competition and deregulation are allegedly linked because increased competition presupposes some degree of deregulation: competition can only be realised when institutions have some freedom to move. This at least points to the need to address some important empirical questions: have marketisation policies increased competition and what would evidence of increased competition look like? Secondly, have marketisation policies actually decreased or increased the regulation of universities?

The second is the 'privatisation' of higher education by encouraging the private higher-education sector or by means of 'privatisation' of certain aspects of public institutions (Teixeira and Amaral 2001). The third involves the promotion of the economic autonomy of higher-education institutions, enhancing their responsiveness to the 'supply and demand' of factors of production and products.

One way of understanding this is offered by Marginson (2004:), who rejects 'dualism' or the use of 'theoretical binaries' (Dow 1990). A

dualistic approach to social theory implies that higher education is *either* competitive or not, or that it is *either* an economic market or not. Neo-liberal policy-makers argue that it is *either* a ‘true’ market or not (and if it is not, it should be transformed into one). Marginson’s solution is to insist that higher education is all of these things simultaneously because it is—

comprised by a number of different ‘layers’ of practices. It is a site of teaching and learning and of intellectual and cultural production; it is a site where social status is produced and regulated; it is a site of economic exchange; and it is a site where economic profits are made and capital accumulated.

This apparently neat ‘having-your-cake-while-eating it too’ approach, while superficially appealing, nonetheless depends on Marginson showing us how and where it is that when he refers, for example, to ‘educational capitalism’ that characteristics like making ‘economic profits and accumulating capital’ are actually exhibited in modern universities.⁸ The critical question is this: have any existing universities shown any of the characteristics Marginson rightly notes have begun to appear in a frankly *commercial version of* higher education like the University of Phoenix ‘where the producer’s motivation is no longer teaching, or caring for students, or adding to the stock of knowledge, or status and institutional prestige? It is, as Marx argued, accumulation for accumulation’s sake, capital for capital’s sake’ (Marginson 2004: 194).⁹ The fact that an entity like the University of Phoenix exists is not evidence that universities are now actually manifesting multiple layers, including an ‘educational capitalist layer’ that Marginson says they do.

Another way of understanding the idea that we now have a ‘quasi-market’ in higher education is suggested by Graham Burchell (1996: 23–24), who says that while classical liberalism defines the basis of government conduct in terms of ‘natural, private-interest-motivated conduct of free, market exchanging individuals’, neo-liberalism insists that—

the rational principle for regulating and limiting governmental activity must be determined by reference to *artificially* arranged or contrived forms of free, *entrepreneurial* and *competitive* conduct of economic-rational individuals.

This means that from the neo-liberal perspective, end goals like freedom, choice, consumer sovereignty, competition, and individual initiative, as well as compliance and obedience, becomes the work of the state relying

on the development of techniques like *auditing*, *accounting*, and *management*. As Barry et al. (1996: 14) put it, techniques like these that—

enable the marketplace for services to be established as 'autonomous' from central control. Neo-liberalism, in these terms, involves less a retreat from governmental 'intervention' than a re-inscription of the techniques and forms of expertise required for the exercise of government.

Whether this quite real development (to which I return in later chapters) justifies talking about a 'quasi-market' is, however, quite unclear. The actual history of universities has always entailed substantial government intervention, stemming from the fact that education has been and remains even in the twenty-first century a substantial expense for many governments: typically, significant funding comes with significant regulation. In many higher-education systems, a panoply of legislation and statutory regulation continues to shape degrees, funding, access, quality, institutional management, reporting, and other areas. What is happening is the use of a market vocabulary and discourse to justify some of the many unacceptable things that now go on in modern universities like the diversion of revenues away from teaching and to marketing campaigns, or the payment of extraordinary remuneration packages for senior managers.

Let me finish by discussing one more question. On the premise that markets require some process of commodification, has this happened to education or knowledge and can it happen?

EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE AS COMMODITIES?

A central intuition-cum-assumption relied on by both neo-classical economists and by neo-liberals is that for markets to exist there have to be buyers and seller of commodities. A commodity is standardly understood to be something grown, made, or put up for sale in a market. The circularity of this notwithstanding, we still need to ask what is a 'commodity' and what is 'commodification'?¹⁰ The latter question presumably accepts that there are some things that start out by not being commodities but may become so and thereby seeks to elucidate the means by which a non-commodity becomes a commodity. In what follows I make it plain that talking about higher education as if it were a commodity, or has become one, is not the same as having made it so. Higher education, like friendship or love, cannot be commodified. But it can be damaged by people

who, gripped by the delusion that it can be commodified, wreak havoc on the relationships and practices that define a higher education.

Markets, by definition, exist where supply and demand determine prices for the transfer of goods and services. Free markets are described as such because they are free from regulation, allowing unrestrained competition to determine prices. Open markets are those in which ‘anyone, or at least a large number of persons, can buy or sell.’ As a general matter, markets are largely governed by ‘private (i.e., civil and business) law, which tends to defer to parties’ intent rather than judgments based on a public-principled response to particular arrangements.

Critics of commodification, especially those influenced by the Marxist theory of alienation, seem to assume that it is possible to both ‘marketise’ and ‘commodify’ and thereby compromise human flourishing.¹¹

We see something of the kinds of concerns that some have about the possibility that education could be commodified in the work of Margaret Radin (1996). Radin, who discusses the development of markets in body parts, surrogate parenting, and prostitution in the twentieth century is perhaps not quite sure that a real market can be established that literally creates commodities out of human organs. She is, however, worried that, by some process that involves something like reification, if we start to talk about marketising certain human relationships and activities we can end up with literal commodification. This issue is more than ordinarily complex.

On the one hand, it is true enough, that using a discourse about markets ‘might deprive us of other ways of understanding human experience and thus of the conceptual tools to see anything wrong, e.g., with baby-selling’ (Radin 1996: 11). Radin adds that under the conditions of ‘universal commodification’ certain ‘all important personal attributes, relationships, and philosophical and moral commitments’ that we associate with being a parent or having friends can be rendered ‘monetisable and alienable from the self’. Thinking, for example, about parenthood, she says ‘a better view of personhood should understand many kinds of particulars—one’s politics, work, religion, family, love, sexuality, friendships, altruism, experiences, wisdom, moral commitments, character, and personal attributes—as integral to the self. To understand any of these as monetisable or completely detached from the person ... is to do violence to our deepest understanding of what it is to be human’ (Radin 1996: 12–13). Yet it still needs to be demonstrated that talking about a relationship or an activity like the relationship of friends hanging out with each other in such fashion

as to want to turn it into a saleable relationship or activity is not the same thing as actually achieving this conversion.

There is of course a horrifying plausibility about Radin's discussion up to a point. There is plenty of evidence demonstrating the capacity of some humans to turn other humans into commodities: slavery is the oldest and most obvious example of this.¹² We have also seen more recently the sale of labour, blood (or plasma), organs, and the monetisation of childbearing in the form of surrogate mothers, where a woman agrees to bear a child for another woman or couple and to receive a monetary reward for so doing. These examples show that it is possible to commodify, either in part or in whole, certain important activities and relationships which are aspects of our humanity.

Equally it is plain that some aspects of our being human are simply not commodifiable: we cannot conceive of 'commercial friendship' or 'commercial love': this is not to deny the reality of professional care, for example, of the elderly or people with disabilities, or prostitution; but no one in their right mind would treat these as examples of 'commercial friendship' or 'commercial love'. There is something about the quality of friendship *per se* or the love between parents and children or between adults that is what it is and that cannot be commodified without changing the very value and point of that relationship. This argument is properly an ethical one based on some insight into core aspects of our social lives.

That argument applies to knowledge and to practices like teaching and research. Apple (2007: 12), for example, has outlined some of the steps needed for the commodification of education. Critically, the services or goods—in this case a university education or 'knowledge'—that are to be commodified must be reconfigured so that they can indeed be bought and sold.

Immediately it ought to be evident that it is not clear what precisely is being bought and sold. Is the student purchasing a certain amount of time in a classroom? Is the student buying a credential without the obligation to do anything more than hand the money over? In both cases it is not clear why anyone would bother doing either. The mystery remains: what else is being bought?

Simon Marginson, who deploys a critical political-economic framework to distinguish between 'public goods' and 'private goods', helps to clarify what if anything is being bought. The answer is simple. You cannot buy an education, but you can buy the status or reputation attached to attending a certain university. The basic category mistake at stake here begins

when people start treating knowledge/education as a commodity. It is not. Here one distinction that matters is between ‘public goods’ like education, which you cannot buy, and a ‘status good’, which you can buy. Let me start with the idea of a ‘public good’.

THE IDEA OF PUBLIC GOODS

In 1954 the economist Paul Samuelson analysed the notion of ‘public goods’. Samuelson identified public goods as ‘economic goods that are non-rivalrous and non-excludable’. What this means is simple: goods are non-rivalrous when they can be consumed by any number of people without being depleted, for example, knowledge of a mathematical theorem or the ability to recite a poem. Goods are ‘non-excludable’ when the benefits cannot be confined to an individual buyer: air, water, public land, a police force or an army to promote security, and public education would seem like obvious, examples.

Private goods, on the other hand, are goods which are neither non-rivalrous or non-excludable. Most commodities—like cars, cigarettes, land sold as real estate, bales of wool, or a box of bananas—are obvious examples of ‘private goods’. Almost by definition, public goods tend to be either not produced at all by commercial markets, or else are under-produced, while private goods are ideas for production and sale in markets.

Marginson arrives at the conclusion that knowledge is *predominantly* a ‘public good’, not a private good.¹³ Archibudi and Filipetti (2015) concur, though they add that knowledge is very close to being a pure public good when people drawing on that knowledge do not need to properly understand it. However, this is uncommon, as generally most of us ‘have to learn to use knowledge, and the more it is sophisticated and complex, the more it will require investment of time and resources’ (Archibudi and Filipetti 2015: 10). This goes to the heart of a major question about what being a student involves, to which I return later in the book.

Treating knowledge/education as a commodity involves a category mistake. As Stiglitz (1999) argued, knowledge is close to a pure public good and far away from being a commodity. Stiglitz (1999: 308) insisted that any public good has two critical properties: Firstly, it involves non-rivalrous consumption in that the ‘consumption’ by one individual does not detract from that of another. Secondly, it is non-excludable because it is difficult, if not impossible to exclude an individual from enjoying the good. Stiglitz uses the example of knowing about a mathematical theorem:

This knowledge clearly satisfies both attributes: if I teach you the theorem, I continue to enjoy the knowledge of the theorem at the same time that you do. By the same token, once I publish the theorem, anyone can enjoy the theorem. No one can be excluded

And as Stiglitz points out using the neo-classical economic frame itself, there is no economic advantage or incentive to try to exclude anyone by putting a price on knowledge.¹⁴

The fact that knowledge is non-rivalrous—that there is zero marginal cost from an additional individual enjoying the benefits of the knowledge—has a strong implication. Even if one could exclude someone from enjoying the benefits of knowledge, it would be undesirable to do so because there is no marginal cost to sharing its benefits. If information is to be efficiently utilized, it cannot be privately provided because efficiency implies charging a price of zero—the marginal cost of another individual enjoying the knowledge. However, at zero price only knowledge that can be produced at zero cost will be produced (Stiglitz 1999: 309).

Stiglitz gives the lie to all those who natter on about 'knowledge-as-commodity'. Except for commercial property (such as copyrights and patents), the natural price of knowledge is zero. Stiglitz also noted that a large component of knowledge consists of global public goods. A mathematical theorem is useful because it is true in Australia, Tibet, or Russia. Its price everywhere is also zero. And in the internet age it is obvious that most knowledge can be freely accessed or low or no cost, always providing one is hooked into the communicative network, and it is created and disseminated freely. But not only does most knowledge never become a commodity; even knowledge goods when they take on a commercial form are shaped by the logic of public goods.

The public good of knowledge is central to teaching and learning. The knowledge content of teaching and learning is a public good, as MIT recognised when it launched its Open Courseware initiative. And as Joseph Stiglitz (1999: 309) points out, one fundamental public-policy implication of this idea is that 'the state must play some role in the provision of such goods; otherwise, they will be under-supplied'.

While the major benefits of higher education and research are that they provide for a range of public goods, this is not to deny that there may be substantial economic benefits arising from public goods, like enabling certain conditions of production in the profit-making private industries, as

well as in government and civil society. This includes the way knowledge underpins a general minimum level of social literacy, through to ensuring that the obligations of citizenship can be discharged. However, this economic role is often indirect, and it is difficult both to define and measure. There may also be more individualised economic ‘spill-over’ benefits from the education of one person to others. The knowledge and skills graduates bring to the workplace not only make the graduate more productive, they make other workers, non-graduates, more productive as well. Such benefits are partly but not fully or consistently rewarded in the labour markets and thus must be subsidised by public funding of education and training. Among economists there is little disagreement about the public good character of both the collective goods and the spill-overs, though there is disagreement about their value

The implication of this is simple: education itself cannot be commodified, nor can students be seriously regarded as ‘customers’ in a market buying it. Treating students as ‘customers’, presumes for example, that they know enough about what they are buying. As Gaita (2012) observes, customers do indeed typically know what they want and what counts as getting it. ‘The trouble, however, is that students are being introduced to things they don’t understand and which take time to understand’. Secondly the additional idea that customers also know the value of what they want denominated in dollars ignores the point that unlike a pizza or a bucket of chips, the value of the education they are engaging in is as much dependent on what they are doing as learners as it is on what their teachers doing. Equally, and for other reasons, the value of what they are doing as students and getting from their teachers cannot be denominated using a price signal. If anything, any value that might be attributed depends on the intrinsic worth of what they are *doing* as opposed to consuming and that frequently the value of the learning they’re doing may not become apparent until some time later.

Research knowledge likewise remains a public good. Open science, based on collaboration, informal contacts between academics and businesses, attending academic conferences, and using scientific literature can also be used to transfer knowledge from the public sector to the private sector. It will take time for national policy systems to acknowledge it, but this statement spells the end of the New Public Management and commercialisation paradigms that have dominated research policy. The illusion was that nation-states could secure economic growth benefits from their research systems by commercialising them. Even the Organization

for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD 2008b: 102–3) has come to accept that there are limits to the marketisation of research knowledge:

The idea that stronger intellectual property right (IPR) regimes for universities will strengthen commercialisation of university knowledge and research results has been in guidelines on licensing, data collection systems and strong incentive structures to promote the commercialisation of public research.

Yet as Raewyn Connell (2013b) insists, something is going on that looks a lot like goods being bought and sold as if we are actually in a market.

STATUS GOODS AND POSITIONAL ADVANTAGE

One way to create a simulacrum of a 'market' in education is to restrict supply in some way and offer elite education to a small number of people, thereby creating a status good—or what some call a 'Veblen good' (Gillborn and Youdell 2000).¹⁵ Neo-classical economics tells us that when the price of a commodity goes up, the demand goes down, so that as commodity prices rise, fewer commodities are purchased. Veblen goods are an exception: as prices go up, demand increases. Spending less is not the point; spending more is what confers the added status and value. What is being sold, in this case is what economists call 'positional advantage': that is, something that other people cannot get because it is no longer commonly or widely available becomes a 'status good'.

Elite universities routinely restrict access to their programs. A key characteristic of a Veblen good is that the possession of it confers status. Thus, not all law degrees, Ph.D.'s, or MBAs are the same. Most of the elite universities in America have relatively small enrolments in their undergraduate or postgraduate programs. This can be achieved by pricing and/or by using meritocratic criteria like academic grades or results on special tests to restrict access. To the extent that this happens, the status good of having a degree from an elite university becomes a private good, because such a degree is a status or positional good. Status production is highly competitive.

Yet even these status markets are never able to completely 'commodify' the status good being sold. This is because, as Marginson (2004) argues, 'status markets' have special characteristics that distinguish them from normal markets.

Firstly, you cannot sell more of ‘it’ (as you might be tempted to do) if as a producer of microchips you want to expand ‘market share’. By definition, like any luxury good, the value of the status (i.e., scarce) good, is diminished if too much of ‘it’ becomes available. It is not in the interest of the elite university to obey the ‘law of supply and demand’ and expand its enrollment to soak up all of the possible student demand. To do so immediately devalues the positional, status value of its own degrees, and so it ceases to be an elite university. America’s elite institutions do not expand to meet all possible demand. If anything, as various league tables of the ‘best’ universities reveal, the best universities enroll remarkably small numbers of students. They do not seek to maximise enrollments, revenues, and market share. They are not interested in diluting the very thing that makes them elite—the small numbers of their graduates who have won the positional heights.

Secondly, they are not driven by competition between producers so much as they are by competition between prospective students for access to the high-value products (scarce student places in sought-after institutions). Thirdly, status production is highly competitive between the group of high status universities, but this group is largely closed to outside competition. Once elite institutions become elite, they find it relatively easy to maintain this role, and to block other potential producers. Elite university status reproduces itself. The number of high-status producers is always limited in absolute terms. Fourth, when high-status universities are given freedom to charge whatever fees they like, the experience of higher education in the United States suggests that the rate of tuition inflation exceeds the general rate of price inflation.

Indeed there is good evidence suggesting that in America especially there has been a dramatic increase in the price of Veblen goods in the higher-education system as elite universities increase the price of their education in the context of the more general move to develop a mass higher-education system. In 1946, the one-year tuition cost at Harvard was \$420, and average annual income for an individual was \$US 2,600. Harvard’s one-year tuition in 2006 was \$30,275. In 2014, it reached almost \$39,000 (with room and board added, the total cost approached \$US 60,000). Median household income in 2012 was around \$US 54,000, and per capita mean income was \$US 27,319 (Kolb 2014). The costs of American post-secondary education have risen four times the rate of growth in the Consumer Price Index between 1982 and 2012.

Provided there is a rationing of these resources (i.e., unequal distribution within the society), it is possible to 'sell' the positional advantage involved in going to an elite university by marketing the idea that elite students they will access superior facilities, like buildings and sports ovals; more favourable teaching staff–student ratios; superior academic expertise; and enhanced social support, like pastoral care.

And yet there is a particular that subtly decomposes even this idea.

Granting Marginson's important point that universities *appear* to offer a 'positional good' based on the apparent (difference between a good degree from a good university and a not so good degree from a not-so-good university, Marginson's point is confirmed by some of the odd things that universities actually do. While I will return repeatedly to this point in the remaining chapters, let me highlight one aspect of the make-believe that is now in effect. This particular insight comes from John Quiggin, one of Australia's iconoclastic economists, who seems to have also been puzzled by the idea that we now have a market in higher education.

Quiggin starts by recalling the neo-classical narrative that 'markets create competition': firms (or universities) that do well will experience strong and growing demand and enjoy financial success, while those that perform badly will lose 'customers' and revenue and, if they fail to respond, will declare insolvency. As Quiggin then observes, this model is entirely inapplicable to the higher-education sector because it is extremely rare for universities, regardless of the quality of their management to close down. He then turns to one of the key elements deployed by universities as they engage in 'quasi-competition', namely, competing in the world rankings. As Quiggin puts it, it is quite unclear what relationship the various rankings of universities has to do with whatever is meant by or defined as 'quality'. Putting it bluntly, Quiggin says 'the rankings of universities can be predicted, with a high degree of accuracy, by the date and conditions under which they were founded' (Quiggin 2014: 9). Put another way, quality in higher education has nothing much to do with metrics of student satisfaction, research output, or even 'quality of teaching' however that is defined and measured (Probert 2015:62). It has everything to do with being a 'sandstone' university in Australia, one of the 'ancient' universities in Britain, or being one of the Ivy League colleges in America. And to complicate the matter further, the 'market research' done in Australia by universities suggests that students choose the university they want to attend chiefly on the basis of whether it offers the courses they wish to take, before making some second-order assessment about the quality of

the provider. That quality is overwhelmingly determined by the length and kind of institutional history (Probert 2015:62).

CONCLUSION

For the past few decades governments in Britain, Australia, and the United States have urged universities to adopt the behaviours and language of business and competitive markets. Using essentially discursive means, policy-makers said they had set loose a project of economic market reform in higher education. This is why critics like Wendy Brown (2015a, b: 9–10) observe that neo-liberalism is ‘a normative order of reason that has become a widely and deeply disseminated governing rationality’ that insists that ‘all conduct is economic conduct, all spheres of existence are framed and measured in economic terms and metrics, even when these spheres are not directly monetized’. Her point was made for her by Cornell University President David Skorton in his extraordinary Commencement Address of 2014:

Each of you starts the next portion of your life’s journey with the tremendous benefit of a Cornell education. I hope that you’ll carry with you ... a continuing commitment to build human capital so that more will have opportunities to pursue their dreams.

As Brown notes, contemporary neo-liberals treat us all as members of the species *homo oeconomicus*, understood as ‘an intensively governed and constructed bit of human capital’ and ‘tasked with improving and leveraging its competitive positioning and with enhancing its monetary (and non-monetary) portfolio value across all its endeavours and venues’ (Brown 2015a, b: 10). As far as it goes, this seems right.

Yet we are not required to believe that this has literally happened. We are entitled to consider the neo-liberal policy-making processes of the past few decades as exercises in semantic legerdemain or magical thinking.

What this means is that when an institution like Plymouth University declares that it is an ‘enterprise university’, by which it means ‘an enterprise-led university where innovation and creativity, together with responsible business practice, underpin all our activities’, we are not required to believe it. We can say ‘you are making that up’. We are in the presence of sheer folly, a muddle, an intellectual confusion which is incapable of understanding its own incoherence. That this can be said of a university only highlights the grave dangers posed especially to those young people who have every reason to expect far better. That modern universities are now generating a self-portrait that relies on such basic category mistakes

as the idea that they are working in a higher-education market or that they are selling education is a bad sign.

We need to pay much more attention to what has actually been going on in our universities over the past few decades. In the following chapters I want to show how the way that many universities now work is less a consequence of them working in a market selling higher education as a commodity and more a consequence of the 'privatisation' of public universities. This process of 'privatisation' is not easily or simply characterised. At the least, the privatisation of universities involves the abandonment in part or wholly of distinctive traditions in the ways higher education has been done in these countries. We will see in particular the disruptive, even destructive impact, of privatisation on ideas about the value of knowledge, the autonomy of teaching and research, and the claim that higher education is a public good best funded by the whole community.

NOTES

1. Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade routinely refers to higher-education exports when talking about international fee-paying students studying in Australia: 'Australia's exports of *Education services* are an important part of Australia's services exports to the world, accounting for around 36 percent of total services exports in 2013–14' (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2015: 1).
2. This bizarre argument seems to rely on a Gary Becker-esque tendency to treat all aspects of human life as economic. Oddly, Dill et al. (2004: 327) immediately acknowledge that making competition the criteria for determining whether a market exists or not, is an odd call and one at odds with the entire thrust of neo-classical economics: they note correctly that competition does not meet 'the contemporary definition of a market as a process for allocating goods and services based upon price'. Indeed.
3. Ryle deployed this idea to expose the very big category mistake he thought lurked in the Cartesian theory of mind. Ryle thought Descartes represented mental concepts like 'believing', 'knowing', or 'aspiring' as if they were acts or processes: the problem for Descartes as for many psychologists later was that these were covert, because unobservable acts. Ryle thought that 'believing' or 'knowing' and the like were actually 'dispositions' (1949: 33). Arguably, Ryle made his own category mistake as he tried to correct Descartes' category mistake.
4. In reality and in spite of the neo-liberal talk about shrinking governments and creating free markets, governments continue to both subsidise private

business enterprise to a staggering level and to regulate the activities of private enterprises extensively: the only question is to whose benefit.

5. This is analogous to the advice the Red Queen gives to Alice about a key rule:

‘The rule is jam tomorrow and jam yesterday—but never jam to-day.’

‘It *must* come sometimes to ‘jam to-day,’ Alice objected.

‘No, it can’t,’ said the Queen. ‘It’s jam every *other* day: to-day isn’t any *other* day, you know.’

‘I don’t understand you,’ said Alice. ‘It’s dreadfully confusing!’

‘That’s the effect of living backwards,’ the Queen said kindly: ‘it always makes one a little giddy at first.’

6. This fact has not deterred some economists who *have gone* to extraordinary lengths to preserve the integrity of neo-classical economic theory. In the spirit of Becker’s extraordinary attempt to make all of human existence an economic matter, Massy (1994, 2004), for example, has developed a ‘microeconomic theory of non-profit enterprises. His model ‘describes’ non-profit behaviour as ‘maximising a subjectively determined value function by adjusting outputs and output prices, subject to market, production, and financial constraints’. The value function reflects the institution’s mission. Market constraints reflect the demand functions of those who purchase its outputs and the supply functions of those who provide factors of production. The production function describes how input factors are transformed into output quantity and quality. Massy (2004: 18) insists that the all-important not-for-profit condition financial function requires that total revenue minus total cost equals zero. The point of this is not clear. Many public universities regularly pursue economic surpluses; many American private not-for-profit universities likewise pursue surpluses through the management and sale of television rights to their elite university sporting activities or the investment of endowment.
7. I say ‘apparently’ because Jongbloed had earlier concluded that (i) ‘there are many markets in higher education’ (Jongbloed 2003: 111) and (ii) that ‘despite marketisation policies, in reality a true market for higher education *does not exist in many countries*’—although he does not say which ones (Jongbloed 2003: 113). According to Jongbloed (2003: 111), these markets include markets for ‘students (undergraduates, postgraduates, doctoral students), a market for research staff, a market for lecturers, a market for research grants and scholarships, a market for donations, a market for graduates, a market for company training, and so on’. It is easy in the light of this example of academic muddle to see why we might agree with Gerald Graff (2006) about the worry on the part of some academics that one day there will be an outbreak of clarity.

8. Marginson makes a good theoretical case for 'a non-dualistic framework that enables a complex historical reality to be broken down into constituent elements or layers of practices recognised as interdependent' by drawing on Braudel (1981: 23–25). As he notes Braudel conceives of fifteenth to eighteenth century Europe in terms of three heterogeneous zones of activity, layers coexisting with each other and affecting each other, while constituting identifiably separate worlds and to a large extent sustained by different people'. The only question is how applicable is this to real universities
9. The University of Phoenix is an American for-profit entity and a wholly owned subsidiary of Apollo Education Inc. Phoenix had more than 100,000 students within the first five years of going public and today offers degrees in over 100 degree programs at the associate bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. levels. Like many such entities in other systems UoP is parasitic when it comes to public monies. The university heavily recruits students and obtains financial aid on their behalf, including Federal Pell grants: for the 2008–2009 fiscal year, the University of Phoenix student body received more Pell grant money (\$656.9 million) than any other university. Between 2010 and 2015, enrollments have declined more than 50 percent. In February 2013, a peer review group recommended to the Higher Learning Commission that the university be put on probation because the University of Phoenix 'has insufficient autonomy relative to its parent corporation'. On May 9, 2013, the Apollo Group filed a report with the Securities and Exchange Commission which stated that the HLC Institutional Actions Council First Committee ("IACFC") had recommended to the HLC that the university retain its regional accreditation, but that the university be placed on "notice" for two years. Their concerns center on the university's governance, student assessment, and faculty scholarship in relation to Ph.D. programs. University of Phoenix has been identified by *USA Today* as a 'red flag' institution for posting a student loan default rate (26 percent) that surpassed its graduation rate (17 percent). A 2010 report found that the University of Phoenix's online graduation rate was only 5 percent
10. There is a distinction between 'commoditisation' and 'commodification' (Surowiecki 1998). 'Commoditisation' means simply the conversion of a market for a given product (e.g., wheat) into a commodity market. Neo-classical economists say commodity markets are invariantly characterised by declining prices and profit margins, increasing competition, and lowered barriers to entry. 'Commodification' refers to attempts to convert human or public goods into a commodity, which, it is argued, involves the degradation of the good attached to the activity or thing by market values.

11. We may be prepared to accept with Ertmann that even with the widespread marketing of commodities characteristic of capitalist societies, that ‘market mechanisms are multifaceted, both facilitating and hampering human flourishing’ (Ertman 2004: 49). That said, the fundamental inequalities that are built into the very architecture of capitalist markets, like the radical inequality in the distribution of both capital and wealth as well as incomes, affect the distribution of valued resources—physical, social and intellectual—in ways that clearly thwart the fullest flourishing of many people (Stiglitz 2012).
12. That said, slavery did not begin as a market-based activity. For the longest time, as anthropologists have shown, wars of conquest provided the institutional basis for the practice of taking slaves (Graeber 2011).
13. Marginson allows that degree certificates, and the networking benefits of attendance at elite schools or universities, can be thought about as private goods.
14. The exception to this, as Marginson points out, is that knowledge goods are excludable only at the moment, of creation because the ‘original creator holds first-mover advantage’. Knowledge is at this point a temporary private good in a ‘one-sale market’ and so quite unlike manufactured goods. Mostly, its long-term life as a public good is more important than its initial life as a private good. And much of knowledge never functions as anything but a public good.
15. The term ‘Veblen good’ originated with Thorsten Veblen’s (1899) account of conspicuous consumption and the pursuit by the very wealthy of scarce but high-priced luxury items like artworks, expensive wines, or luxury cars.

REFERENCES

- Amaral, A., Meek, V., & Larsen, I. (Eds.). (2003). *The higher education managerial revolution?* Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Apple, M. (2007). Education, markets, and an audit culture. *International Journal of Educational Policies*, 1(1), 4–19.
- Archibugi, D., & Filippetti, A. (2015). Knowledge as global public good. In D. Archibugi & A. Filippetti (Eds.), *Handbook of global science, technology and innovation* (pp. 1–27). Oxford: Wiley.
- Barnett, R. (2000a). *Realizing the university in an age of supercomplexity*. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.
- Barnett, R. (2000b). *Realizing the university in an age of supercomplexity*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Barry, A., Osborne, T., & Rose, N. (1996). *Foucault and political reason: Liberalism, neoliberalism and rationalities of government*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Begg, D., Fisher, S., & Dornbusch, R. (1991). *Economics* (3rd ed.). Sydney: McGraw Hill.
- Birch, K., & Myknenko, V. (2010). Introduction: A world turned upside down. In K. Birch & V. Myknenko (Eds.), *The rise and fall of neo-liberalism*. London: Zone.
- Blackburn, S. (2005). *Truth: A guide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brown, R. (2011). The march of the market. In N. Molesworth, R. Scullion, & E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketization of higher education and the student as consumer*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Brown, R. (2015a). The marketisation of higher education: Issues and ironies. *New Vistas*, 1(1): 5–9. http://www.uwl.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Departments/Research/new_vistas/voll_iss1/voll_iss1_art1_23April2015.pdf
- Brown, W. (2015b). *Undoing the demos: Neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. Cambridge: Zone.
- Brown, R., & Carasso, H. (2015). *Everything for sale? The marketisation of UK higher education*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Buchanan, J. (1986). Contractarianism and democracy. In J. Buchanan (Ed.), *Liberty, market and state*. Brighton: Wheatsheaf.
- Burchell, G. (1996). Liberal government and techniques of the self. In A. Barry, T. Osborne, & N. Rose (Eds.), *Foucault and political reason* (pp. 19–36). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Chang, H. (2002). Breaking the mould: An institutionalist political economy alternative to the neo-liberal theory of the market and the state. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 26, 539–559.
- Connell, R. W. (2013b). Why do market 'reforms' persistently increase inequality? *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 34(2), 279–285.
- Crouch, C. (2011). *The strange non-death of neoliberalism*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (2015). *Analysis of Australia's education exports*. Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/analysis-of-australias-education-exports.pdf>
- Dewey, J. (1929). *The quest for certainty: The Gifford Lectures*. New York: Minton Balch & Co.
- Dill, D., Teixeira, P., Jongbloed, B., & Amaral, A. (2004). Conclusion. In P. Teixeira, B. Jongbloed, D. Dill, & A. Amaral (Eds.), *Markets in higher education: Rhetoric or reality*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Dow, S. (1990). Beyond dualism. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 14, 143–157.
- Ertman, M. (2004). What's wrong with a parenthood market? A new and improved theory of commodification. *North Carolina Law Review*, 82(2), 3–60.
- Finnis, J. (2013). *Collected essays: Reason in action (I); Intention and identity(II); Human rights and common good (III); Philosophy of law (IV); Religion and public reasons (V)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Foskett, N. (2011). Markets, government, funding and the marketisation of UK higher education. In N. Molesworth, R. Scullion, & E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketization of higher education and the student as consumer*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Friedman, M. (1962). *Capitalism and freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gaita, R. (2012). To civilize the city? *Meanjin*, 71(1), 29–49.
- Gillborn, D., & Youdell, D. (2000). *Rationing education: Policy, practice, reform and equity*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Graeber, D. (2011). *Debt: The last 5000 years*. London: Melville.
- Hemsley-Brown, J. V., & Goonawardana, S. (2007). Brand harmonisation in the international higher education market. *Journal of Business Research*, 60, 942–948.
- Hirschman, A. (1982). Rival views of market society. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 48(4).
- Jongbloed, B. (2003). Marketisation in higher education, Clark's triangle and the essential ingredients of markets. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 57, 110–135. doi:10.1111/hequ.2003.57.issue-2.
- Kerr, C. (1988, September). A general perspective on higher education and service to the labor market. Unpublished paper excerpted in *Policy Perspectives*, 'Distillations'.
- Kolb, C. (2014). American postsecondary education: A Prada Handbag or an Irish Potato? *Huffpost*, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/charles-kolb/american-postsecondary-ed_b_5616827.html
- Le Grand, J., & Bartlett, W. (Eds.). (1993). *Quasi markets and social policy*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Lorenz, C. (2012). If you're so smart, why are you under surveillance? Universities, neoliberalism, and new public management. *Critical Inquiry*, 38(3), 599–629.
- Marginson, S. (1997). Competition and contestability in Australian higher education, 1987–1997. *Australian Universities Review*, 40(1), 5–14.
- Marginson, S. (2004). Competition and markets in higher education: A 'glonacal' analysis. *Policy Futures in Education*, 2(2), 175–244.
- Marginson, S., & van der Wende, M. (2007). *Globalisation and higher education* (OECD education working papers, no. 8). OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/173831738240/>
- Massy, W. (2004). Markets in higher education: Do they promote internal efficiency? In P. Teixeira, B. Jongbloed, D. Dill, & A. Amaral (Eds.), *Markets in higher education: Rhetoric or reality*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- McCloskey, D. (1994). *Knowledge and persuasion in economics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McCloskey, D. (2002). *The secret sins of economics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mirowski, P. (1989). *More heat than light: Economics as social physics, physics as nature's economics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Mirowski, P. (2013). *Never let a serious crisis go to waste: How neoliberalism survived the financial meltdown*. London: Verso.
- Mises, L. (1936). *Socialism: An economic and sociological analysis* (trans: Kahane, J.). London: Jonathan Cape.
- Molesworth, M., Scullion, R., & Nixon, E. (Eds.). (2010). *The marketisation of higher education*. London: Routledge.
- Noble, D. (1998). Digital diploma mills: The automation of higher education. *October* 86 (Autumn): 107–117.
- Nozick, R. (1974). *Anarchy, Utopia and the state*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2008b). *Tertiary education for the knowledge society*. Paris: OECD.
- Probert, B. (2015). *The quality of Australia's higher education system: How it might be defined, improved and assured*. Canberra: Office for Learning and Teaching.
- Pugsley, L. (1998). Throwing your brains at it: Higher education, markets and choice. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 8(1), 71–92.
- Quiggin, J. (2014). *Post-school education in Australia: The case against deregulation*. Submission to Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee inquiry into the Higher Education and Research Reform Act Amendment Bill.
- Radin, M. (1996). *Contested commodities: The trouble with trade in sex, children, body parts and other things*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Ryle, G. (1949). *The concept of mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Stiglitz, J. (1999). Knowledge as a global public good. In I. Kaul, I. Grunberg, & M. Stern (Eds.), *Global public goods* (pp. 308–325). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Surowiecki, J. (1998). The commoditization conundrum. *Slate* http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/the_motley_fool/1998/01/the_commoditization_conundrum.html
- Teixeira, P., & Amaral, A. (2001). Private higher education and diversity: An exploratory survey. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 55(4), 359–395.
- Teixeira, P., Jongbloed, B., Dill, D., & Amaral, A. (Eds.) (2004). *Markets in higher education: Rhetoric or reality*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Thomas, W., & Thomas, D. (1929). *The child in America*. New York: Alfred Knopf.
- Veblen, T. (1899). *The theory of the leisure class: An economic study of institutions*. London: Macmillan.
- Weimer, D. L., & Vining, A. R. (2016). *Policy analysis: Concepts and practice* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall.
- Williams, G. (1992). *Changing patterns of finance in higher education*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Winston, G. (1999). Subsidies, hierarchy and peers: The awkward economics of higher education. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 13(1), 13–36.

The Rise of the Manageriat

One of the big stories told about the modern higher education is that universities have become transnational business corporations operating in a competitive ‘global knowledge economy’ (Readings 1996: 13; Kelsey 1998; Strathern 2000; FitzSimmons 2015). This story about the modern university, which is almost always confirmed by any number of academics and by academic studies, insists that the modern university has been variously ‘marketised’ or ‘rationalised’ by a new order of managers. One set of commentators think the result is a wonderful, new, efficient, high-quality customer-focused institution of higher learning. Another set of commentators insist that the effect of marketising universities has been to subvert and even degrade core academic values and that practices are now being subverted by a large new administrative class (Bok 2003). A small number of writers have gone so far as to argue that the ‘marketisation’ of higher education has actually fostered a new type of entity: the ‘McUniversity’ (Parker and Jary 1995; Neave 2005),

Benjamin Ginsberg’s (2011) polemic *The Fall of the Faculty* is a good example of this concern. Ginsberg argues that modern American universities have degenerated into poorly managed pseudo-corporations controlled by managers so far removed from research and teaching that they have no idea what these activities involve. He makes the case using data from 1975 to 2005 that the number of administrators over the past 40 years has grown far more rapidly than that of academic staff or students. Ginsberg reserves special scorn for those he calls ‘deanlets’. ‘Deanlets’

are people with postgraduate degrees who did not become academic staff but opted instead to pursue a career as managers. Ginsberg notes that administrative bloat has been justified on the grounds that an expansion in the number of administrators was needed to deal variously with the ever-increasing numbers of students and more complex administrative systems, to manage new information technologies, and to insurance compliance with increasing regulations mechanisms imposed by governments. While accepting that some of this is true, he says the real logic driving administrative bloat was the self-fulfilling wish of administrators to expand their own power and status by inventing new work which they alone could do. Ginsberg claims that it is the growth of the managers that explains things like the subversion of academic autonomy and the increased use of cheap, casualised, or even unpaid adjunct teaching staff; the increased emphasis on ‘vocational education’ at the expense of the ‘liberal arts’; and the transformation of research into little more than a revenue stream.

Granting that there is always some risk in relying on a single-cause explanation, is Ginsberg right to emphasise something like a ‘will to power’ argument which claims that what has happened reflects the self-interest of administrators?

Sonia Livingstone insist that there are only three questions that matter: namely, ‘What’s really going on?’ ‘How can this be explained?’ and ‘how could things be otherwise?’ (Livingstone 2012: 19). I will focus on the first two questions here.

What does the evidence say about the extent to which modern universities have been captured by administrators and managers? How should we characterise the modern university and how should we begin to explain what has happened?

As should be clear by now, I do not accept that universities have actually been transformed into corporations in a competitive higher-education market that is now selling education as a commodity. Like Frank Furedi, we need to see the claims made by those who aver that we now have a market for higher education as profoundly mistaken. As we have seen, governments and senior managers of universities do seem convinced that marketising higher education:

will make universities into more flexible and efficient institutions, or that the expansion of the market into the lecture hall will provide better value for money and ensure that the university sector will become more responsive to the needs of society, the economy, students and parents. (Furedi 2011: 1)

And like Furedi we ought to conclude that ‘the policy-driven term “marketisation” is fundamentally an ideological one’ (2011: 2).

What has happened is this. The modern university is a consequence of successive waves of government-driven policy changes which has sponsored, especially in the United Kingdom and Australia, something I will call ‘market crazed governance’ (after Carlen 2008). This is a style of state-sponsored policy that starts with some imaginary narrative about higher education as a market, while also and simultaneously actually supporting the production and juxtaposition of contradictory government policy objectives. At the same time, inside the universities, that policy frame, sponsors and encourages a new kind of management culture of practice informed by the ethos of new public management. The result was summed up in a short telephone exchange with a member of the support staff while I was writing this book.

I had rung the technical support staff because my password was either defunct or I had forgotten it. After some checking of my identity the very nice person on the other end of the line said that if I was prepared to wait for three more days the whole problem which lay behind this need of mine would be resolved. ‘Oh?’ I said. ‘Yes’, he said, and he then explained that the real problem was that there were too many systems, each needing a separate password and that it had been decided to amalgamate two systems and rely on one password. I said something like, ‘That sounds like a good idea’. ‘Yes’, he said, ‘but we tried doing it a year ago and it didn’t work then and it probably won’t work now’. A few days later the fix was put in, the two systems affected duly crashed, and we were back at square one requiring multiple passwords.

Here we see the force firstly of David Graeber’s ironic account of the ‘iron law of liberalism’ (Graeber 2015). That law highlights the paradox that as an ‘anti-bureaucratic individualist’ ethos is sponsored by neo-liberals insisting on ‘market solutions’ to every social problem by introducing ‘market principles’, ‘market incentives’, and ‘market-based accountability’, all intending to reduce government interference in the economy, this actually increases the regulatory reach of the state while, expanding the number of personnel needed to regulate the newly ‘marketised’ entities. Hence, the iron law of liberalism:

Any market reform, any government initiative to reduce red tape and promote market forces will have the ultimate effect of increasing the total number of regulations, the total amount of paperwork and the total number of bureaucrats the government employs. (Graeber 2015: 9)

This paradox is richly evidenced in the modern universities. The result of ‘marketisation’ is not a net increase in rationality, efficiency, intellectual cogency, or teaching quality. Indeed all of these things are seriously degraded.

Secondly, the little story highlights the other essential effect that follows from the first law of liberalism which Graeber also highlights. I am tempted to call it Graeber’s ‘iron law of stupidity’. It is the fruit of his exploration as an anthropologist of the relations among power, ignorance, and stupidity. He concludes that that bureaucracies are organised in such a way as to guarantee that a significant proportion of actors will not be able to perform their tasks as expected and that on discovering this, ‘those managing the system conclude that the problem is not with the system itself but with the inadequacy of the human beings involved’. As Graeber goes on to explain, it is not so much that bureaucratic procedures are inherently stupid, or even that they tend to produce stupid behavior, but rather that bureaucratic procedures are ‘invariably ways of managing social situations that are already stupid because they are founded on structural violence’ (Graeber 2006: 4). By this Graeber only means to state the obvious: universities, like nursing homes, schools, banks, or the taxation office are not places where we would immediately think about violence, but he reminds us that of these all are involved in the allocation of resources within a system of property rights regulated and guaranteed by governments in a system that ultimately rests on the threat of force (i.e., legitimated violence).

In effect the story I tell here is a story that starts with universities as places where *homo academicus* played for a long time. The pursuit of knowledge, said Bourdieu, meant that academics were paid—

to play seriously; placed outside the urgency of a practical situation and oblivious to the ends which are immanent in it, he or she earnestly busied herself with problems that serious people ignore—actively or passively. (Bourdieu 1990: 381)

Then one day serious people both in government and in the universities decided that universities needed to be brought under the sign of the market. Academic authority gave way to bureaucratic authority.

While the details of this argument about the effects that the shift in the locus of authority away from academics and toward administrative and managerial staff will begin in the following chapters, I begin to make the case that such a shift in authority has already begun. I outline some of the key aspects of new public management like the movement of resources

away from teaching, the introduction of a culture of audit, and increased antagonism on the part of managers to any hint of dissent or critique. I conclude by suggesting that one of the most characteristic expressions of new public management in the modern university is the role played by branding and advertising campaigns run by universities. The mere fact that universities are now allocating a considerable slice of their revenue stream to marketing and branding may well persuade senior managers that they really are running corporations and that their make-believe world is real.

WHAT'S IS REALLY GOING ON?

The story told today is that university administration has taken a stranglehold grip on the throat of the university, evidenced in the sheer size of the administrative staff now employed in universities. Is this the case?

In America it seems so. Between 1975 and 2005 American colleges and universities increased the number of administrators by 85 percent and the number of non-teaching staff by 240 percent. Marcus (2014) reports that from 1987 until 2011/12 (the most recent academic year for which comparable data was available) universities and colleges added some 517,636 administrators and professional employees to their staff establishments. This meant that between 2000 and 2012 the ratio of teaching staff to non-teaching staff declined by 40 percent. In universities like the University of Michigan there are now 53 percent more administrators than faculty (Craig 2015: 39). This is a common pattern in many American universities. As Marcus noted, in 2014 there were two non-academic employees for every full-time, tenured (or tenure-track) academic staff member at public universities, and two and a half at private universities and colleges (Marcus 2014).

Available evidence suggests that the situation is less extreme in the United Kingdom and Australia. Across all the universities in Australia in 2014, the average proportion of full-time academic staff was 45 percent while 55 percent of staff were non-academic staff. In the United Kingdom only 48 percent of staff were classified as academic. In both Britain and the United States there has been consistent growth in the employment of non-academic staff since the late 1980s.

In the UK universities' 2013–14 returns to the Higher Education Statistics Agency on staff numbers reveal that support staff were the majority at 111 out of 157 institutions. They made up 60 percent or more of all staff at 27 institutions. Among larger institutions (defined for the purposes of the analysis as those with at least 500 academics), the

highest proportion of support staff—63 percent—was recorded by the University of Bradford. The University of Wolverhampton had 62 percent and Durham and Aberystwyth universities had 61 percent. The overall national average was 53 percent. Well below that average were universities like Oxford, (with just 44 percent of its staff holding support staff positions); Birbeck University of London (45 percent); and Kings college London (42 percent) (Jump 2015).

In 2013 Australia's universities employed just under 116,000 people on a permanent or fixed-term contract basis in 2013. Of these, 51,400 had academic job classifications and 64,400 non-academic job classifications. These statistics do not include casually employed staff (Department of Education 2013: Table 2.2).

On a full-time equivalent basis, just under half of university staff—47 percent—were employed in academic roles, teaching, researching, or both. Norton and Cherastidtham (2014) distinguished between 'academic' staff and five kinds of 'non-academic staff: i.e., faculty support staff, centralised administration, learning support staff, student welfare staff, and public services staff'. The data he has used suggests that in 2013, a total of 20 percent of university employees are faculty support staff, 19 percent work in central administration (which includes building and grounds maintenance), 9 percent are in learning support services (such as libraries and computing centres), while just 3 percent work in student welfare services (such as health and counselling).

In Australian universities, there are 1.3 non-academic staff members to every academic staff member. While most Australian universities converge around the ratio of 1.3 non-academic staff members to each academic staff member, there are outliers. At the 'nightmare' end, the ratio at Victoria University in Melbourne is 1.9:1. In contrast, the ratio at the University of New South Wales is 0.5:1 and at the University of Notre Dame 0.6:1. Lean administration is possible. But these are the exceptions, not the rule. Murphy (2013) claims no historical change. Most non-academic staff members today are back-office central administration staff, not front-office school staff. Since the beginning of the 1980s, revenue has flowed away from academic departments and university schools to faculties and central administration at a rate of about 1 percent per year. Today 50–60 percent of university income is distributed to central administrations. Each year the figure grows incrementally. Universities repeatedly claim that centralising administration is more efficient, but it is not.

Almost certainly, as Norton and Cherastidtham (2014: 33) acknowledge, the official data may not fully capture the effects of people with academic titles in primarily managerial roles. He suggests that around 1500 staff with academic classifications are employed in non-academic areas of universities. An unknown number of staff with academic classifications in faculties and departments are performing significant administrative roles, such as deans or heads of department.

On one question the evidence gets a bit more complex. As we have seen, there was significant growth in the employment of administrative staff in American colleges and universities after the 1970s. It seems that between 1975 and 2005 American colleges and universities increased the number of administrators by 85 percent and the number of non-teaching staff by 240 percent.

However, the situation is slightly different in Australia. First, let us scotch one myth about the Australian experience. The myth holds that that non-academic staff are growing as a share of the university workforce. Australian universities began the era of the unified national system in 1996 with 1.3 non-academic staff to each academic staff member. The ratio is the exactly same today. For on-going and fixed-term contract employees, non-academics' share of the total workforce has been stable at around 57 percent for the last 30 years (Department of Education 2013: Table 1.2).

One explanation? There used to be before the era of desktop computers a large body of support staff attached to academic schools of units devoted to typing up curriculum and doing correspondence, copying, filing, and so on. That vanished in the 1990s; Australian universities began the era of the unified national system in 1996 with 1.3 non-academic staff to each academic staff member. The ratio is the exactly same today.

MAKING SENSE OF THIS: MARKET-CRAZED GOVERNANCE

In the previous chapter I argued that in spite of a lot of people in furious agreement with each other about the 'marketisation' of higher education, this hasn't really happened—not at least in the ways that talking about real markets would imply.¹ What has happened testifies more to the ability of large numbers of people to make category mistakes and to do so persistently. Whatever else universities once were, what they have become is deeply confused and deeply confusing places characterised by what I call 'market-crazed governance'.

If it was indeed the case that universities had been converted into enterprises competing with each other in a higher-education market, we might imagine that markets would impose the discipline of the market. This hasn't happened, because no such market exists. What has happened is that governments everywhere intervened, creating what is best described as a pattern of 'market crazed governance'. Here I have adapted Carlen's (2008) well-known discussion of 'risk-crazed governance' and 'imaginary penalties', which she applied to criminal justice policy made under the Blair New Labour government after 1997.

As Carlen describes them, 'imaginary penalties' are produced by policies and programs designed to satisfy 'public' demands to reduce crime and risk and to increase security. Policy-makers and officials in the justice system start to act 'as if' they can actually meet these expectations while knowing full well that they are quite unable to meet them. 'Imaginary penalties' contain elements of both real penalties (like rehabilitation) and symbolic ones (like a 'tough on crime' discourse). Not only do the imaginary penalties erode and undermine the potential for the justice system to achieve justice, they are also, quite simply, ineffective—they do not achieve what they purport to achieve, and in some cases they have the opposite effect. They are characterised by self-referencing standards and by the tendency to evaluate procedures rather than real consequences or to measure 'customer satisfaction'. Most insidiously of all, 'imaginary penalties' help to reinforce the 'totalizing grip of law and order discourse on public knowledges' (Carlen 2008: xx).

In analogous ways 'market-crazed governance' relies on 'imagined markets' and 'imagined competition', which meets the government's intentions to redesign universities as part of the knowledge economy while meeting standards like fiscal austerity and accountability. 'Imaginary markets' and 'imaginary competition' help to reinforce the totalising grip of neo-liberal order discourses about the economic value of knowledge/education. Policy-makers and officials in the policy apparatus can then act 'as if' they have actually created a higher-education market *and* deliver traditional kinds of academically credible knowledge while knowing full well that they cannot do so. By this I mean only to insist that government policy-makers and university managers know they cannot actually deliver high-quality education when the university enterprise has been redesigned to operate with reduced resources while assessing their performance against some economistic conception of the value of knowledge as human good.

Above all the idea of 'crazed governance' highlights the juxtaposition of contradictory government policy objectives. What we have now is a

multi-layered conception in which universities are now expected to serve a plethora of different functions, social and symbolic as well as economic and political (Shore 2010). Government no longer conceptualises universities primarily as sites for reproducing national culture, or educating people for citizenship, or equipping individuals with a broad, critical liberal education. Rather, it expects universities to produce *all* of these plus its agenda for enhancing economic importance, its focus on commercialisation of knowledge, and its goals for social inclusion.

The scale of those contradictions is given a glorious expression in the Blair government's 2003 White Paper, *The Future of Higher Education*:

We see a higher education sector which meets the needs of the economy in terms of trained people, research and technology transfer. At the same time it needs to enable all suitably qualified individuals to develop their potential both intellectually and personally, and to provide the necessary storehouse of expertise in science and technology, and the arts and humanities which defines our civilization and culture. (Department for Education and Skills 2003: 1.44)

As Collini (2003: 3) commented at the time, 'It is hardly surprising that universities in Britain are badly demoralized' as 'no single institution could successfully achieve all the aims crammed into this unlovely paragraph'.

Ivana Milojevic (1998) has usefully identified no less than six different conceptions of the university which reflect contradictory government ideas about the point and purpose of the university. These include—

- *The university as corporation, an independent business, or place for vocational training.* According to Milojevic this scenario is based on the 'reality of globalisation' (sic), government spending cuts, and the consequential pressure to find new funding sources. This university is 'student-based' only in terms of students being conceived of as 'consumers' where the primary concern of university managers is to secure their revenue streams. It is plain that most universities face this pressure if they wish to survive (Milojevic 1998: 696).
- *The university as a place of academic leadership, acquisition of knowledge, and search for truth.* In this model, the main focus is teaching and research (i.e., passing on knowledge to students and expanding the knowledge base of university disciplines). Although this idea of the university as a kind of 'sanctuary' from the turbulent world of politics has always been challenged by outside life, it remains central to demands for traditional ideas of university autonomy.

- The emerging *global electronic university*. This model, increasingly favoured toward the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century (Selwyn 2014), imagines that the university has been transformed into an open, flexible, and virtual campus ‘with unlimited access to information, informal faculty–student relationships, and learning based on cooperation. This kind of university will supposedly overcome the ‘tyranny of the disciplines’, replace hierarchy, and through reduced costs and flexible access reach an enormous number of people’ (Milovejic 1998: 597).
- *The university as a community-based institution*. Milovejic notes that many universities are required to demonstrate their capacity to engage in public service and community outreach as part of the idea that universities need to service the needs of the local communities situated in close proximity to the university campus. This requirement is frequently encountered in the case of universities in rural and regional settings.
- *The University as a cultural coordinator for the nation, educating people for citizenship*. This is a role that universities, particularly those in the Northern hemisphere, are apparently relinquishing as government funding shrinks, as university research and staffing become more internationalised, and as globalisation renders meaningless the traditional role of universities as the ideological ‘arm’ of nation states.
- *Poliversities and multiversities; instead of universities*. The emphasis in this model is on multiple, shifting roles, promoting an even greater proliferation of inventiveness than is implied by any simple idea of diversity (Milojevic 1998: 596)

In consequence many universities facing policy-driven imperatives requiring them to orient to all of these many features try to develop programs and practices that demonstrate their compliance with all of these ‘objectives’.

At the same time as governments spell out their ‘vision’ of the multi-purpose university we see new forms of governance in Britain, the United States, and Australia.

While the state has apparently withdrawn from directly interfering in university management, it continues to maintain a combination arms-length control over budgetary provision and much more micro-control

through a variety of regulatory mechanisms oriented to policy compliance and quality assurance. This idea is clearly reflected again in the United Kingdom's 2003 white paper on the *Future of Higher Education*:

Realising our vision will take time. Having presented a radical picture of a freer future, it is the duty of government to make sure that the transition is managed carefully and sensibly so that change is not destabilizing. So in some areas government will want to support the way in which institutions move toward new freedoms, and develop new patterns of provision. Government has to retain a role because it is the only body that can balance competing interests between the different stakeholders. It will also have a responsibility to intervene when universities fail to provide adequate opportunities or when access, quality or standards are at risk. (DIUS 2003: 1.44)

That is to say that in spite of a neo-liberal discourse about freedom, decentralisation, and the abolition of government control in favour of a market model, what actually emerges is greatly increased centralisation and bureaucracy both within and outside the university.

The idea of 'market-crazed governance' also begins to catch something of the permanent hysteria that has come to characterise modern universities as the make-believe world threatens constantly to unravel in the face of a reality that obdurately refuses to conform to the fantasy. In my university, e.g., policy is no longer defined as advice; it has become a set of rules to be followed without question. The kind of top-down-command style of management seems to owe more to some military ethos than a place that used to engage in collegial deliberation as a fundamental norm.

What actually unfolds is a 'push-pull' process involving governments committed to steering and regulating and internal managers who increasingly have seized direct control and management of processes and work practices once firmly in the hands of academics.

Despite claims to the contrary, deregulation and privatisation of the public sector has not meant less government or reduced state intervention. If anything, state intervention in many British, American, and Australian universities has expanded since the 1980s. In this 'new funding environment' universities must demonstrate that their education and research is contributing to positive economic, social, cultural, and environmental 'outcomes'; hence, the need for metrics and regimes of auditing.

We see, rather, shifts in state involvement and disguised government intervention through complex funding formulae and a network of new

intermediary bodies whose professed independence from government is often highly questionable. ‘Strategic plans’, ‘target setting’, ‘benchmarking’, ‘academic audits’, ‘quality assurance’, ‘annual performance review’, ‘performance indicators’—these terms, which were absent from the university sector three decades or more ago, now provide the core vocabulary of the dominant discourse. That discourse now becomes the language used increasingly by the managers of the modern university, who become the masters of the universe of the new public management.

NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

The practitioners of new public management inside the universities becomes the vehicle by means of which the neo-liberal imaginary is implemented without universities actually having to work in a real free market. Though I will spend a lot of time in later chapters documenting the ways new public management has transformed many aspects of the way universities work, it is important to point to the transformative effects of the development of new public management in the modern university (Strathern 2000; Deem and Brehony 2005).

With Marginson (2009a) we need to distinguish between the new public management and the neo-liberal discourse about the ‘university as an enterprise’ operating in a market of competing institutions. It is true that both are sustained by a fundamentalist ‘economism’ centred on the alleged virtues of ‘markets’ and ‘competition’. And yet to be very clear, we will see at the heart of the neo-liberal project an idea about the role of the state in designing and promoting markets. The irony here is that Friedrich von Hayek, one of the figures conventionally identified as a key figure in the rise of neo-liberalism, was radically opposed to this kind of state-centric approach.

For Hayek, in the classical tradition, economies are the outcome of spontaneous evolution which demonstrate the superiority of unregulated markets for creativity and progress. A spontaneous order emerges for Hayek as if it were a natural process. Indeed as Gray points out, the emergence of spontaneous systems is ‘somewhat akin to the generalizations of Darwinian evolution’ (Gray 1984: 31) in that Hayek maintains that ‘selective evolution is the source of all order’ (Gray 1984: 32). Hayek (1944) also maintains that the proper functioning of markets is incompatible with state planning of any sort, like the limited interventions of the Keynesian welfare state, let alone full-scale socialism.

While Hayek argued for the importance of markets for the regulation of private-business conduct, it was James Buchanan and his collaborators that argued for an extension of the market as a mechanism for the institutional regulation of public sector organisational contexts. In this, Buchanan engineered a major shift from liberal to neo-liberal governmentality. In Buchanan's view, markets are a useful technology for use by the state. Buchanan thinks about markets, less as Hayek had done as a natural, self-regulating reserve, where the 'hand of nature' will produce an optimal social and economic market order, and more as a technique of government's 'positive' power, acting deliberately. Buchanan expresses a much greater faith in *conscious action* to legitimate the 'long over-due task of institutional over-haul' that many commentators were calling for.

Equally, while we can see the effect of state sponsored neo-liberal discourses on universities, we will also see in the rise of new public management the reflection of a basic structural shift in the modern university: the rise of the 'manageriat' committed to the new public management project.

Budgetary policy proved to be the chief vehicle for the initial capture of the university sector.

The introduction of new public management into the public policy sectors of United States, Australia, and United Kingdom involved a 'reform' process. State-owned enterprises such as the education, income support, and welfare and health-care sectors were all subjected to various processes of privatisation, for example, by 'selling off' entities, 'contracting out', or introducing the user pays principle so that they can be made 'efficient and profitable'.

The initial and primary way of doing this invariably involved exposing these entities to cuts in public funding.

In the case of the higher education sector, we saw in Chap. 4 how governments began the 'reform' process by implementing serious and sustained cuts in public spending, thereby creating a permanent budgetary crisis for universities. As Lorenz (2012: 601) notes, in practice 'cost-efficiency' in new public management discourse is usually interpreted as implying at least whole or partial self-financing of organisations, and if possible it is expected to make them 'profitable'. It is not at all surprising that the introduction of new public management into public policy-making, like higher-education policy, has manifested itself in the guise of permanent reductions in costs, that is, permanent spending cuts. In each country most universities set about developing alternative funding sources mostly to do with attracting fee-paying students, especially international students. In this way 'cost efficiency' and 'competitiveness' were introduced. What

we then see is a convergent process in each of these countries which is achieved by an alliance between government policy-makers and management internal to the universities.

These core features of this alliance include firstly a constant decrease in the level and quality of teaching. This claim is typically enough dismissed by modern universities: in Britain Universities UK has consistently denied that there is—or ever was—a problem of ‘standards’ that needs to be addressed (Aldermann 2009: 21). As recently as January 2016 Belinda Robertson head of Universities Australia was likewise insisting that Australia’s universities were still offering outstanding education.

Though this claim about declining quality will need to be discussed and tested much more carefully and precisely (see Chaps. 7 and 8), evidence for this claim is suggested firstly by a continuous worsening of the staff/student ratios. This manifested itself among other things in ever-increasing teaching loads for teaching staff, larger class sizes, and in attempts to begin to replace face-to-face education with on-line ‘delivery’. There is research pointing to certain negative effects. In the United Kingdom the *Times Higher Education Supplement* carried out a survey in 2004 which found the overwhelming majority of academics (N = 400) believed that worsening staff/student ratios was having a generally adverse effect on academic standards. Forty-eight percent reported, for example, that they had ‘felt obliged to pass a student whose work performance did not really merit a pass’ while 42 percent said that decisions to fail students’ work had been overruled at ‘higher levels’ in the university. Almost one in five admitted to turning a blind eye to plagiarism. Research by Gill (2008) found that 80 percent of academics surveyed (N = 500) said that worsening student-staff ratios were affecting academic standards. Seventy-seven percent said plagiarism was a growing problem, while more than 70 percent said that the need to maintain acceptable retention rates had led to lower failure rates on courses in their institution (also Alderman 2008a, 2009, 2012).

That there has been a decline in the quality of teaching and learning is also suggested by a decline in the number of full-time academic staff and a growing reliance on part-time, temporary staff hired on a contract or casual basis. In Australia, for example, in 2010 an estimated 67,000 people were employed as casual academics in Australian universities. That is, more than half of all university teachers in Australia were employed casually. This amounts to a major structural process replacing inflexible

and expensive tenured, full-time staff with flexible and cheap untenured, part-time adjuncts, teaching assistants, and symbolic professors.

Finally the notion that many universities are now offering poor quality teaching is suggested by a process of de-professionalisation as managers and in some cases ‘automated systems’ take over responsibility for defining, regulating, and auditing work practices once the responsibility of autonomous professional academics operating collegially. Finally, teaching and research are continuously separated out though the explanation for this is rather more complex than the idea that it reflects a management inspired preference. For one thing, it is clear that in Australia, for example, there is a major diversion of internal budget resources away from teaching and toward research. Norton and Cherastidtham (2015: 1) estimate that in Australia in 2012 at ‘least \$2 billion in university research spending could not have been financed from any source other than students. Conservatively, one dollar in five spent on research comes from surpluses on teaching. This constitutes the cash nexus between teaching and research’. As to the mechanism, they suggest that what they call ‘teaching surpluses’ are achieved because ‘teaching generally costs less than what universities earn from students. This is especially true for international students, who typically pay significantly more than domestic students’. They go on to add that ‘the best information available suggests that universities earn up to \$3.2 billion more from students than they spend on teaching’. Oddly enough, Norton and Cherastidtham (2015) fail to discuss the systematic use of casualised, low-paid teaching staff as the mechanism that is relied on to achieve what they call ‘teaching surpluses’.

That at least is a reminder that since the 1980s we have seen constant increases in student tuition fees, which have for the great majority of tertiary students in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia meant a dramatic increase in the amount of student loan-based debt. Indeed, this is a direct consequence of the alliance between government policy-makers and management internal to the universities. It is a melancholy fact that in the last decade the senior managers of Australian universities like their counterparts in the United Kingdom and the United States have been consistent advocates for the need to increase student fees.²

Increasing student debt, worsening staff/student ratios, a decline in the number of full-time academic staff, and increased reliance on part-time, casualised, and even unpaid staff all are direct consequences of new public management policies and practices. These policies are all dressed up in the make-believe vocabulary of ‘markets’, ‘competition’, and ‘quality’.

Reference to the idea of quality of course gives the lie to the idea that universities have actually been subjected to the discipline of the market and its reliance on competition to produce increased quality.

THE CULTURE OF AUDIT

Once the move to impose ‘cost efficiency’ had begun via the simple expedient of cutting public funds to universities, governments in each country unveiled a second stage of ‘reforms’. Neo-liberal governments were convinced that as universities were ‘marketised’, competition would flourish, ensuring that the quality of higher education would likewise improve. It became something of a mantra amongst governments of all colours, that ‘market competition’ improves quality as universities get better at attracting students and offering more and better teaching. The idea that competition enhances quality was exemplified when the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2010: 8) proposed certain reforms to the Cameron government. This review claimed their recommendations would—

create genuine competition for students between Higher Education Institutions ... There will be more investment available for Higher Education Institutions that are able to convince students that it is worthwhile.

However, and in lieu of any actual markets and the competitive discipline they generated, governments promoted improved quality by introducing audit and accountability mechanisms using ‘quantifiable indicators’ that claimed to measure and rank institutions by the ‘quality’ of their teaching and research. As Furedi (2011: 2) insists, not the least of the paradoxes at work is that for all the talk about commodifying higher education, this talk does not actually result in any—

triumph of free-market economics. Indeed it can be argued that the marketisation of education has been paralleled not by a decrease but an increase in state intervention and the micro-management of university life.

There is a solid and growing body of evidence suggesting that under the sign of the market the quality of higher education is actually declining, though not necessarily for reasons which are entirely the direct responsibility of universities.

The fatal paradox at play here is that, firstly, the very preoccupation with metrics and accountability regimes increased the tendency to relocate the locus of authority away from academics and toward managers. This has a lot to do with the way the ‘theory of market-driven quality improvement’ provides the legitimation for increasing layers of managerial oversight of educational practice and increasingly intrusive risk-management interventions.

Though again this needs to be discussed more carefully in later chapters, the imposition of quality auditing has systematically reduced the grip that academics had on their own autonomy. As Martin Trow (cited in Barry 2004: 164–65) puts it, ‘the withdrawal of trust in its universities by [government] has forced it to create bureaucratic machinery and formulas to steer and manage the universities from outside the system.’ Its typical consequence has been ‘the rise of a regime of bureaucrats, inspectors, commissioners, regulators and experts which ... is eroding professional autonomy’ and further promoting ‘a move away from the disciplines, being the former fortresses of the [academic] professions’ (Barry 2004: 166).

Secondly and no less fatally, the shift to the idea that ‘student satisfaction’ survey-generated metrics can become a proxy ‘measure’ of high-quality teaching and learning has had some very odd effects which further erode the authority that used to be assumed by academics. Those effects arise from a need to ‘manage for risk’.

According to neo-classical economics, consumer sovereignty is taken to be a foundational premise for any functioning market. Under new public management and the logic of ‘marketisation’, the customer is always right. This means the university had better listen to the student. Appeals to the identity of student-as-customer are underpinned by an agenda that seeks to discipline academic life through the make-believe conceit that students can and should now apply consumer pressure in the marketplace of higher education. From this perspective the complaining student or parent takes on a new role in the marketised university in what becomes a ‘culture of complaint’.

The culture of complaint has encouraged the emergence of a form of ‘defensive education’ that is devoted to minimising sources of disputes that have the potential to lead to complaint and litigation. In this respect we see how the elective affinity between neo-liberalism and talk of risk works.

As Shore (2008: 280) argues, policy-makers and managers alike working under the sign of neo-liberalism shift their focus from rights to risks.

This can enable the representation of ‘risk society’ as a space in which job insecurity is normalised as ‘employment flexibility’.

One effect of a preoccupation with risk is anxiety on the part of managers about dissent and critique or resistance to management-driven change. Though it can easily be overstated, one idea about the university was that it was to serve as critic and conscience of society offering an informed critique of the prevailing political social and economic arrangements. As Bansel and Davies (2010) suggest, those operating under the sign of the market seem nervous about dissent, which has become dangerous perhaps because it is seen as a threat to funding and, hence, to institutional survival. At the least some of the conditions that have come to characterise the modern university also seem conducive to bullying and authoritarianism. There is a small but valuable body of research revealing universities to be unhealthy institutions, creating conditions that enable rudeness, even bullying, and other forms of employee abuse (Lewis 2004; McKay et al. 2008; Twale and De Luca 2008). As Zabrodiska et al. (2011) note bad behaviour, including bullying, has surely been around for a long time and certainly well before the neo-liberal era. That said, the dominant features of the modern universities, like the extensive use of short-term contracts and casual labour (and the job insecurity this creates), funding pressures, an increasingly competitive ethos, the rebalancing of the locus of authority away from academics and toward managers, and weakened union power in the United Kingdom and Australia, all suggest an increased likelihood that some staff will experience bad behaviour by their managers (Lewis 1999; McCarthy et al. 2003; Keashly and Neuman 2010). As Thornton (2004: 168–69) argues, the tendency of contemporary universities to favour an increasing proportion of flexible workers—casual, contract, sessional and part-time—means that not only are these workers likely to be treated as depersonalised and disposable but the uncertainty they represent may exercise a chilling effect on the full-time staff and enhance the arbitrary exercise of managerial power. Redundancies and terminations are a fact of life in the corporatised workplace, but these acts in themselves do not formally qualify as bullying.

Another consequence of corporatisation is to increase management supervision of many aspects of teaching. Furedi (2011: 4) highlights one of the key logics now at work in the modern privatised university: defensive education. This refers to moves usually made by managers to ensure that academics are discouraged from exercising their professional judgment by making the course content too demanding, or causing upset when offering feedback or responding to disputed marks. Courses, especially ones that do

not rate highly in student surveys because they demand too much work or effort, are modified and made customer friendly. Redefined performatively as a ‘customer’, the student is expected to become the personification of ‘market pressure’ set loose on an otherwise ‘archaic’ and ‘unresponsive university’. As the 1994 Group of United Kingdom Universities notes in its statement *Enhancing the Student Experience*:

On this account students come to ‘play an important role as “change agents,” challenging the established modes of learning, and contributing to making it more exciting and relevant’. (1994 Group 2007: 16)

Even more incredibly, the 1994 Group says, ‘Students know how they want to be taught and have ideas about how techniques can be improved’ (2007: 6). Aside from the assumption that academic teaching is essentially just a ‘technique’, the idea that the student-as-customer already ‘knows how they want to be taught’ is quite bizarre. Yet it is even more bizarre that governments and universities now routinely assign to students the responsibility for assessing what they have learned. This is the point of the *University Experience Survey* (UES), which is represented as ‘the only comprehensive survey of current university students in Australia’ and ‘is designed to collect information that will help both universities and the government improve teaching and learning outcomes’. Among the items in the customer satisfaction survey students are asked: To what extent has your course developed your—

- Critical thinking skills?
- Ability to solve complex problems?
- Ability to work with others?
- Confidence to learn independently?
- Written communication skills?
- Spoken communication skills?
- Knowledge of field(s) you are studying?
- Development of work-related knowledge and skills? (Department of Education and Training 2015)

The very idea that ‘student satisfaction’ is a useful proxy for assessing the quality and the experience of challenging education and the effort required to grapple with seriously complex ideas or intellectual practices is deeply problematic. It overlooks the very real possibility that students do need the challenge of putting time and effort into practising and mastering

things like reading and writing accurately and critically or applying sophisticated mathematical or statistical techniques to problem-solving. This means they need to be introduced to and experience various kinds of intellectual practices and then challenged to experience the intensity of acquiring certain skills, engaging with the demands of understanding seriously complex ideas or procedures, developing certain insights about their world, and engaging in problem-solving. Such an engagement does not require nor should it always be about promoting or ‘measuring’ ‘customer satisfaction’. Just as you can buy a gym membership but cannot buy ergonomic fitness, increased muscular strength, or flexibility without rising to the challenge of actually lifting weights or using a treadmill, so anyone can buy a degree—but you cannot buy the capacity to think well, read a poem by Keats with insight, solve a quadratic equation, or work out the motivations of a given political leader.

This is why Furedi (2011: 5) insists the provision of academic teaching will never conform to the paradigm of consumption. It would become something else if it ever could be commodified and bought and sold. Commodification inexorably leads to standardisation, calculation, and formulaic teaching. It reduces quality into quantity and transforms an academic relationship between teacher and student into a transaction dominated by concerns that have little to do with education. Thankfully academic and research-based knowledge cannot be standardised and pre-packaged consumer goods, which is why the tension between academic life and ‘marketisation’ is ultimately irreconcilable.

That said, however, there is one way modern universities have actually given themselves over to ‘marketisation’: the assiduous practice of branding, self-promotion, and marketing. After all, if there is one original source of make-believe where almost anything can become true if you say it often enough, it is in the advertising industry. And it is here perhaps that the manageriat has come into its own.

MARKETING THE MODERN UNIVERSITY

According to David Harvey (2005) marketisation is a key principle of neo-liberalism, and despite universities offering what Mighall (2009) calls an ‘immaterial product’, they are engaged in activities like branding, self-promotion, and marketing much more intensively than they have been in the past.

A good deal of research and commentary, much of it uncritical and unreflexive, has been done that ‘describes’ the way universities now

market themselves. This includes studies showing how marketing concepts (including advertising practices) have been imported from corporate entities into higher education (Gibbs 2002; Kittle 2000; Edmiston-Strasser 2009; Burns and Hayes 2012). Other works talk up the idea that universities now promote their ‘competitive advantage’ (Mazzarol and Soutar 1999) or protect and promote their image, brand, and reputation (Nguyen and LeBlanc 2001; Westcott et al. 2006). Some of these works treat the student as a ‘consumer’ and education as a ‘commodity’ (Binsardi and Ekwulugo 2003; Molesworth et al. 2010) or discusses how universities now sell ‘products’ (Hesketh and Knight 1999).

Branding the university by crafting mission statements is one of the ways universities now emulate the practices of businesses, where mission statements are traditionally seen as part of the corporate ‘strategic plan’ (Cochrane et al. 1993; Pearce 1982; Pearce and David 1987). Pearce and David (1987: 109) provide the following definition of a ‘mission statement’:

An effective mission statement defines the fundamental, unique purpose that sets a business apart from other firms of its type and identifies the scope of the business’s operations in product and market terms ... It specifies the fundamental reason why an organisation exists.

Mission statements for universities were almost unknown until the late 1980s, but have become near universal in 2016. Perhaps nothing captures the pathos of modern universities as managers set about employing consultants and PR specialists to say what makes their university ‘unique’ or ‘special’, just as nothing expresses the loss of purpose that those charged with running the modern university now display as they attempt to express their claims to purpose and distinctiveness.

The commitment of senior managers to branding becomes ever more a core part of the business of managing a university despite doubt about whether there is a ‘higher-education marketplace’ or any significant competition for students. This is to say nothing of the scepticism on the part of academic staff, who when they might bother to read their university’s mission statement might be alienated by what they find there.

Sauntson and Morrish (2011) did some nice research on the ‘mission statements’ produced by British universities. Almost every British university website refers to a mission statement. They researched all of the available mission statements for UK universities in the Russell Group 1994 Group, and the Million+ group.³

They used ‘corpus linguistic’ analysis of these mission statements.⁴ In terms of self-promotion, the research suggest that most universities relied on often quite abstract kinds of uniqueness. Common to each of the mission groups were words like ‘quality’, ‘excellence’ and ‘vision’, which were somehow magically attached to the ‘products’ available for student ‘consumption’.

Sauntson and Morrish (2011) also found that the frequency of nouns like ‘research’, ‘student,’ ‘learning’, and ‘teaching’ arguably reflects the relative priorities of the three groups of UK universities. The Russell Group privileged ‘research’, the 1994 Group prioritised ‘research and teaching’, and the Million+ group emphasised ‘teaching’. They found that ‘research’ was a frequent item in all groups (most frequent for 1994 Group, second most frequent for Russell Group, and third most frequent for Million+ group). The high ranking of ‘research’ in the 1994 Group suggests that research was a priority. This perhaps reflects this group’s anxiety with foregrounding and enhancing their research profile as part of their overall strategic plans. Clearly, this also applies to Russell Group universities for which ‘research’ is the second-most-frequent noun.

‘Student’ was the second-most-frequent noun for the 1994 and Million+ groups but came fourth on the list for the Russell Group (after ‘university’, ‘research’, and ‘world’). This reflects the greater priority given to teaching in these universities, as opposed to the primary emphasis on research in Russell Group universities.

The high value of ‘knowledge-as-commodity’ was often emphasised by using collocating modifiers such as ‘cutting-edge’, ‘exemplary’, and ‘highest quality’. In the Million+ statements, knowledge collocated more often with ‘skills’ than it does in the other two groups. Recalling Marginson’s big point about the value of status to universities, the study highlighted the way references to the ‘world’ worked as when the Russell Group of universities insisted they were ‘world-leading’: what this actually meant was that they had the status that goes with longevity.

Why do Vice-Chancellors value mission statements? Sauntson and Morrish (2011) suggest that senior managers believe that branding creates status by capturing some indefinable quality of a university which nevertheless constitutes a ‘unique selling point’. Critics like Moore (2003: 331) observe that in the market economies of our time real products like cars or soap powder have less and less intrinsic value:

value inheres in something else, something less tangible: the aura, the simulacrum, the reproduction (as opposed to the original), the brand. The attempt to replace value with symbolic meaning grows out of a sense that production has been transformed, or replaced, by signification.

Branding claims to secure ‘uptake’ of the product, to the extent that Kalia and Bangar (2002) assert that in the twenty-first century, brands have become an indispensable asset of an organisation. However as significations, brands are tremendously fragile and fluid are inherently fragile, which is no doubt why university mission statements, an arm of the branding process, are in a constant state of amendment and change (Morphew and Hartley 2006: 456).

The use of mission statements as part of developing a unique brand is just one part of the much larger process of marketing.

In Britain since 2010, universities have increased their spending on marketing by about a third. This seems to have been a response to the Cameron government’s policy of trebling the fee caps. Spending at the 70 institutions that responded to a *Times Higher Education* Freedom of Information request rose from £26.1 million in the 2010–11 financial or academic year to £31.9 million in 2011–12. This increased again in 2012–13 when spending rose to £36 million. This represents a 22.4 per cent increase (following a 0.1 per cent fall from 2009–10 to 2010–11) and an average spend per institution of £455,461. Spending rose at 53 universities, fell at 14, and was static at 3.

Under the aegis of privatisation, Australian universities have been spending more on marketing: the average total institutional expenditure has risen from \$5.4 million in 2009 to nearly \$6.7 million in 2013 (Favaloro 2015). This average disguises the extent of the practice or the variations. In 2011 Deakin university spent \$14 million, while Swinburne University spent \$13 million (Hil 2015: 15). In 2014 one university (RMIT) increased spending by 24 per cent, or \$4 million, to allocate \$21 million or about 2 per cent of its total income of \$1.08 billion on advertising. In 2014 Victoria’s eight universities spent about \$80 million on advertising and marketing, equivalent to about 1 per cent of their total income, and in line with the previous year’s spending. There is a suspicion that actual spending on marketing could ‘easily’ be double the figures mentioned in the annual reports because the annual reports capture central marketing spending but not necessarily the budgets of faculties, research centres, and other areas or the budget spent on international marketing. Senior managers and Vice-Chancellors are often keen to downplay how much is spent on marketing.

Equally, as Favaloro (2015: 494) points out, while average expenditures on marketing have increased, marketing expenditure per student varies greatly between institutions. Deakin University, for example, is now

spending more than 50 percent less per student on marketing than they did five years ago. Deakin was one of more than a dozen Australian universities to reduce marketing expenditure per student over the five years from 2009. However, between 2009 and 2013 expenditure, Federation University spent nearly 200 percent more per student on advertising and marketing efforts, Australian Catholic University spent 81 percent more, and University of New England spent 77 percent more.

Given widespread suspicions that it is a waste of money that should be spent on teaching and research, does branding and advertising actually work or have any value?

The rationale advanced by the managers of universities for devoting this level of resources to advertising is what might be expected in institutions claiming to operate under the sign of the market. The claim is that universities engage in marketing in a bid to increase revenues by attracting more students, and that effective campaigns boost enrolments and revenues. The evidence suggests as it might be guessed that there is a sizeable gap between delusion and reality.

If recent marketing performance by Australian universities is assessed against the simple measure of student growth, the results are mixed at best. Ten universities that increased marketing expenditures per student the most between 2009 and 2013. Federation University, which has increased its marketing expenditure the most per student, has experienced a decline in total student load by more than 14 percent. La Trobe, Edith Cowan, and Macquarie universities also increased marketing expenditure, but their enrolments have been either static or falling. Only three universities which increased marketing expenditure saw increases in student growth: Australian Catholic University, James Cook University, and the University of Tasmania. The Australian Catholic University, for example, increased its marketing by 81 percent for a 44 percent increase in student numbers, while James Cook University increased expenditures by 30 percent for a 24 percent increase in enrollment. Whether this had anything to do with marketing is, of course, a separate issue: it is acknowledged that factors like expanding on-line facilities, increasing unemployment, or new course introductions might affect any movements in student enrollments (Favloro 2015: 496).

In the United Kingdom in 2013, universities increased their spending on marketing to potential students by nearly a quarter in the run-up to the introduction of higher fees, yet suffered a 7.4 percent fall in student applications. The University of Bedfordshire, which urged students in 2013 to 'Begin, Build, Believe', increased its spending on marketing

for new students by 368 percent between 2010–11 and 2012–13, with just over £900,000 spent in 2014. Applications for undergraduate study at that university in 2013 were down 14.8 percent on the previous year (Clarke 2014). Of the 70 universities providing data, the only institutions to spend nothing on advertising to students in 2011–12 were the universities of Cambridge, Oxford, and St Andrews (Mathews 2013).

Closely related to the expenditure on marketing is the increasing use of recruiting techniques, which again adds to the costs of the privatised university at the expense of teaching and research. Apart from the financial costs there are also a host of moral harms and legal costs.

In 2014 in the United Kingdom 106 higher education providers spent £86.7 million (\$133.7 million) in 2013–14. This is a 16.5 percent increase from the figure two years earlier. Recruiting agents were used to recruit a significant proportion of all non-EU students enrolled at British universities.

It appears that the increase is driven as much by rising commission rates as by expanding recruitment.

Across the 124 institutions that provided information on admissions, the number of international students enrolled using agents totaled 58,257 in 2013–14. This was up 6.4 percent from the 2011–12 figure of 54,752. (As context, the Higher Education Statistics Agency reported that 179,390 non-EU students started courses at all levels of study in the United Kingdom during 2013–14. The average agent fee paid per student in 2013–14 was £1,767 (\$2,725). That left substantial income for institutions, with average overseas undergraduate tuition fees for that year standing at £11,289 (\$17,419) for classroom subjects and £13,425 (\$20,715) for laboratory-based courses.

The biggest spender, according to the responses to *Times Higher Education's* request, was Coventry University, which paid out £10.2 million (\$15.7 million) in commission fees and taxes over the past three years. However, the university included fees paid to progression partners, such as providers of pre-degree courses, in its response.

The biggest spender that provided answers for spending on recruitment agents alone was the University of Bedfordshire, which spent £9.5 million (\$14.7 million). Universities that said they did not use agents included some of the Britain's most selective, such as the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and Imperial College London

In Australia privatised universities are paying more than an estimated \$250 million each year to unregulated agents for the recruitment of

international students, despite widespread acknowledgement that a number of these agents are corrupt and deal in fraudulent documents. The commissions paid by universities, which in just the past four years may have totaled more than \$1 billion of public funds, are often not disclosed. The number of fee-paying international students at universities in NSW has increased 13-fold since 1988. With around 17 per cent of university operating revenues coming from international student fees, profits from the international student industry have become central to the budgets of universities. Some universities are using up to 300 local intermediaries or agents to market to and recruit students, resulting in major due diligence and control problems. In 2015, the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) issued a report (*Learning the Hard Way*), which raised difficult questions about the probity of universities dealings with international students. These issues include everything from the use of fraudulent documents to concerns about the academic integrity of the curriculum like ‘soft marking’ of international full-fee-paying students.

There is evidence that some major education agents in China, representing many of Australia’s most prestigious universities (including Sydney, Melbourne, and the Australian National University), are colluding in the submission of fraudulent student applications. Some universities in New South Wales were dealing with countries where document fraud and cheating on English-language proficiency tests was common. The report said universities had prioritised revenue over the protection of the quality and reputation of their degrees, and that their offshore businesses were driving the downward trend.

The director of the international student office at one university in New South Wales indicated they were actively pushing into markets in India where ‘document fraud is a known and serious problem,’ the report said.

For almost 30 years, they have experienced problems such as fake qualifications, questionable agent behaviour, visa-driven enrolments, nepotism in offshore campuses, loss of intellectual property to partners, unwitting involvement in offshore bribery, cheating and plagiarism, academics exploiting students and students offering inducements to students.

CONCLUSION

Those who exercise administrative roles and tasks undertake a vital and valuable function in any university. People responsible for the finances, the appointment of personnel, carrying out legal due diligence tasks, managing facilities, and looking after the technology—whether this meant keeping the quill pens sharp or updating the software services—have always had an honored role since the birth of the modern university. The question explored in this book is not their necessity but the current scale, authority, and ethos of modern managers.

To be clear, what we see now includes a combination of the effects of several decades of spending cuts by governments and the development of a new managerial ethos inside the universities. What I have begun to do in this chapter is to suggest as Olssen and Peters (2007: 324) do, that the contemporary managerial advocates of new public management represent universities as if they are working in a competitive market setting. In the neo-liberal policy conceit, universities operate on the ‘as-if’ principle that they are business enterprises competing in a market environment.

It is important to stress that understanding the modern university does not require us to subscribe to a totalitarian logic either in neo-liberalism or the new kind of managerial practices. There are important tensions between neo-liberalism and the technocratic rationalism promoted by the manageriat and between the impulses to let ‘markets determine outcomes’ and the will to power of new public management.

Likewise the modern university has not been rendered mute and thoroughly regulated by an all powerful ‘manageriat’. On the one hand, and notwithstanding the supine dispositions of too many academics, criticism and the challenge of the new remain part of the mainstream ethos of universities. As Marginson suggests ‘intellectual boldness has not been crushed out of the modern university though they may be politically and aesthetically more timid than they have been for a long time (Marginson 2002: 111).

Partly this reflects the fact that the neo-liberal conception of higher education markets and the university as a competitive market-driven institution depends on a fundamental category mistake. It is hardly a surprise to find that managers work as exponents of new public management do so outside the characteristic relationships and forms that actually characterise any capitalist economic market. Despite the economic language or corporate-speak of new public managers, it is a government and manage-

ment control system, rather than a discourse, which is grounded in and reflects an actual market system as such. Under the sign of new public management the operations of universities in Australia and the United Kingdom are determined less by the interaction of supply and demand and more by a combination of compliance with government policies and regulations and compliance with the policies and rules generated internally by university managers. In the contemporary university both the neo-liberal policy imaginary, and the policies, rules, and techniques are all-important. The policy-generated rules and techniques are designed to corporatise universities. They support the employment of entrepreneurial managers with some control over resources. They certainly provide some scope for private income raising and with it enhanced accountability and output-related controls through a combination of national planning, prospective contracts, financial accountability measures, and quality assurance (Marginson 2009a, b: 4)

Corporatisation has in turn encouraged the corporate practice of branding and advertising, where senior or manager and consultants can engage in the delightful, even arousing, practices found in other venues, offering their devotees opportunities for escapism and make-believe.

This is why modern universities have ‘vision’ and ‘mission’ statements, and employ marketing units to craft the university ‘brand’ and design advertising campaigns. In many universities in Australia, for example, managers routinely engage in SWOT analysis (involving the modelling of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). Vice-Chancellors talk about ‘market share’, product diversification, leveraging of reputation, and ‘risk-taking’. In consequence the managers also believe that they recruit customers; set prices and revenues; pursue ‘bottom-lines’; set key performance indicators; provide efficiency incentives; deal with ‘stakeholders’ (understood to be proxy for ‘real’ shareholders and business partners); sign contracts; and maintain a range of accountability, audit, and quality assurance mechanisms (including customer satisfaction surveys called ‘course evaluation surveys’ (Power 1997; Strathern 1997)).

What is actually happening in the modern university is somewhat different. To pursue the delusion that universities work in an education market understood as ‘an input–output system which can be reduced to an economic production function’, real changes have had to be made to the way universities work.

One is a new insistence on ‘flexibility’, involving the increased use of outsourcing and cheap, casualised or contract labour. New public man-

agement also values clearly defined objectives (both organisational and personal) along with a results orientation (achieved by increased use of measurement of key performance indicators [KPI] operating with enhanced managerial responsibility for achieving these key performance indicators). What this has meant can be identified quickly.

We see increasing standardisation and instrumentalisation of the curriculum, which in some universities has meant adopting elements of the ‘McDonaldisation’ model (Ritzer 2006), including student self-service and a severely reduced menu of curriculum choice. The unconscionable reliance on cheap, part-time or casual teaching staff alongside a no-less-unconscionable reliance on international students, recruited chiefly as a revenue stream, has also encouraged an unwillingness to provide high-quality learning to the ever-increasing numbers of domestic and international students. The relentless imposition of a corporate governance model and its distinctive brand of ethical nihilism and risk-averse behaviours evident in the rise of a ‘culture of audit’ (Strathern 2000) means that many universities have become increasingly unhappy, even fearful places as staff deal with ‘instructions’ issued from above about a wide array of work practices and ‘accountabilities’ that are non-negotiable because they are managed by so-called human resource units. The legitimations offered on behalf of this state of affairs are found in unintelligible strategic plans, supplemented by competitive marketing campaigns touting the unique value of this or that university as it engages in a globally competitive market. There is a nearly complete inability on the part of the senior managers to say what learning is, or why truth matters combined, with an unwillingness to see or to say why higher education remains a fundamental public good (Giroux 2014). That this is happening puts many of the 700 or so universities worldwide, including the Australian universities who signed onto the *Magna Charta Universitatum* (1988), at risk of being accused of hypocrisy—or worse.

For most significantly the new public managers who claim to apply quasi-market or private-sector micro-techniques to the management of public sector organisations have silently displaced a ‘public service ethic’ where people inside the university think in terms of assumptions about the ‘common good’ or ‘public interest’ with a new set of norms and rules. As Olssen and Peters (2007: 324) emphasise, this means ‘notions of ‘professional’, ‘trustee’, or ‘fiduciary duty’ are conceived as ‘principal/agent relationships’. For Olssen and Peters this poses a fundamental question:

When organizations are ruled by new governance arrangements and models, under relations of managerialized accountability, what happens to the presumption of trust that public servants will act in the public good?

To make the case that this has begun to compromise the quality of teaching and research will require a much more detailed account of the effects these policies have had at the institution level than has so far been provided here. This will involve questions like how these policies affect and shape the ethos of universities, including work practices of teaching and research staff, as well as the experience of undergraduate and graduate students.

NOTES

1. Brown (2011:17–18) argues the United States has moved to a ‘somewhat marketised’ system, which he says was possible because many of its elite tertiary institutions had a high degree of autonomy. This means there is something that looks a bit like competition for the same kinds of students in the substantial ‘not-for-profit’ private universities and colleges. This reflects the relatively open meritocratic access as well as the fact that elite institutions can set their tuition fees, which typically represents about half of the cost of teaching: the balance is made up by institutions’ using their own funds together with state appropriations (for public institutions) and donations (for private ones). That said, of course, there are also significant state and institutional subsidies for tuition fees and living costs. Institutions spend a considerable amount of effort on marketing and branding. There is also a lot of federal research money.
2. In the response to the Abbott governments proposals to cut university funds and uncap fees only one Vice-Chancellor (Stephen Parker of the University of Canberra) broke ranks with *Universities Australia*, the peak body representing universities:
I personally will not attend a further meeting of an organisation with *necrotizing fasciitis* ... the condition where the body eats its own flesh ... This [policy] will blight the lives of a generation, unless Australia comes to its senses ... Bizarrely there is no guarantee that a single cent of the extra money will go into the student’s course: it could go into research, infrastructure, paying for past follies or current cock-ups. (Kelly, 2014: 1)
3. The Russell Group are the 20 research-intensive universities, the 1994 Group include 19 smaller research intensive universities, and the Million+ are the post-1992 universities.

4. ‘Corpus linguistics’ involves using a computer-held body of texts and a range of computerised methods to explore aspects of language and language use. Sauntson and Morrish (2011) started with a word-frequency analysis to identify different themes and priorities across the three groups.

REFERENCES

- 1994 Group. (2007). Enhancing the student experience. Available from <http://www.1994group.ac.uk/documents/public/SEPolicyStatement.pdf>
- Alderman, G. (2008a). *Teaching quality assessment: League tables and the decline of academic standards in British Higher Education*. Inaugural Professorial Lecture University of Buckingham, 17 June. Buckingham: University of Buckingham.
- Alderman, G. (2008b). University standards under threat. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/aug/18/bournemouthuniversity.administration>.
- Alderman, G. (2009). Defining and measuring academic standards: A British perspective. *Higher Education Management*, 21(3), 9–21.
- Alderman, G. (2012). Reflections: Change, quality and standards in British higher education. *Journal of Change Management*, 10(3), 2430–2452.
- Bansel, P., & Davies, B. (2010). Through love of what neoliberal-ism puts at risk. In J. Blackmore, M. Brennan, & L. Zippin (Eds.), *Re-positioning university governance and academic work* (pp. 133–145). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Barry, J. (2004). The new public management and higher education: A human cost? In M. Dent, J. Chandler, & J. Barry (Eds.), *Questioning the new public management* (pp. 149–170). Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Binsardi, A., & Ekwulugo, F. (2003). International marketing of British education: Research on the students’ perception and the UK market penetration. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 21, 318–327.
- Bok, D. (2003). *Universities in the marketplace: The commercialization of higher education*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bologna University. (1988). *Magna Charter Universitatum*. Bologna: Bologna University.
- Brown, R. (2011). The march of the market. In N. Molesworth, R. Scullion, & E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketization of higher education and the student as consumer*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Burns, J. A., & Hayes, T. J. (2012). *New strategies in higher education marketing* (Business and education references committee). Canberra: Parliament of Australia.
- Carlen, P. (Ed.). (2008). *Imaginary penalties*. Portland: Willan Publishing
- Clarke, J. (2014). Marketing spend up, but applications fail to follow suit. *Times Higher Education*. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/marketing-spend-up-but-applications-fail-to-follow-suit/2012107.article>

- Craig, R. (2015). *College disrupted: The great unbundling of higher education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Deem, R., & Brehony, K. (2005). Management as ideology: The case of “new managerialism” in higher education. *Oxford Review of Education*, 31(2), 217–235.
- Department of Education. (2013). *Staff: Selected higher education statistics 2013*. Canberra: Department of Education.
- Edmiston-Strasser, D. M. (2009). An examination of integrated marketing communication in U. S. public institutions of higher education. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 19, 142–165.
- Favaloro, C. (2015). Marketing in the Australian higher education sector. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 37(5), 490–506.
- Furedi, F. (2011). Introduction to the marketisation of higher education and the student as consumer. In M. Molesworth, R. Scullion, & E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketisation of higher education and the student as consumer*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Ginsberg, B. (2011). *The fall of the faculty: The rise of the all-administrative university and why it matters*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Graeber, D. (2006, May 26). *Beyond power/knowledge: An exploration of the relation of power, ignorance and stupidity* (Annual Malinowski Lecture). London: London School of Economics.
- Graeber, D. (2015). *The Utopia of rules: On technology, stupidity and the secret joys of bureaucracy*. Brooklyn: Melville House.
- Gray, J. (1984). *Hayek on liberty*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hayek, F. (1944). *The road to serfdom*. London: Routledge/Kegan Paul.
- Hesketh, A. J., & Knight, P. T. (1999). Postgraduates’ choice of programme: Helping universities to market and postgraduates to choose. *Studies in Higher Education*, 24, 151–163.
- Hil, R. (2015). *Selling students short*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Jump, P. (2015, September 3). Academics in the minority at more than two-thirds of UK universities. *Times Higher Education*, <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/academics-minority-more-two-thirds-uk-universities>
- Keashly, L., & Neuman, J. (2010). Faculty experiences with bullying in higher education. Causes, consequences, and management. *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, 32, 48–70.
- Kelly, E. (2014, December 1). University of Canberra’s Stephen Parker slams Universities Australia. *Canberra Times*, <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/university-of-canberras-stephen-parker-slams-universities-australia-20141201-11xyf8.html>
- Kelsey, J. (1998). Privatizing the universities. *Journal of Law and Society*, 25, 51–70.

- Kittle, B. (2000). Institutional advertising in higher education. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 9, 37–52.
- Lewis, D. (1999). Workplace bullying—Interim findings of a study in further and higher education in Wales. *International Journal of Manpower*, 20, 106–119.
- Lewis, D. (2004). Bullying at work: The impact of shame among university and college lecturers. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 32, 281–299.
- Livingstone, S. (2012). Critical reflections on the benefits of ICT in education. *Oxford Review of Education*, 38(1), 9–24.
- Lorenz, C. (2012). If you're so smart, why are you under surveillance? Universities, neoliberalism, and new public management. *Critical Inquiry*, 38(3), 599–629.
- Marcus, J. (2014, February 6). New analysis shows problematic boom in higher ed administrators. *New England Center for Investigative Reporting*, <http://necir.org/2014/02/06/new-analysis-shows-problematic-boom-in-higher-ed-administrators/>
- Marginson, S. (2002). Towards a politics of the enterprise university. In S. Cooper, J. Hinkson, & G. Sharp (Eds.), *Scholars and entrepreneurs: The universities in crisis* (pp. 109–136). Melbourne: Arena.
- Marginson, S. (2009a, January). *National system reform in global context: The case of Australia*. Paper presented to Reforms and consequences in higher education system: An international symposium. National Center of Sciences, Tokyo, http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/people/marginson_docs/CNUFM%20Tokyo%2026%20January%202009.pdf
- Marginson, S. (2009b, August 17). *The limits of market reform in higher education*. Paper presented at Research Institute for Higher Education (RIHE), Hiroshima University, http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/people/marginson_docs/RIHE_17Aug09_paper.pdf
- Mathews D. (2013). University student marketing spend up 22%. *Times Higher Education*, <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/university-student-marketing-spend-up-22/2001356.article>
- Mazzarol, T., & Soutar, G. N. (1999). Sustainable competitive advantage for educational institutions: A suggested model. *The International Journal of Educational Management*, 13, 287–300.
- McCarthy, P., Mayhew, C., Barker, M., & Sheehan, M. (2003). Bullying and occupational violence in tertiary education: Risk factors, perpetrators and prevention. *Journal of Occupational Health and Safety*, 19, 319–326.
- McKay, R., Huberman Arnold, D., Fratzl, J., & Thomas, R. (2008). Workplace bullying in academia: A Canadian study. *Employees Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 20, 77–100.
- Molesworth, M., Scullion, R., & Nixon, E. (Eds.). (2010). *The marketisation of higher education*. London: Routledge.

- Murphy, P. (2013, May). The rise and fall of our bureaucratic universities. *Quadrant*, https://quadrant.org.au/magazine/2013/05/the-rise-and-fall-of-our-bureaucratic-universities/#_ednref4
- Neave, G. (2005). The supermarketed university: Reform, vision and ambiguity in British higher education. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 9, 17–22.
- Nguyen, N., & LeBlanc, G. (2001). Image and reputation of higher education institutions in students' retention decisions. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 15, 303–311.
- Norton, A., & Cherastidtham, I. (2014). *Mapping Australian higher education, 2014–15*. Melbourne: Grattan Institute.
- Norton, A., & Cherastidtham, I. (2015). *The cash Nexus: How teaching funds research in Australian universities* (Grattan Institute Report No. 2015–9). Melbourne: Grattan Institute.
- Parker, M., & Jary, D. (1995). The McUniversity – Organization, management and academic subjectivity. *Organization*, 2, 319–338.
- Readings, B. (1996). *The university in ruins*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Sauntson, H., & Morrish, L. (2011). Vision, values and international excellence: The 'products' that university mission statements sell to students. In N. Molesworth, R. Scullion, & E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketization of higher education and the student as consumer*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Shore, C. (2008). Audit culture and illiberal governance: Universities and the politics of accountability. *Anthropological Theory*, 8(3), 278–298.
- Shore, C. (2010). Beyond the multiversity: Neoliberalism and the rise of the schizophrenic university. *Social Anthropology/Antropologie Sociale*, 18(1), 15–29.
- Strathern, M. (1997). "Improving ratings": Audit in the British university system. *European Review*, 5(3), 305–321.
- Strathern, M. (2000). Introduction: New accountabilities. In M. Strathern (Ed.), *Audit cultures: Anthropological studies in accountability, ethics and the academy*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Twale, D., & De Luca, B. (2008). *Faculty incivility. The rise of the academic bully culture and what to do about it*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Westcott Alessandri, S., Yang, S.-U., & Kinsey, D. F. (2006). An integrative approach to university visual identity and reputation. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 9, 258–270.
- Zabrodoska, K., Linnell, S., Laws, C., & Davies, B. (2011). Bullying as intra-active process in neoliberal universities. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17(8), 709–718.

Teaching in the ‘Marketised’ University

Once upon a time university teachers enjoyed a high level of professional autonomy like the kind of exercised by doctors, architects, lawyers, actuaries, and so forth. In the case of academics this meant they were expected to exercise their professional judgment about such things as the subjects they taught and the knowledge content of those subjects, the style of teaching they employed, and the kinds of assessment they used. This autonomy also went to the kinds and scale of research they did. This idea of academic freedom both shaped and was reproduced in an academic work culture and an organisational ethos defined by collegial governance, which especially in Australia and the United Kingdom meant a mixture of rule by professors and deliberative processes involving boards and committees set up and run by academic staff.

Professional autonomy had some strengths. It worked well enough for a system of higher education that was for much of the twentieth century dominated by white, middle-class men who were not always reflexive about the narrow and elite social character of universities which excluded large numbers and kinds of people. Academic autonomy certainly helped cover up a range of socially exclusionary processes that was indefensible.¹ It was often the case too that the academics who made up the universities were not always as reflexive as they may have been about the way that academics did their teaching and research. This may explain the curiously reactive, even defensive, way academic freedom was largely understood. To adapt one of Isaiah Berlin’s classic formulations, the idea of academic

freedom was framed as a ‘negative freedom’, entailing academics being *free from* interference by governments and being left alone, rather than as a *freedom to* act and a freely chosen responsibility to engage in ‘public scholarship’.

Then something happened. That something included government-sponsored incentives to open up access to universities that began in the 1960s. By the 1980s it included the impact of neo-liberal higher-education policies complemented by the rise of new public management within universities that together caught universities up in a perfect storm. Governments expected dramatic increases in the scale of student enrollments as they also began cutting public funding of universities. Cutting public support created the ‘incentive’ for universities to start charging domestic students fees and recruiting international fee paying students. It also encouraged universities to start thinking about themselves as ‘competitors’ in a global ‘higher-education market’. Governments encouraged this exercise in ‘marketisation’ along with new approaches to university management like vesting increasing authority in a cohort of managers committed to new kinds of management practices that aped the corporate world. This included short-term contracts for senior management positions, bonus payments tied to key performance indicators which were in turn tied to compliance with performance, and ‘quality’ metrics and the like. The emergence of this ‘culture of audit’ and an ethos of compliance silently acknowledged that creating a market for higher education was all make-believe, which needed nonetheless to be taken seriously. In this chapter I ask what has happened to the way academics now teach.

My argument is that academic teaching has been profoundly affected by what I have called ‘market-crazed governance’. I use this term to make sense of the bizarre and complex mess of contradictory goals and systemic contradictions now embedded in both the systems of higher education and in many universities.

Several contradictions stand out. For example, universities are expected to be both ‘efficient’ *and* to ‘deliver’ high-quality teaching. ‘Efficiency’ means employing more and more cheap, short-term, or part-time teachers. The pursuit of ‘quality’ means using metrics of customer satisfaction to demonstrate that ‘excellence’ is being achieved.²

A different but related contradiction is set up when the same idea of quality is set up against the idea that academics ought to pursue ‘student-centred’ or ‘enquiry-based’ learning curriculum models which explicitly downplays any idea that teachers need to know anything much in

particular, or in general, other than 'facilitating' student's learning. This is where the advocacy for on-line technologies to 'deliver education' has achieved a salience given its obvious appeal to managers preoccupied with 'efficiency'. (Unfortunately I cannot deal with this very important aspect of attempts to change the culture of academic practice: I think Neil Selby [2015] has said much of what needs to be said). A third contradiction involves the idea that universities ought to compete with each other (remember, they are in a 'higher-education market') so that students can force the kinds of changes need to improve the quality of learning. However any competition that has occurred tends to be fought out on league ladders as universities compete to climb up the ladder that claim to 'measure' the quality of universities. These rankings rely little, if at all, on whatever teaching quality is supposed to mean, and much more on 'research quality' using proxies like research income or the number and 'peer assessed status' of the journals in which academics publish their research. This kind of competition over research rather than teaching quality has encouraged a form of 'asset stripping' as universities divert funding away from teaching and into research. Finally, we might acknowledge the contradiction between the apparent commitment to a discourse about 'markets', 'freedom', 'innovation', and 'competition' and the tightening stranglehold of rule-bound, often authoritarian, managerial rule. I want to explore some of these contradictions here.

Perhaps the most damaging and insidious effect of 'market-crazed governance' is that it sustains a university in which various kinds of ignorance, especially preferred ignorance, becomes the norm. Like any Ponzi scheme, the modern university literally cannot afford the truth about itself: as Martin Trow (1999) pointed out, no Vice-Chancellor or indeed any senior manager can now afford to tell the truth about what is going on.³

What this looks like can be encapsulated in a short story about something that happened to an experienced academic at a major Australian university in 2013.

A CASE STUDY

At the start of 2013, 'Dr. John Smith' was asked by his-then 'line-manager' to coordinate a large undergraduate social science subject designed for about 380 second-year students.⁴

At this time John had been a university teacher for some decades. He still cared deeply about being a good teacher. The subject itself had been

taught successfully and without incident for many years to second-year students drawn from a number of different degree-level professional programs.

As the ‘coordinator’ he was to design the curriculum and teach a one-hour lecture (which would be repeated twice a week to accommodate the large numbers of students). Before the course started, the curriculum which he designed was vetted by his ‘line-manager’. That person’s expertise was in another field. John was also told there was a textbook which had already been selected and ordered for the university bookshop. (When John got around to reading it a week or so later, he said he couldn’t believe that such a badly written, confusing, and boring book had ever been published, let alone selected for the class.) The coordination tasks also included working with a senior tutor called ‘Sue Brown’. She was the only other full-time teacher. She was both highly skilled and experienced. Together they were to ‘manage’ a small team of eight sessional, that is, low-paid teachers employed on an hourly basis. John recalled that these were all ‘nice people’ but they lacked both teaching training and a higher degree, though some had a degree of teaching experience. However, from a senior manager’s point of view, they were ideal: in 2013 the effective rate of pay for these staff was between \$33.20 and \$39.00 per hour.⁵

The casual staff were to teach the smaller two-hour classes (of around 20–25 students each). John and Sue went to some trouble to allocate the casual staff to teach the various student cohorts, ensuring that the various professional groups were taught in workshops run just for those students. After talking it over with some of the casual teachers, John and Sue, both still committed to an idea of ‘deep learning’ as outlined by Ramsden (1992), decided to rely on a series of short, research-based essays for the assessment.

John was told before the semester started that a new cohort of students from another professional degree program who had not previously been enrolled in this course would be taking this subject for the first time. Staff in that degree program and the school’s managers believed this degree program was an ‘elite program’: they said it was attracting top-quality students who were high achievers with high tertiary entrance scores, while the teaching staff were getting outstanding scores for ‘Good Teaching’ in the Course Evaluation Surveys (based on the highly authoritative Course Evaluation Questionnaire (Ramsden 1991) filled out by students and used in the university as a ‘measure’ of good teaching.

From the first weeks of teaching John said that it became clear that a majority of the students from the new degree program were experiencing and expressing a significant level of difficulty, even distress, when asked to engage in any activities involving basic reading, writing, and thinking abilities. Students from the other degree programs did not exhibit these signs of stress and seemed to be enjoying the lectures and smaller classes very much. From the first weeks the sessional staff teaching the new cohort of students made a sustained effort to help them to meet the learning objectives of the subject. A number of changes were also made on the run in the first weeks following discussion with the School's Director of Learning and Teaching to address the problems experienced by the new group of students who were clearly struggling to meet the expectations of the subject. Staff also offered special extra classes to provide additional support to the new students.

The first assessment activity, submitted in mid-semester at week, required students to research, write and submit a research paper. When these papers were read, they revealed that the new groups of students were exhibiting a range of problems, including substantial levels of plagiarism, a basic inability to summarise arguments encountered in their reading, an inability to write simply and accurately, and a good deal of trouble in demonstrating beginning-level critical skills. These problems were way out of line with the performance of all the other cohorts of students. The new students did poorly, and around 60 percent were failed, far in excess of the fail rate for all other student groups.

John reported that 'all hell broke loose, when these students got their results back'. There were angry confrontations in some of the classes, with allegations that the teaching staff were being 'unfair' and 'unprofessional'. Spokespeople for the new cohort of students pointed out that most of them had been getting High Distinctions (i.e., 80 %+) in their first-year classes.

At the end of the first semester—and after a lot of moderation of samples of student work and very careful consideration—John, Sue, and the staff failed a approximately 40 percent of the new students enrolled in the subject, a fail rate far in excess of that for the other student cohorts. This reflected their judgment that the new students had failed to meet the agreed-on learning objectives of the subject, which had been spelled out repeatedly and clearly and used as a framework for a lot of the work in the small classes. John indicated that the other staff in the course expressed the view that this result could have been worse if the sessional staff weren't

already feeling the ‘political’ heat being generated: an ‘unconscious decision’ seems to have been taken not to fail as many people as the actual quality of work being submitted might have indicated was appropriate.

Some of the students affected, realising the extent of the difficulties they faced, then initiated an increasingly highly mobilised, bitter, and sometimes vicious campaign. This included letters of complaint to the Vice-Chancellor, the lodging of numerous appeals about the ‘unfair’ basis of the academic grades being given out, and—perhaps most crucially—the use of the Course Evaluation Survey process to attack sessional staff in often highly personalised and offensive ways. (Oddly enough, it seems that most of these students enjoyed the lectures.) Some also took to using Facebook to make quite public attacks of what seemed like a deeply defamatory nature on some of the sessional staff. (John said he had seen some documentary evidence that some of this mobilisation involved several of the staff who taught the new cohort of students.) The use of the Course Evaluation Survey process to attack sessional staff was so disturbing that the Director of Learning and Teaching offered by way of a collective email to provide counselling to those staff targeted in this campaign.

By now says John, it had become apparent that many of these students believed they had been performing at a high level of accomplishment in their degree-program subjects, and they couldn’t believe that the high fail levels in this subject reflected fairly on their ability. John carried out an analysis of the student records data and established that indeed between 60 percent and 90 percent+ of these students had been getting High Distinctions (i.e., 80 percent+) and/or Distinctions (70 percent+) in their first-year subjects. The difficulty was that the level of accomplishment this implied was not evidenced by their ability to demonstrate basic reading, writing, and thinking skills in the subject. Further inquiry established that these students were not used to being asked to read widely or critically, to do research, or to think for themselves. It turned out that they were used to teachers running three-hour lectures followed by a series of tests involving short-answer and multiple-choice questions. This in a university which officially espoused a commitment to ‘student-centred learning’: John indicated that this university mostly still relies on lectures, some small classes, and lots of tests and examinations.

Close scrutiny of enrollment data also showed that the high ATAR scores said to underpin claims about the ‘superior abilities’ of the students enrolled in the course was more an artefact of the large numbers of students coming from Technical and Further Education colleges that offer

two- and three-year diplomas to students who were being enrolled via Pathways agreements with the university. This meant that only a small number of secondary-school students needed to be recruited who indeed could have had higher-than-normal ATAR scores coming in. A further problem was that there were many students with a TAFE diploma course getting advanced standing equivalent to half of their degree who had arrived in John's second-year course believing they had the knowledge, skills, and ability which had got them a TAFE diploma when their actual levels of literacy, thinking, and writing ability were not well developed at all.

As John said, it was not surprising, therefore, that this group of students were incensed that their abilities were not being acknowledged or that they were insisting that the 'real' problem was the 'incompetence', or 'lack of professionalism' or other deficits allegedly being displayed by the staff teaching the subject.

As might be expected, this situation soon came quickly enough to the attention of senior managers in the school. The result was a minor example of 'market-crazed governance' involving policy-making on the run: that is, doing everything to placate the customers and ignoring any recognition of academic authority in favour of a management-driven 'fix'.

On August 14, 2013, senior managers in both the faculty to which John Smith's school belonged, and the university, decided 'after lengthy discussions', presumably with each other, to allow all the new cohort of students, and *only those students*, in the subject who had been failed, to resubmit their work for a 'supplementary assessment'. This privilege was not given to any other student who had been failed. This decision was communicated to these students on August 21st. There was no consultation with John as the subject coordinator: the 'reason' offered for this lapse of common courtesy was that he 'had not been available'. This was a deeply puzzling proposition given, as John said, that he was teaching several subjects at the time and was on campus every day.

Only two reasons would ever be given for the decision taken by the group of managers. One reason given—verbally—by a faculty representative was that the mega-faculty was 'worried' about the large number of appeals or complaints. This person further said the faculty 'wanted to make this problem go away' by this decision. Yet it was also acknowledged by this person that the decision was unlikely to work, unless, by some miracle, the students were able to improve their work to such an extent that they would achieve a passing standard. This, it should be added, was correct: the pass rate did *not* improve dramatically.

The second reason was that the Dean of his School said he was ‘worried’ that if the students took the matter to a legal tribunal like a Civil Administrative Tribunal (or worse sought a court injunction), then the school might be judged to have failed in its ‘duty of care’ by preparing the new students adequately for success in their second year of studies. The Dean argued that it was therefore important to protect the school’s public reputation for offering a ‘high-profile’, and in the eyes of ‘the university’ a very successful degree program.

John said that he read this as a coded way of saying that the Dean (and the ‘university’) accepted that there was a serious problem with the way the teachers had failed to develop the intellectual and academic abilities of the new cohort of students in the previous year. Equally, they did not want this problem revealed: their anxiety about the large number of student appeals reflected a worry that the matter might spill out into the media, especially if students took legal action. This fear of publicity, John said, pointed to an anxiety senior university managers have about damaging the ‘brand’ of the university, should a matter like this ever become a matter of public discussion let alone broad public interest.

Finally, a promise was made in at least one formal meeting that the real problem, namely, the assessment practices of the professional degree program that had lead students to believe they were elite students, would be subjected to a review by an academic from another university. This review was subsequently carried out. That report confirmed that the grading of those students in their first-year subjects had been anomalous. Late in 2015, John said it was quite unclear whether anything had been done to rectify the approach to assessment that favoured the widespread use of ‘High Distinction’ grades.

How common is the ‘presenting’ problem involved here: that is, fixing what appear to be unacceptable levels of ‘fail’ grades? Other Australian academics I have interviewed have similar stories. A senior lecturer at another major university told me what happened to him as the subject coordinator of a business-law class with over 2,000 students. He co-taught this huge class with a small army of casual staff, doing the face-to-face teaching in ‘small’ classes. The majority of the students were international fee-paying students with significant English-language difficulties. At the end of semester he and teaching staff failed some 40 percent of the students. As the subject coordinator, he was told by his Head of Department that this fail rate was unacceptable. On this occasion the senior teacher refused to amend the fail rate because as he told the Head of Department, he had

both a legal and a moral obligation to uphold professional standards. He was replaced the next day with a more compliant academic who duly ‘corrected’ the grades to produce a more acceptable ‘fail’ rate.

At my university we also now have a *pro forma* that academics are required to fill out at the end of the semester after we have finished our assessment and grading activities that asks us to identify ‘risks’. Among those risks is the circumstance where we have failed more than 10 percent of students in the subject. There is no hint (of course!) that this is a mandatory policy or a rule to be obeyed: we are simply being told that to fail more than 10 percent of our students is a ‘risk’. In the age of the nudge, a wink is as good as a nod (Sunstein 2014).

THE MORAL OF THE STORY...

While I make no claim that the case study is representative in some general way of all or even most academics, it does seem nonetheless to highlight some well-documented things that have become increasingly common in many universities in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Those common factors include big classes; the ever-increasing reliance on cheap, casualised (and often unskilled) teaching staff; along with the use of ‘mass production’ techniques like three hour lectures, on-line ‘delivery’ of resources, and assessment processes like short-answer tests.⁶ We also see the role played in this setting by the extensive use of customer satisfaction surveys—typically referred to as student feedback instruments like Australia’s Course Evaluation Surveys and ostensibly designed to ‘measure’ ‘quality’ but arguably used to legitimate a problematic situation—which points to the evolution of a ‘culture of audit’ in our universities.

These specific aspects are linked to equally well documented general developments that have shaped the history of universities in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia over the last three or so decades. All three countries have seen major cuts in public funding. This has led to increased interest in interest designed to establish whether this has meant any significant, steady erosion in academic authority and autonomy or any significant decline in the quality of the educational experience.

In what follows my focus is on how academics experience the university. I argue that many universities are prone to what I call ‘market-crazed governance’. By this I mean that universities and the staff who work in them are being asked by governments and local managers to pursue contradictory or incoherent objectives or to do things that simply don’t add

up. For example, universities are expected to be efficient *and* to provide high-quality education. It may even be that some managers believe the contradiction between these two objectives will somehow be resolved by treating students as customers, because a customer-centric approach will mean that universities will improve the ‘relevance’ and ‘quality’ of what they teach over time. Certainly, as I show here, the ‘customer focus’ warrants the use of ‘student-centred’ or ‘enquiry-based’ learning models which are more concerned about letting students work out what they want to learn and less and less about what students actually learn, know, or can do. This model conveniently legitimises the increased use of casual, cheap teaching labour because under the sign of student-centred learning, teachers do not need to be ‘knowledge experts’: all they have to do is ‘facilitate’ student learning. And yet universities are being expected to deliver high-quality employable graduates to prospective employers.

Something insidious is happening when university teachers decide not to expose students to challenging reading or demand less and less hard work or intellectual effort because that may result in bad numbers on the customer satisfaction surveys which are used to demonstrate that the university is delivering high-quality learning (Massy 2003). This is a central contradiction which cannot be explained away.

I then turn to the way universities are now managed by a cadre of administrators and their on-line systems to carry out the surveillance of staff and ensure their compliance with policies and procedures. In such a setting, many academic staff experience increased compliance demands, and a few may even have bruising encounters with authoritarian managers. Many will also experience a slow, not always perceptible, loss of autonomy, accompanied by a sense that not much seems to make sense anymore. This may have to do with the new kind of language categories that spill out of the offices of learning and teaching managers. These managers will reassure all who listen that their university offers teaching that is ‘relevant’ to the ‘real world’ (as distinct from?) because their teaching staff belong to ‘communities of practice’ and engage in ‘intentional shared work’; practice ‘team-based teaching’; are committed to ‘capacity building’, ‘engagement’, and ‘embedded practice’; and can demonstrate ‘quality outcomes’ because they measure ‘inputs’, ‘outputs’, and ‘impacts’ (Hil 2015: 139). This all points to a slide into different kinds of ignorance, some of it preferred ignorance, some of it simply sheer ignorance.

Let me start by outlining the way the idea of student-centred learning was introduced and how it works in universities which have embraced the culture of audit.

STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING?

One of the distinctive features of the 'marketised' university and the culture of audit which actually helps to 'drive' it is the emergence of a management-driven discourse that claims to value student learning—especially new kinds of learning which are 'enquiry-based' or 'student-centred'. This approach claims a theoretical grounding in Rogerian client-centred therapy (Rogers 1983) and in constructivist learning theory (Hutchings 2006). Advocacy for 'student-centred' learning began in the 1970s and 1980s against a backdrop of well-grounded concern about traditional university teaching. The advocacy for 'student-centred' learning was the result of academic research and publication by academics, most of them in educational schools concerned to bypass traditional university pedagogy (Kraft 1994; Biggs 2001; Gibbs 2010). There was a clear sense that student-centred learning was a 'progressive' framework employed by forward-thinking academics pitted against the troglodytes engaged in the traditional knowledge-transmission model. Paul Ramsden, for example, argued that 'we are surrounded in the higher education of the late twentieth century by those who ... constrain the fresh, the progressive and the genuinely innovative in teaching' (Ramsden 1993: 95–96). For Ramsden 'progressive education' policies would lead to an increase in student responsibility in learning, through the recognition that different students prefer different learning styles; old-style transmission models could only focus on the 'dissemination of information, the measurement of effects, and the categorisation, reward and punishment of the learners' (Ramsden 1993: 97).

The old transmission tradition of teaching relied on lectures, tutorials, and laboratory practical sessions, while assessment consisted for the most part of examinations supplemented by essays, reports, and the like (Laurillard 2002: 81). This tradition privileged a pedagogy involving the transmission of content based on the idea that students be essentially passive recipients of knowledge. Critics of this approach like Fetherston (2001) pointed to the unspoken assumption behind this approach, namely, that 'delivery of the content results in learning of the material' in a process akin to osmosis. While academics thought that their responsibility was to lay out the knowledge to be transmitted, they were not always confident that this would happen. Instead, they *hoped* students would learn (Phillips and Baudains 2002: 15). As Laurillard suggests, if students failed, it was their fault (Laurillard 2002: 11). As for the reliance on examinations, this

became more an obscure but painful rite of passage than a well-justified assessment of student learning. As Rowntree said, a traditional three-hour examination mostly tested the student's ability to write at 'abnormal speed, under unusual stress, on someone else's topic without reference to his customary sources of information, and with a premium on question spotting, lucky memorisation, and often on readiness to attempt a 'wild guess' at problems that would confound experts' (Rowntree 1987: 135). The reliance on lectures, huge reading lists, and three-hour exams across many disciplines had acquired a well-buffed patina of tradition and authority that could not hide the failure of this approach to give life to a conception of learning as process of wrestling with intellectual problems and puzzles requiring a dynamic relationship between teachers and students.

There was, and still is, a good case for revising this time-honoured pedagogy. Nevertheless, this revision has not happened, perhaps because attempts to encourage academics to embrace it has been very much a management-led process. The irony-cum-tragedy is that in spite of the formal embrace of a discourse about 'student-centred' learning, the transmission model of pedagogy continues unabated, now augmented by the hollow promise of on-line 'delivery' of learning resources. Let me explain how this managerial-driven 'failed revolution' has come about.

The objective of 'student-centred' learning has been to redefine the point and value of traditional teacher-centred pedagogies (Lattas 2009). Enquiry-based learning' or 'student-centred learning' are the preferred terms currently used to describe an approach to teaching and learning based on 'self-directed enquiry or research by the student'. Frey (2007) is not alone in his utopian imagining of a higher-educational future based on student-centred, enquiry-based learning that deploys digital and on-line technologies. (There is also a lot of talk about 'life-long learning'.) Frey says enquiry-based learning involves abolishing the 'sage on stage' model of lecture-based teaching, and introducing a 'student centred learning' model where the student is the active producer of knowledge and where students can even craft or create their own knowledge by drawing on on-line courseware.

The paradigm shift from 'teaching' to 'learning' has been promoted as a shift from *inefficient teaching* (because it is 'time dependent, location dependent, and situation dependent') to *efficient learning* in which students will increasingly access courseware on-line, learn at their own pace and work with teachers who function more as coaches and mentors (Frey 2008). A student-centred approach to teaching and learning is said to enhance students' learning. One department at Sydney University declares typically, for example, that—

In enquiry-based learning, students take on more responsibility for identifying precisely what they need to learn and finding resources which will allow them to fill their knowledge gaps. Enquiry-based learning can begin in first year and progressively help students to develop their research skills as self-directed learners. Students learn to identify and find answers to the questions that they need to ask and the resources that they need to draw upon in solving any given complex (often real-world business problem)[sic]. (University of Sydney 2011)

Constructivism is a large body of research and theory which underpins the concept of 'student-centred learning'. It claims to have broken new ground by ensuring that each university student is put at the centre of the learning process. It rests on the reasonable premise that the question of how students learn had never been properly considered by many university teachers for much of the twentieth century. Less reasonably, because they tend not to adduce relevant evidence, constructivists also claim that the predominance of what can be called the 'academic model' which tended to disdain teaching and favoured a strong preference for the transmission of disciplinary knowledge resulted in largely ineffectual teaching, which in turn explained why so many university students performed badly into the 1980s. Placing the student at the centre of the learning process, it is claimed, will dramatically improve student performance. Research into student learning relies heavily on the use of qualitative, interpretive social science approaches, including phenomenographic research using student surveys and interviews.

Constructivist theory is central to the student-centred learning model. In answer to the question, how do students learn? constructivists hold that students 'construct' their own knowledge in their own unique (student-centred) way. The student is responsible for identifying the content of knowledge and learning method, which must reflect their individual learning needs. One hallmark of the student-centred/constructivist approach is the assumption that the teacher does not need to be an expert in any particular area of knowledge and does not need to actively 'impart' knowledge. Any involvement of mimicry, imitation, program-level imitation (the imitative transmission of ideas and concepts), or emulation in human learning is anathema to the constructivist doctrine.

Under the sign of student-centred learning the teacher is primarily responsible for student attitudes and behaviour rather than for guiding and encouraging students to engage with the subject matter and develop the kinds of understanding that will increase their mastery of

the practices associated with knowledge as a process of inquiry based on problem-solving and testing various claims to knowledge. In a regime of student-centred learning, the only failure possible is that a teacher may not identify the student's preferred learning mode and begins, for example, to assign inappropriate curriculum tasks or assessment items. The constructivist view strongly implies that it is not necessary to have a knowledgeable person teach students. Indeed, constructivists claim that, in all likelihood, direct instruction is a hindrance to student learning—a hindrance because it is 'teacher-centred'. This claim, of course, has more than an 'elective affinity' with the managerial project of replacing full-time, expert teachers with casualised, cheap facilitators. Constructivist teaching is all about facilitating students' 'discovery' of their own 'learning process'. Indeed, in metaphoric terms, the teacher is really a 'learning manager' or 'facilitator' whose job it is to 'manage' the student. The constructivist approach to teaching and learning is also based on the assumption that every student is (a) motivated to learn, (b) is inherently creative enough to discover everything on his or her own, and (c) is inherently capable of succeeding in all domains of intellectual and or professional activity. In the student-centred or enquiry-based learning process, students work so that they can teach themselves.

Given that the older lecture- and examination-based model of university teaching was not always successful, student-centred learning might seem a welcome development. Perhaps that is why many academics have begun use the vocabulary of student-centred learning. As one study in a Queensland University showed, staff in the early 2000s had no 'trouble talking the talk'. Carpenter and Tait (2002) report that the academics they interviewed believed that good teaching was 'best conceptualised through the medium of the learner':

Good teaching is about helping your learners (Assoc. Lecturer, Education). Good teaching results in students learning a lot (Lecturer, Education). To sort of induce in them a desire to learn information for its own sake (Snr. Lecturer, Science). Good teaching practices are ones which enable the learners to learn (Assoc. Prof, Education). Good teaching practice basically has the outcome that students are efficient learners (Lecturer, Law). (Carpenter and Tait 2002: 11)

However, one fundamental problem is that enquiry-based learning or student-centred learning is not really student-centred at all. Apart from

the typical retreat into jargon, where managers seemingly have no trouble issuing documents with titles like, 'Excellence in Learning About Learning in a World-Class University', student-centred learning discourse is not really about student-centred learning at all (Watson 2005, 2008).

Again, a particular kind of ignorance based on delusion and deception has been set loose. This is made clear, for example, when it is claimed, in an all too typical statement:

The starting point for student-centred teaching must be the achieved learning outcomes—good teaching must be achieving learning outcomes which are valued by students, graduates, industry and employers (RMIT 2001).

The discourse and practice of 'student-centred learning' is actually negated by many practices found in the modern university and put in place by managers committed to new public management and its culture of audit. These include the way the quest for efficiency has led to further embedding the older lecture- and examination-based model into modern 'student-centred' learning. Then there is the requirement arising from the 'quality assurance' regime that subject outlines, 'graduate capabilities statements', and all sorts of other curriculum materials be prepared months before any teaching actually takes place, something that again prevents student-centredness from ever being possible. The contradictions here between a highly prescriptive week-by-week outlines of key learning objectives, key learning activities, formative assessment, and all the rest of it, and delivered by lectures *and* the idea of being 'student centred' is extraordinary. This development is a direct consequence of setting up increasingly complex and time-intensive bureaucratic committee-based processes to audit a curriculum before it is even taught.

Even more astonishing is the way 'student-centredness' apparently aligns quite nicely with the roll-out of quality-assurance criteria and ensuring the relevance of curriculum to the needs of industry. What this means is that managers increasingly worry about the design of curriculum so that it passes various tests of relevance as well as meeting both international quality-assurance criteria and the criteria applied by national-quality assurance bodies. Meeting all the needs and interests of 'the stakeholders' (including governments, professional bodies, and employers) who in many universities now are invited to monitor or even approve 'learning objectives', graduate capabilities, graduate attributes, and 'outcomes' is now paramount (as opposed to having individuals with actual knowledge

of the subject matter evaluate the schools' programs). None of this is seen as impinging on or subverting the core idea of student-centred learning. In this way the marriage of knowledge and ignorance is consummated.

However, what happens under the sign of student centredness is even more shocking. When students are treated on the 'as-if' principle that they are consumers, and full-time academic teaching staff are either coerced into adopting a student-centred model or else are displaced by casualised low-paid facilitators of learning, one result is a culture in which teachers and students trade proxy measures of learning and quality. The proxies in question are an artefact of the regulatory mechanisms set up by managers who first define, then 'measure', program 'quality' and 'viability'. (These measures can include measures of student demand like the number of students with good grades from their secondary-schooling experience or high entrance-test scores through to metrics that claim to measure good teaching or simply record 'economic viability' like the level of budget surplus.

The actual culture of practice created by the managers has encouraged or nudged staff to offer students a not-too-demanding curriculum. This has led to teachers opting not to require too much reading, or in some cases any reading, of academic literature. Ironically, especially in the light of the push to promote 'student-centred learning', managerial culture has (re)instated a reliance on lectures, as well as on short multiple-choice and short answer tests, which enable students to get the 'right answer' and so get good grades. In return students record highly favourable customer satisfaction scores. Everyone is a winner. (In the building industry this reciprocity is framed as the 'you scratch my back, I'll scratch your back' principle.)

The fact that many of these students cannot read, write, or think all that well is just what Bent Flyvbjerg (2013) calls 'uncomfortable knowledge' or I would call 'preferred ignorance', something best not disclosed or made public. However, this reciprocity enables senior managers to send out emails like this:

Dear ... Colleagues,

You may have noticed that the Vice Chancellor has distributed the most recent data on student feedback broken down by College and School. We have done very well. Of 23 Schools we ranked number 5 for Good Teaching and sixth for Overall Satisfaction ... A wonderful result, made all the more impressive by being ranked so highly in research. Last year we brought in more than \$4m, ranking us the second highest research income earner in

the University (accounting for 40% of the [faculty] total). Well done to all of you *for a terrific set of numbers* [emphasis added].

A school or program looks to be successful when all of the metrics which an audit culture generates are favourable: like high student entrance numbers, high completion rates, satisfied students who are attractive to employers, and excellent customer satisfaction numbers, apparently signifying 'good teaching' 'quality'.

It is not surprising that a small number of critics of student-centred learning like Latas (2009) suggest that at the very moment when universities are claiming to focus on 'quality teaching' (i.e., student-centred learning) the university managers are doing everything to ensure that 'student-centred learning' never actually happens, while also 'actually engaging in and accelerating the dynamics through which the art of teaching may be lost'. As Latas writes—

In all the flurry of setting up awards for teaching, urging the scholarship of teaching, funding its projects, articulating the philosophy of teaching, the excellence of teaching, pinning it down in plans and guidelines, urging curriculum reform and the adoption of new pedagogies, it is the distinctive essence of teaching that may be missed even repudiated, in its sublation in the discourse of learning without teaching (Latas 2009: 86)

The reference by Latas to the 'art of teaching' acknowledges both the value of an ethic of care and responsibility that animates what is truly and essentially a relationship between a teacher and the student. As I argued in Chap. 2, that relationship involves a heavy responsibility on the teacher's part to help to nurture the student so that, as Ronald Barnett, insists they will want to put themselves out to advance their own learning, be it practical or conceptual. Equally, there is a heavy responsibility on the part of the student to develop the relevant dispositions and qualities. It is that reciprocity which is endangered by moves to change the relationship to emphasise ease and mutual benefits. (Parenthetically, the current enthusiasm by university human resource managers for the idea that teachers ought to be 'passionate' involves amnesia about the original idea of passion as that kind of suffering you were prepared to put up with to advance the things you care about most.)

What this actually translates into is suggested in one United Kingdom research survey, which suggests that almost half of academics surveyed

have experienced pressure in the last three years to ‘enhance’ student grades or stop students from failing. In the *Guardian* survey of university staff, some 46 percent of academics said they have been ‘pressurised’ to mark students’ work more favorably, according to a survey hosted on the *Guardian*’s Higher Education Network (Shaw and Ratcliffe 2012). Another 37 percent did not believe teaching was valued by their institution (Shaw and Ratcliffe (2012)).⁷

There are now also a number of cases on the public record of managers meddling with, disciplining, or even standing down academics who refuse to toe the line and produce ‘acceptable’ pass rates. Alderman and Brown (2008) report on cases like a head of department at one pre-1992 university being leaned on to ‘revisit’ grades he had given because his students had complained. When he refused to do so, the grades were referred to a learning and teaching committee. At another—an institution belonging to the elite Russell Group—the internal examiners were pressed to increase the pass rate for a particular degree program but in such a way that the externals would not have known that this had happened. At a third, an ex-polytechnic, when two internal examiners resisted pressure to raise the grades of some obviously illiterate postgraduate students, the scripts were sent to ‘another campus’ for remarking.

We know even more about one case involving Professor Paul Buckland because an independent industrial tribunal investigated and reported on the case at length. In the summer of 2006, Paul Buckland, a Professor of Environmental Archaeology at Bournemouth University, graded an examination paper (Alderman 2008a) that 18 students failed. A compensatory examination took place on August 29th. Again, the papers were graded in the normal way, first by Buckland and then as required by policy by a second internal examiner. Of 16 candidates, 14 were deemed to have failed the second examination. On September 7th, a board of examiners, chaired by a pro-Vice-Chancellor of the university, ‘checked and confirmed’ the grades. Out of a total of about 60 students, 14 had failed.

At this stage the employment tribunal concluded that the program leader for the archaeology degree interfered with the exam-marking process. The tribunal found that he had taken ‘possession of the resit exam papers and re-marked them’. At paragraph 98 of its report the tribunal stated that the program leader ‘should not have done what he did; he simply had no business intermeddling in the marking’ ‘What is more, this re-marking did not have the prior sanction of the chair of the board of examiners. Nonetheless, the secretary to the board appears to have arranged for the

regarded scripts, to be scrutinised by a second academic. Although initially acquiescing to this strange procedure, Professor Buckland subsequently objected, arguing that the proper way to proceed would have been to refer the examination papers to the relevant external examiner. This did not happen. Instead, as a result of the aberrant procedure, a number of students were moved from an outright fail to a borderline position, permitting them be 'passed' if marks for other subjects were high enough. The net result was that students who originally failed, and whose failures had been endorsed first by the external examiner and then by the board of examiners, were told that they had passed. Early in 2007 Buckland resigned.

An employment tribunal subsequently found that the resignation of Buckland at Bournemouth University amounted to 'unfair dismissal', because his resignation had been triggered by the deliberate undermining of his academic authority in relation to the university's assessment process. The tribunal concluded this conduct was so serious as to amount to a repudiatory breach of his contract.

In the United States the Homberger case stands out as an example of the power of students to wreak havoc by complaining about subjects being too hard (Selingo 2013: 19; Jaschik 2010). Dominique Homberger, a distinguished European-trained zoologist has been a tenured professor at Louisiana State University since 1979. In 2010, she was asked to teach an introductory first-year biology subject. In April 2010, following student complaints about the fail rate for her first test, she was removed from teaching that introductory subject. She had been using a series of multiple-choice quizzes at the beginning of class, partly to give students an attendance incentive and partly to make sure students were doing the reading. She didn't 'bell curve' the grades on the grounds that students needed to demonstrate clear mastery of the subject matter. She had also designed the multiple-choice questions, giving ten possible answers (and not the conventional four), as she didn't want students to rely on guessing. As she said after being removed from teaching, just after running the second test, some students in the course might not have been able to do much better than a D, but every student could have earned a passing grade. Homberger claimed her 'tough approach' was having a positive impact, and that the grades on her second test were much higher. The Dean of the College of Basic Sciences issued a statement after he had removed Homberger from her teaching role in the subject—and without any discussion with her. The Dean said—

The class in question is an entry-level biology class for non-science majors, and, at mid-term, more than 90 percent of the students in Dr. Homberger's class were failing or had dropped the class. The *extreme nature* of the grading raised a concern, and we felt it was important to take some action to ensure that our students receive a rigorous, but fair, education. (Jaschik 2010)[emphasis added]

The Chapter of the American Association of University Professors at Louisiana State University criticised the decision to remove Homberger as 'an attack on academic freedom': 'If you are a non-tenured professor at this university, you have to think very seriously about whether you are going to fail too many students for the administration to tolerate'. The new teacher assigned to replace Homberger gave every student a 25 percent increase in their grade for the first test (Selingo 2013: 19).

Arguably, instances like the Buckland and Homberger cases point to one of the effects of an audit culture gaining hegemony at universities—namely, the chilling effect it has on academics' being willing and able to rely on and make academic judgements about the abilities of their students. What other effects does the audit culture have? Does it actually improve the quality of learning and teaching?

AUDIT CULTURE: 'MEASURING' THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

The new public management story is that, once 'marketised', universities face competition; and this competition will improve 'efficiency' and 'quality'. Since no market or competition actually exists in higher education, the government supplies the incentive to efficiency simply by persistently cutting public funding. Inside the universities the efficiencies are found as we have seen by the simplest of devices: managers start to reduce the reliance on full-time and expensive academics and replace them with cheap, non-permanent teaching staff. As for 'quality', the government imposes new and ever-more-intrusive auditing and accountability systems designed to 'measure quality'. Inside the universities even more extreme redefinition of teaching practices is introduced, including the introduction of 'student-centred learning' and the reliance on students to evaluate the quality of the teaching and learning process. It is perhaps predictable that government policy-makers and regulators and university managers have become preoccupied with 'quality' and 'metrics'.

It is fair to say that since the neo-liberal 'reform' process got under way there have always been concerns that the 'quality' of teaching and learning might be being compromised. In Australia and Britain it can be suggested that both the problem and the solution, that is, more and more auditing for quality, has actually helped to support the continuous undermining of academic authority and autonomy and speed up the generalised decline in the abilities of students.

This, of course, is denied by policy advisors and some researchers (Probert 2015: 15). In Australia Gavin Moodie argues, for example, that there is no evidence that 'the radical expansion of higher education sparked by the Dawkins reforms of the late 1980s' has degraded the quality of student learning. Moodie rightly notes that considering the scope of the problems, even thinking about, let alone getting credible evidence about, what students actually learn means that inevitably we will need to rely to some extent on trust in the 'application of accepted norms':

When those norms are disrupted, trust is undermined until new norms are accepted. If there was a gap in the Dawkins revolution in assuring the quality of higher education, it wasn't in the changes themselves but in measures to build general confidence in the new arrangements (Moodie 2013: 246)

What Moodie doesn't acknowledge are even more important questions: on the basis of what assumptions will we talk about those accepted norms? and, critically, *who* gets to set and monitor those 'accepted norms' about what students learn? There are also quite basic issues about the language of quality now used obsessively but vacuously: what, for example, is the word 'quality' supposed to mean and can 'quality' actually be 'measured'?⁸

In what follows I want to trace out some of the all-too-real effects of the redefinition of authority in the modern university away from academics and in favour of managers, which is signified by the construction of a culture of audit that ostensibly claims to rely on student evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning.

In Australia the preoccupation with assessing and measuring quality began in the late 1980s. As Probert (2015: 17) says, the result was a government-driven exercise to create an elaborate and ever-ramifying regulatory architecture. Lee Dow and Braithwaite (2013: 8) observe that in Australia the federal government's control of funding has driven 'the majority of the strategic forward looking assurance activities and conversations such as the Compacts and the data collection which forms the accountability

for delivering outcomes'. What this has meant in practice over time is that Australian universities have been exposed to an evolving regime of quality assessment (Probert 2015: 18–21). It began as a voluntary process for evaluating progress against objectives set by universities, using ranking in bands and offering financial rewards for top bands (Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) This turned into mandatory processes for 'monitoring and improving quality', judged in terms of how each individual university defined the terms of what counted as success, but no funding (Australian Universities Quality Agency audits). This then turned into compulsory assessment of comparative performance against selected metrics, leading to national institutional rankings and funding by performance bands (Learning and Teaching Performance Fund) between 2006 and 2008. The Learning and Teaching Performance Fund (LTPF), offered \$220 million over three years, awarded in three rounds, and used a range of measures, including student retention and progression, student evaluations, and graduate destination surveys measuring employability of graduates (Probert 2015: 18). Now there is compulsory assessment of the ability of universities to meet defined standards in teaching and learning for the purposes of registration (TEQSA and the Higher Education Standards; Higher Education Academy professional accreditation).

At the same time as Probert (2015: 21) and Hazelkorn (2015) argue that the actual quality-assurance process has been plagued, on the one hand, by the use of 'opaque academic language, making it difficult to understand or compare performance between institutions, especially internationally' and, on the other, by a failure to keep the process of quality assurance free from the effect of promoting the recruitment of international students which introduces profound risks of criminal and educational corruption into university operations: 'the intertwining of compliance and business development' can only erode trust in the integrity of the whole process. This as we have seen is putting it rather mildly.

Another key problem was that many academics remained unpersuaded about the point or value of the development of the quality-assurance regimes. As Thompson-Whiteside (2012: 41) put it, there was 'evidence suggesting that academics view it as a meaningless set of policies driving managerial behaviour'. Even a shrewd observer like Probert (2015: 27) hasn't quite caught the underlying contradiction set loose from the start between the pursuit of quality and efficiency. She notes perhaps too complacently the way 'policy work was also being undertaken to develop comparative performance indicators for the measurement of quality and efficiency in Australian higher education', though she also notes more

sharply how this work reflected 'a rather different but still generic business "production measurement" view' which is what some academics were rightly suspicious of.

In Britain, contemporary concern about the quality of university teaching in universities can be traced to an inaugural professorial lecture given by Geoffrey Alderman at the University of Buckingham in June 2008 (Alderman 2008a, b). Alderman documented the history of 'quality assurance' in UK higher education before commenting on the irony that whilst external quality assurance had become 'more intrusive and directive', there appeared to have been a decline in academic standards. Alderman gave examples of cases where universities appeared to have acted in ways that damaged their own standards. Alderman attributed these to a combination of factors, including the reliance on league tables, the redefinition of students as consumers or customers, and the inadequate level of student preparation or capacity especially among international students.

This led to the government's appointing a Select Committee Report (IUSSC 2009). As Brown (2010: 130) notes, the Select Committee took evidence from more than 100 separate submissions provided by the Department for Business, Innovation, and Skills, the Funding Council, and the sector-wide bodies, as well as a number of universities, organisations and individuals.

Unsurprisingly, the evidence either defended the *status quo*, albeit with caveats, or called for reforms. A number of witnesses gave direct evidence of poor practices: one of those giving evidence of dodgy practice was Walter Cairns, a senior lecturer in law at Manchester Metropolitan University who was subsequently removed from the University's Academic Board, an action for which the Vice-Chancellor very nearly incurred the charge of contempt of Parliament.

The upshot was a classic case of policy-making that also had an effect opposite to that intended, namely, further eroding academic autonomy. On the one hand—and ironically or not—the very thing that should have been acknowledged, namely, management interference with academic judgement which had triggered the Select Committee report, was simply ignored. The protection of academic judgement was *not* listed as one of the cardinal principles set out in paragraph 31 of the consultation document (HEFCE 2009).

On the other hand, the Select Committee decided to further erode the corporate responsibility of universities' for ensuring academic standards by recommending that the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher

Education (QAA) should be reformed and re-established as a quality and standards agency, with the responsibility for maintaining ‘consistent, national standards’ in higher-education institutions in England and for monitoring and reporting on standards. The new QAA would have a duty to safeguard and report on standards: it would also report annually on standards to Parliament. The reformed QAA’s mandate was to include the review of, and reporting on, the quality of teaching in universities and, if and where shortcomings were identified, ensuring that they were reported publicly and addressed by the institution concerned. The Agency should develop its current policy of giving greater attention to institutions’ policies and procedures for improving quality and should produce more guidance and feedback based on its institutional reviews. The Committee also recommended that all English higher-education institutions should have their accreditation to award degrees reviewed no less often than every ten years.

Subsequently, the QAA report (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2009) looked specifically at student workload and contact hours, language requirements, recruitment and admission of international students, the use of external examiners; and assessment. It recommended a review of assessment practices ‘supported by developmental activities aimed at improving the robustness and consistency of assessment and classification practices within and between institutions’ together with clarification and explanation of the reasons for, and meaning of, variation in particular approaches to assessment. It declared that external examining needed to be more transparent and that there should be further discussion at the national level about training and support for external examiners

‘MEASURING’ QUALITY? THE COURSE EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

There are a number of student-response-based teaching-quality evaluation ‘instruments’. In the United Kingdom the National Student Survey (NSS) is administered to students still in their final year of undergraduate studies. In Australia, Ramsden’s (1991) Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) has been used since the early 1990s. Partly because the Course Experience Questionnaire is the most widely referred to in published work I will focus on it here (Stergiou and Airey 2012: 44).

The basic form of the Course Experience Questionnaire was developed for graduates in the United Kingdom. A later version was tested in Australian universities during 1989 by Paul Ramsden and his colleagues (Ramsden 1991, 1992). Its use has evolved over time. Prior to 2002, graduates expressed their degree of agreement or disagreement on a five-point scale with 24 statements about five prescribed facets of their courses:

- quality of teaching;
- clarity of goals and standards;
- nature of the assessment;
- level of the workload; and
- the enhancement of their generic skills.

A final item asked graduates to indicate their overall level of satisfaction with the course on the same five-point scale. After 2002 universities select from a list of ten themes like:—

- quality of teaching;
- enhancement of their generic skills.
- quality of student support; and
- development of graduate qualities.

Since then it has also been developed to assess what goes on in individual subjects.

If we pay some close attention to the way these surveys work we will see that they are not quite what they purport to be. The Good Teaching Score includes five statements which students then respond to using a five point Likert scale to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statements which include:

- The teaching staff of this course motivated me to do my best work.
- The staff put in a lot of time into commenting on my work.
- The staff made a real effort to understand difficulties I might be having with my work.
- The teaching staff normally gave me helpful feedback on how I was going.
- My lecturers were extremely good at explaining things.
- The teaching staff worked hard to make their subjects interesting.

Another of the popular themes include the Generic Skills Scale, which attempts to measure the extent to which university courses or subjects add to the ‘generic skills’ that graduates might be expected to possess.

- The course developed my problem-solving skills.
- The course sharpened my analytic skills.
- The course helped me develop my ability to work as a team member.
- As a result of my course, I feel confident about tackling unfamiliar problems.
- The course improved my skills in written communication.
- My course helped me to develop the ability to plan my own work.

The original version of the Course Experience Questionnaire asked students who had just completed an undergraduate degree program whether they agreed or disagreed with each of 25 statements relating to the quality of the program. It sought to measure their overall satisfaction with the quality of the program and to allow comparisons of the best and worst courses in a particular discipline or field of study, and to provide evidence about what academics needed to be doing to promote good learning outcomes. It was claimed that the Course Experience Questionnaire provided the first comparable data on teaching quality across the higher education sector.

There is a lot of work on the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ), claiming to test its reliability and validity (e.g., Ramsden 1991; Richardson 1994, 2005; Hanbury 2007). In its first Australian national trial, Ramsden (who developed it), claims its scales have been found to have generally satisfactory reliability levels with Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging between 0.71 for the Appropriate Assessment scale, to 0.87 for the Good Teaching scale.

What this gobbledygook translates into is the following: Although ‘reliability’ may be measured in a number of ways, the most commonly accepted measure is internal consistency reliability using Cronbach’s (1951) alpha coefficient. Following ‘classical scaling theory’, a scale will be internally consistent if the items correlate highly with each other – in which case they are also more likely to measure the same homogenous variable (Oppenheim 1992). That is, the questionnaire is deemed to be ‘reliable’ because all of the items correlate with each other. Items that are reliable, that is, items with low error components, are more likely to fulfill these requirements. Since Cronbach’s alpha measure provides an

estimation of the proportion of the total variance that is not due to error, this represents the reliability of the scale.

As for 'validity' which some readers might naively assume has something to do with truth, again the tests for validity only assess 'the strength of internal consistency which if strong indicates that the items measure the same constructs, thus providing supportive evidence of construct validity' (Stergiou and Airey 2012: 46). Further evidence of construct validity can be accomplished 'by demonstrating the existence of relationships with variables that are hypothesised to be outcomes of the focal measure'.

The whole enterprise rests on a mix of non-sequiturs, unwarranted assumptions, and a lot of methodological sophistication likely to baffle any lay person. Firstly and to be clear, there is no agreement about what good university teaching looks like, nor is there any agreement that the items on the Good Teaching scale actually reflect some agreed-on account of what good teachers do or achieve. It is a question to be asked how did Ramsden arrive at his items? Then there is the assumption that students are best placed to evaluate teaching quality. Most of us might have thought that we might start by asking a team of experienced academic peers to first establish by deliberative means some agreement about what they think defines good teaching and do so in ways that takes account of specific disciplines (from instrumental performance practice, sociology, accountancy, clinical medicine, architecture, philosophy or whatever). One version of what they might agree on is offered by Bain (2004). This group might then go and audit and assess all of the elements of a teaching practice, including written curriculum documents, actual teaching performances, and student work (of any kind and form) submitted for assessment. Instead the CEQ assumes that students who have little experience and don't know very much are nonetheless both able to and should have the responsibility for assessing it using the level of their personal 'satisfaction' identified by five items.

Because there is no assessment against anything real (like curriculum documents, actual teaching performances, and student work (of any kind and form) submitted for assessment deploying agreed-on criteria, assessing the value of the CEQ depends on a weird 'magical' practice using 'tests of reliability and validity' to determine the extent to which responses to the various items 'are internally consistent'. That is, if the items correlate highly with each other, the assumption is that they are 'measuring the same homogenous variable'. This is all high-grade nonsense.

Then there is the question, how does the CEQ align with student-centred learning? The answer is not at all. Mostly it seems to assume that

teachers are relying on an academic transmission model. This is suggested by CEQ items like—

- My lecturers were extremely good at explaining things.
- The teaching staff worked hard to make their subjects interesting.

There is no conception of the account of knowledge outlined in Chap. 2 and the idea that the job of teachers is to help student to explore with growing confidence and ability the provisional nature of knowledge and developing the ability to engage the kinds of problems which knowledge always poses. There is no sense, as Ken Bain (2004: 12) suggests, that really good university teachers need to be experienced guides who understand the fundamental principles of their knowledge and practice, can think about their own thinking, and can call on organising concepts that others can ‘see’ and think with. Above all, good teachers know how to simplify and clarify complex issues, techniques, and ideas by cutting to the heart of the matter with provocative insights and challenging questions that engage students. But then, the Course Evaluation Questionnaire has little elective affinity with such a conception of knowledge or teaching. It really is far better attuned to the kinds of teaching practices sanctioned by ‘market-crazed governance’ that actually characterises too many of our universities.

WHAT IS ACTUALLY HAPPENING?

Apart from the impact of the union of student-centred learning and a culture of audit on the capacity of academics to exercise academic judgement, there is also emerging evidence that the shift to student-centred learning in the modern university and the use of metrics like the Course Evaluation Questionnaire is either masking or contributing to a significant decline in basic intellectual abilities on the part of a majority of students. Given the absence of relevant contemporary data for Australian universities (Coates 2009), the American experience and the evidence being gathered by US researchers will have to stand in.

Arum and Ropska (2011) provide a rigorous yet nuanced empirical study of the consequences for student learning of the decades of cultural and organisational change which US universities have experienced since the 1980s. Their study is designed to ask a simple question: how much do students learn in the United States’ four-year colleges and universities?

To answer this question, this they have studied some 2,322 students using a range of internal assessment practices as well as the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) test. It was launched in 2000 by the Council for Aid to Education, a national non-profit organisation based in New York City. Rather than testing for specific content knowledge gained in particular courses or majors, the intent was to assess 'the collective and cumulative result of what takes place or does not take place over the four to six years of undergraduate education in and out of the classroom'. In effect the CLA is a 'value-added' model standardised test designed to assess the contribution a university makes to the intellectual development of a student. It assesses critical thinking, analytic reasoning, and problem solving and uses a range of open-ended questions over a 90-minute test. A typical example looks like this—

One task asks students to generate a memo advising an employer about the desirability of purchasing a type of airplane that has recently crashed. Students are informed: 'You are the assistant to Pat Williams, the president of DynaTech, a company that makes precision electronic instruments and navigational equipment. Sally Evans, a member of DynaTech's sales force, recommended that DynaTech buy a small private plane (a SwiftAir 235) that she and other members of the sales force could use to visit customers. Pat was about to approve the purchase when there was an accident involving a SwiftAir 235.' Students are provided with the following set of documents for this activity: newspaper articles about the accident, a federal accident report on in-flight breakups in single-engine planes, Pat Williams's e-mail to her assistant, and Sally Evans's e-mail to Pat Williams, charts on SwiftAir's performance characteristics, an article from *Amateur Pilot* magazine comparing SwiftAir 235 to similar planes, and pictures and descriptions of SwiftAir models 180 and 235. Students are then instructed to 'prepare a memo that addresses several questions, including what data support or refute the claim that the type of wing on the SwiftAir 235 leads to more in-flight breakups, what other factors might have contributed to the accident and should be taken into account, and your overall recommendation about whether or not DynaTech should purchase the plane'.

Arum and Ropska acknowledge that the Collegiate Learning Assessment task has been criticised for its capacity to highlight individual abilities reliably, but there seems to be agreement that it works to highlight institutional failings.⁹ With that caveat in mind, they suggest that the answer to the question, what do students learn? is, Not much (Arum and Ropska

2011: 34). They report that 45 percent of students showed no significant gain in ‘critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills’ during their first two years in college (Arum and Ropska 2011: 36). The evidence suggests that students learn little if anything, remain functionally illiterate, and generally refuse to use their time in universities to read think or learn how to write. They show too how persistent social, ethnic, and economic inequalities are proving resistant to the policy imperative which declares that by expanding access to higher education social equality will be enhanced. They conclude that too many undergraduate students are ‘academically adrift’ and that a pattern of limited learning is prevalent in contemporary American universities.

Pointing out that the evidence suggests that half of college students do not improve on important skills that they should gain in their first years in college, they then connect this problem to what they call a ‘lack of academic rigor’ at many universities.

They define ‘lack of academic rigor’ to include factors like the increasing reliance on casualised teaching staff and roll-out of a student-centred model. They present data from student surveys showing, for example, that 32 percent of students each semester did not take any subjects with more than 40 pages of reading assigned a week, and that half of the sample did not take a single subject requiring them to write more than 20 pages over the semester. Arum and Ropska also report that the students they studied spent, on average, only about 12–14 hours a week studying, and that much of this time was spent in group study. When they engage in a more nuanced way, they report a direct relationship between different styles of teaching and studying and whether students learned more or less. For example, students who studied by themselves for more hours each week gained more knowledge—while those who spent more time studying in groups saw diminishing gains. On the other hand, students whose teachers had high expectations (like reading more than 40 pages of text a week and writing more than 20 pages a semester) gained more than other students. Arum and Ropska also stress that there is both significant variation between and within institutions, with students in some academic programs regularly outperforming others at the same university. Arum and Ropska pointed to differences arising from disciplinary traditions. Students studying liberal arts subjects often experienced ‘significantly higher gains in critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills over time than students in other fields of study [like business, education, social work and communications], who showed the smallest gains’.

Finally, Arum and Ropska point to the effects of the pursuit of efficiency, like the reliance on casual, cheap teaching staff in conjunction with larger and larger classes. They report that many university teachers report that increases in class size and course loads are leading them to cut down on the expectations about student assessments like writing essays or reports simply to deal with the increased work load associated with grading.

Finally, and this again points to another dimension of 'market-crazed governance', we see evidence of other contradictions in modern universities. There is emerging evidence, for example, that for all of the talk about giving more weight to teaching, university management, aided and abetted by government policy-makers, are dramatically reducing investment in teaching and learning and increasing investment in research. This has some odd effects on the way academics now work and experience their work.

ACADEMIC WORK IN THE 'MARKETISED' UNIVERSITY

The first odd effect is the disjunction created between talking up the value and importance of quality teaching while actually dis-investing in it. In the United Kingdom the Cameron government savagely cut public funding to universities in 2010. In April 2013 the Australian government also announced plans to slash a further \$2.3 billion from its \$12.9 billion grant to universities. This opens up an important question: How much of their resources are modern universities actually devoting to support teaching? Implicit in this question is, How much do universities really value teaching versus research?

The answer would seem to be not very much. On the one hand and using appropriate metrics, Murphy (2013) reports that Australian universities dramatically increased 'teaching productivity'. This productivity doubled between 1965 and 2011, rising from 12 'full time student units' per academic in 1965 to 18 in 1991 to 25 in 2011. That meant a rise in the number of students an 'academic' taught from 96 to 144 to 200. Few industries, especially labour-intensive ones, could boast this increase in productivity. It was achieved in a number of ways, chiefly by relying on larger classes and the extensive use of casual and or contract teachers (Murphy 2013: 44).

In 2013 Australia's universities employed just under 116,000 people on a permanent or fixed-term contract basis in 2013. Of these, 51,400 had academic job classifications and 64,400 had non-academic job classifications.

These statistics do not include casually employed staff. Department of Education (2013: Table 2.2). While the total number of university employees has increased steadily since the late 1990s, student numbers have grown more quickly, leading to more students per staff member. In 2010 an estimated 67,000 people were employed as casual academics. That is to say, more than half of all teachers are employed casually. This is almost certainly an underestimate. It suggests a clear preference to dis-invest in teaching.

In America casualised teachers now do the work which used to be done by full-time staff. Back in 1969, almost 80 percent of college faculty members were tenured or on tenure track. By 2015 the numbers had essentially flipped, with two-thirds of faculty now non-tenured and half of those working only part-time, often with several different teaching jobs. This is something that modern universities refuse or fail to acknowledge: it doesn't align well with the glossy brochure-speak in their corporate advertising. It is also something of a public-policy scandal. No one in their right mind would go to a hospital staffed predominantly by low-paid, third-year medical students or seek financial advice from someone without appropriate education and professional experience. If there is one thing students, parents, and the community at large ought to be indignant about, it is this. The point is not to direct outrage at the casualised workforce. That outrage is better directed at those people who really ought to know better and who have allowed and encouraged this dramatic redefinition of the point and purpose of the university as a site of good teaching.

We need to recall that teaching students is—or at least is *supposed* to be—why universities exist. That colleges and universities have turned to casual teaching staff suggests how far they have drifted from what they say they are all about, that is, teaching students.

The increasing use of a casualised workforce has never been justified, nor is it justifiable in terms of improving teaching quality: it is a ruthless, even heartless, economic exercise designed to reduce the costs of teaching and enable the redirection of the revenues of the university sector that chiefly follow tuition income away from teaching and toward things like research, marketing, and support of the managerialiat.¹⁰ That it is leading to an unacceptable level of poverty among American casual teaching staff is reprehensible. Based on data from the American Community Survey, 31 percent of part-time university teachers in 2014 were living near or below the federal poverty line. According to the UC Berkeley Labor Center, one in four families of part-time faculty are enrolled in at least one

public assistance program like food stamps and Medicaid or qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (Fredrickson 2015).

There is good evidence in Australia that there a major exercise is under way diverting teaching-based income away from teaching. Lawrence Cram (2009) acknowledges the connection between expenditure on education, on the one hand, and the quality of education, on the other, is not well understood. Cram's research 'explores the conjecture that the public policy settings for Australian universities drive the per-student expenditure related to the provision of education to low values'. This conjecture informs Cram's careful assessment of the empirical data. That data and his analysis suggest that Australian universities are spending a lot more of revenue which comes essentially from tuition-based income to generate research output than they allocate to teaching. Cram's research shows that on average Australian universities were spending over \$200,000 to get one HERDC point (equivalent to one refereed journal article) while they were spending about or \$7,500 per year per equivalent full-time student on teaching. More recently, Norton (2014) reported that about one dollar in every five paid by fee-paying students was being spent on research rather than tuition in Australian universities. In aggregate terms Universities are using up to \$2 billion in student tuition fees to subsidise their research programs each year.¹¹ These kinds of findings paralleled what the American Boyer commission (1998) found:

while tuition income from undergraduates is one of the major sources of university income, helping to support research programs and graduate education ... the students paying the tuition get, in all too many cases, less than their money's worth' (Boyer Commission 1998, cited in Cram 2009: 91)

If Cram and Norton's work is credible, the relentless push to reallocate income earned from teaching away from teaching to research suggests some of the paradoxes that now define the modern university as a site of teaching and learning.

Many universities have also seen a determined effort to introduce workload planning, chiefly to 'attack' slack, but in part to increase efficiency by increasing student/staff ratios and or research outputs. The new managers of universities seem to believe that higher education is a predictable, rationalisable enterprise.

For example, Arum and Roska (2011: 11) report that American academics on average now spend twice as many hours on teaching as they

do research, while also spending more time on administrative work. They teach for 11 hours a week. In colleges they research two hours a week and in research universities five hours a week. The rest of the time (20 hours plus) is made up of committee meetings, e-mail correspondence, and various professional obligations. Academic time starts to be sucked up into a kind of black hole, with the result that the time academics once would have spent interacting with students now gets allocated to new tasks. Some of this time is now better registered as managerial time, which erodes the time that might be spent on teaching and research.

To ensure a rational allocation of time, university managers especially those housed in 'human resource' units, have overseen the development and use of 'workload formulas'. This usually takes the form of devising a metric relying on agreed-on formula for the calculation of weekly hours worked by individual academic staff. Enterprise Bargaining Agreements in force at Australian universities imply that academics are contracted to work a 37.5-hour week. In Australia, to the surprise of no one, these workload formulas never produce a value that is greater than the contracted working week for all full-time workers in Australia, that is, 37.5 hours per week. This, of course, sets up a fundamental mystery: few academics are actually able to fit all of the work they do—be it general reading, research work, or teaching related work—into a 37-hour week.

What is clear is that government have not wanted to give discretionary time to academics simply because they held tenured positions in universities. They may not even have been prepared to trust the universities to monitor the work of their own staff to see that discretionary time was indeed being spent in the advancement of scholarship, science, or teaching. Those who are forced to describe their activities in misleading terms experience alienation. The managers, by contrast, do not feel this, and for good reason. The terms that suit their activities are the terms that have triumphed: scholars now spend a considerable, and increasing, part of their working day accounting for their activities in the managers' terms. The true use-value of scholarly labour can seem to have been squeezed out: only the exchange-value of the commodities produced, as measured by the metrics, remains (Collini 2013).

In Australia two recent national surveys of academic work conditions—one published by the National Tertiary Education Union in 2002 (Winefield et al. 2003); the other by the Australian Council for Educational Research in 2008 (Coates et al. 2008)—revealed academics were actually working for 50 hours or more. In effect what amounts to substantial unpaid overtime is being worked. The necessity for this is obvious,

after even a cursory examination of an academic position description. If academic staff were to 'work-to-rule', the university would not survive a semester and research would grind to an abrupt halt. Preparation and delivery of lectures, tutorials, and practical work alone accounts for more than 60 percent of the official working week; and this does not include all the activities associated with teaching—setting and marking exams and assignments, student consultation (face-to-face and email), and, of course, administration. Assignment marking is especially time-consuming, if the end result is to be fair and of value to the student. Time must also be found to complete the paperwork for quality assurance, risk assessment, ethics approvals, course and program reviews, student surveys, committee duty, community service, and preparation for the following semester. And then there is the matter of undertaking and publishing world-class research, which also involves the winning of research grants and the supervision of graduate students with effectively no technical or administrative support.

In a context like this, the use of workload formulae becomes doubly obscurantist: it not only ignores the substantial amount of work academics actually need to do to (to support the functioning of the university), but it enables managers to claim that staffing levels are appropriate. It can sometimes produce quite surprising effects. In one case, in order to make the formula work, managers at the University of Queensland introduced the innovative concept of the zero-hour tasks—where zero hours were allotted for certain tasks (Meyers 2012: 130).

In the face of all this, it is perhaps not surprising that many academics have come to feel stress, even despair, in the face of the changes many have experienced in the course of their careers and the sense that things don't quite add up anymore.

Even in 2001 an Australian Senate *Inquiry into Higher Education in Australia* reported that it found a university system with a 'corporate' rather than a 'collegial' focus (Australian Senate 2001: para 9.33). The Senate committee concluded that this represented a 'deterioration of the intellectual climate' and was accompanied by 'victimization of critics or dissenters and a reduction in academic freedom and transparency' (AustralianSenate 2001: para 3.223). In one empirical survey, Kayrooz et al. (2001) suggested that Australian academics agreed. Kayrooz et al. reported that 'almost all of the respondents (92 percent) reported a degree of concern about the general state of academic freedom in their universities, with over one-third (37 percent) reporting major concern'. The academics they interviewed pointed to the erosion of 'public scholarship'

as a consequence of things like the ‘pressure to attract research funding from industry and a range of consulting and other services which increasingly channelled research effort into safe, well-defined areas, rather than curiosity-driven ones’. These academics also pointed to what happens when universities begin to behave more as businesses selling ‘services’ to ‘customers’ and are run by ‘executives’ rather than ‘academics’. The academics interviewed by Kayrooz et al. (2001) believed they now confronted a division between ‘management’ on the one hand, and academics or ‘staff’ on the other, which ‘has never been more exaggerated’.

A recent 25-country study (Coates et al. 2009) found that ‘Australian academics expressed considerably lower satisfaction with management issues than all other countries other than the United Kingdom’. These authors noted that ‘it is worrying that Australian academics—together with their British colleagues—are the least complimentary when it comes to the leadership and management of their institutions (Coates et al. 2009: 21). One possible explanation for this is that the higher-education systems in these two countries have been subjected to the most profound government-induced changes anywhere in the developed world (Coates et al. 2009: 310; see also Meeket al. 2009).

Many academics when surveyed over the past decade or so have reported that any of the measures adopted which treat students as consumers and expand their intake have damaged the quality of education offered to undergraduates and affected the quality of their own work. Half of the academics and university staff surveyed described their workload as unmanageable. They pointed to changes in the kind and intensity of the work they do, which may include a mixture of less direct face-to-face teaching and more administrative and compliance work.

The working environment for many academics, especially those on short-term contracts, seems increasingly typified by demands for unrealistic levels of performance, responsibility without the relevant authority or resources, and some measure of persistent job insecurity and a fear of heavy-handed reprisal for anything that vaguely resembles dissent or disagreement with the management line. Bexley et al. (2011) drawing on a sample of 5,525 responses, concluded that among Australian academics ‘there is a general disquiet with the leadership and management of institutions’ (Bexley et al. 2011: xii). They found that 41 percent of the respondents felt they could not speak out on matters of university policy compared with 33.5 percent who felt they could. (In some institutions negative responses reached into the high 50 percent range).

One of the few studies of workplace stress in Australian universities has been conducted by Professor Anthony Winefield and his colleagues Carolyn Boyd, Judith Saebel, and Silvia Pignata (Winefield et al. 2008) of the University of South Australia. Part of this wide ranging study involving two surveys each of over 6,000 staff members at 13 universities assessed stress using the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12), which is used routinely in health-care settings to identify the level of risk to an individual's mental health.

In Australia, about 19 percent of the working population has GHQ-12 scores indicative of 'potential mental illness'. Amongst academic staff, Winefield's surveys determined this figure to be in the vicinity of 50 percent. Indeed, the levels of strain reported by academic staff are higher than those reported by prison officers. Clearly, for intellectual people, universities are unhealthy places in which to work. The top three issues responsible for stress were university management (an immense surprise), hours of work, and industrial relations. University academics rated their job satisfaction, trust in senior management, and perceptions of procedural fairness as low. About half the academic staff considered their managers to be incompetent. The tertiary-education system would come to a rapid halt if all those who were entitled to it, decided to take stress leave. It is a tribute to their mental resilience and commitment to their profession that academics continue to do their best under such appalling conditions.

Stress results when people are required to act in the face of fundamentally conflicting information. The conflict is obvious. On the one hand, we have a highly skilled and committed academic work force who believe that their job description obliges them to deliver advanced education and research for the benefit of students and the nation. On the other, we have a managerial class with a singular preoccupation with ensuring they get their annual bonus payments based on achieving their Key Performance Indicators while promoting their personal career advancement based on their ability to achieve managerially conceived goals that are all too often effectively divorced from the interests or goals of university staff.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have presented some of the evidence which suggests what has happened in universities over the past few decades and the consequences for staff. As Frank Furedi (2011: 2) has argued, the consequences of talking about higher education as if it were a commodity and higher

education a market has not actually resulted in the ‘triumph of free-market economics’. The attempted ‘marketisation’ of university education has resulted only in an increase both in state intervention and in the micro-management of academic work by a cadre of managers. As Docherty (2011: 23) says, modern British university managers are increasingly treating university academics as ‘human resources’, carrying out functions given to them by governments, which obliterates the ‘faculty of thinking’. This attempted ‘marketisation’ has also generated major contradictions stemming from the attempt to promote both greater ‘efficiency’ and more ‘quality’ teaching and learning.

Ironically, as this chapter argues, the development of quality-assurance regimes has not addressed the evidence of quite serious deficiencies in university teaching practices, deficiencies which ought to be addressed. Precisely because so much of the quality-assurance discourse is characterised by a managerialist rationality deploying meaningless generalisations, the resulting vacuous managerialism effectively inhibits or prevents any deep reflexive engagement with the practices of scholarship and teaching. One result is an inability on the part of those promoting quality assurance to elicit a willingness on the part of academics to take ‘quality’ seriously. In effect, much of the quality assurance discourse results in activity done for the sake of compliance and is frequently treated with a good deal of contempt by rank and file academics. This results in a refusal or unwillingness to engage in the serious matter of critical reflexivity about pedagogical or curricular practice.

This is why we ought to be concerned about the erosion of public scholarship, the diminution of academic freedom, and the subtle and sometimes not so subtle changes to teaching practice arising from the imposition of student-centred learning and a culture of audit that asks students to evaluate the quality of teaching and their learning. In the next chapter I turn to the student experience.

NOTES

1. The misogyny of universities for much of the twentieth century ought to be more notorious than it seems to be. Though the patterns are slightly different for the three countries studied here, the Australian story exemplifies a more general picture. Australian women academics only achieved numerical parity with men in 2001. Despite some improvement since 2000, women academics remain under-represented at senior levels

(Dobson 2010), continue to earn less than men (Umbach 2007), are less likely to apply for promotion (Carrington and Pratt 2003), and—acknowledging the lower status ascribed to teaching—women academics do disproportionately more teaching (McKinney and Chick 2010; Wallace and Marchant 2013).

2. In America, research by Schuster and Finkelstein (2006) showed that by 2003 there were 543,000 part-time academic staff compared with 630,000 full-time staff. Other research by Kezar and Sam (2010) and Arum and Ropska (2011) suggest that 65 percent of new appointments were non-permanent. As would be expected given the diversity of American higher education there are significant differences between community colleges, teaching-only universities and research and teaching universities. In Australia, there is little doubt that the same trend is well and truly in place. In the 1990s the proportion of sessional teaching staff doubled from 10 percent of full-time equivalent staff (Bexley et al. 2011: 1). By 2010, as May (2011) notes, there were 67,000 sessional staff employed in Australian universities comprising 60 percent of the academic staff. Without labouring the point, the bulk of these sessional staff lack job security, typically experience what Bexley et al. (2011) call 'intellectual marginality', and are far less likely to be professionally trained to teach than the 34,000 full-time academic staff.
3. I think that the parallels between the logic of the Ponzi scheme and what is now going on in too many universities are striking starting with the reliance on inflated claims about the benefits to be got from investing and the actual reliance on shrinking (intellectual or finance) capital to keep the whole show afloat. A 'Ponzi scheme' (to quote from Wikipedia) is a criminally fraudulent investment scheme in which an individual or organisation promises staggeringly high rates of return to investors and proceeds to pay returns to the first cohorts of investors from new capital paid into the scheme by later cohorts of investors, rather than from any real profit earned by the operator. The Ponzi operator skims off some of the capital for private use until the scheme collapses. *Apropos* my use of Wikipedia how ironic is it that many universities who ordinarily encourage on-line learning and the use of on-line resources typically warn students against using Wikipedia in their studies because it lacks the credibility associated with academic publications!
4. The case is drawn from ongoing research to be completed over the next few years of Australian academics, drawing on a mixture of interviews and ethnographic techniques. To protect the source there are no identifying references.
5. For the non-Australian reader this equates to the casual rates for a level 6 beauty salon worker, a beginning-level carpentry apprentice, or a few dollars more than a casual shop assistant earns.

6. To be clear not, all of the short-term or even unpaid staff are necessarily untrained or unqualified. In some professional degree programs (like law, medicine, social work, and veterinary science) universities use highly experienced and skilled professionals as ‘adjunct professors’.
7. Just over 60 percent of the 2,019 respondents to the *Guardian* survey were academics, while others worked in a range of positions, including finance and student services.
8. My preference is to treat quality as a good or virtue. For the kind of virtue ethics developed by Socrates and Plato, virtue (or *arête*) signified the various kinds of human excellence: we can be excellent ethically, intellectually, physically, practically, and so on. It was ‘the good, the highest form, the highest idea of all’ (Pirsig 1974: 373). If we keep a distinction between ‘quantity’ and ‘quality’ in mind, then a quality like living ethically or being thoughtful does not come in quantities and is therefore unmeasurable. Almost certainly the current definition of quality signifies the extent to which a product or service meets and/or exceeds a customer’s expectations (Gronroos 1984) and comes out of a ‘services marketing’ literature (Normann 1984).
9. Concern about the ability of the CLA to measure individual performance may have been addressed by a 2009 test-validity study organised by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) (Klein et al. 2009). The results showed that when test data were aggregated in larger samples, they can provide reliable estimates of institutional or group-level differences in performance on these tasks.
10. This is not to deny that some use of casualised staff is justified, for example, when professional programs use it to bring skilled practitioners into classes (e.g., in law, medicine, social work). Most, however, is not
11. Norton claimed that about 41 percent of Australian university research funding in 2012 (worth \$3.7 billion) came partly from sources like investment income, donations, and profits from commercial operations, as well as from government funding and overseas student fees.

REFERENCES

- Alderman, G. (2008a). *Teaching quality assessment: League tables and the decline of academic standards in British Higher Education*. Inaugural Professorial Lecture University of Buckingham, 17 June. Buckingham: University of Buckingham.
- Alderman, G. (2008b). University standards under threat. *The Guardian*. 18 August. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/aug/18/bournemouthuniversity.administration>.
- Alderman, G., & Brown, R. (2008). Academic fraud: How to solve the problem. *The Guardian*, 28 June. <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2008/jun/26/highereducation.uk3>

- Arum, R., & Ropska, J. (2011). *Academically adrift: Limited learning on college campuses*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Australian Senate. (2001). *Universities in crisis* (Senate employment, workplace relations, small business standing committee). Canberra: Australian Parliament.
- Bain, K. (2004). *What the best college teachers do*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bexley, E., James, R., & Arkoudism, S. (2011). *The Australian academic profession in transition*. Melbourne: Center for Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne.
- Biggs, J. (2001). The reflective institution: Assuring and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. *Higher Education*, 41, 34–51.
- Brown, R. (2010). The current brouhaha about standards in England. *Quality in Higher Education*, 16(2), 129–137.
- Carpenter, B., & Tait, G. (2002). Good teaching and learning in the academy. In *Proceedings Australasian Law Teachers Association conference*, Vanuatu. <http://eprints.qut.edu.au>
- Carrington, K., & Pratt, A. (2003). *How far have we come? Gender disparities in the Australian higher education system* (Current Issues Brief No. 31 2002–2003). Canberra: Department of the Parliamentary Library.
- Coates, H. (2009). What's the difference? A model for measuring the value added by higher education in Australia. *Higher Education Management and Policy*, 21(1), 34–45.
- Coates, H., Dobson, I., Edwards, D., Friedman, T., Goedegebuure, L., & Meek, L. (2009). *The attractiveness of the Australian academic profession: A comparative analysis*. Melbourne: ACER.
- Cram, L. (2009, July 6–9). How Australian universities fund the student experience. In *The student experience, proceedings of the 32nd HERDSA annual conference*, Darwin, pp. 90–99.
- Department of Education. (2013). *Staff: Selected higher education statistics 2013*. Canberra: Department of Education.
- Dobson, I. (2010). *Room at the top: Women's progress or glass ceiling?* Paper presented at TEM 2010 conference. Melbourne: TEM.
- Docherty, T. (2011). *For the university: Democracy and the future of the institution*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Fetherston, T. (2001). Pedagogical challenges for the World Wide Web. *Educational Technology Review*, 9(1), 13–24. <http://www.ace.org/pubs/etr/issue1/fetherston.cfm>
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2013). How planners deal with uncomfortable knowledge: The dubious ethics of the American Planning Association. *Cities*, 1–27. DOI: [10.1016/J.CITIES.2012.10.016](https://doi.org/10.1016/J.CITIES.2012.10.016).
- Fredrickson, C. (2015). There is no excuse for how universities treat adjuncts. *The Atlantic*, 15 September. <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/09/higher-education-college-adjunct-professor-salary/404461/>

- Frey, T. (2007). *The future of education*. <http://www.davinciinstitute.com/page.php?ID14170/>. Accessed 5 Sept 2012.
- Frey, T. (2008). Thomas Frey –Senior Futurist. <http://www.davinciinstitute.com/speakers.php/>. Accessed 5 Sept 2012.
- Furedi, F. (2011). Introduction to the marketisation of higher education and the student as consumer. In M. Molesworth, R. Scullion, & E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketisation of higher education and the student as consumer*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Gibbs, G. (2010). *Dimensions of quality*. York: Higher Education Academy.
- Gronroos, C. (1984). A service quality model and its marketing implications. *European Journal of Marketing*, 18(4), 36–44.
- Hanbury, A. (2007). *Comparative review of British, American and Australian national surveys of undergraduate students*. York: Higher Education Academy.
- Hazelkorn, E. (2015). *Rankings and the reshaping of higher education: The battle for world-class excellence*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). (2009). *Future arrangements for quality assurance in England and Northern Ireland*. Bristol: Higher Education Funding Council for England.
- Hil, R. (2015). *Selling students short*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- House of Commons Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee, (IUSSC). (2009). *Students and universities eleventh report of session 2008–09 (HC 170–1)*. London: The Stationery Office.
- Hutchings, W. (2006). The philosophical bases of enquiry-based learning. Centre for Excellence.
- Jaschik, S. (2010, April 15). Who really failed? Dominique G. Homberger won't apologize for setting high expectations for her students. *Inside Higher Ed*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2010/04/15/lsu>
- Kayrooz, C., Kinnear, P., & Preston, P. (2001). *Academic freedom and commercialisation of Australian Universities: Perceptions and experiences of social scientists* (Discussion paper no. 37). Canberra: The Australia Institute.
- Kezar, A., & Sam, C. (2010). Understanding the new majority of non-tenure track faculty in higher education. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, 36(4), 1–133.
- Klein, S., Ou L., & Sconing, J. (2009). Test validity study report. New York: Fund for the Study of Post Secondary Education.
- Kraft, R. (1994). Bike riding and the art of learning. In L. Barnes, C. Christensen, & A. Hansen (Eds.), *Teaching and the case method*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Latas, J. (2009). 'Dear learner': Shame and the dialectics of enquiry. *The International Journal of the Humanities*, 6(11), 84–98.
- Laurillard, D. (2002). *Rethinking university teaching: A conversational framework for the effective use of learning technologies* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Marchant, T., & Wallace, M. (2013). Sixteen years of change for Australian female academics progress or segmentation? *Australian Universities Review*, 55(2), 60–71.

- Massy, W. (2003). *Honoring the trust: Quality and cost containment in higher education*. Bolton: Anker Publishing.
- May, R. (2011). Casualisation here to stay? The modern university and its divided workforce. In R. Markey (Ed.), *Dialogue downunder*, Refereed proceedings of the 25th conference of AIRAANZ, pp. 1–18. Auckland: AIRAANZ.
- McKinney, K., & Chick, N. (2010). SoTL as women's work: What do existing data tell us? *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 4(2), 1–14. <http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/ijstol/v4n2>
- Meek, V., Goedegebuure, L., Carvalho, T., & Santiago, R. (Eds.). (2009). *The changing dynamics of higher education middle management*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Meyers, D. (2012). *Australian universities: A portrait of decline*. Brisbane: AUPOD.
- Moodie, G. (2013). Quality. In G. Croucher, S. Marginson, A. Norton, & J. Wells (Eds.), *The Dawkins revolution 25 years on*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.
- Murphy, P. (2013, May). The rise and fall of our bureaucratic universities. *Quadrant*, https://quadrant.org.au/magazine/2013/05/the-rise-and-fall-of-our-bureaucratic-universities/#_ednref4
- Normann, R. (1984). *Service management: Strategy and leadership in service businesses*. New York: Wiley.
- Norton, A., & Cherastidtham, I. (2014). *Mapping Australian higher education, 2014–15*. Melbourne: Grattan Institute.
- Oppenheim, A. (1992). *Questionnaire design, interviewing and attitude measurement*. London: Continuum.
- Phillips, R., & Baudains, C. (2002). *Learning Botany: Evaluation of a web-supported unit on plant diversity*. Perth: Murdoch University. Retrieved February 28, 2005, <http://www.tlc.murdoch.edu.au/project/N265Eval.pdf>
- Pirsig, R. (1974). *Zen and the art of motorcycle maintenance*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Probert, B. (2015). *The quality of Australia's higher education system: How it might be defined, improved and assured*. Canberra: Office for Learning and Teaching.
- Ramsden, P. (1991). A performance indicator of teaching quality in higher education: The course experience questionnaire. *Higher Education*, 16, 129–150.
- Ramsden, P. (1992). *Learning to teach in higher education*. London: Routledge.
- Richardson, J. (1994). A British evaluation of the course experience questionnaire. *Studies in Higher Education*, 19, 59–68.
- Richardson, J. (2005). Instruments for obtaining student feedback: A review of the literature. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 30(4), 387–415.
- Rogers, C. (1983). *Freedom to learn for the 80's*. New York: Charles E. Merrill Publishing.
- Schuster, J., & Finkelstein, J. (2006). *The American faculty: The restructuring of academic work and careers*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University.

- Shaw, C., & Ratcliffe, R. (2012). Academics under pressure to bump up student grades, Guardian survey shows. *The Guardian*, <http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2015/may/18/academics-under-pressure-to-bump-up-student-grades-guardian-survey-shows>
- Stergiou, D., & Airey, D. (2012). Using the course experience questionnaire for evaluating undergraduate tourism management courses in Greece. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 11(1), 41–49.
- Sunstein, C. (2014). Nudging: A very short guide. *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 37, 583.
- Umbach, P. (2007). Gender equity in the academic labor market: An analysis of academic disciplines. *Research in Higher Education*, 48(2), 169–192.
- University of Sydney. (2011). Enquiry based learning. http://sydney.edu.au/business/learning/staff/teaching/enquiry-based_learning/
- Watson, D. (2005). *Weasel words*. Sydney: Random House.

The Student Experience

Contemporary higher education in Britain, America, and Australia is synonymous with large numbers of students. Each of these countries now has a mass system of higher education. In America over 6,000 universities and colleges enrolled more than 20 million students in 2014, an increase of 30 percent from 2000. Some 70 percent of US high school students go on to higher education, the highest level of matriculation in the world. In Australia around 1.1 million domestic students were enrolled in higher education in 2014 along with 350,000 international students. In the United Kingdom in 2015 there were some 2.23 million university students, including 1.5 million studying for their first degree. The United States has a higher proportion of its population in university than the United Kingdom, which has the smallest proportion, but both are now mass university systems.

If a shift to a mass university system in Britain, America, and Australia is now well established, as is the idea that many of these universities have been ‘marketised’, there are questions to be asked about what this means and in particular how students experience the modern university.

For those who support the neo-liberal approach to higher-education policy there is a tendency to assume that a mass ‘competitive’ ‘higher-education market’ naturally produces quality graduates who do well at university before going on to enjoy life-long enhanced incomes and job security—as well as contribute to a growing economy.

For those who are critics of the consequences of neo-liberal policy for students, there is a tendency to focus on the negative effects of the current policy framework. This is illustrated by Brown et al. (2011: 5), who point to the broken promise of the ‘American dream’. They present evidence suggesting that simply graduating from a university no longer guarantees access to the good life because ‘only a tiny minority of American college graduates [can now be] winners among large numbers of college graduate losers in the global competition for the best jobs and comfortable upper-middle-class life’ (Brown et al. 2011: 5). In neither case, however, do we get much sense of what today’s university students want, how they experience the modern university, or what they actually learn.

In this chapter I examine some questions about the student experience. They include, What if anything has changed about the university student experience over the last few decades. What does paying for a university education feel like and what is it like to have large amounts of debt? What do students actually do now? How well do they do? Is there evidence of increased student consumerism, leading to student complaints that some university subjects are too hard or too demanding, and students’ putting pressure on academics to stop demanding too much, as Arum and Røpska (2011) suggest is increasingly the case in America or as Hil (2015) suggests is happening in Australia?

There are several caveats about the scope of this chapter. For example, I have decided not to address the issue of how international students are being dealt with, or how they experience the universities they attend in each of the three countries studied. Partly, this is for the same reasons I have limited the scope of the questions I do address. My ability to answer these questions rigorously is limited by the sheer numbers and diversity of contemporary university students in three systems of higher education. It is limited too by the relative paucity of good research. Finally there is the problem of space limitations in a single chapter.

In framing these questions I do make the assumption that students are not simply passive blanks waiting to be acted on by ‘the university’. They are active partners in the relationship they have with teachers, and are responsible for their dispositions and the choices they make, along with the commitment they make to doing whatever it is they do. Of course, like the rest of us, they do so in conditions not entirely of their own making. We also need to remember, especially when thinking about the majority of those students in their late teens and early twenties, that the balance of experience, expertise, and responsibility still lies with the

teachers, who ought to be exercising an appropriate level of care for what happens in the university. That teachers are no longer able to exercise this responsibility autonomously is the central problem modern universities now confront.

WHAT IF ANYTHING HAS CHANGED ABOUT THE KINDS OF STUDENTS NOW STUDYING IN UNIVERSITY?

For a long time, universities in Britain, America, and Australia were small, elite institutions enrolling mostly elite-status males. Each country began to make the shift to a mass university system in the middle decades of the twentieth century. But has this ‘massification’ of higher education undone a long history of social inequality, in which factors like class, gender, or ethnicity played a major role in determining who went to university or the kind of benefits to be got?

On the face of it, our first impulse would probably be to say yes and there are some good reasons for thinking this way. Arguably the single most striking shift has been the enrollment of increasing numbers of women. Though the story is different in each country, the Australian case is illustrative. In Australia women made up just 20 percent of total university enrolments in 1911, which had only increased to 32 percent of total university enrolments by 1972. In Australia female students did not achieve numerical parity until 1987 (Booth and Kee 2010: 9). The significant shift to a female majority has proved decisive. Where in 1970 there were 269 male students for each 100 women students, in 2014 there were just 80 males to every 100 female students.

This is undoubtedly a major and positive change. However, and even after parity was achieved, a gendered division of curriculum choice persists in Australia. In 2007 there were still degree programs with very low or very high female enrollments: for example, only 15.5 percent of engineering and surveying students were female, while 74 percent of education students were female (Booth and Kee 2010: 18). This may in turn explain why in spite of dramatic improvements in accessing higher education, women continue to be paid less on average than men. In 2015 Australian women had full-time average weekly earnings of \$AU1307 per week compared with full-time average male earnings of \$AU1591—an 18 percent pay gap. This differential has barely shifted since Australia introduced the principle of equal pay for equal work in 1974. In some respects the patterns of gendered inequality seem quite intractable.¹

Nor can we discount the role played by neo-liberal policy regimes as governments use a variety of policies to promote the already unequal distribution of incomes and wealth (Atkinson 2015). There is now alarming evidence that over the period when access to higher education was being opened up the distribution of wealth and income in America, Britain, and Australia was becoming dramatically more unequal.² This has major implications for anyone trying to assess the contribution of increasing access to higher education to making these societies more-or less-equal. There are two factors to consider here. What does the evidence say about the success of policies designed to increase access to low income students? How should we understand and assess the policy of charging fees to students to fund the growth of universities while increasing the debt burden generated by student loans designed to encourage them to go to university?

EQUALITY OF ACCESS?

On the face of it America in particular has a very good record in terms of enabling large numbers of Americans to access higher education. America's system of higher education has long been more diverse than most. America seems to have demonstrated a willingness to give large numbers of people access to higher education and seems more democratic in temper than either the British or Australian systems. However, appearances can be deceiving.

While Australian and British universities are conventionally understood to be 'public', as we have seen, America has long favoured a mixed system which includes a significant number of 'private' institutions (mostly 'not-for-profit' universities and colleges). The American system is genuinely diverse and complex. The Californian model (often credited to Clark Kerr) can be viewed something like an archetype for America as a whole. In the 1960s the University of California was mandated to recruit the top eighth of high school graduates, California State University was to enroll the remainder of the top third of high school graduates, while the two-year community colleges provided access to everyone else. Alongside this public system were some 186 private colleges and universities, including elite research universities like Stanford or large, not-for-profit universities like University of Southern California.

It is therefore significant that for a system so ostensibly 'democratic' the 'best universities' as ranked using a range of conventional metrics reveal the role played by small, elite, mostly private not-for-profits, who enroll

small numbers of students. It is these universities that dominate the rankings used to determine the ‘best’ universities. This reminds us that the point of elite education is to ensure that it remains a ‘positional good’ defined by its scarcity: by definition, like ‘capital’ itself and all its variants (‘social capital’, ‘intellectual capital’, and so forth) ‘higher-educational capital’ cannot afford to be diluted too much by making it widely available: scarcity must be maintained and protected by any number of mechanisms—like ostensibly meritocratic entrance tests favouring elite students, keeping enrolments small, and using fees as price proxies for ‘quality’. This is implied in Table 8.1.

Again, while the apparent diversity of students and the kinds of ways they engage higher education in America is seemingly impressive, a few things stand out that countermand that general impression. For example, if the stereotype of the ‘university student’ is an 18–22-year-old studying full-time in a four-year undergraduate degree-granting university, this

Table 8.1 Top ten US universities 2015

<i>Name</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>(U/G) Fee (pa.)</i>	<i>No. of students</i>
Princeton	Private research university	\$45,150	8,000
Harvard	Private research university	\$45,728	21,000
Swarthmore College	Private liberal arts	\$47,070	1,545
MIT	Private research university	\$40,023	11,000
William and Mary	Public research university	\$15,674	8,900
Williams College	Private liberal arts college	\$49,780	2,000
Amherst College	Private liberal arts college	\$49,730	1,785
Stanford	Private research university	\$45,700	15,877
California Institute of Technology	Private research university	\$43,710	2,255
Yale University	Private research university	\$46,500	12,312

Source: *The Best Colleges: Top 50 Colleges and Universities in America: 2015* <http://www.thebestcolleges.org/rankings/top-50/>

stereotype applies only to 29 percent of those currently enrolled. Forty-three percent of students enrolled are over 25, while most of the younger students are actually enrolled in two-year community colleges (45 percent). Like their British and Australian peers, American students also confront certain persistent effects of social inequality.

American research has long shown that access to higher education is shaped in large part by patterns of social inequality (Coleman et al. 1966; Gamoran 2008). Some may find it surprising that in spite of the ‘massification’ of American higher education during the twentieth century, good research finds that social class differences have persisted. Some of this research draws on National Assessment of Education Progress data collected over three decades (Campbell et al. 2000). This research shows that while the number of students applying to and attending universities has expanded dramatically over the past 60 years, and while working-class and poor students are attending American universities in greater numbers than ever before, they tend to enroll in relatively less selective two-year colleges, and poor or low-income students are less likely to be in four-year institutions in general than they were a decade ago (Thomas and Bell 2008: 281).

Some of this ‘structural’ effect both depends on and informs the aspirations and expectations of students and how this shapes what they then do. As Bui (2002) shows, half of the low-income first-generation college students started at a two-year college rather than a four-year college in the late 1990s (Snyder 1999). Among the reasons they gave for this was their belief that their academic preparation was not sufficient for them to gain admission to a four-year institution. This finding is surprising given that research has shown that first-generation students actually have a better chance of earning a bachelor’s degree if they started at a four-year college rather than a two-year college (Snyder 2000). Many of these students also said that they could not afford the tuition fees at a four-year institution, and that they needed the flexibility of class timetabling possible at a two-year college to meet other responsibilities like paid work or supporting their family.

Australia seems to be heading toward a similar kind of diversity—with an equivalent lack of effect on persistent and deep patterns of inequality. We know a good deal about the current body of Australian university students courtesy of a very large survey of some 110,000 students (including 55 percent who were later-year students) carried out in 2011–12 (Radloff et al. 2012). The survey was more or less representative. The sample included females (57 percent), international students (16 percent), people

who spoke a language other than English at home (26 percent), and students with a disability (5 percent).³

Forty-five percent reported they were the first in their family to go to university. Set against the patterns of enrolment in the late 1960s this suggests significant diversity. However, this does not necessarily translate into equality defined as the capacity of low-income Australians to access university. That shift has still to occur in Australia.

Writing in 1983 and almost a decade after the Whitlam Labor government had abolished tuition fees in 1974, Anderson and Vervoorn reported that ‘higher education in general and universities in particular remain socially elite institutions’. They showed that the over-representation of students of high socio-economic backgrounds ‘has remained constant at least since 1950, as has the under-representation of those of lower socio-economic background’ (Anderson and Vervoorn 1983: 170). The most striking thing about this is that the pattern has persisted over time in spite of repeated major policy changes.

There has been no significant change in participation by low socio-economic status Australians since Anderson and Vervoorn’s (1983) analysis. In the late 1990s Andrews reported the first systematic study of the effect of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (Australia’s deferred loan scheme for university students) on higher-education participation. A differential system of student-loan-based fees was announced for 1997. Table 8.2 shows that the proportion of students aged 17 to 24 years from low socio-economic backgrounds studying subjects was not affected by the introduction of differential HECS in 1997.

Andrews’s work was controversial, partly because his findings were unexpected and inconvenient. Later work has confirmed that the introduction of student fees supplemented by a deferred repayment loan scheme in 1989

Table 8.2 Share of commencing students low socio-economic status backgrounds, 17–24-year-olds

<i>HECS band</i>	<i>1989</i>	<i>1991</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>
Band 1 (%)	21	20	19	20	20	20
Band 2 (%)	20	21	20	21	20	21
Band 3 (%)	12	15	13	12	13	12
All (%)	20	20	19	20	20	20

Source: Andrews (1999: Table 1—share of commencing students from low SES backgrounds, 17–24-year-olds)

had little measurable effect on higher-education participation (Aungles et al. 2002). In its report for the 2003 to 2005 triennium, the Department of Education Science and Training (2003: 19) found that while students from low socio-economic status backgrounds had made up 14.7 percent of all students in 1991, almost 15 years later, the proportion of low-income and low-status students had dropped slightly to 14 percent of students. Even in 2015 not much had altered (Universities Australia 2013). While the numbers of low-income Australians studying for a degree had increased since 1970 from only a few thousand to almost 140,000, ‘as a proportion of the total student population this participation is below parity’ (Universities Australia 2013: 11). In fact, it acknowledged that the proportion of low-SES students had actually declined between 2001 and 2008 ‘before improving slightly’. As a proportion of total enrollments students from low SES background has crept up from 16.8 percent (2006) to 18.9 percent in 2014 (Universities Australia 2015: 5): 25 percent of Australians are in this cohort.

In Britain, too, things don’t seem all that different. The Final Report of the Independent Commission on Fees (2015: 12) pointed to very modest growth in participation by the most disadvantaged young people after the introduction of very heavy increases in student fees. In spite of accounting for around 20 percent of young British people, those from the lowest SES cohort accounted for only 11 percent of enrolled first-year, first-degree students.⁴ As Will Hutton argued in 2015, if 12,000 more students from poorer homes enrolled in a university than in 2010, this was more than offset by the collapse of more than 152,000 in the total number of part-time students fearful about the increase in the level of debt for part-time studies (with fees set at 6750 pounds per annum) and the abolition of maintenance grants. As Hutton (2015) put it, ‘this represents one of the biggest setbacks to social mobility in modern times’.

While none of this is cause for celebration, Bourdieu’s work ought to have reminded us that those with a disproportionate share of resources tend to use that fact to maintain their advantage. Expecting that simply by increasing the numbers of people going to university would somehow undo deep patterns of social privilege or undo the intrinsic character of higher education as a positional good is simply naive.

THE DEBT BURDEN

Perhaps no other aspect of contemporary higher education in the three countries studied herein has so dominated public discussion as the issue of student debt. This is especially so as the Great Recession of 2008 engendered

a new appreciation both of the risks of indebtedness and of the role played by various kinds of ignorance which had spawned the crisis.⁵

In the case of student debt, we see the cruel paradox that neo-liberal policy-making has set loose. The whole premise of public higher-education policy-making in each of these countries since the 1980s has been the idea that access to higher education needed to be opened up so that everyone could enjoy the benefits of increased social mobility and economic growth than an expanded university system promised. However, as these governments explained, they just ‘didn’t have the money’ themselves to ‘grow’ the university system. Their solution was to get students to pay an increasing share of the costs of their tuition to fund that growth. Recognising the practical and equity difficulties this created, governments invented a variety of loan schemes, some of them using Australia’s own invention of a deferred loan repayment scheme to enable students to borrow the money to pay for their education. In America a blend of private loans and government loans schemes was set up.

Out of this farrago of ‘cruel optimism’, lies, and deception we have created a mess.⁶ The mess includes loan schemes of staggering complexity, a major problem of intergenerational inequity, and a public policy scandal in Australia and probably England, where universities are now diverting tuition revenue away from teaching and into research.⁷ In this last respect university students are literally being short-changed.

Governments in England and Australia have actually had to fund the growth of universities to make up for the ever-increasing gap between the costs of higher education and the loan-fuelled expenditures which were not actually being repaid by students.

Students meanwhile have been steadily accruing a staggering level of debt. In societies like Britain and America—which have come to rely on increasing levels of public and private debt—it is not surprising that student loans have grown the fastest out of all debt classes, with a growth rate of 65 percent in the ten years to 2015 (Bankwest Curtin Economics Center 2015).⁸ In Australia total student debt was estimated at \$AU34 billion for 2015 with estimates that it could increase to \$AU70 billion by 2017. Average student loan debt, however, seems lower than is the case for either English or American students: it is estimated that 26 percent of 18-54-year-olds in 2017–18 will have an average debt of \$21,500. (For comparison the average debt per student in the United States was \$US26,500.)

That said, there are important aspects of social inequality that are shaping the way the student loans scheme works. Research by Sharrock (2015) indicates, for example, that there are important ‘stratifying’ effects at work in the way social class interacts with educational choice, albeit in quite complex ways. As Table 8.3 below suggests, graduates in medicine face far higher student-debt loads than do graduates of education or nursing programs, in part due to higher fees. On the other hand, taxpayers contribute far more to the cost of degrees in medicine than in those fields, and doctors can expect to earn more. Meanwhile, law graduates face higher debts than engineers or nurses; yet taxpayers contribute far less to law degrees. Over a lifetime, lawyers can expect to earn more than nurses.

In the United Kingdom, English students are the group most affected by high tuition fees. At the end of 2014–15 total government loan debt for English students and EU students studying in England was £64.7 billion (Bolton 2016: 16). There has been significant growth since 1995–96 when the total amount of debt was £1.9 billion. The increase seen in 2014–15 alone was more than £10 billion. This increase has been driven by the post-2010 increase in fees. The 2015/16 figures suggest a 2 percent increase in the number of maintenance loans taken out and a 5 percent increase in the total value of maintenance loans taken out since 2013–14. The equivalent figures for fee loans show a 3 percent rise in the number taken out and a 9 percent increase in their total value. The total value is increasing faster as more and more students are now in the post-2012 system (Bolton 2016: 17).⁹ For what it is worth, the Cameron government

Table 8.3 University income public subsidies, student fees, and projected student debt, 2014

<i>Course type (years of study)</i>	<i>University income</i>	<i>Fee + subsidy</i>	<i>Public subsidy</i>	<i>Subsidy per student</i>	<i>Student debt</i>
Medicine (5 years)	\$159,000	\$31,800	\$21,700	\$109,000	\$50,000
Law (4 years)	\$48,000	\$12,200	\$2,000	\$8,000	\$40,000
Education (4 years)	\$65,000	\$16,200	\$10,200	\$41,000	\$24,000
Nursing (3 years)	\$58,000	\$19,500	\$13,500	\$40,000	\$18,000

Source: Sharrock (2015: 1)

Values are Australian dollar values

has projected that the outstanding value of publicly generated student debt in England will increase to around £100 billion in 2016–17, £500 billion in the mid-2030s, and £1000 billion (£1 trillion) by the late 2040s (Bolton 2016: 19).

As for the level of individual debt, fee levels for 2012/13 imply that for students starting in England in 2012/13, who take out average maintenance and fee loans, the typical debt on graduation will be approximately £40,000 (Bolton 2016: 18). The scale of repayment in England is also quite large. At the end of 2014–15, a total of 2.7 million borrowers (or 62 percent of the total) were liable for repayment. There is no data on the actual repayment rate. ‘Historical’ data, however, makes an obvious point. As in Australia, the repayment idea is just that: a bright idea. Forty-five percent of students in the first large repayment cohort had repaid their loan by 2002, but this declined to 21 percent of the 2007 cohort, declining to just 6 percent of the 2011 cohort. As Bolton remarks, the average value of repayments continues to increase in each year, implying that it is only in the first few years after graduating that large numbers of borrowers begin to repay their loan. Relatively few start earning above the repayment threshold four or more years later, and even then their numbers are balanced by those who stop repaying for one reason or another (Bolton 2016: 23).

The irony that the savage increase in fees and the dramatic rise in student debt were all part of an austerity-policy response to the Great Recession of 2008, a crisis created by a criminally fraudulent conduct in the financial market and negligent government regulation, should not be overlooked.

Since the Great Recession, American student loan indebtedness has also continued to rise. In the 2000s, two-thirds of college graduates completed their degree by taking on debt. The median education debt of graduating students had risen to \$US15,123 by 2008 (Dwyer et al. 2012: 1135). In the 1990s students had the choice between government-supplied loans and grants and private lenders.¹⁰ By 2014, student default rates were close to 14 percent (Dwyer 2015). This is because student loans are now the main source of financial aid provided by the US government to support college students. As Dwyer (2015) argues, the rising volume of student loans signifies both the increasing debt owed by students, and the increasing percentage of students taking out loans. In 1989–1990, a total of 19 percent of students took out loans, which increased to about 35 percent in 2007–2008. This highlights the kinds of decisions being taken by low-income Americans to take out loans in the desperate belief

that this will somehow provide an advantage for their children, while even some middle-class families are forced to take out loans because of declining incomes. In the United States total student debt is now estimated to be over \$US1 trillion.

In a highly unequal society debt will have unequal effects. Careful research by Dwyer et al. (2012) shows that the effects of debt on college completion are strongly affected by class. While students from all classes use debt to 'invest in their social mobility', the negative effects of taking on additional debt after a certain level of debt is reached are borne most heavily by low-income students. Students in private universities appear to be relatively immune to these effects. Put simply, high income students who take out debt are more likely to graduate and to do so from private universities. Not only is access to higher education shaped in large part by the class background of students but so too is the likelihood of success.

Any negative debt effects on graduation are only evident in America's public universities. Students from low-income backgrounds who take out debt are far less likely to graduate. Those with fewer family resources will find higher loan amounts more difficult to manage, and this seems to reduce the likelihood of completing college. Research on the 2009 student cohort, e.g., found significant rates of financial stress, with nearly 60 percent of the borrowers whose original balances were below \$5,000 experiencing either a default (about one-third) or a 120+ days delinquency (17.2 percent), while 8.5 percent found themselves with higher balances today than when they started (Brown et al. 2015). Other research suggests that low-income students are both less likely to graduate and more likely to default on loan repayments. Thirty-five percent of students with less than \$5,000 in debt defaulted within six years, almost twice the default rate of students with more than \$100,000 in debt (Dwyer et al. 2012: 1142). Students with low debt and low earnings are disproportionately likely to not finish university. Sixty-three percent of students who started college in 2003–04 and defaulted on their loans by 2009 had failed to complete their studies (Dwyer et al. 2012: 1143).

Dwyer et al. (2012: 1148) followed a cohort of students with \$US10,000 or more in debt and compared those who dropped out and those who graduated. Those with high levels of educational loan debt who dropped out were 1.3 times more likely than high debtors who graduated to be enrolled part-time, were 1.75 times more likely to work more than 20 hours per week, and 1.99 times more likely to be parents. Financial difficulties play a role: college dropouts are 2.39 times as likely as graduates

to have ever attended a community college (which have far lower tuition fees than four-year institutions) and report ‘work or finance’ as the most common reason for dropping out (37.1 percent). While investing with borrowed resources has risks, these risks are greatest for the least advantaged. Large debt loads appear to be a deterrent to continuing at university, especially for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Students feel they have to stop for a while and work either to save money or to pay off loans.

Comparable English data suggest a similar picture. While most students are taking out tuition loans, the more advantaged students tend not to take out maintenance loans. This includes students from a managerial, professional, or intermediate (family) background, students living at home, London-based students, and students studying medicine or dentistry (Bolton 2016: 19).

Much of this discussion might seem to lend a great deal of weight to the proposition that a ‘marketised’ university establishes an elective affinity with students who have been transformed into ‘consumers’. Let me outline one version of this argument before I turn to what we know about the ways students engage with the university.

THE STUDENT AS CONSUMER?

Williams (2011: 172) is not alone in supposing that most modern universities are subtly reinforcing the idea that students ought to act as consumers by making demands and having their voices heard. Students are expected to complete course evaluation forms and are recruited onto staff–student liaison committees. Institutions placing attention so firmly upon the student experience enhance the idea that the purpose of higher education is the creation of satisfied consumers. If neo-liberalism is a performative discourse, this implies that not only has higher education been redefined in market terms but that people will begin to reconceive of themselves and their practices in the terms offered by the discourse. That is, we can begin to understand ourselves through the lens of market metaphors as individuals able to maximise lifestyle through choice (Stevenson 2006: 485–500).¹¹

The metaphor of ‘the free market’ certainly implies that students are now consumers or customers enjoying the benefits of competition and freedom of choice that all consumers are alleged to enjoy and that this will have some kind of strong normative impact on their experience and

practice such that students will begin to think about and experience themselves and become consumers or customers (Nordensvard 2011: 157). This metaphor may mean, for example, that students understand their motivations to study to include furthering their own human capital in the form of degree programs that boost their CV and/or give them skills to make them more employable in the job market. Such a view reflects quite neatly the policy commitment of most Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) states to ‘active labour market policies.’ Employability is central to active labour market policies where competencies and competence management become important. ‘Policy is no longer about “functions” so much as “competencies”; that is, knowledge, capacities, and attitudes that are employable with regard to an ‘efficient’, ‘flexible’, (and learning-based) adaptation to changing conditions’ (Simons and Masschelein 2008: 401). From this view, the student needs to consider higher education as a way to increase his/her employability.

Wellen argues this consumer perspective is coming to shape the relationship between academia and the student body:

More students view themselves as active purchasers of academic services, and are calling for stronger quality assurance standards and ‘valued’ credentials. Institutions are faced with more market pressures to differentiate/specialize in order to succeed as competition for students and faculty grows (Wellen 2005: 25)

Wellen suggest that when we treat employability as a consumer motive, we can have two different approaches: students can ‘buy’ skills or they can ‘buy’ degrees.¹² The first motive focuses more on what students can do with their knowledge; it involves the ‘employability of knowledge’. Steven Heyneman illustrates this perspective with clarity: an ‘economistic’ standpoint could mean that an educational system in a market economy should ‘prepare students for changing careers and flexibility in the labour market’ and an excellent school system ‘emphasizes those skills which maximize adaptability’ (Heyneman 2004: 447). Others might say that education exists to supply students with transferable skills (Carroll and Reichelt 2008: 391–92). One recent and popular version of this is the idea that students need ‘to learn how to learn’ and this includes skills like self-management. One learns the skill to learn instead of learning specific knowledge that would become easily outdated in the knowledge economy. Learning is therefore neither limited to schools nor other institutions of education

nor to a particular time in people's lives (Simons and Masschelein 2008: 397–8). The essential feature of 'life-long learning' is its expansive scope: every person is a learner who participates in institutions as well as informally by relying on self-directed learning (OECD 1999: 9).

The other possibility is that students simply want to buy a degree without bothering about the knowledge or skills. These students would have a rather instrumental relationship with the university, which leads to a commodification of education involving plagiarism, apathy, and customer complaints. This is what Molesworth and colleagues discuss as a mode of existence where students seek to 'have a degree' rather than 'be learners' (2009: 278).

A third view of the student as consumers would have it that students treat education more as fun without too much economic value other than enjoyment: having a nice time with interesting subjects, friends, and intense socialising. Students 'purchases' an educational service just as they might buy an iPhone for their own pleasure (Blake et al. 2000: xi).

In an attempt to determine if any of these possibilities are happening, Haywood et al. (2011) carried out a phenomenographic study of 60 mostly white, British middle-class students studying at a post-1992 vocational university. They asked the students to tell them about their hopes and expectations for the future at different stages of their university experience, beginning with their decision to study for a degree to their experiences leading up to graduation and looking for a first job. Haywood et al. (2011) claim their research shows how marketised higher education can act as a resource for students' daydreams, and in doing so may facilitate or support socialisation into a contemporary 'work and spend' culture fuelled by debt.

As Haywood et al. (2011) stress, the stories told by students have little to do with education or the skills required for a specific job. Instead the stories are focused on consumer lifestyles supported by 'well-paid' jobs. This is of course a major theme in a lot of university advertising. Goodlad and Thompson (2007: 2) show, for example, how going to university is now sold on the premise that it will 'help make your dreams a reality ... and help you find your dream job'. It is also unsurprising perhaps that the stories told by students' emphasise celebrity lifestyles, travel, and image jobs in films and television, which seem to play a large role in creating and sustaining the motivation to get a university degree. (One Deakin University television advertisement promoting 'Deakin Worldly' focused on a student flying first class to exotic locations).

Haywood et al. (2011) rightly emphasise the richness of imaginings relating to these idealised lifestyles in contrast with the lack of detail about the actual career or skills required. For example, ‘Nicola’, a final-year public relations student, describes her ideal future:

[In the future I’ll be] living in [my] barn conversion, working 9–5.30 and being successful and not being stressed because PR’s quite stressful; it’s synonymous with that and I don’t want that ... I’ve got my kitchen sorted and everything. Whether I would get *Grand Designs* in or something and do it from scratch I don’t know ... (Haywood et al. 2011: 183)

It seems that watching *Grand Designs* helped to shape Nicola’s ideas of her dream home. Here we see media representations entwined with expectations of the future. Nicola’s dream is of the *lifestyle* of someone who works in public relations, rather than of doing the work itself. As Haywood et al. suggest, these idealised lifestyles foreground consumption (2011: 183). As well as displaying a lack of knowledge about any particular career, ‘Katie’, a final-year communication student, also talks about a future centering on success, fun, and exciting travel:

I imagine myself being successful, just because it’s something I’ve always obviously wanted to be. And I probably imagine myself working [...] somewhere where I can really have fun. Like I wouldn’t want to work somewhere where it’s numbers, I’d like kill myself, I wouldn’t because I wouldn’t end up in that kind of job, but definitely somewhere where I can be creative. And I would quite like to travel as well ... I definitely will look into moving abroad and working. (Haywood et al. 2011: 186)

One important way these students sustained their imagined future was by avoiding aspects of the course they thought were difficult (and therefore likely to result in failure), preferring to engage with options or subjects which they liked. ‘Hannah’, a communication student, spoke about her dislike at being taught something she didn’t feel was relevant to a future of working in politics:

But I just don’t want to do things that I don’t want to do obviously. And there were certain things like journalism and PR that really did not interest me ... And I don’t see why I should do something that really is not my thing ... I don’t want to be trained for that, because I know I’m not going to use it ... so why would I be trained for something that I’m not going to use? (Haywood et al. 2011: 189)

Some of the students in this research were able seem to maintain idealised daydreams right to the end of their course; for others, however, there was a dawning realisation that the desired career may not be for them after all. For example, final-year archaeology student Oliver described how after three years of study he had decided not to pursue archeology as a career:

I don't want to go into [...] archaeology ... [because of] the money if I'm honest, because it's so bad ... It's just not worth it ... I couldn't live like that ... really it's too low ... I [also] think it's the lifestyle, the fact that it's a lot of outdoor work... (Haywood et al. 2011: 189)

It may be that this research by Haywood et al. (2011) describes some of the motivations and imaginings of young students today. Yet it doesn't really tell us much about how students deal with the demands of being a university student. So how do students engage with the university? It is to that question that I now turn.

BEING A STUDENT

Given the assumption that universities now operate under the sign of the market, have students actually become 'customers' who treat universities in an utterly instrumental way? Granting the sheer diversity in the kinds of students and their modes of engagement with universities, getting and assessing evidence about the motivations of students will be difficult. There is a small body of evidence pointing to a range of conclusions about what contemporary students actually do, and how well they are doing.

To start with, if there is one clearly observed change in the way students experience the university today and the way it was once experienced, it is surely the shift away from students enjoying what was effectively a full-time university experience where they did not need to worry about paid work to a time when that matters for increasingly large numbers of students.

STUDY–WORK BALANCE

In the 1950s, when the nine Australian universities enrolled a total of 36,500 students, a few universities undertook surveys of the student experience.¹³ Among the findings was that only 11 percent of students in 1955–56 had engaged in paid work during their studies although 51 percent reported they worked during the summer vacation (Krause et al. 2005: 93).

Fifty years on, the 2005 survey of first-year students found that the overall proportion of full-time commencing students in paid work had increased from 51.3 percent (1999) to 54.9 percent. By 2009 this had risen to 61 percent.¹⁴ (32 percent of full-time students were working part-time, as were 32 percent of part-time students). Equally, 23 percent of part-time students worked full-time compared with just 3 percent of full-time students (Krause et al. 2005: 50). The 2011 census confirmed the trend, showing that by international standards, the percentage of Australia's students who combined study and paid work was quite high. The 2011 census showed that 73.7 percent of students were enrolled full-time and that 62.4 percent of tertiary-education students worked, with nearly twice as many working part-time as working full-time. As for the hours worked, it seems that in 2004, 27 percent of respondents were employed for more than 15 hours per week, while about 10 percent were working more than 20 hours per week (Krause et al. 2005: 53).

As might be expected there is a clear relationship between the decision taken to work or not and the class and age of students. There is a significant relationship, on the one hand, between low SES background and taking on paid work to meet basic needs and to save for future HECS debts; and, on the other hand, between high SES background and working to be more financially independent of family and to improve employability after leaving university. Students working longer hours (16 or more per week) were more likely to be older, from an English-speaking background, from a lower SES background (as defined by parental education), enrolled in a course additional to their on-campus enrollment, and living in rental accommodation.

In 2004 three-quarters of 19-year-old students reported they worked in order to be more financially independent of their family and 87 percent to afford 'extras' like travel and entertainment. Younger students were less likely than the average for all students to work to meet basic needs. Even so, more than half the 19-year-old respondents said that they were supporting themselves to a substantial degree. The majority of 20–24-year-olds worked to meet basic needs, to afford 'extras', and to be more financially independent of their parents. Older students, who were more likely to be part-timers, worked to support themselves and their families. By 2014, nearly two-thirds of those working did so to afford basic needs. Low SES students were more likely to be working to meet basic needs (73 percent, compared with 48 percent) and to support their families (22 percent, compared with 6 percent) (Baik et al. 2015: 56).

In Britain a survey of students found that 59 percent were working and that 45 percent of all had a part-time job, including a third of students now working part-time during term time. Thirteen percent held down full-time jobs, either during term time, over holidays, or both. Most students were working, at least in part, because of money concerns, with 58 percent wanting to spend the money on socialising and 55 percent on food and household bills (Gil 2015).

On the question of whether paid work affects the study experience, the evidence is not always clear-cut or conclusive. To start with, while in 2009, working students reported an estimated average of 13.7 hours per week, by 2014, this had risen to 14.5 hours per week. The proportion of students working 21 or more hours per week had risen from 8 percent in 1994 to 18 percent in 2014, while those working 31 hours or more had risen from 2 percent in 1994 to 9 percent in 2014 (Baik et al. 2015: 58). In the 2012 national Australian student survey just over half (51 percent) of students across Australia reported that financial circumstances did affect their study. Equally, 49 percent reported no or very little impact. At the same time just over half (52 percent) of students reported that paid work had at least some effect on their study, though there was substantial variation, depending on the university they attended. The impact of paid work was emphasised especially by later-year students, external students, domestic students, and people with English as their native language.

Surveys of first-year students suggests that students committed to part-time paid employment had significantly fewer average weekly contact hours (15.5 hours per week) than non-employed peers (16.8 hours). By 2014, a total of 55 percent of first-year students reported that work interfered with their study—there was also an increase in the proportion of working students who reported missing classes to attend work, up from 18 percent in 2009 to 24 percent in 2014. Again, just over half of students (52 percent) reported that they ‘were finding it stressful to balance study and other commitments’, though only 27 percent thought that their course load was too heavy (Baik et al. 2015: 60).

Again there is a suspicion that the silent effects of class stratification are at work here. The field of study chosen also played a role in this regard. Only around a third of people studying medicine or dentistry, which traditionally have recruited heavily from private-school-educated families with high incomes reported that the need to work for paid work interfered with their studies. This compared with around two-thirds of students in degree programs with large intakes like public health, business, and education.

There are good grounds for believing that elite universities and or elite programs inside universities keep their expectations intact about the quantity and quality of student engagement and study in relation to paid work. It remains the case, for example, that both Cambridge and Oxford universities do *not* allow undergraduate students to combine working with full-time study.

What else can we say about the student experience? Here I focus on first-year Australian students because I can draw on a sequence of well-designed surveys run every four to five years between 1995 and 2014 (McInnis et al. 1995a, 2000; Krause et al. 2005; James et al. 2010; Baik et al. 2015).

MOTIVATIONS?

The first-year students in 1955/56 were asked to cite one reason for their decision to enroll in their chosen degree course. ‘Interest in the course’ was rated as the highest factor (49 percent), followed by job prospects (16 percent). Eight percent of students gave reasons classified as ‘altruistic’. Set against that backdrop there does seem to have been a decisive shift to a more vocational orientation over the past few decades.

Between 1995 and 2014 first-year university students continued to report a mix of ‘interest-related’ reasons and ‘job-related’ reasons in their decision to enroll in university. In the 1990s three-quarters or more of students consistently rated ‘studying in a field that really interests me’, ‘improving my job prospects’, ‘developing my talents and abilities’, and ‘getting training for a specific job’ as important over the three surveys. The most prominent item was ‘studying in a field that really interest me’. In 1994, a total of 95 percent of first-year students rated this as ‘important’ in their decision-making. In 2014, intrinsic interest in the field of study remained the most often cited reason (96 percent) for students coming to university. In 2004, the other three items did not attract such a strong response. Three-quarters rated ‘getting training for a specific job’ as important, while being motivated ‘to improve my job prospects’ was very important for 54 percent of respondents (Krause et al. 2005: 12). In 2014 there was increase in this kind of sentiment, as 87 percent talked about ‘improving their job prospects’ and 77 percent talked about developing their talents and creative abilities (Baik et al. 2014: 24).

In 2004 a little over half said they knew already what type of occupation they wanted, which as Krause et al. (2005: 14) said, may have meant

that those coming into university education had become more focused on career and on preparing for employment, a theme clearly evident in university advertising. By 2014, a total of 65 percent said they knew what kind of occupation they wanted to pursue.

This expression of preference clearly reflects the way modern universities have turned away from traditional humanities and sciences degrees (or what Americans call the 'liberal arts') and moved toward an increasingly professional and vocational curricula. That hasn't meant, however, that broad-scope arts and science degrees have fallen completely out of favour.

In Australia broad arts and social science degrees have consistently attracted around a quarter of all enrollments since the 1960s. In 2013 about 27 percent of students enrolled in this kind of degree program. Equally, the past few decades have seen an increase in student enrollments in professional degrees. In 2013 this included management and commerce (20 percent), health (18 percent), and education (12 percent). Even so, more students enrolled in creative arts than they did in engineering that year (Norton 2014: 22). We see the same kind of pattern. Liberal arts degrees have retained some of their popularity: liberal arts and sciences' degrees declined from 45 percent to 34 percent, but have since stabilised around this mark. In the United States the share of total degrees represented by professional fields increased from 55 percent in 1973 to 62 percent in 1993. In the United States the kinds of degrees on offer that have increased their enrollments the most include computer and information sciences, health professions, security and protective services, transportation and material moving, public administration, and business. However, not all professional fields fared equally well: education, nursing, social work, library science, and all fields associated with the social service/welfare functions of the state (and all enrolling large numbers of women) have declined over time.

Several things stand out about these responses. Firstly, in 2014, close to 90 percent of first-year students indicated they were clear about the reasons they came to university. However, there was also a significant rise in the proportion of students (65 percent up from 50 percent in 2009) who reported experiencing a lot of pressure at school to go to university, and a significant rise in the proportion of students who reported they were strongly influenced by their family's expectations (Baik et al. 2015: 22). It is also significant that in 2014 only a quarter of the students agreed that they were ready to choose a university course when they left secondary school, while 22 percent of students agreed that they would have preferred

a general first year at university before choosing a specific course (Baik et al. 2015: 28). Secondly, many more mature age students (25+) thought that ‘studying in a field that really interests me’ and ‘developing my talents and creative abilities’) was more important than younger students, while high-achieving students (defined as those who had an overall average mark of 70 percent or higher in their first semester) also rated ‘studying in a field that really interests me’ first. Secondly those students who were the first in their immediate family to attend university or who came from low SES backgrounds, and/or who had grades below 60 percent rated improving job prospects more highly than other groups (Krause et al. 2005: 13). Equally, the surveys point to a steady if slight increase in the numbers of students saying they ‘were clear about their purpose’. By 2014, however, one in five were reporting they were ‘they were just marking time at university’, which was twice the proportion saying this in 1999.

That said, the behaviour of students after they start life as a student points to some complexity. Firstly, nearly one in every five students (18 percent) in the sample had withdrawn from some subjects by mid-2004. Of this group, just over half (53 percent) had withdrawn from one, 29 percent had withdrawn from two, and the remainder from three or more subjects or units. This was the same as the withdrawal rate reported in the 1999 survey, which was much higher than in 1994 (8.8 percent—Krause et al. 2005: 17). Those more inclined to withdraw included part-time students and or mature-age students. Numerous studies have identified a range of pressures which older students face as they try to juggle work and family as well as study commitments. In 2004, a total of 42 percent thought about changing courses, while 39 percent cited ‘financial reasons’ and 36 percent pointed to a fear of failing as an important consideration.

Students were also asked if they had thought about deferring and why. No single factor stood out. There was a steady increase from the 1999 survey in the proportion of students saying that ‘emotional health’ and ‘financial reasons’ were important (Krause et al. 2005: 19).¹⁵ In 2014, as in previous years, those students with financial worries tended to think more of deferring. Female students were significantly more likely to think of deferring (22 percent, compared to 17 percent for male students, as were part-time students (27 percent, compared to 19 percent for full-time students and students from regional backgrounds (25 percent, compared to 19 percent for metropolitan students (Baik et al. 2015: 29). Another factor at work here was poor grades. In 2004, a total of 26 percent of ‘low

achievers' reported withdrawing from at least one subject compared with only 15 percent of 'high achievers'. 'Low achievers' also withdrew from a larger number of units, on average, than did 'high achievers'. In 2014, a total of 50 percent thought about deferring because of poor grades. Again we see the impact of class. In 2014 students from low SES backgrounds were more concerned about failing than their peers (59 percent, compared to 36 percent for high SES students) (Baik et al. 2015: 32).

So what then do students actually do as students?

For one thing a majority still continue to turn up on the campus though perhaps for not quite as long as they once did. In 1994, 78 percent of the sample said they usually spent four or five days per week on campus. In 1999, only 67 percent made the same claim. In 2004 73 percent of first year students said they spent four to five days on campus. Equally by 2014, just over half the students reported spending three to four days on campus with a slight drop in the proportion of students who were on campus four to five days per week (59 percent in 2014, compared with 63 percent in 2009) (Baik et al. 2015).

However, students who spent fewer days on campus were also those least likely to ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions. Conversely, those who typically spent four to five days on campus were significantly more likely to study and to discuss their course material with other students. First-year students who spent more time on campus were more likely to report that they felt as if they belonged to the 'university' than those who spent fewer days per week on campus. Students who agreed that it was possible to miss classes because lecture notes were posted on the web were less likely than their peers to spend time on campus. By 2014, the majority of students were reporting that they attended classes unprepared for some of the time, with a small percentage of students (14 percent) reporting that they 'frequently attended classes unprepared'. These numbers have varied slightly since 2004, but have remained consistent. This is also the case for the number of students who indicated that they missed classes. In 2014, the majority of students indicated that they missed classes, and, as in 2009, many of the students said they could do this because of the provision of lecture recordings and notes online (Baik et al. 2015: 39).

The surveys also set out to establish the kind of contact students had with their teaching staff and their work effort. Here the results are suggestive of significant disengagement. In 2004 only 29 percent said they were regularly seeking advice from teaching staff. By 2014 this had increased

to 37 percent (Baik et al. 2015: 22). In 2004 though two-thirds of students said they were confident 'that at least one teacher knew their name', one-third were not confident that this was the case (Krause et al. 2005: 37). By 2014 two-thirds of first-year students 'felt confident that one of their teachers knew their name': one-third were still not confident of this. A third of students also said they never sought academic assistance. This almost certainly reflects in part the increasing use of casual staff who are less likely to arrange student consultations and are probably less likely to remember student names. Equally, more students reported skipping classes and coming to a class without having completed set readings or assignments. Half said they 'occasionally skipped class', while 60 percent said they occasionally came to class unprepared. By 2014 approximately 30 percent of students were reporting that they never asked questions in class and never made class presentations. In addition, approximately one in ten students skipped classes frequently, which was the highest response ever reported (Baik et al. 2015: 1).

Just under half the students in the 2014 study were also reporting that they worked consistently throughout first semester. This was a significant increase from 43 percent in 2009 (and 37 percent in 2004). Part-time students were much more likely to say they worked consistently throughout the semester than full-time students (62 percent, compared to 46 percent of full-time students) (Baik et al. 2015: 32).

Several key features point to declining student engagement with the university as a teaching space. Reflecting the efficiency-driven decisions of university managers to cut class hours, class contact hours per week for full-time first year students declined steadily after 1995 from 17.6 hours in 1994 to 17.1 in 1999 and an average of 16 contact hours per week in 2004. By 2014 this was down to 15 hours a week (Baik et al. 2015: 35) The other finding, that students also typically spent less time in formal class settings, yet on average spent slightly more time on campus than in 1999, suggests that they were using their time on campus to access email and other on-line facilities: in 2014 students reported spending an average of nine hours on-line.

Yet it was also becoming clear that students were spending less and less time on private study. In 1955–56 Australian university students were asked to indicate the number of nights they studied each week. In terms one and three, 15 percent studied one or two nights a week, 21 percent three nights a week, 28 percent four nights a week, and 35 percent five or more nights a week (Krause et al. 2005: 95). In 2004 first-year students

reported studying for an average of 11 hours per week. In view of the fact that they spent on average 16 hours per week in class, it is clear that the academic expectation that students engage in at least two hours of private study for every one hour of class time was not happening among the students in this sample. By 2014 students reported studying for only nine hours per week and only 53 percent said they ‘got a lot of satisfaction from studying’ (Baik et al. 2015: 38).

In America, as we have seen earlier, Arum and Ropska (2011) set out to establish how much students were actually learning in universities. They concluded that the answer for many undergraduates, was not much. Using a standard set of tests and college grades they found that 45 percent of students did not demonstrate ‘any significant improvement in learning’ during the first two years of college, while 36 percent of students did not demonstrate any significant improvement in learning over four years of college. Arum and Ropska (2011) found that students spent, on average, about 12–14 hours a week studying. A third of students each semester did not take courses with more than 40 pages of reading assigned a week, while half didn’t take a single course in which they had to write more than 20 pages over the semester.

In another survey of American students (at the University of California Berkeley), students spent 12 hours a week socialising with friends, 11 hours using computers for fun, 6 hours watching television, 6 hours exercising, 5 hours on hobbies, and 13 hours a week studying.

The steady increase in the coincidence of university study and increases in paid employment would suggest that students would look to increasingly ‘flexible’ ways of doing their university work. In 2004 students reported using the web for study and research approximately 4.2 hours per week on average. More than two-thirds of first-year students frequently used the web for study purposes (Krause et al. 2005: 34). By 2012, a total of 71 percent of students were doing some or all of their study online, while 13 percent were distance or mixed-mode students. In 2014 students reported an average of nine hours use of on-line technology for study purposes.

There is a good deal of ambiguity about the ways students now engage with teaching staff and experience teaching. Many commentators have expressed concern about the fact that more than half of all undergraduate teaching in Australia in 2015 is done by casually employed academic staff, while the staff–student ratio has declined to such an extent that small classes are no longer a part of the student experience. Data gathered by the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement has consistently shown

that Australian students do not score well on measures of ‘active learning’, interactions with academic staff, or ‘enriching educational experiences’ (Australian Council for Educational Research 2010).

Yet we need to remember that things were not necessarily much better in the ‘good old days’. One 1955/6 survey of students at Melbourne University disclosed ‘a fair amount of dissatisfaction on the part of students’. Overall, 53 percent, although satisfied intellectually, expressed some reservations about aspects of their experience. Asked for detail, students made comments suggesting a level of disengagement on the part of academics:

Lecturers do not, or perhaps don’t have time to get to know their students and not enough cognisance is given to the fact that 1st year’s are entering a totally new world and would welcome a more humane attitude from lecturers who now take the place of the understanding school teacher.

We would appreciate being treated more like human beings instead of machines with minds. When appointing tutors their teaching ability should be considered. They should not be chosen merely on their academic brilliance.

In the mid-1990s, as James et al. (1995) report, students often said they were not happy with the quality of the teaching they were getting. Barely half the first-year students surveyed in 1994 ‘found their subjects interesting’, and slightly less than half said that staff ‘were good at explaining things’. It seemed then that large numbers of first-year students were looking for a challenge, but were finding university study unsatisfying and their subjects uninteresting. Only 53 percent had the impression that the academics who taught them were enthusiastic about the subjects they were teaching. Only 43 percent agreed they got satisfaction from studying, and over a third had given serious consideration to deferring in the first six months of their courses (James et al. 1995: 7).

A high proportion of students were quite negative about the way they were being taught, and student perceptions of the overall quality of teaching did not change between 1994 and 1999. In 2004 perceptions remained the same about some aspects of teaching and were even more negative about others. Only 50 percent of students agreed that staff were usually available to discuss their work. Two-thirds of students agreed that staff were approachable even though a third were not confident that at

least one teacher knew their name. Yet there was a significant drop (from 45 percent to 38 percent) in their perception of staff availability to discuss their work and a reduction in the percentage of students who agreed that staff usually give helpful feedback on student progress and took an interest in their progress. Only 30 percent thought academic staff actually took an interest in their progress.

There is also some ambiguity in the finding that more students thought they were dealing with teachers better able to explain things or that 63 percent said they enjoyed ‘the intellectual challenge of the subjects they were studying’. To what extent does this reflect better teaching or is it evidence of the effects of a drive to reduce the demands of teaching and assessment?

WHAT ARE THEY LEARNING?

What of the quality of student learning? The evidence about this is complex and sometimes difficult to interpret. Understanding that the relationship between teacher and student involves what students do and put in as much as what teacher do, it is sobering to note that in 2004, a total of 36 percent of students said they were still having trouble motivating themselves to study (Krause et al. 2005: 29). At the same time, while 83 percent of students expressed a strong desire to do well in their subjects, 53 percent said they only studied the minimum of what was actually required by their teachers. Just over one-third of the students reported borrowing a book from their university library. One-quarter had never borrowed a book. Yet it seems on face value that contemporary Australian universities students are doing very well if the grades they are getting are any indication. Radloff et al. (2012: 18) report that around two-thirds of students reported an average grade of about 70 out of 100. Interestingly, distance- mode students and females reported higher average grades than most other groups. Students’ reports of their grades varied substantially depending on the universities they were attending, which probably reflects at least different grading practices. There were five institutions, for example, at which 40 percent or more reported an average overall grade of 80–100 out of 100, compared with another five at which such grade averages were reported for fewer than 20 percent of students.

The 2014 survey of first-year students pointed to a slight decline in the proportion of students saying that the standard of work expected at university was much higher than they anticipated. Two-thirds of students in the 2014 study reported that the average marks they achieved in

semester one were the same or higher than what they had expected, with 23 percent reporting that their marks were higher than expected, and 44 percent saying they were the same as expected. There was also an increase in the proportion of students reporting higher than expected marks (up from 17 percent in 2009) and a decrease in the proportion of students reporting marks the same as they expected (from 51 percent in 2009) (Baik et al. 2015: 32).

Can we trust that evidence like this reflects both real changes in student capacities for thinking, reading, writing, remembering, comprehending, problem-solving, and so on, and that at the end of it all we can then say is that a given student or cohort of students can do these things really well—or not do them well or at all? This is an important question.

I want to suggest that we really should not be putting much trust or faith in these kinds of assessments and the grades expressing them, partly because we don't actually know how the numbers work (what do they count? or what do they measure?). Let me explore this argument by examining the evidence that American higher education is in trouble.

As we have already noted, there is evidence suggesting that not everything is right with American higher education. In 2014 the American higher-education system had the lowest levels of completions amongst OECD member states (OECD 2013). While the top 50 universities and colleges claimed 90 percent graduation rates, only slightly more than half of students (about 55–59 percent, depending on the year and data source) who enrolled at a four-year university graduated within six years (Bowen et al. 2009). Some state universities graduated fewer than 25 percent of their students within six years of enrolment. Two-year colleges had graduation rates of only 29 percent. We also know that some 60 percent of students entering community college were being required to take remedial courses before being admitted to a degree program. But even this did not seem to be working: over 70 percent of students taking remedial mathematics classes were not passing these courses.

More generally, and according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, more than 31 million American students left higher education without a credential between 1995 and 2014. Over one-third dropped out within the first semester: 80 percent dropped out within the first two years.¹⁶

While this can be interpreted as a sign of failure, it could also remind us that there are different ways of experiencing undergraduate higher education in America, which may be concealed by the data produced regularly

by the OECD and others that talk about averages. Fewer than half of American undergraduate students go to four-year public or private universities, and a respectable proportion of these do complete their degrees on time. It is true enough that the majority of students have a much less straightforward experience. They invariably complete their bachelor's degrees in institutions other than the ones in which they started, often with gaps, and usually involving a mixture of full- and part-time study. At the least it can be said that because of the relative success of this messier system, over 60 percent of American have had some of experience of tertiary study and in popular culture the idea of a 'college education' is still positively referenced and valued.

Equally, it is the kind of data that highlights the messier aspects of American higher education and leads some commentators to talk about the poor level of preparation of university students. In America, Martin Trow (2000: 2) suggests that all advanced societies face a serious problem—namely, a decline in the cultural levels, shared knowledge, and the literacy of students entering higher education. He adds that it is perhaps especially severe in the United States where a 'new' post-linear generation, 'immersed from early childhood in video and audio cultures, is less able or inclined to read'. He claims that the situation is made much worse by the near collapse of the system of elementary and secondary schools.

Conservative commentators disposed to a dark view of contemporary universities and the students in them like Peter Murphy (2013) can draw on equivalent data about attrition rates to provide a pessimistic portrait of the Australian university student. He notes, for example, that each year approximately 18 percent of commencing students in Australian universities drop out—though he admits some of them will return. (This attrition rate actually varies between institutions, from 8 percent in the best case to 33 percent in the worst case.) Murphy claims this is not surprising because many students who enroll in university 'have no aptitude for higher education', and though he does not say where his evidence comes from, he claims that of those who stick, 61 percent of full-time students work an average 13 hours a week, spend 15 hours in class, and put in a meager 10 hours a week studying for class.

My first point is that, accepting this kind of data on face value, this does not seem like evidence that warrants any claim that a 'marketised' university system actually delivers the kind of education which the customers want.

It is certainly data like this that has led some American commentators like Selingo (2013) and Craig (2015) to say there is evidence here of

a failed educational model. They do not, of course, say that the system that is failing is a ‘marketised’ model. Rather, they see here evidence of a model that ‘traditional universities’ have relied on for too long. This claim is the prelude to some enthusiastic advocacy for the proposition that students know best what they need. Selingo (2013: 19) describes this as ‘the customer is always right’ model, and says that what universities must do to survive is to offer much more on-line education (e.g., Massive Open Online Courses or MOOCs which enable potentially vast numbers of students to ‘study’ online) and much more competency-based education. Whatever the merits of the particular proposals for reform, the initial claim itself about a ‘failed education model’ relies, to put it simply, on a farrago of unwarranted assumptions, including assumptions about the veracity of grading practices of academics.

Both Selingo (2013) and Craig (2015) argue that the foundation of the system of higher education in the United States is the credit hour, measured in units of time: credits, semesters, and academic years. They say the concept of the credit hour is defined officially by the federal government as one hour of direct faculty instruction and two hours of work outside of class each week during the semester: ‘this is the standard of the time spent in a chair’. (This is also the case in Australia which works on a one hour of class time and three hours of study time ratio for funding purposes.) In what might be described as a *non sequitur*, Selingo (2013: 112) claims that ‘this method of measurement fails to assess what is actually learned in those seats in any meaningful way’. Both Selingo and Craig claim that America’s universities rely on a ‘method of measurement that fails to assess what is actually learned in those seats in any meaningful way’ because students enroll and pay tuition in order to receive 45 hours of ‘seat time’ for three-credit courses (as well as 90 hours of reading and work outside the classroom) (Craig 2015: 59) and that this amounts to a mode of assessing a student’s abilities. This is a nonsense—though in saying why we will encounter further less obvious, nonsense.

Some years ago the eminent American philosopher Harry Frankfurt (1985/2005) wrote a book with a short title that, unsurprisingly, given the prevalence of the problem he was writing about, became a bestseller. The problem is bullshit, which as Frankfurt explains, involves people talking about things they don’t know very much about:

Bullshit is neither true nor false; hence, the bullshitter is someone whose principal aim—when uttering or publishing bullshit—is to impress the lis-

tener and the reader with words that communicate an impression that something is being or has been done, words that are neither true nor false, and so obscure the facts of the matter being discussed. (Frankfurt 2005: 61)

Part of Craig and Selingo's argument relies on the premise that the 'credit systems based on seat time' once were adequate 'when there were few alternatives to classroom learning, when most college students were eighteen to twenty two year-olds who had plenty of time on their hands, when the price tag of a degree was a lot smaller and when we trusted the rigor of courses offered on most campuses' (Selingo 2013: 113). This is elaborated further when Selingo (2013: 112) says academics actually have no way to assess or measure the quality of student learning except to say their students spend more time on average sitting in a classroom. Equally, when employers see a job candidate they are assured of only one thing: that the person had the self-discipline to complete 120 credit hours to qualify for the degree. Craig (2015: 58–9) offers a mixture of insightful propositions and bullshit.

One of the major confusions at work here relies on the proposition that the number of credit hours has somehow become a *de facto* way of measuring the learning of a student: this has simply never been the case. Academics have always relied on and continue to routinely rely on various techniques of assessment to do that. Those techniques include examinations and short-answer questions and multiple-choice tests, as well as essays and research reports, laboratory reports, and a vast array of practical assessment activities depending on the professional field involved.

Whether this range of assessment techniques has been well or clearly used, or generated convincing or useful accounts of what students learn, is an entirely separate issue. Here Craig is on to something. Craig (2015: 58) says we don't have very good ways of 'measuring our fundamental product'. I think he means to say that we need a kind of 'summative' assessment of what a graduate can think or do at the end of a given number of years of university study. This could be glossed in terms of saying what students are supposed to have learned in their courses, what capabilities they are supposed to be able to demonstrate as a result, and the extent to which they have done so. There are good grounds for thinking that there have always been problems about the capacity of university teachers to say clearly what their students have actually learned to think and do. This is closely connected to the difficulties we have had with measuring teacher quality, as I argued in Chap. 7.

There are several issues. The first is the premise that we know what subjects/courses students have taken and we can also identify the numerical grades from assessment activities undertaken throughout their program of study. This, however, depends on the widespread and largely unthinking reliance on metrics in grading assessments in which it seems academics seek to clothe their judgements about the merits of a student's work with the secular authority signified by a number like '50' or '85'. Academic numeric grades work as all numbers do to promote a certain kind of secular authority and 'objectivity'. This is a largely spurious exercise. The potentially serious misuse of numbers involved in constituting a grade is revealed when we ask what is it that is being 'counted' or 'measured': in the case of counting the number of right or wrong answers in a simple test, not too much damage is done if the grade is based on a simple enumeration of the 'right' answers.

The deeper question—why would a university be teaching and assessing 'stuff' based on simple 'right'/'wrong' answers to test memory—is another question. The idea that students need to be systematically exposed to the kinds of thinking, comprehension, and problem-solving heuristics involved in addressing 'wicked problems' (Rittel and Webber 1973) is still far too little appreciated or addressed in too much higher education in most fields of professional practice to say nothing of basic research in the natural scientific and human sciences. For more complex tasks, the question is much more serious: Assessing a complex thesis or research paper involves neither counting nor measuring: what is it that is being counted? The idea that a teacher is 'measuring' something is simply curious if there is no agreed-on unit of measurement. This also begins to indicate why university teachers reading and evaluating the same complex piece of work like a Ph.D. thesis or a research paper may assess it quite differently. Quite often the actual exercise of grading involves nothing more sophisticated than a process like the kind involved when one person asks another about the film they have just seen or a restaurant meal they have just eaten, 'What would you give that out of ten?'

Teachers need to know something about the real changes that have taken place in a person's capacity for thinking, reading, writing, remembering, comprehending, problem-solving, and so on and be able to describe these changes. We should be able to say at the end of a semester or a whole degree course that this student can do the things we want them to do really well, or not very well, or even not at all. For this we would need to have a mixture of very sharply defined formative assessments that

evaluate these things through the course of the degree program and then some kind of summative assessment which provides an overall view of these abilities. The latter is by and large not happening. We cannot simply assume that the formative assessment is all that accurate a reflection of the things we want students to be able to think and do. The absence of any summative assessment at the conclusion of a degree confirms our inability to say anything clear about what a student can do or think.

That said, many degree programs, especially those involving preparation for professional practice, frequently involve some kind of professional internship, where for example, as a legal or medical intern the student must bring together the various theoretical and practical dimension of their course work in a real-world setting, like a ward or a legal office, and solve problems that are deeply summative and quite demanding because they are occurring in actual site of practice.

CONCLUSION

I do not doubt that many students still continue to get valuable things from their university experience. The overwhelming majority of Australian students surveyed in 2014 claimed they were studying in fields in which they had an intrinsic interest and that their motivations were ‘not narrowly vocational’. They said they were generally sure of their reasons for attending university and had a strong desire to do well. Almost three-quarters of the students reported that they ‘really liked being a university student’, 67 percent said that ‘it was exciting to be at university’, though only 58 percent said that university life really suited them. Most said they both expected and enjoyed the opportunity for intellectual challenge (Baik et al. 2015: 10).

What is less clear is how well they engage with the intellectual challenge of learning. It is deeply problematic that at too many universities, for all the mountains of data now being produced, we don’t really know what students have actually learned or know in terms of being able to think or do act independently. The mountains of data we do have largely reflect a perverse preoccupation with ‘customer satisfaction’. That preoccupation in turn reflects the erosion of academic authority and the presumption that managers can now tell us about the quality of learning and teaching in the university by asking students what they think is happening. Even the elaborate surveying of the first-year student experience only tells us what students believe is going on: whether it is well justified is another

thing altogether. We have too few studies like that of Arum and Ropska (2011) which paint a dismal portrait of the way the great proportion of non-elite students in America's mid-range universities are failing to learn anything—primarily because their teachers have stopped making demands of them.

What is now happening points to a subtle and sometimes not so subtle disappearance of one of the things that universities might properly be expected to do, namely, introduce students to the practices employing the knowledge they have gained. Against those who think knowledge is a 'thing' that can be delivered in on-line modules or memorised for subsequent regurgitating in a short-answer test, we need to ensure that as many students as possible experience 'knowledge' and learning as a demanding and challenging encounter with persistent problems and that the effort to know well is connected to the possibility that after gaining that knowledge we might then do well and live well.

In this respect there is no intrinsic contradiction between a traditionally conceived curriculum in the physical or human sciences and a curriculum inflected toward some kind of professional practice. In fact, you might expect that a professional degree program ought to be even more strongly oriented to ensuring that good practice is something the graduates of such a program can promote because they can both determine the right thing to do and do it because they also know what the right reasons—i.e., well-justified grounds for acting—look like. In this respect, the critical task for both teachers and their students is to ensure that a defensible set of practices conducive to knowledge have been institutionalised.

This means that students will come to know, amongst other things, how to frame good questions, how to make reliable assumptions (and detect those that are not so credible), and then how to search for and evaluate a range of relevant evidence. If these capabilities are being modeled by teaching staff and practiced actively by students under the guidance of their teachers, students can be asked to engage basic intellectual-cum-practical questions that define both good intellectual practice as well as more general professional capacities: for example, what is really happening? how do we explain what is actually happening? and how might things be done better?

The inverting of the traditional relations of authority in which the learning done by students was assessed by their teachers to a situation where students are now charged with the responsibility for assessing the quality of the teaching done by their teachers is good for no one and for

nothing. Designing and delivering a curriculum where the chief objective is to avoid upsetting students—because if the work is too difficult it might compromise the teacher’s Good Teaching Scores—is a horrible moment to have arrived at.

NOTES

1. There are complex factors at play here, including the way women and men work in different industries and do different jobs. Historically, female-dominated industries and jobs have paid lower wages than male-dominated industries and jobs. There is also a persistent lack of women in senior positions. Women are much more likely than men to work part-time or flexibly or to have precarious employment because they still undertake most of society’s unpaid child- and elder-care work. There are also differences in education, work experience, and seniority; and we cannot discount the role of persistent direct and tacit forms of discrimination.
2. Recent work by Leigh (2013) and Picketty (2013) confirms this picture. In Australia individuals in the top 20 percent of income earners got 500 percent as much income as people in the bottom 20 percent of income earners. In terms of wealth, a person in the top 20 percent of wealth owners got 7,000 percent more wealth than a person in the bottom 20 percent. These trends are getting more extreme over time (ACOSS 2015: 2).
3. The sample failed to get a significantly representative sample by failing to include enough international students, who made up over 22 percent of tertiary-education students in 2014 and slightly under-representing students who speak a language other than English at home—who compose 32 percent of students.
4. Using the British approach which locates low-income people by Participation of Local Areas of measures of disadvantage (POLAR) the Fees Commission reported a modest narrowing of the gap between the lowest quintiles and the highest quintiles between 2010 and 2014. In 2010, ‘English school-leavers from the least disadvantaged POLAR2 quintile were 3.2 times more likely to enter higher education than were those from the most disadvantaged quintile. In 2014 this ratio had fallen to 2.5 times, continuing a trend toward widening participation’ (Independent Fees Commission 2015: 12).
5. As research has shown, the rise of student debt has occurred in societies where low- and middle-income earners increasingly rely on debt to fund the gap between their living needs and declining real incomes, while neo-liberal governments do the same to cover the gap between their expenditures and their belief in the value of low tax regimes.

6. As Lauren Berlant (2011) says ‘cruel optimism’ describes a situation where the thing you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing.
7. It is hard to establish whether English universities are diverting student-generated revenue into research expenditure as brutally universities in Australia. Certainly the low status of teaching and the increased incentives for academics to do less teaching and more research achieves the same effect, namely, employing more and more casual staff to do the bulk of the teaching.
8. This is closely followed by other property debt (62 percent) and mortgages (59 percent).
9. Bolton (2016: 18) shows that 2014/15 data suggests that 9 percent of students who received a loan had only maintenance; 7 percent, fee loan only; while the remainder took out both. The average combined loan for those who took out both was £11,460, while the average across all who took out any type of loan was £10,370. In 2013/14 estimated maintenance loan takeup was 89 percent, while estimated fee loan takeup was 92 percent for students in England.
10. In America student loans were initially government backed (and subsidised) through the Stafford Student Loan Program. Private lenders successfully lobbied for participation in the 1990s. These private loans generally had less restrictive eligibility requirements but more restrictive repayment requirements and were a highly lucrative investment for lenders (Heller 2008).
11. When we ‘describe’ students as ‘customers’ or ‘consumers’, we are using metaphors. Metaphors are what we think with. In this sense they are ‘a way of comparing two different concepts’ (Jones and Peccei 2004: 46) and rely, as Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Hofstadter and Sander (2013) have shown, on the capacity to see or make analogies involving an attempt to understand one experience in terms of another experience. All sense-making, including theories and models, is metaphorical in nature (Morgan 1999: 10; Hofstadter and Sander 2013) and every metaphor is at its core also normative.
12. As Heyneman (2004) implies, the notion that one can ‘buy skills’, like the idea you can ‘buy knowledge’, is something no normal person would advance, but then most economists aren’t normal.
13. The first survey of commencing students was conducted by the Student Counselling Service at the University of Melbourne in 1955 and 1956, followed by other surveys at the University of Queensland and the University of Western Australia.
14. One surprising result of the 2014 survey, especially given data from the 2011 census, was that this had dropped back to 53 percent (Baik et al. 2015: 54).
15. One survey of students in two Australian universities (Stallman 2010), suggested high levels of psychological distress in 84 percent of the participants (N = 6,500), compared to only 29 percent in the overall Australian population.

16. To complicate this picture, however, a major contributor to low completion rates is that one-third of students transfer from one institution to another at least one before graduating and 29 percent transfer more than twice.

REFERENCES

- ACOSS. (2015). *Inequality in Australia: A nation divided*. Sydney: ACOSS.
- Andrews, L. (1999). *Does HECS deter?: Factors affecting university participation by low SES groups*, Higher Education Division Occasional Paper Series 99-F, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. Canberra: Ausinfo. <http://www.detya.gov.au/archive/highered/occpaper/99F/does.pdf>
- Arum, R., & Ropska, J. (2011). *Academically adrift: Limited learning on college campuses*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Aungles, P., Buchanan, I., Karmnel, T., & Maclachlan, M. (2002). HECS and opportunities in higher education. A paper investigating the impact of the Higher Education Contributions Scheme (HECS) on the higher education system. <http://www.dest.gov.au/directory/media/reports/HECS.pdf>
- Baik, C., Naylor, R., & Arjkoudis, S. (2015). *The first year experience in Australian universities: Findings from two decades, 1994–2014*. Melbourne: Center for Study of Higher Education University of Melbourne.
- Bankwest Curtin Economics Center. (2015). *Beyond our means? Household savings and debt*. Perth: Cutrin Unjkerosty.
- Berlant, L. (2011). *Cruel optimism*. Duke: Duke University Press.
- Blake, N., Smeyers, P., Smith, R., & Standish, P. (2000). *Education in an Age of Nihilism*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Bolton, P. (2016). *Student loan statistics* (Briefing paper no.1079). London: House of Commons Library.
- Booth, A., & Kee, H. (2010, April). *A long run view of the University Gender gap* (IZA discussion paper series no 4916.) Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor.
- Bowen, W., Chingos, M., & McPherson, M. (2009). *Crossing the finish line: Completing college at America's public universities*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Brown, P., Lauder, H., & Ashton, D. (2011). *The global auction: The broken promises of education, jobs and income*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brown, M., Haughwout, A., Lee, D., Scally, J., & Klaauw, W. (2015, February 20). Payback time? Measuring progress on student debt repayment. *Liberty Street Economics*.
- Bui, K. (2002). First-generation college students at a four-year university: Background characteristics, reasons for pursuing higher education, and first-year experiences. *College Student Journal*, 36(1), 3–9.

- Campbell, J. R., Hombro, C. M., & Mazzeo, J. (2000). *NAEP trends in academic progress: Three decades of school performance* (NCES document No. 2000-2469). Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- Carroll, E. B., & Reichelt, S. A. (2008). Using current consumer issues to involve students in research. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 32, 391–393.
- Coleman, J., Campbell, E., Hobson, C., McPartland, J., Weinfeld, F., & York, R. (1966). *Equality of educational opportunity*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- Craig, R. (2015). *College disrupted: The great unbundling of higher education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dwyer, R. (2015). *Students loans and graduation from American universities*. New York: Third Way.
- Frankfurt, H. (2005). *On bullshit*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gamoran, A. (2008). Persisting social class inequality in U.S. education. In L. Weis (Ed.), *The way class works: Readings on school, family and the economy*. New York: Routledge.
- Goodlad, C., & Thompson, V. (2007, June 22–24). *Dream weavers and dream catchers: Exploring the aspirations and imagined futures of students in transition from further education to higher education*. Paper presented at international conference on Researching Transitions in Lifelong Learning, University of Stirling. Available from www.shef.ac.uk/.../Goodlad_and_Thompson_dream_weavers_and_dream_catchers%5B2%5D%5B1%5D.doc
- Haywood, H., Jenkins, E., & Molesworth, M. (2011). A degree will make all your dreams come true: Higher education as the management of consumer desires. In N. Molesworth, R. Scullion, & E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketization of higher education and the student as consumer*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Heller, D. (2008). The impact of student loans on college access. In S. Baum, M. McPherson, & P. Steele (Eds.), *The effectiveness of student aid policies: What the research tells us* (pp. 39–67). New York: The College Board.
- Heyneman, S. (2004). International education quality. *Economics of Education Review*, 23(44), 441–452.
- Hil, R. (2015). *Selling students short*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Hutton, W. (2015, August 9). Growing student debt is entrenching unfairness for a whole generation. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentis-free/2015/aug/09/student-debt-kick-in-teeth-for-poor-families>.
- Independent Commission on Fees. (2015). *Final report*. London: Independent Commission on Fees.
- James, R., Krause, K., & Jennings, C. (2010). *The first year experience in Australian universities: Findings from 1994 to 2009*. Melbourne: University of Melbourne.
- Jones, J., & Peccei, J. (2004). Language and politics. In L. Thomas, S. Wareing, I. Singh, Peccei, J., Thornborrow, & J. Jones (Eds.), *Language, society and power*. London: Routledge.

- Krause, K., Hartley, R., James, R., & McInnis, C. (2005). *The first year experience in Australian universities: Findings from a decade of national studies*. Melbourne: University of Melbourne.
- Leigh, A. (2013). *Battlers and billionaires: The story of inequality in Australia*. Melbourne: Black Inc.
- McInnis, C., James, R., & McNaught, C. (1995a). *First year on campus diversity in the initial experiences of Australian undergraduates*. Melbourne: Centre for the Study of Higher Education University of Melbourne.
- McInnis, C., Powles, M., & Anwyl, J. (1995b). *Academic roles and values in Australia*. (Research working paper no. 95.3). Parkville: Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne.
- McInnis, C., James, R., & Hartley, R. (2000). *Trends in the first year experience in Australian universities*. Melbourne: University of Melbourne, Centre for the Study of Higher Education.
- Molesworth, M., Nixon, E., & Scullion, R. (2009). Having, being and higher education: The marketisation of the university and the transformation of the student into consumer. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 14(3), 277–287.
- Murphy, P. (2013, May). The rise and fall of our bureaucratic universities. *Quadrant*, https://quadrant.org.au/magazine/2013/05/the-rise-and-fall-of-our-bureaucratic-universities/#_ednref4
- Nordensvärd, J. (2011). The consumer metaphor versus the citizen metaphor: Different sets of roles for students. In N. Molesworth, R. Scullion, & E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketization of higher education and the student as consumer*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- OECD. (1999). *Measuring student knowledge and skills: A new framework for assessment*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.
- OECD. (2013). *Education at a glance 2013: OECD indicators*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2013-en>
- Radloff, A., Coates, H., Taylor, R., James, R., & Krause, K. (2012). *2012 University experience survey national report*. Canberra: DIISRTE.
- Sharrock, G. (2015). How much student debt will you be facing post-budget? *The Conversation*, 15 May.
- Simons, M., & Masschelein, J. (2008). The governmentalization of learning and the assemblage of a learning apparatus. *Educational Theory*, 58(4), 391–415.
- Stallman, H. (2010). Psychological distress in university students: A comparison with general population data. *Australian Psychologist*, 45(4), 249–257.
- Stevenson, N. (2006). European cosmopolitan solidarity questions of citizenship, difference and post-materialism. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 9(4), 485–500.
- Thomas, S., & Bell, A. (2008). Social class and higher education: A reorganization of opportunities. In L. Weis (Ed.), *The way class works: Readings on school, family and the economy* (pp. 273–287). New York: Routledge.

- Trow, M. (2000). *From mass higher education to universal access: The American advantage* (Research and occasional paper series: CSHE.1.00). Berkeley: University of California. <http://www.cshe.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/shared/publications/docs/PP.Trow.MassHE.1.00.pdf>
- Universities Australia. (2013). *An agenda for Australian higher education*. Canberra: Universities Australia.
- Universities Australia. (2015). *Higher education and research facts and figures*. Sydney: Universities Australia.
- Williams, J. (2011). Constructing consumption: What media representations reveal about today's students. In N. Molesworth, R. Scullion, & E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketization of higher education and the student as consumer*. Abingdon: Routledge.

The Fate of Knowledge in the Modern University

The proliferation of new public management talk about ‘strategic plans’, ‘target setting’, ‘benchmarking’, ‘academic audits’, ‘quality assurance’, ‘annual performance review’, and ‘performance indicators’ has become a key part of life in the university. In this ‘new funding environment’ universities are required to demonstrate that what they do is contributing to positive economic and social ‘outcomes’. University funding (now called ‘strategic investment’) is more and more often required to be explicitly linked to specific government goals and narrow measures of ‘relevance’. Many now treat this as evidence that the university has been ‘marketised’. As we have seen, there are many advocates and critics of ‘marketisation’ who treat the ‘marketisation’ project as a reality and who talk as if this has either dramatically improved the quality of teaching or else fundamentally degraded the teaching functions of the university. This argument has also been made about university research.

Proponents of the idea that university research is a core feature of the ‘knowledge economy’ and a central contributor to national prosperity, treat university research as ‘the causeway between *the world of pure and unapplied knowledge* and the world of *real economic impacts*’ (Deloitte 2015: vii) [emphasis added]. That causeway apparently is paved with gold. In Britain, Universities UK claim that investment in university research had a rate of return between 20 and 50 percent.¹ Commissioned by Universities Australia, Deloitte similarly claims to be able to quantify the value of ‘the

existing stock of all knowledge generated by university research': this is 'estimated to account for almost \$160 billion in 2014, equivalent to approximately 10 percent of Australian GDP' (Deloitte 2015: viii). By comparison, as Universities Australia point out, this exceeds the entire value added to Australia's GDP by the mining sector in 2014.² In America the Association of American Universities, representing 60 research universities, claims its members have contributed to America's prosperity by filing 2,700 patents and executing 2,400 licensing agreements in just one year (2011), thereby generating new products, companies, and entire industries in fields like medicine, public safety, food and agriculture, semi-conductors, education, and communications.

This kind of talk takes its cue from a pioneering paper by Edwin Mansfield, who in the late 1980s set out to calculate the economic value of American university research. This he defined as the 'rate of return from the entire investment in academic research' (Mansfield 1991: 7). He argued that policy-makers who needed to decide how much to invest in academic research needed to know about this 'incremental rate of return'. As he put it, 'past investments in academic research are sunk costs, and the social rate of return from next year's investment is what counts'. Armed with an equation, and making many allowances for the mess called reality, Mansfield set out to estimate that rate of return.³ He subsequently announced his finding that 'in the equation where C is the annual investment in academic research during 1975–78, and X is the annual social benefit from this investment, then... the resulting estimate of X, together with our estimate of C, implies that the estimated social rate of return—that is, the value of i in equation (2)—is 28 per cent' (Mansfield 1991: 10). This seemed like very good news and no doubt encouraged neo-liberal governments everywhere that investing in university research was a very good thing.⁴

Others, however, have a different view of the shift to a 'marketised' university model. Levidow (2001: 1) complains about the rise of 'academic capitalism', where university staff are driven into entrepreneurial competition for external funds. Docherty (2014: 76) talks feelingly about the 'marketisation and commodification of knowledge'. Goransson and Brundenius (2011: 4) focus on the neo-liberal emphasis on 'useful knowledge' and the tendency to treat both knowledge and research as commodities by focusing on intellectual property rights. This, they say, has led even European universities to start to follow the US model and introduce legislative versions of the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980, which obligated

university researchers to assign intellectual property rights to governments or to their university. Wendlin (2008) offers a taxonomy of the process whereby university research is commercialised. This she defines as ‘the ambition of the universities to make money from their educational and research activities’ and involves universities using patents, spin-outs, and industrial applications (Wendlin 2008: 145).

As I did in earlier chapters, I start here with some initial scepticism about these claims, because the evidence suggest that something more complex is happening.

Something else is evident in the fault lines that run through universities that have apparently been ‘marketised’: the claim to have commodified research. This is nowhere more apparent than in the way university managers and government attempt to measure and regulate the research that gets done in universities. One sign of this is the now-annual unveiling of the results of various exercises designed to ‘measure’ the quantity and quality of university research, apart from what Wilsdon et al. (2015) call the ‘metric tide’.

Though each country has its own version of these exercises, the *State of Australian University Research 2015–16* report is a typical product of the new order. This report was produced by the Australian Research Council, a national statutory agency which has carried out four rounds of peer-based review of Australian university research called the Excellence in Research Assessment scheme in 2010, 2012, and 2014. The 2015 report announces that ‘Australia’s university research performance is amongst the best in the world’. The Excellence in Research Assessment report adds with commendable accuracy that in 2015, a total of ‘89 per cent of the assessed research areas in Australian universities is rated as world class, up from 68 per cent in 2010’. By comparison, in the same time period in Britain, it seems only 79 percent of research was world-class. In Australia the number of research fields ‘deemed “national research strengths” for Australia also doubled—up from 20 in 2012 to 43’. For those who like rankings, the relative position of each discipline or even an individual university can be plotted.

What any of this actually means and *how it means* call for examination, especially when set in the context of the idea that we have now ‘marketised’ the university. My task here is simple: What has actually happened to university research and how can we explain what has happened?

To address this question I explore the value of the idea that we are seeing the triumph of ‘commodified knowledge’ at the expense of ‘knowledge

as a public good'. I then turn to the effect of the idea that we can measure research quality and then point briefly to some of the consequences of this idea.

KNOWLEDGE AS 'PUBLIC GOOD REGIME' VERSUS THE 'ACADEMIC CAPITALIST REGIME'

One very important line of argument has been advanced that the effect of 'marketising' universities has been to 'commodify' scientific research work and 'knowledge', which for some writers amounts to a new regime, 'academic capitalism'. Sheila Slaughter is the best-known advocate for this argument. In the late 1990s Slaughter and Larry Leslie (1997: 5) argued that 'globalisation' had sponsored and then accelerated a shift toward what they call 'academic capitalism'. They said the 1980s were a turning point in that American 'faculty and universities were incorporated into the market to the point where professional work began to be patterned differently, *in kind rather than in degree*' [emphasis in original]. Later, writing with Gary Rhoades (2004: 7), Slaughter argued that this theory of 'academic capitalism' was designed to show how 'colleges and universities are integrating with the new economy'.

Slaughter and Rhoades developed this story using a binary model that distinguished between two regimes, one called the 'knowledge as public good regime'; and the other, the 'academic capitalist regime'. In the 'knowledge as public good regime', the kind of basic research traditionally associated with university academics is described in terms of certain epistemological or 'scientific' norms first elaborated by Robert Merton (1942/1973).

Merton argued there was a 'scientific ethos' as an 'affectively toned complex of values and norms which are held to be binding on the man (sic) of science'. Merton insisted these norms became institutional values which are 'transmitted by precept and example' and reinforced by sanctions before being in 'varying degrees internalized by the scientist, thus fashioning his scientific conscience' (1973: 268–69).

Merton specified four kinds of institutional norms or regulating ideals, which he said constituted the ethos of modern science. These included 'universalism, communalism, disinterestedness, and organized skepticism'. 'Communalism' meant, firstly, that all scientists believed they should have equal access to scientific knowledge and that there should be a sense of common ownership in order to promote collective collaboration. On this

account secrecy became the opposite of this openness or should we say 'publicness'? The norm of universalism meant that all scientists could contribute to science regardless of race, nationality, culture, or gender. It also opens up a regard to avoiding particularistic criteria of truth. As Merton put it, the norm of universalism 'militates against all efforts to impose particularistic criteria of validity' (1973: 270). This aspect of the ethos suggests that refusing to apply criteria like one's patriotism ('You cannot say that ... it's un-American') or one's ethnicity as in Nazi criticism of what was called 'Jewish science' will help promote the pursuit of truth in the scientific evaluation of evidence and claims.

Merton developed this idea when he argued that the 'failure to adhere to this injunction [i.e., the 'purity' of science] will encumber research by increasing the possibility of bias and error' (Merton 1973: 261). Writing this first in 1938, Merton seems to have had in mind the Nazi state's attempt to 'organise' German science to play a role in rebuilding Germany. He wrote that the 'function of this sentiment [of scientific purity] is to preserve the autonomy of science' because 'if the pure science sentiment is eliminated, science becomes subject to the direct control of other institutional agencies and its place in society becomes increasingly uncertain' (Merton 1973: 260).

The idea of universalism was closely connected to the norm of disinterestedness, a norm requiring scientists to act for the benefit of a common scientific enterprise, rather than for personal gain. Finally, there is the norm of 'organized scepticism', which requires that all scientific claims be exposed to some kind of critical scrutiny before being accepted. I will return to Merton's normative analytic myself, but let us first see what Slaughter and Rhoades do with it.

Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) claim that the Mertonian norms that once characterised university research have been overwhelmed by a new set of norms as universities are encouraged or required to undertake research that serves the needs and interests of 'the economy'. The result is a new regime of 'academic capitalism'. In this regime the separation between basic and applied research is blurred because of the fact that commercial values, such as knowledge privatisation and profit-making, start to redefine the commitment to research that has traditionally been made in universities. In consequence, the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime, 'inventor faculty, and corporations have claims to knowledge produced at universities that come before those of public' and '[p]ublic interest in science goods are subsumed in the increased growth expected

from a strong knowledge economy' (Slaughter and Rhoades 2004: 29). Scientific knowledge that is located in the public is thus treated as 'raw material that can be claimed through legal devices, owned, and marketed as products and services' (Slaughter and Rhoades 2004: 15). Moreover, in the academic capitalist regime, higher education has two economic roles. Apart from generating revenue for academic organisations, its task is also to produce the kind of knowledge that facilitates the global economic competitiveness of corporations (Rhoades 2006). There are several points for consideration when thinking about how accurate this analytic typology is.

Firstly, when Slaughter and Rhoades refer to 'academic capitalism', what do they mean by the term 'capital'? It is important to differentiate between various forms of capital. As Bourdieu (1986) and Munk (2009) suggest, the category of 'capital' need not refer solely or narrowly to economic capital. It can be used to refer to 'social', 'cultural', 'symbolic', and 'informational' capital. While talk about 'academic capitalism' may refer to 'economic capital', it may also encompass 'symbolic capital' like status, prestige, and recognition or 'social capital', which refers to the advantages conferred on people with the right social networks. When Marginson (1997) talks about education as a positional good, he is referring to these kinds of advantages, while also allowing that these can be translated into material benefits like increased income or wealth.

When Slaughter and Rhoades refer to 'academic capital', they seem mostly to have in mind what Roberts and Peters claim about knowledge becoming a 'new form of intellectual capital' (Roberts and Peters 2008: 17). Intellectual property like patents or software licences can be readily translated into economic capital, for instance, by selling the on the markets that have been created through the global and national regulation of intellectual property rights. In other words, intellectual property implies the possibility of creating income streams that enable some universities to participate in economic markets. In this respect, the discussion by these authors of 'academic capitalism' seems a less than clear way of linking various social entities, and activities that have contributed to the kind of shift in practices that worries them.

The second point, which opens up a much broader range of issues, begins when we ask whether and/or to what extent, Mertonian norms had ever actually been adopted or followed by university academics before the rise of 'academic capitalism'. For example, has the separation between 'basic' (or 'pure') research and 'applied research' ever really been so

strict as the distinction between the ‘knowledge as public good regime’ and the ‘academic capitalist regime’ implies. Even Merton did not seem to detect any disjunction between his analytic-normative account of the scientific ethos and his (1970) own widely admired and richly detailed historical account of the rise of modern ‘physical’ or ‘natural’ sciences in the seventeenth century. Given that Merton treats ‘external influences’ as corrupting to both the scientific ethos and to knowledge production, Merton’s own study of science in seventeenth-century England (1970) documents the positive roles played by an array of political, economic, religious, and military factors in promoting the growth of scientific research and legitimating and codifying the normative structure of seventeenth-century science. This points to the ‘uncomfortable knowledge’ that states, especially, have often been deeply interested in certain kinds of knowledge and research that will assist their military, political, and economic ambitions. In the past century this interest was heightened, for example, in times of war, as exercises like the US-led atom bomb ‘Manhattan project’ (1940–45) or the use of mathematicians like Turing in Britain to first crack the Enigma code in 1941–43 and then build the first computers. Even Slaughter and Rhoades (2004: 29) have to acknowledge, ‘In the 1945–1980 period, [so] much scientific and engineering research [in the US] depended on Department of Defence funding for weapons of mass destruction’.

Finally we should note that Slaughter and Rhoades are careful to insist that the distinction between the ‘knowledge as public good regime’ and the ‘academic capital regime’ is really an analytical distinction only. Not even Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) claim that all, or even most universities and academics have actually embraced the ‘marketisation’ of knowledge or the pursuit of profit-making. As they say, ‘academic capitalism has not replaced the public good knowledge regime’ (Slaughter and Rhoades 2004: 29).

At the least, Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) usefully remind us of the need to need to ask some basic questions, chief among them, What is knowledge and why is it a public good? If, as I hope to show, ‘knowledge’ or the research process has not actually been commodified in universities now working under the sign of the market, we still need to ask what has happened to academic research under the sign of the market. Let me turn to the question of knowledge and its status as a public good.

WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE AND WHY IS IT A PUBLIC GOOD?

Aaron Panofsky (2010: 142) rightly stresses that the sharp point of Robert Merton's inquiry was to identify those institutionalised features of 'science' that have historically distinguished and separated it from other spheres of social life and that have endowed it with the ability to generate reliable knowledge and to do so regularly.⁵ Merton believed that the freer a scientific community was from extra-scientific influences, the stronger its institutionalisation of the scientific ethic, and the stronger the collective commitment to elements of the scientific ethos, the less vulnerable it would be to extra-scientific influences. This is surely a relevant concern when thinking about what is actually going on in today's universities. In what follows I will briefly restate and elaborate the case made in Chap. 2 that considering knowledge a public good and for treating knowledge or science (*wissenschaft*) as a social process.

KNOWLEDGE AS A PUBLIC GOOD

To be very clear, I am using the category of 'science'/'scientific' and cognate ideas like 'research' and 'knowledge' in the way Germans use the word *wissenschaft* to denote any systematic processes involving 'learning', 'knowledge', 'teaching' 'research', and 'scholarship' that are framed by questions which engage significant problems. This certainly implies, as I argued in Chap. 2 that 'knowledge' is a dynamic process rather than something that is handed down, and it implicates teachers *and* students in the addressing of issues and problems. Normatively the activity of *wissenschaft* is oriented to the human good that is truth.⁶ It is this bundle of activities and relationships that I treat as a public good.

The concept of a public good itself has been a commonplace among some economists ever since Samuelson's (1954) early taxonomy of public goods. Samuelson treated public goods as all those goods which all of us enjoy in common, in the sense that each person's consumption of a public good involves no loss of any other person's consumption of that good. This is what economists mean when they say that public goods are both 'non-rivalrous' and 'non-excludable'. A hammer, for example, is 'rivalrous' because on a building site only one carpenter can use it, even though three may need to use it; and it is 'excludable' because the guy with the hammer can tell the other two they are not getting their hands on it. In contrast, a brilliant blue sky with a fresh, clean wind blowing is

‘non-rivalrous’ since millions can enjoy it, and no one person or group of people can deny them that opportunity. The points of distinction between ‘private’ and ‘public goods’ are outlined in Table 9.1.

Samuelson suggested further that it is highly likely that public goods will generally benefit the whole community actually or prospectively.⁷ This premise underpins the assumption that the whole community should therefore contribute to the provision and upkeep of public goods. While blue skies and fresh air are not produced by humans, and do not require government intervention to produce them (though it may be needed to protect them), roads, clean water, sewage systems, and street lighting are classical examples of public goods that require some kind of government intervention to ensure their production and/or maintenance.⁸

The idea that knowledge is a public good has become something of a commonplace, if a highly contested one, ever since Kenneth Arrow (1962) first made the case treating knowledge as a public good. As an economist, Arrow’s key point was that while knowledge is frequently expensive to create, it can be disseminated at low or no cost. Stiglitz reiterated this kind of account in 1999. However, others have argued that knowledge is never a pure public good, but always has a mix of the features associated with ‘private’ and ‘public’ goods (Pavitt 1987; Nelson 1992; Callon 1994).

The effective point that these writers make is that it has long suited powerful and wealthy interests to create and use a variety of mechanisms to try to convert the normal ‘public good’ status of knowledge into a ‘private good’ by creating the conditions of excludability. This is not easy, since in its nature knowledge is a common good and freely available once it has been ‘published’ or disseminated in some form.

The excludability of knowledge is not a ‘natural’ or inherent aspect of ‘knowledge’. It is not enough to ground a theory of knowledge as a

Table 9.1 Private and public goods

	<i>Rivalrous</i>	<i>Non-rivalrous</i>
Excludable	<i>Pure private goods</i> (Pen, bread, car)	<i>(Network or club goods)</i> Cable TV, canals
Non-excludable	<i>Common goods</i> Ocean fisheries, commons <i>Congestibles</i> Pest control	<i>Pure public goods</i> Clean air, street lighting <i>Public bads</i> Pollution

Source: Adapted from Ostrom and Ostrom (1977) and Kaul et al. (1999)

public good in the intellectual vanity of researchers, as Daniela Archibugi and Andrea Filippetti do when they claim academics and their universities have long diffused the results of their research often, with the sole satisfaction of seeing their achievements acknowledged and their reputation enhanced. ‘In fact, the dissemination of knowledge is the ultimate goal of their activity’ (Archibugi and Filippetti 2015: 2). The critical point here is to not reify ‘knowledge’ and treat it as some kind of thing: equally, the public good status of knowledge is not grounded only in the motivations of those who do research.

To treat knowledge as the form it may appear in, is to overlook the ways ‘knowledge’ is a dynamic, complex, and utterly social process. ‘Knowledge’ and scholarship (*wissenschaft*) refer to all kinds of social, institutional, creative, intellectual activities, relationships, and practices. Those activities, relationships, and practices include going to seminars or lectures as well as lecturing, engaging in research supervision, doing peer review of new papers, doing email correspondence, offering critiques in book reviews, participating in debates and controversies, publishing in journals and books, enabling media reporting of ‘discoveries’, and conference participation. Normally, these practices and institutions prevent excludability.

In this way knowledge is not to be confused with the forms in which it may appear, like books, journals, internet encyclopedias, or the specification of techniques, software, or chemical analysis required in a patent application. However, excludability can be constructed, starting with the use of forms like commercial publishing or the specification of certain kinds of techniques or designs. As Archibugi and Filippetti (2015) argue, mechanisms like this enable excludability along with other kinds of institutional devices that artificially enable excludability.

Those who create knowledge through activities like research, design, and invention can use three kinds of techniques to exclude others from accessing or benefitting from the knowledge they have generated (Archibugi and Filippetti 2015). The key forms are intellectual property rights (including patents), secrecy, and access codes.⁹ These are all constraints on the fullest flourishing of knowledge-as-process. Among the odd effects that follow (as I suggested in Chap. 4) are that knowledge and ignorance are imbricated with each other, since as McGoey (2014a: 9) notes, devices like secrecy are used by those wielding power to protect knowledge, enabling ignorance to flourish. This is surely a worrying effect in any university.

Intellectual property right refers to a family of legal devices, including patents, copyrights, and trademarks, intended to guarantee to researchers and inventors the exclusive right over the product of their activities, although usually for a limited span of time. These tools are an institutional solution provided by states. As economists like Archibugi and Filippetti (2015) acknowledge, these legal interventions are needed to enforce the excludable nature of knowledge more than in most other aspects of economic life. At the same time Archibugi and Filippetti (2015) rather naively accept that states do this so simply to solve the problem of underproduction of public goods. The idea that states might want to promote the interest of powerful corporations so as to further advance their already existing asymmetrical access to wealth, intellectual resources, and political power seems to be beyond the imaginative capacity of most economists. The tawdry history of recent copyright claims—such as researchers and corporates taking out a patent on the DNA of rice seed so they can sell rice farmers seed they already possess, or do the same with the DNA sequence of human breast cells so they can then market lucrative breast cancer diagnostics—seems both breathtakingly heartless and something close to criminal theft. These kinds of raids on the commons frequently backfire as they provoke ordinary citizens to defend what is really integral to the natural or human heritage. As the case of generic pharmaceuticals produced in India indicate, intellectual property rights like patents do not guarantee full protection because they are infringed upon so often.

Imposing secrecy provisions on researchers and the work they do is another common technique often used to make excludability possible. Among the common devices that make this possible are confidentiality clauses in research contracts. On many occasions those researchers who are actually doing the research work do not seek secrecy. Rather, it is imposed on them by their employers, who may include universities, governments, or corporations to prevent others getting access to their research either for commercial reasons or for ‘reasons of state’. Secrecy is commonly used not only in the military sector but by business entities. Again, secrecy is an imperfect device and is not always easily achieved since it can be circumvented by military and industrial espionage, headhunting, reverse engineering, whistle-blowers, and hackers. As we have seen with repeated scandals involving big pharmaceutical companies, the strategy of secrecy is a high-risk strategy. While the technique of secrecy may have been adopted to ensure that the results of clinical trials which do not support public claims to the therapeutic efficacy of drugs like thalidomide or

various antidepressants are not made public (in order to bolster corporate profits). This technique may also unleash a human disaster and lead to massive legal sanctions against those companies.

Finally, the use of access codes has become increasingly common. Access codes are one of the great paradoxes of the digital society. This is because the use of access codes has developed along with the digital revolution enabled by the World Wide Web, whose very existence was grounded in an idea of perfectly free communication.¹⁰ As Benkler (2013: 285) reminds us, the commitment to knowledge as a public good has underpinned the spread of Free and Open Source Software, which has undone attempts by corporations like Microsoft to monopolise the creation and sale of software. The development of technical methods that make it more difficult to use knowledge without authorisation include access codes, passwords, firewalls, and software protection. On the one hand, the technical reproducibility of artefacts. As the incendiary revelations of Wikileaks and Edward Snowden suggest, access codes, passwords, and other devices do not guarantee the protection of information that governments and security agencies would like to keep under wraps.

What this discussion suggests is that making something like knowledge that is intrinsically a public good into a private good is not so easy to do. Yet we are clearly being encouraged to believe that the production of knowledge by university-based research is being, or has already been, commodified or commercialised, I propose that we examine the available evidence to establish whether this is the case.

To do that we need to look more closely at what kind of research is currently being produced by university staff and how it is funded. The assumption to be tested here is that whether university-based research is being, or has already been, commodified or commercialised. This will be evidenced by significant levels of commercialised research income or the issuing of patents and similar intellectual property protections.

WHAT IS ACTUALLY HAPPENING: AN AUSTRALIAN CASE STUDY

In this section, I draw on a body of publicly available data gathered by the Australian Research Council as part of its Excellence in Research Assessment scheme, which surveys the performance of Australian universities in terms of how much research income they get, where they get it from, and what they do with it. The Excellence in Research Assessment

scheme is a lot like the British Research Excellence Framework scheme.¹¹ Unlike Britain, which currently is the only country to use the results of an exercise like Research Excellence Framework to distribute research funding, Australia's Excellence in Research Assessment does not affect research funding—yet.

Acknowledging the idea that 'academic capitalism' ostensibly involves the commercialisation of research, the first question to be addressed is, how much is invested in university research and where does the investment come from?

To put the story about research funding into perspective, in 2014, total operating revenue for Australian universities was \$27.1 billion (compared with total revenue of \$18.4 billion in 2004). This revenue is sourced primarily from government grants to support teaching along with student fees. The quantum of government grants has not diminished over the last decade. In 2004, a total of 80 percent of all university revenue came from these two sources. In 2014, this figure was 84 percent (UA 2015: 4). (The total of *consultancy and contract income* tied to educational processes seems to make up less than \$AU0.8 billion).

However, when we turn to analyse the quantum of *research funding*, it needs to be acknowledged that it is not easy to reliably establish the sources and quantities of research income or research expenditures in Australia. Firstly, the funding of university research in Australia is complex, making the task of finding out how much money is involved in university research quite difficult to ascertain. For example, the Higher Education Research Data Collection collects data on university research income by source of funds but *excludes* income from Commonwealth government research block grants, infrastructure grants, and internal university income. Secondly, as I have already argued, there are good reasons for thinking that most universities are diverting a significant proportion of their student fee income away from teaching and into research (Cram 2009; Norton 2014).

With these caveats in place, it seems that in 2013 Australian universities had total research 'income' of \$AU9.9 billion. (This does not include any budgetary diversion from teaching to research going on in individual universities.) Among the key sources of research income are competitive grants allocated by the Australian Research Council and the National Health and Medical Research Council. There are also a number of smaller Commonwealth funding agencies which fund research relevant to their portfolio interests. For 2012, universities reported about \$1.6 billion in fund-

ing from Commonwealth Competitive Research Grants. In 2013 about 49 percent of university research income (\$4.82 billion) came from Australian Research Council and National Health and Medical Research Council grants. In addition, another 26 percent (\$2.57 billion) came from other public sector grant sources. Another 26 percent (\$2.17 billion) was attributed to income sourced from ‘industry and others’ (ARC 2015: (1): 87).

The Australian government also gives performance-based block grants to support research—which Higher Education Research Data Collection does not include in its account of research income. In 2014, \$1.72 billion was provided to universities as block grants for research and research training. Research block grants are allocated according to performance-based formulae and are independent of funding for specific research projects, programs, or fellowships. Universities have considerable autonomy in deciding what research projects, personnel, equipment, and infrastructure this funding will support.¹²

As this evidence begins to suggest, any notion that Australian universities are actually attracting large amounts of commercial research income is simply not the case. The overwhelming preponderance of money used to fund research comes essentially from various public sources.

To put this another way, the amount of commercial research income is extremely modest. The Excellence in Research Assessment scheme (ARC 2015: 101) reports that universities earned research commercialisation income for the 2011–13 added up to a total of \$AU155 million or \$AU51 million annually (or 0.019 percent) of the ostensible annual research income in 2013 of \$AU9.9 billion. Drilling down into the way different disciplines attract commercial research income shows what should come as no surprise: a small number of disciplines earn the lion’s share of commercial research income, while many disciplines earn little if any commercial income.¹³ For the three years of reporting, the field of medical and health sciences earned \$AU75.2 m (with the bulk of this income coming to researchers in fields like immunology (\$33.9 m), pharmacology (\$13.3 m), and oncology/carcinogenesis (\$12.2 m). A few other disciplines like agricultural and veterinary sciences (\$35.4 m) and engineering sciences (\$15.8 m) complete the big picture.

The same point can be made about the idea that university research is economically valuable because it generates income from intellectual property rights. As Table 9.2 below indicates, half of the disciplines, namely, those within the category of physical and life sciences, were able to generate patents, while the other half, most of them in the social sciences, did not.

Table 9.2 Research data Australia 2014

<i>Field of research outputs</i>	<i>Research income (\$m)</i>	<i>Research staff</i>	<i>FTE granted</i>	<i>Patents</i>
Mathematical sciences	10,532	150.7	922	0.2
Physical sciences	15,990	354	1,148	44.6
Chemical sciences	15,288	335.2	1,353	92.9
Earth sciences	11,090	360.5	960	5.0
Environmental sciences	9,288	418.5	828	14.6
Biological sciences	28,795	988.5	3,294	122.2
Agricultural and veterinary	12,094	531.9	1,287	22.3
Information tech sciences	24,856	248.3	1,749	52.9
Engineering	57,124	1,085	3,711	293.5
Technology	6,442	114.7	670	42.0
Medical and health sciences	90,550	3,670	9,788	235
Built environment	9,934	80.5	1,109	00
Education	20,238	215.7	2,908	00
Economics	9,366	155.1	947	00
Commerce Management tourism	2,5334	153.3	3,175	00
Studies in society	2,2978	322.1	2,411	00
Psychology	14,377	265	1,421	00
Law	10,252	75.5	1,339	00
Creative Arts				
Writing	12,905	38.5	1,567	00
Language	13,409	76.7	1,574	00
History				
Archaeology	7,934	116	773	00
Philosophy	6,619	47.5	616	00

Source: ARC (2015 (Vol. 1): 28–33)

To summarise: since 2000, the apparent value of university research and development revenue has increased from around \$4.5 billion to nearly \$10 billion. Equally and since 2000, the real value of the total research income received by universities has increased by nearly 70 percent (to \$5.5 billion). However there are large differences in how the various components of this income have grown. In Australia, governments continue to be the overwhelming source of funding for research. The total amount of real government spending on science, research, and innovation has increased from \$6.7 billion in 2000 to around \$10 billion in 2014. Government support to encourage innovation in business has more than doubled, to around \$3.2 billion a year. Funding for research block grants

and other higher-education research appears to have declined in value by around 20 percent, to \$2 billion a year, but this result may be affected by how this funding was estimated prior to 2004. Funding by the Australian Research Council and the National Health and Medical Research Council has increased to nearly \$1.8 billion a year (UA 2015: 19).

There is one final point. Like America's and Britain's universities, some of Australia's universities are 'more equal' than the others. The first hint of this is suggested by the Table 9.2 above. What it points to is a clear concentration of both research funding and output by discipline or field of research. (The fields of research doing very well in terms of research funding are highlighted in boldface.)

In 2013, when total research income was \$AU9.9 billion, 49 percent of this research income (\$4.82 billion) came from ARC/NHMRC grants; and most of this went to the medical and health sciences (37 percent); the rest, to engineering (9 percent) and to the biological sciences (12 percent). Another 26 percent (\$2.57 billion) sourced from other public sector agencies, again, largely replicates the distribution of competitive grant funding with the medical and health sciences, who are the big winners again. Finally 26 percent of research income was sourced to 'industry and others' (\$2.17 billion), which again follows the same kind of pattern, with 41 percent of this funding going to the medical and health sciences group.

In terms of research 'outputs', the physical and biomedical sciences were the clear leaders, with the medical and health sciences clearly the disciplinary leaders in terms of research outputs (with 21 percent of total national output), followed by engineering (13 percent). In the social sciences, research, education, commerce management and tourism, and studies in human society each produced 5 percent of the total outputs in 2013 (ARC 2015: (1): 87).

The Table 9.2 highlights an 'obvious' fact: the big winners in the allocation of competitive research money are the biomedical sciences and some of the other physical and biological sciences. However, though this can only be clearly shown after drilling down a bit further into the data, the distribution of research income reveals that a small number of universities take the lion's share of this income. The universities that belong to the Group of 8 take on the order of between 70 and 80 percent of research funding, depending on the precise measure used. Those universities are the old foundational elite or 'sandstone' universities (in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide, Hobart, Brisbane, and Canberra). With the exception of the Canberra-based Australian National University, all are old and all have

long housed biomedical disciplines as well as cognate sciences like agriculture, veterinary sciences, and engineering. The Group of 8 has tirelessly lobbied to prevent what they see as newer and more poorly performing universities, some of them even former Colleges of Advanced Education, from competing with them for a slice of the research funding cake. They probably do not need to worry so much.

I have argued that we cannot treat the teaching and learning practices of a university as if they can ever be commodified: this is just a crude category mistake. What is clear is that on the basis of this evidence, ‘knowledge’ or research has not yet been commercialised or commodified in Australia. The same cannot be said quite so definitively about academic research in countries like the United States.

ACADEMIC RESEARCH UNDER THE SIGN OF THE MARKET?

As I have argued, in terms of funding, there is very little evidence yet that Australian universities are successfully attracting commercial sources of research funding. In the United States the situation is a little different.

The development of close ties between American universities and for-profit business entities as well as concern about these close ties is not new, as a considerable body of research and commentary addressing this theme suggests (AAUP 1983; Blumenthal et al. 1986; Kenney 1986; Shenk 1999). As Kleinman notes, work like these ‘expressed concern about corporate influence on academic research agendas as well as marked increases in conflicts of interest, secrecy, and focus on research as proprietary (Kleinman 2010: 25). The evidence is clear: through much of the twentieth century American businesses looked to expand their influence over America’s universities. As early as 1925 George Hale and Herbert Hoover, then US Secretary of Commerce, headed up a campaign to raise \$US20 million from industry to finance basic university research (Washburn 2005: 35). From the 1920s on major corporates like General Electric, Dow, du Pont, and AT&T offered to finance university research, recruit graduates, and establish consulting relationships with colleges like MIT or CalTech (Washburn 2005: 40). There has been equally long-standing concern in America going back to the start of the twentieth century about the very close ties between some industry sectors and some American universities, and the possibility that commercial imperatives might indeed corrupt or subvert the integrity and autonomy of university research. Writing in 1918, Thorsten Veblen raged against the way ‘the ideals of scholarship are

yielding ground, in an uncertain and varying degree, before the pressure of businesslike exigencies' and worried about the attempt to turn higher education into a 'merchantable commodity, to be produced on a piece rate plan, rated, bought and sold by standard units' (Veblen 1918: 139).

As writers like Kleinman (2010) and Radder (2010) have shown it is entirely possible to begin to reshape academic research by introducing new kinds of financial incentives. Radder says this might begin, for example, when universities pursue economic rewards by selling the expertise of their researchers or the results of the research to corporate interests. Or it might involve university departments carrying out doctoral research and offering students doctoral scholarships funded by a corporation, or carrying out contract research for a company (Radder 2010: 7) It might also involve more subtle processes, where decisions taken by universities about what they will research begin to be taken only in the light of economic imperatives or criteria and may even be taken at the expense of otherwise compelling ethical or public good criteria. This possibility has little to do with any distinction between 'applied' and 'pure' research or science:

although it is true that in our present-day 'knowledge economy' the implicit or explicit identification of these purposes [i.e., producing applied or pure science] with economic purposes is pervasive, there is no necessity to do so. Science can be used and still is being used in the more general interest of the public. (Radder 2010: 5)

Though this whole question deserves very close scrutiny and a lot more attention than it will get here, it does seem that there are only a small number of areas and cases where the evidence clearly points to economic factors eroding or compromising the integrity of the research process. Among the well-documented cases is a history of big tobacco companies buying favourable research evidence about the benign effects of cigarette tobacco. Other historians can point to efforts by large pharmaceutical companies to bury negative clinical trial data pointing to the relative inefficacy of various antidepressant medications (Kirsch 2009), and the imposition of secrecy clauses on academic researchers by pharmaceutical companies. as data about the harmful effects of medications like (Thalidomide)—used to treat pregnant women—or Vioxx—used to treat inflammation—became available (Goldacre 2012). With the exception of cases where researchers have knowingly accepted paid commissions to falsify their data, most of the cases involve attempts by corporate interests to overcome the public

good status of certain scientific knowledge by imposing secrecy conditions on the dissemination of knowledge. These exercises are always doomed to fail because the public good status of knowledge seems non-repressible, even if it takes some time for this knowledge to become public.

Granting the general difficulties involved in these and attempts to commercialise or commodify knowledge, we now need to ask what has happened to university research in universities that have ostensibly been marketised. The answer, again, is staring us in the face.

We have seen what happened to the neo-liberal higher-education policy project that set out somehow to ‘commodify’ higher education by turning students into ‘customers’. This, it was thought, would make the university more ‘efficient’ *and* better able to deliver ‘excellence in teaching’ while meeting a number of other, not always necessarily congruent, economic and social equity objectives. This was supposed to be a natural consequence of turning higher education into a competitive market and leaving competition to remake the university.

What actually happened, absent anything like a real market or real competition, has been a management-driven exercise to introduce a market-based model of higher education, which actually entails a contradictory mix of policies. The failure-cum-inability of the new public management ethos to actually ‘marketise’ higher education has not affected the disposition to use the vocabulary of markets: if anything, that vocabulary, accompanied by a lot of heavy breathing, continues apace. This is what I call ‘market-crazed governance’. With respect to teaching, this has led to pursuing ‘efficiency’ and ‘quality’ by replacing full-time teaching staff with casualised, cheap teaching staff and/or on-line delivery. Absent real competition, governments and university managers have demanded evidence of change and of the quality which these measures were supposed to ensure. This has led to the introduction of a ‘culture of audit’ and elaborate metrics of quality managed by the expanded cadre of administrators. The very logic of creating a ‘market’ with students reconfigured as ‘customers’ has led to the reliance on students to assess both the quality of the teaching *and* of their own learning.

A parallel process has been set loose as managers now regulate and monitor the quality of the various kinds of research that go on in universities. The same logic appears to be operating. The neo-liberal policy-makers talk about making universities central to the ‘knowledge economy’ and ensuring that academic research becomes ever more ‘commercial’, ‘competitive’, and ‘real world relevant’. This is a very exciting way of talking, though

it does not have much more reality value than the fevered imaginings of some adolescent ‘in lust’ with a distant media star. But, as ever, the manageriat have overcome the obstacle represented by the ‘public good’ status of knowledge. They have invented an elaborate culture of audit that purports to ‘measure research quality’ while promoting a very satisfying competitive regime signified by the various global rankings of universities. Again, this is another consequence of market-crazed governance.

THE INTRODUCTION OF BUREAUCRATIC RESEARCH METRICS

The United States does not have a single national system for assessing university research. In recent years, it has actively supported projects like STAR METRICS (Science and Technology for America’s Reinvestment: Measuring the Effects of Research, Innovation, and Competitiveness and Science) launched in 2010 and led by the National Institute of Health, the National Science Foundation, and the Office of Science and Technology Policy. This project aims to create a repository of data to assess the ‘impact’ of federal research funding.

Australia and Britain have seen the introduction of national research assessment systems designed to assess the performance of researchers and assign numerical scores. These are typically based on measures like an individual academic’s publications, contribution to the research environment, peer esteem, research impact, external research income obtained, and number of Ph.D. student completions. In Britain, the Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the latest version of an exercise that started back in 1985. In Australia, the Excellence in Research Assessment scheme has been carried out three times. In 2012, twelve Australian universities also ran a small-scale pilot exercise to assess and measure the ‘impact of research’, called the Excellence in Innovation for Australia trial.¹⁴

These exercises have been introduced in order to maintain the ‘as-if’ fiction that university research has been ‘marketised’. What is really driving the pursuit of metrics of quality are demands by policy-makers for some kind of data that documents research quality as well as the need of university managers to promote their capacity to engage in competition within and between institutions for prestige, students, staff, and resources. The result is that these exercises generate a lot of data, encourage a highly competitive ethos, and underpin the all-important global rankings of the

world's best universities. And in the case of Britain, it is now affecting research funding. Research funding in Britain's universities has been contingent since 2013 on demonstrating its economic benefits and dividends. As Monbiot (2009) observes, universities 'are being turned into corporate research departments. No longer may they pursue knowledge for its own sake: the highest ambition to which they must aspire is finding better ways to make money'. Monbiot argues that a quiet intellectual revolution took place in Britain in April 2009. This was because the research councils, which provide 90 percent of the funding for academic research, introduced a requirement for those seeking grants: 'they must describe the economic impact of the work they want to conduct' (Monbiot 2009). This changed the idea of quality, which until then typically denoted the overall caliber of research based on the values, criteria, or standards operating in a given academic community. To get some idea of what the research assessment exercise looks like, I will take a closer look at the Excellence in Research Assessments scheme.

MEASURING RESEARCH QUALITY?

What does an audit exercise like Excellence in Research Assessment consider 'quality'? How does it actually define and assess quality and how does it measure research quality?

For a start, the Excellence in Research Assessment exercise depends on a peer review process. The Australian Research Council uses its data base of Australian academics to select well-published and credentialed senior academics to act as peer reviewers. These reviewers are assigned to relevant fields of studies and then asked to review the submitted work. This consists of a pool of nominated 'peer review outputs', which make up what the Australian Research Council calls a Unit of Evaluation. The unit comprises a computer file of published books, papers, and chapters selected by the university, employing the academics who produced that work. The reviewers are then asked under conditions of confidentiality and severe time constraints to read a target number of research 'outputs' and then report on the overall standard of quality of 'outputs' reviewed. They are directed to send their reports on the quality of that work to another 'layer' in the process, a group of people who comprise the Research Evaluation Committee. These people need not be experts or even know very much about the field of research being reviewed.

The evaluation of the research outputs requires that the peer reviewer be ‘qualified to understand the discipline nationally and internationally’, the relevant disciplinary publishing practices like the best and/or the most appropriate journals and book publishers, the major research problems being addressed by the discipline, and generally, as the Australian Research Council puts, it ‘where the frontiers of knowledge are’.

In the 35-page handbook given to peer reviewers what the Australian Research Council mean by the notion of ‘quality’ is spelled out—in just one page. The Australian Research Council says there are three dimensions of quality—comprising three factors, namely, ‘approach’, ‘contribution’, and ‘quality distribution’, with a focus on ‘contribution’ as the key marker of quality.

In writing about the approach, reviewers are asked to provide the disciplinary context for the benefit of Research Evaluation Committee members, who, the Australian Research Council says, ‘may not necessarily’ be directly involved in the field of research. Peer reviewers are asked to consider addressing questions like what contextual information and common disciplinary practice are relevant for reviewing the quality of research outputs that were sampled? They can also assess whether the methods appropriate to the discipline are spelled out and whether they are appropriate to the research questions. Reviewers are asked to comment on what the overall approach taken demonstrates about the quality of the research sampled.

‘Contribution’ is described as the contribution of the group of outputs reviewed. The reviewer is asked to provide a judgment about the quality of the work which has been reviewed. The reviewer is asked, for example, to consider a number of questions. Is the research timely? Is the research (in terms of question and/or findings) significant? What degree of originality and/or innovation is there in the research approach or research questions? What is the level of theoretical and conceptual rigor in the research? Does the research demonstrate depth of discussion and analysis? Has the research been subsequently used by others? Finally, the reviewer is asked to assess the contribution nationally and/or internationally to the further development of knowledge and understanding. These are all substantial questions, which might properly be addressed in a book review about one book. The idea that these questions might be addressed to a collection, including three or four books, half a dozen chapters, and the same number of scholarly papers seems a trifle daunting. This is a serious problem, given that the reviewer is required to read a sample of outputs

which may include books, book chapters, and journal articles and to then write a report of no more than 10,000 characters.

Finally, the reviewer is asked to summarily assess and measure the ‘quality distribution’, that is, the quality of the work distributed across the sample reviewed. The Australian Research Council helpfully suggests the use of a scale from 1 (the lowest quality) to 4 (the highest quality). The ARC says this should be considered a ‘banding’ rather than as a series of fixed points. The Australian Research Council adds the expectation that the written analysis in the report will align with and reflect the proportions of quality recorded across the quality distribution scale.

This, then is the vacuous heart of a very elaborate bureaucratic exercise. In Britain, the Research Excellence Framework 2014 exercise involved more than 1,100 British academics spending about one year reading and assessing 191,232 research outputs submitted for review. As one academic panelist there complained, it would require ‘two years’ full-time work, while doing nothing else’ to read the 1,200 journal articles he had been allocated (Sayer 2014). It is estimated that the cost of the exercise in Britain was around £47 m spent in universities and a further £12 m in central administrative costs.

It seems difficult to give much credence to the idea that any review panel or individual reviewer, however competent and conscientious, could actually read and assess all of the books, chapters, and paper submitted for assessing and ranking. Apart from the sheer volume of work being assessed, the assumptions appears to be that there is no issue arising from the increasing specialisation in some areas of current research. No national research assessment exercise can possibly presume to have access to reviewers possessing the competence to judge between merely acceptable and really significant contributions to knowledge in a given discipline. As my account of the Excellence in Research Assessment process suggests, the evaluation involved nothing like the kind of rigorous peer review process which a single article or book proposal submitted for publication might be subjected to or the kind of peer review process used to assess applications for research funding or promotion. The requirement that reviewers write a report of no more than 10,000 characters in length on an entire Unit of Evaluation comprising multiple books, book chapters, and refereed journal articles seems to give the lie to the idea that this is a searching inquiry into the quality of a large body of work.

Then there is the requirement to create and assign metrics of quality. Wilsdon (2015: i) points to the blunt use of metrics such as journal impact

factors, h-indices, and grant income targets, which overlook some of the most precious qualities of academic culture that resist simple quantification. Critical observers like Lawrence (2007), 'point to the damage done by poorly designed evaluation criteria' which are 'dominating minds, distorting behaviour and determining careers.' Here as Wilsdon et al. (2015: 58) notes. What the use of a metric using a range of 1–4 does is to assert that a '1' means or says the same thing about research done, whether it is in physics, archaeology, creative writing, accounting, or social work. Yet it is clear that research across disciplines, and within them, is diverse in practice and output. This is to say nothing of any more profound and deep differences engaging questions of epistemology, method, styles of communication, degree of difficulty, or approaches to evidence. These differences are silently annihilated by the tacit assumption that a single number establishes an identity between actually quite disparate practices or research 'outputs'.

This, again, is to say nothing about whether these numbers involve either some kind of counting process or some measurement process using agree-on units of measurement. In this case, like the spurious practice of academic grading that uses a percentile number, the answer is that the Excellence in Research Assessment exercise involves neither counting nor measuring. There is nothing to count and there is no agreed-on unit of measurement. The crucial move from some kind of qualitative assessment to a numeric grade is designed to create a sense that there is now an authoritative number that should keep critics or doubters silent. The process is actually as rigorous as asking two people after they have seen a film or have just eaten a meal in a restaurant to give it a score 'out of ten'. It also begins to look a bit like the academic version of a student satisfaction survey used to 'measure the quality' of teaching or the quality of learning. In this case, it looks more like a survey of academic satisfaction.

Perhaps this is why Wilsdon et al. (2015) conclude that the old practice of peer review, 'despite its flaws and limitations, continues to command widespread support amongst academics'. Granting that peer review is not perfect, it is still 'the least worst form of academic governance we have, and should remain the primary basis for assessing research papers, proposals and individuals, and for national assessment exercises like Excellence in Research Assessment or the Research Excellence Framework'. In this respect, as Wilsdon and his colleagues suggest, metrics should support, not supplant, expert judgment (Wilsdon et al. 2015: viii).

In a sense though, this critique make some important points, but it does not matter. For example, it may well be that the doctrine of Papal Infallibility is theologically spurious and historically improbable, but this does not stop the Papacy from continuing to exercise the authority it does. This is because too many Catholics have neither the interest in, or the courage to question, the doctrine. The same may be true too for the great bulk of academics. It has been said only half in jest that the only things likely to arouse an academic to take any kind of political action is an increase in their car park fees or a decision to move them out of one office into another without consultation. As White (1929) put it, when men first define a situation as real however ridiculously, there are real consequences.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE KEY EFFECTS OF AUDIT CULTURE?

Martin Trow has argued that there have been a number of negative effects arising out of the culture of audit on research. These include a preference for short-term publication as against long-term scholarship, leading to what Trow calls ‘a frenzy to hasten publication to get in under a publication deadline, a frenzy that also affects decisions about where to publish’ (Trow 1998: 123). This is aligned with the discouragement of interdisciplinary research, whose character is not easily identifiable or assessable (Trow 1998: 123). He also points to a persistent effort ‘to squeeze research out of people and departments that have little or no training, aptitude, or inclination for research, with the resulting proliferation of bad and useless research’. There are other effects like ‘the creation of a first- and second-class teaching staff, the latter comprising those often highly useful teachers who are made redundant in order to improve its standing in the research competition’ (Trow 1998: 123). Because it is not clear what kinds of evidence might be called on, it is not possible to test all of these claims. However, one claim can be tested.

Has Research Output Increased in the New Order?

Has research output increased in the new order? Or is it possible that research like teaching has been eroded by the bureaucratic regime imposed as part of a culture of audit.

On the face of it, there seems to be data supporting the proposition that there has been a major increase in publication. On all sorts of simple metrics, Australian universities certainly seem to produce a lot of research. Deloitte Access Economics (2015: 81) claims the amount of ‘quality research output’ from Australia’s universities is continuously growing. It notes that Australia ranked ninth in the world for number of Web of Science publications, producing 3.9 percent of the world’s approximately 2 million scientific publications in that year. In 2013 Australian universities published over 45,500 articles in scholarly refereed journals, more than double the volume of such articles produced in the previous ten years. Australian universities also produce a significant number of books and book chapters as well as refereed proceedings of academic conferences’. The ARC (2015) exercise also seems to point clearly to growth in ‘output’. The number of books surveyed increased from 4,912 (2010) to 5,488 in (2015), while book chapters increased from 34,755 (2010) to 45,269 (2015). Finally, the number of journal articles grew from 206,816 (2010) to a staggering 301,499 (2015). Is this *prima facie* evidence of Trow’s concern that there is mounting pressure on ‘people and departments to produce research when they have little or no training, aptitude or inclination for research?’

Yet there is a case to be explored further that the last two decades which saw the rise of research management in universities has actually seen a decline in research output. Peter Murphy argues that in 1993, at the onset of the unified national system, Australian academics produced 1.5 publications per capita. This metric declined as low as 0.6 in 1997. It has been running at about 1.0 per capita since 2004. By comparison, the major American research universities produce two to five publications per capita per annum. The best Australia can manage is the Australian National University’s 1.6 per capita. The University of Melbourne output fell from 2.0 per capita in 1992 to 1.1 per capita in 2011 (Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education 2012). It can be added that data like this is disguised by the way that the Excellence in Research Assessment exercise selects the work submitted by each university, which itself will have filtered out those academics who do little or no research, while favouring the highly research-productive academics. This matters, given that high-quality research tends to be produced by people who also produce a lot of research (Murphy 2013).

Impact on Ph.D. Research

One of the key effects of the managerial revolution in universities is the assumption that managers now know better than academics. Nowhere is this illustrated better than in the rise of graduate research ‘schools’ in Australian universities. These are administrative entities that administer higher-degree research candidates. Typically, they have a practising or former academic in charge. In the last decade, these agencies have begun refashioning higher-degree research, chiefly in Ph.D. level research degrees. The result is a system increasingly run by people who are not ‘normal’.

There is a well-known story about Max Weber, the great social theorist among other things, for his deeply ironic theory of bureaucracy. The story is set in Germany after the start of World War I. Weber is a 50-year-old-plus patriotic German wanting to do his bit for the war effort. He has accepted a role in the Military Hospitals Commission run by the German Army. On arriving in his office on the first day, he notices there is no telephone, so he puts in a memo to Headquarters Command asking for a telephone. Headquarters Command replies, asking why he needs a telephone. Weber, well known for his inability to suffer fools lightly, replied, ‘Normal people know why a telephone is needed, and I cannot explain it to others’ (Weber 1988: 520).¹⁵

Normal people who are actively participating in the kinds of creative processes involved in scientific research work, creative writing, design, and composition know one big thing: writing a Ph.D. thesis or a book, making a painting or an opera, or carrying out and designing an experiment is nothing like an industrial or logistical process amenable to some kind of predictive scheduling process dreamt up by a bureaucrat somewhere. All sorts of factors come together or fall apart to shape the process. The inherent difficulty of the task itself; negotiating the gravitational pull of our obligations to family, friends, and the community; and the need to earn an income conjoin with our ability to marshal all of our physical, emotional, intellectual, and creative abilities. These are not susceptible to a logistical approach involved in producing and distributing a plastic widget. These people know that the research process, like renovating a house, is not susceptible to a rational-technical process.

Sometimes the process works incredibly fast. 1906 was an *annus mirabilis* in physics. In that year Albert Einstein produced, at white hot speed, five of the most remarkable and influential scientific papers ever written.

One of them was his doctoral dissertation, which demonstrated the existence of atoms. One of the other papers was his paper on special relativity. Under current rules in many Australian universities, he would not have been allowed to submit his thesis because of the time he actually took to write it: he would have been too fast!

More usually the process takes a long time and longer than most of us can predict. Picasso took years to research and design his breakthrough cubist painting *The Women of Avignon*. As Richardson (1996) reminds us, Picasso produced over 800 studies for the painting. He began it in 1907 and at its first exhibition insisted it was still unfinished. It still is. If Picasso were so foolish as to try to enroll in a Ph.D. project which involves doing some creative design work or some other project work and then writing a short exegesis, he would have run out of time in any Australian university. A colleague of mine began a big Ph.D. project based on interviewing many thousands of people about their experience of the Great Depression. He started his thesis project in the mid-1960s and finished it in the mid-1990s. The thesis subsequently was published as a book has made an indelible contribution to the social history of economic crisis.

What has happened here is a case study in how the managerial impulse has encouraged a mix of academics and managers to expand their authority, develop their careers, and enhance their bonus payments by offering managerial solutions to non-problems. As Peter Murphy (2013) notes, one of the 'non-problems' is 'non-completion' by Ph.D. students. The other closely related non-problem is what is now called 'untimely completions'.

As long as there have been statistics on Ph.D. programs, going back in North America to the turn of the twentieth century, somewhere in the range of 50–55 percent of Ph.D. candidates failed to complete. Like any other creative, artistic, scientific, or intellectual process, anyone designing, researching, and writing up a Ph.D. faces all sorts of hurdles. Some students discover that 'life' gets in the way of a smooth process: securing a living income, family and sexual issues, not to say illness and death can all trip up the best-laid Ph.D. plans. Others discover that the topic they thought they would address was either not a problem worth tackling or one that would hold their interest. Many will have to deal with unsupportive temperamental or bullying supervisors. Many will battle with that special kind of ignorance called presumed knowledge: They think they already know stuff when they actually do not. And always there is the problem of getting clarity about the essential problem that are trying to address and establishing the precise shape of the questions they will ask. All this can take time to sort out.

In the last decade centralised higher-degree administrative units in Australia have proliferated. This proliferation required a rationale. One rationale frequently advanced was the claim that there were too many ‘non-completions’ and ‘untimely completions’. Higher-degree administrators came up with all kinds of workshops for Ph.D. candidates to help them achieve timely completions. The second closely related invention was the invention of ‘milestones’, in an attempt to redesign the Ph.D. research process as if it were a technical production and logistical exercise.

Underlying so many aspects of the research assessment exercise is the fallacy of uniformly measurable performance and predictable processes. The logic of punitive quantification is to reduce all activity to a common managerial metric. The activities of thinking and understanding are inherently resistant to being adequately characterised in this way. This is part of the explanation for the pervasive sense of malaise, stress, and disenchantment within British universities. Some will say that such reactions are merely the consequence of the necessary jolt to the feelings and self-esteem of a hitherto protected elite as they are brought into ‘the real world’. But there is obviously something much deeper at work. Graeber (2015) points to the way ‘a timid, bureaucratic spirit has come to suffuse every aspect of intellectual life. More often than not, it comes cloaked in the language of creativity, initiative and entrepreneurialism’.

The great irony is the way people who have actually completed a Ph.D. in the old order are now so easily recruited into the new logistical order as if they had learned nothing from their own experience.

There are several reasons Ph.D. students do not perform well or why some people who start Ph.D.’s do not complete the degree. One is that undergraduate scores are not all that good at predicting who will be a good Ph.D. candidate, because research and undergraduate abilities are very different. Another reason is that the relation of student and supervisor fails. Sometimes the Ph.D. student who stops has been unable to find the right supervisor or the right kind of supervisor or the supervisor has gone away. Others may discover that it is too difficult or it is not for them.

In these cases, getting a Ph.D. candidate to attend a bureaucratically invented workshop will not make much difference. No amount of bureaucratic pedagogy can make the slightest difference to the natural fact of attrition. As Murphy (2013: 37) notes in Australia between 1991 and 2010, the median ratio of Ph.D. completions to commencements three years prior expressed in percentage terms was 50 percent in the 1990s and 55 percent in the 2000s. As Murphy says. This is much the same as the

historic norm of Ph.D. programs everywhere. This norm has not changed. This has not stopped a pseudo-solution to a non-problem being set in place. This is typical of crazed governance.

CONCLUSION

There is little doubt that one of the key effects of the introduction of research metrics and increased surveillance has been to redefine academic work, space. And time. Academics in universities have traditionally enjoyed a good deal of autonomy in determining how they would use their time and space. This took the form of unassigned time. This was because it was understood both inside and outside the universities that the creation of knowledge, contributing to science, and engaging in scholarship was to a very considerable extent not predictable and programmable. Rather, it was outcome of motivations and intentions that non-scholars cannot possibly know enough about in order to schedule and budget.

One factor that is now impinging on academics and which has changed the relation between teaching and research, has been the effort expended by governments and their agencies to develop new ways of both encouraging academics to do more research by funding it while also creating new ways of measuring research output like various ways of measuring what is called 'research excellence'.

In spite of a neo-liberal rhetoric about freedom, decentralisation, and the end of government control, governments have actually implemented a more regulated, highly interventionist system to monitor the research outputs of academics and to change the behaviour of academics. In this way and despite claims to the contrary, marketisation of the public sector, including universities, seldom means 'less government' or reduced state intervention. Rather, we see a shift in the forms that state involvement now take that disguises government intervention through complex funding formulae and a network of monitoring bodies whose professed independence from government is often highly questionable. If anything, state intervention in many British, American, and Australian universities has grown through these practices, particularly through state control over the funding mechanisms.

There can be little doubt that this has changed the work balance between teaching and research. The ways in which academic staff now think about research have become more formalised. It has also increased the time spent in dealing with measuring and reporting on research out-

puts and other compliance exercises. Reporting on research outputs has become so central to the reputation and budget performance of universities that it now needs to be managed. This is because university managers now think about and measure research in terms of ‘inputs’ and ‘outputs’—and increasingly in terms of research income. What this has meant is that university staff have less and less autonomy when determining the balance and kind of work they will do. This is another function taken over by managers. They have more work to do but not always on teaching or even on research. The result is again another odd effect of crazed governance.

NOTES

1. It has become entirely conventional for university peak bodies and senior managers to emphasise the economic value of universities and to hire major consulting companies to do this work. In Britain Universities UK hired Viewforth Consulting (2015) and BIS (2014) to do this work, while Australia’s peak body, Universities Australia, commissioned Deloitte (2015) to assess the value of higher education.
2. Deloitte relied on data like the employment of over 120,000 staff, the ‘delivery of education’ to over one million students, and the economic value of higher education, that is, \$AU25 billion to estimate a direct contribution of 1.5 percent to Australia’s GDP. While these are justifiable estimates, Deloitte went a step further when it claimed that higher education added 8.5 percent to GDP in 2014 because (i) of the impact that university education has on the productivity of the 28 percent of the workforce with a university qualification and (ii) the imputed worth of improved health outcomes, quality of life, and ‘a range of other social indicators’.
3. Mansfield excluded many things, including many industries outside his sample of 76 companies drawn from seven kinds of industries as well as any research older than 15 years. His method involved asking the R&D managers of the companies to ‘identify the proportion of the firm’s new products and processes commercialised in 1975–85 that, according to these executives (and their staffs), could not have been developed (without substantial delay) in the absence of academic research carried out within 15 years of the first introduction of the innovation’. This is rather like the way unemployment data was gathered in the first half of the twentieth century, when public statisticians telephoned union officials for an estimate of the number of unemployed members.
4. No conclusion should necessarily be drawn from a comparison with the rate of return offered by Bernie Madoff’s Ponzi scheme, which offered rates of return of between 16 and 20 percent.

5. Framing the possibility that ‘science’ can generate reliable knowledge acknowledges the valuable contribution played by anti-foundationist philosophers of science like Feyerabend (1975) and Hacking (2002) and social constructionist accounts of science and technology like those of Bijker and Law (1992).
6. On the narrower question of science and method my use does not privilege either ‘empirical’ research or the use of some version of ‘scientific method’.
7. As Marginson and others have noted, and drawing on the original insight of Hirsch (1976), some public goods do have an added quality in that sometimes they work as ‘positional goods’. These goods are not rivalrous, but access to them can confer a certain social status on the people accessing them. Archibugi and Filippetti (2015: 5) use the example of a new free-to-air TV show which runs a special invitation-only premiere to selected guests in the studio: millions may watch at home but only a few get the invitation and the status as VIPs.
8. The whole conception of public goods proved a source of constant irritation to neo-classical economists and to neo-liberal policy-makers especially those in the Chicago School, who insist that everything is economic and therefore potentially commodifiable. Granting, as Archibugi and Filippetti (2015: 3) do, that the concept of public goods presupposes that supply is feasible only when it is provided by agents of the public such as governments, in theory this has meant ‘profit-seeking agents have little interest to provide and to pay for public goods that everyone can use without paying: who will build a road if a toll cannot be introduced?’ Neo-liberal policy-makers have set about resolving that conundrum by the use of outsourcing; ‘contracting out’; deploying build-own-operate contracts with corporations to supply roads, hospitals, and bridges; and various kinds of privatisation involving the sale of public assets. This has degraded public infrastructure at incalculable costs to the taxpayers of Britain, America, and Australia while enriching private interests (Petroski 2016).
9. The facility with which economists in particular are wont to commit category mistakes should never fail to amaze us. I have drawn on Archibugi and Filippetti (2015) for this account of the devices used to achieve excludability, but they insist on making the very category mistake I have been critical of. For one thing, they treat secrecy and access codes as ‘economic’ strategies. Equally, and in work devoted to demonstrating why knowledge is a public good, they argue like Machlup (1962) and Kenneth Arrow (1962), that knowledge is also a very ‘peculiar commodity’ because ‘it is often generated for competitive purposes: armies and companies do invest time and money to develop new and superior knowledge to be used against their rivals’.

10. The internet was designed from the outset to be as open and as accessible as possible by embedding the principle of ‘Net neutrality’ in its design. Froomkin (2003) demonstrates that the idea that internet service providers (ISP) would ‘transport bits of data without discrimination, preference or regard for content’ owes much to the development of the Internet Engineering Task Force standards. Those standards reflect design decisions taken by the Informal Network Working Group in 1972, which became the Internet Engineering Task Force in 1986. In consequence there are very few blockages to global public access. The internet standards established a framework for all internet discourses and activities. As Froomkin argues, everyone and everything involved in the internet is now—

able to communicate with each other because of a series of openly developed, openly published and frequently updated technical standards like the TCP/IP standard ... which defines a packet switching network in which data is broken up into standardised packets that are then routed to their destination via an indeterminate number of intermediaries ... which in turn creates a built-in resilience to communication barriers that otherwise might make it difficult for two motivated speakers to use the internet to communicate. (Froomkin 2003: 753)

11. In Britain, the Research Excellence Framework distinguishes five levels of ‘research quality’ from ‘Four Star’, i.e., world-leading in terms of ‘originality, significance, and rigour’ to ‘Unclassified Quality’ research that ‘falls below the standard of nationally recognised work’.

12. The schemes include—

- Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA)
- International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (IPRS)
- Research Training Scheme (RTS)
- Joint Research Engagement (JRE)
- Sustainable Research Excellence (SRE)
- Research Infrastructure Block Grants (RIBG)

13. Remembering that the monetary value accrued over three years in the natural and physical sciences, mathematics earned \$152,956, physical sciences (\$2.5 m), chemical sciences (\$4.5 m), earth sciences (3.9 m), environmental sciences (\$974,543), biological sciences (\$4.06 m), agricultural and veterinary sciences (\$35.4 m) information and computing sciences (\$6.7 m), engineering sciences (\$15.8 m), technology sciences (\$1.3 m), and medical and health sciences (\$75.2 m). In the social sciences, psychology and education were the only disciplines to earn ‘big money’: these included built environment (\$92,692), education (\$1.3 m), economics (\$12,843),

- commerce management and tourism (\$148,065), studies in human society (nil), psychology (\$3.2 m), law and legal studies (nil), creative arts writing (\$255,837), language (\$12,963), history and archaeology (\$24,871), and philosophy and religious studies (\$40,695) (ARC 2015: 28–33).
14. Both the British Research Excellence Framework and the Excellence in Innovation for Australia trials sought to measure the ‘impact’ of research, defined by both projects in largely similar terms: both sought to understand a research project’s wider social, cultural, economic, and environmental benefits, though the scale of each differed: the Excellence in Innovation for Australia had 162 case studies for review, whereas the Research Excellence Framework assessed 6,975 case studies. This was on top of the normal quality exercise, which involved reviewing 191,232 research outputs submitted to Research Excellence Framework 2014.
 15. On another occasion Weber stated his case for the urgent building of a hospital and received a request from the same HQ for a detailed list of the supplies needed. Weber replied, as his wife put it, by ‘punishing them with a meter-long telegram’(Weber 1988: 520).

REFERENCES

- Archibugi, D., & Filippetti, A. (2015). Knowledge as global public good. In D. Archibugi & A. Filippetti (Eds.), *Handbook of global science, technology and innovation* (pp. 1–27). Oxford: Wiley.
- Arrow, K. (1962). Economic welfare and the allocation of resources for invention. In Richard Nelson for the NBER (Ed.), *The rate and direction of inventive activity: Economic and social factors* (pp. 609–626). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Australian Research Council. (2015). *State of Australian University Research 2015/2016* (Vol. 1). Canberra: Australian Research Council.
- Benkler, Y. (2013). Distributed innovation and creativity: Peer production and commons in networked economy. In *Change* (pp. 285–308). Madrid: BBVA.
- Bijker, W., & Law, J. (Eds.). (1992). *Shaping technology/building society: Studies in sociotechnical change*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). New York: Greenwood Press.
- Deloitte Access Economics. (2015). *The importance of universities to Australia’s prosperity: A report prepared for Universities Australia*. Melbourne: Deloitte.
- Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education. (2012). *Higher education statistics on staff*. <http://www.innovation.gov.au/HigherEducation/HigherEducationStatistics/StatisticsPublications/Pages/default.aspx>

- Docherty, T. (2014). *Universities at war*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Feyerabend, P. (1975). *Against method: Outline of an anarchistic theory of knowledge*. London: NLB.
- Froomkin, M. (2003). Habermas@ discourse. Net: Towards a critical theory of cyberspace. *Harvard Law Review*, 116(3), 751–873.
- Goldacre, B. (2012). *Bad pharma: How drug companies mislead doctors and harm patients*. New York: Faber and Fabrr.
- Goransson, B., & Brundenius, C. (2011). Introduction. In B. Goransson & C. Brundenius (Eds.), *Universities in transition: The changing role and challenges for academics* (pp. 3–11). London: Springer.
- Graeber, D. (2015). *The Utopia of rules: On technology, stupidity and the secret joys of bureaucracy*. Brooklyn: Melville House.
- Hacking, I. (2002). *Historical ontology*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Kirsch, I. (2009). *The emperor's new drugs*. London: The Bodley Head.
- Kleinman, D. (2010). The commercialisation of academic culture and the future of the university. In H. Radder (Ed.), *The commodification of academic research: Science and the modern university* (pp. 44–64). Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh University.
- Levidow, L. (2001). Marketizing higher education: Neoliberal strategies and counter-strategies. In K. Robins and F. Webster, eds, *The Virtual University? Knowledge, Markets and Management*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 227–48.
- Machlup, F. (1962). *The production and distribution of knowledge in the United States*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Mansfield, E. (1991). Academic research and industrial innovation. *Research Policy*, 20, 1–12.
- Marginson, S. (1997). Competition and contestability in Australian higher education, 1987–1997. *Australian Universities Review*, 40(1), 5–14.
- McGoey, L. (Ed.). (2014a). *An introduction to the sociology of ignorance: Essays on the limits of knowing*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- McGoey, L. (2014b). Strategic unknowns; towards a sociology of ignorance. In L. McGoey (Ed.), *Introduction to the sociology of ignorance*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Merton, R. (1942/1973). The normative structure of science. In R. Merton (Ed.), *The sociology of science: Theoretical and empirical investigations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Monbiot, G. (2009, May 11). These men would've stopped Darwin. *The Guardian*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/may/11/science-research-business>
- Munk, M. (2009). Transnational investments in informational capital: A comparative study of Denmark, France and Sweden. *Acta Sociologica*, 52(5), 5–23.
- Murphy, P. (2013, May). The rise and fall of our bureaucratic universities. *Quadrant*, https://quadrant.org.au/magazine/2013/05/the-rise-and-fall-of-our-bureaucratic-universities/#_ednref4

- Nelson, R. (1992). What is commercial and what is public about technology, and what should be done? In N. Rosenberg, R. Landau, & D. Mowery (Eds.), *Technology and the wealth of nations* (pp. 57–71). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Panofsky, A. (2010). A critical reconsideration of the ethos and autonomy of science. In C. Calhoun (Ed.), *Robert K. Merton: Sociology of science and sociological explanation* (pp. 140–163). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Pavitt, K. (1987). On the nature of technology. Reprinted in K. Pavitt (1999). *Technology, management, and systems of innovation* (pp. 3–14). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Petroski, H. (2016). *The road taken: The history and future of America's infrastructure*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- Radder, H. (2010). The commodification of academic research. In H. Radder (Ed.), *The commodification of academic research: Science and the modern university* (pp. 1–23). Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh University.
- Roberts, P., & Peters, M. (2008). *Neoliberalism, higher education and research*. Rotterdam/Taipei: Sense Publishers.
- Samuelson, P. (1954). The pure theory of public expenditure. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 36, 387–389.
- Sayer, V. (2014). Five reasons why the REF is not fit for purpose. *The Guardian*, <http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2014/dec/15/research-excellenceframeworkfivereasons-not-fit-for-purpose>
- Slaughter, S., & Leslie, L. (1997). *Academic capitalism: Politics, policies and the entrepreneurial university*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Slaughter, S., & Rhoades, G. (2004). *Academic capitalism and the new economy: Markets, state and higher education*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Trow, M. (1998). American perspectives on British higher education under Thatcher and Major. *Oxford Review of Education*, 24(1), 111–129. doi:10.1080/0305498980240109.
- Universities Australia. (2015). *Higher education and research facts and figures*. Sydney: Universities Australia.
- Veblen, T. (1918). *The higher learning in America*. New York: B.W. Huebsch.
- Washburn, J. (2005). *University Inc: The corporate corruption of higher education*. New York: Basic Books.
- Weber, M. (1988). *Max Weber: A biography* (Trans. and ed. Zohn, H.). London: Transaction.
- Wendlin, L. (2008). University marketization: The process and its limits: 143–153. Portland: Portland Press. <http://www.portlandpress.com/pp/books/online/univmark/084/0143/0840143.pdf>.
- Wilsdon, J. et al. (2015). *The metric tide: Report of the independent review of the role of metrics in research assessment and management*. doi: 10.13140/RG.2.1.4929.1363.

Conclusion: Thinking into the Future

Many universities have been both ‘marketised’ and subjected to a new kind of rational-technical style of management makeover in Britain, America and Australia. In consequence, it is now looking like many of these institutions will be less and less able to do the basic things we imagine, or expect a university ought to be doing. In this chapter I want to think through what we might want to do about this.

The modern university is what it is. By this I mean only that universities have a history. Apart from whatever actually happened, this history is made up variously of fictions about what should have been alongside other fictions which tell a story about what people think has actually happened. If I have made one big point in this volume, it is that contemporary stories drawing on the language of markets and commodities to say what universities do and how they do it all too often bear little relation to what really goes on in them.

Real universities belong to very complex systems of higher education that are integrally linked to and help to reproduce some of the key dimensions of increasingly unequal societies. Among the key factors that shape the modern university are both long-standing patterns of social and economic inequality and the more recent emergence of a widespread mindset called neo-liberalism.

Beginning in the 1970s people in the grip of that mindset talked up the value of economic growth, and the valuable role played by free markets,

energised by competition, enabling individual achievement and increased affluence and public goods like education. It is a key paradox that to be successful neo-liberalism has had to rely on governments to promote neo-liberal policy as governments set about changing the behaviour of people working in public utilities, health care, and community services and places like schools and universities. The policy mechanisms used to achieve this have included developing an economic vocabulary and a market-influenced way of talking about ‘competition’; making sustained cuts to public funding; introducing programs designed to commercialise or ‘commodify’ whatever the public sector has done, like providing health care, welfare benefits, or education; turning citizens into ‘customers’; and promoting competition by making the customer pay for more of the service (the user-pays principle).

Crucially, it has also required increasing the authority and power of managers by stripping away the autonomy and capacity of professionals (social workers, doctors, nurses, or teachers, etc.) to exercise their professional judgement, while encouraging those managers to believe they are now working in a business by introducing bonus payments and using key performance indicators’ (KPIs) that rely on comprehensive regimes of surveillance and cultures of audit. These ‘cultures of audit’, while they rely on a mix of criteria, critically focus on customer satisfaction surveys which can supplant or sideline professional assessment about the quality of the work being done or the benefits allegedly conferred on us. In most cases, the story goes, as told by both advocates and critics, that what were once public services providing public goods have been variously ‘privatised’ or ‘marketised’.

In this book I have argued that in the case of universities this has not actually happened —nor could it have happened. Higher-education teaching and research has not actually been commodified or made to work in a competitive market. What has actually happened has been the result of government-policy-driven and management-driven exercises intended to maintain the ‘as-if’ fiction that universities have been ‘marketised’ by developing ‘new’ ways of talking about what goes on in universities, why it goes on, and with what success. The result is ‘market-crazed governance’.

From the start, the marketisation involved the establishment, promotion, and measurement of deeply contradictory policy objectives. The two key sets of policy objectives have been the pursuit of ‘efficiency’ *and* ‘quality’ and the pursuit of ‘access’ *and* ‘equity’. Both the contradictory nature of these objectives and what these objectives rely on for their own realisation creates crazed governance.

To pursue ‘efficiency’ *and* ‘quality’, governments have systematically cut public funding for universities. In turn managers inside the universities have pursued efficiency by reducing expenditures on teaching reliant on income either based on the costs of tuition and/or derived from student fees. This diversion of income away from teaching has been used to support research, advertising campaigns, and the growth of the ‘manageriat’ itself, as well as corporate pay-scales for senior managers. The reduction in spending on teaching has been made possible by employing ever-increasing numbers of cheap, casualised, and in many cases inexperienced and untrained teachers, supplemented by mass-production techniques involving classes of hundreds, even thousands, of students and on-line delivery of various curriculum materials.

What this can lead to is illustrated by a recent event at a major Group of 8 university in Australia. Late in 2015 a small group of casual teachers was given full responsibility for managing the intake of 600 full-fee-paying master’s students enrolled in a summer school and requiring placement as interns in human service agencies as part of their professional training. Those teachers were promised a contract and they started to try to do their job. They found quickly that many of those students had such serious language difficulties as to severely compromise their capacity to do the professional work required of them in their internships. Those teachers were at this stage still being paid standard casual-academic rates. In January 2016 the teachers were told that unfortunately a contract would not now be offered and that they would have to make do with casual rates of pay. Granted the very large revenue stream represented by graduate student fees, and the impossible task facing them of placing 600 more-or-less dysfunctional students in professional internships, the casual teachers to their credit decided to withdraw their labour. This may be interpreted as a sign of the difficulties which some universities now face. Events like this however are not allowed to disturb the spin put about by university managers that all is well.

The pursuit of ‘quality’ or ‘excellence’ is guaranteed because managers and therefore governments can point to metrics supplied by the ‘customer’, namely, students, whose satisfaction has become a proxy measure for the ‘quality’ of teaching *and* learning. The very idea that students might be charged with the responsibility for assessing the quality both of the teaching they get and their own learning, or that these metrics now stand in for some idea of quality learning, suggests how far we have come in the marketisation process.

To ensure that the customers express the satisfaction now needed to assure 'quality', managers, especially those appointed to learning and teaching units, have promoted a new approach to pedagogy, referred to as 'student-centred learning'. This approach to teaching and learning involves reducing the demands made of students to read widely, deeply, or well, or to put in substantial hours of study, let alone exhibit mastery and understanding of complex knowledge, significant debates, or subtle techniques and methods of inquiry. This also means letting up on students needing to demonstrate what they have learned by asking them to undertake seriously challenging assessment activities, where those who have done the hard work may actually fail. An implied trade-off has been tacitly agreed to: a non-demanding curriculum is offered to students in return for them supplying 'good numbers' in the Good Teaching Survey.

The pursuit of the other twinned policy objective, namely, 'access' *and* 'equity', also points to the obdurate reality that not all universities nor all students are equal. Funding the growth of universities by requiring students to pay for an increasing share of their tuition costs and loading them up with ever increasing stock of debt has been a key factor in preventing the kind of equity goals that are so desirable. That many non-elite universities should then short-change many of these students by offering them undemanding curricula merely adds injury to insult.

It needs to be made clear that what I have described of the effects on teachers and students of working in 'marketised' universities happens in many, but not all, universities or all degree programs. The elite degrees and the elite universities continue to attract mostly small numbers of students, who are taught by full-time staff and required to demonstrate their mastery of seriously challenging curriculum and even face the prospect of failing a subject and needing to repeat it. Those elite universities and programs remain largely, though not entirely, closed off to people from non-elite social and educational backgrounds. These elite universities and programs know all too well that preserving the positional advantage that elite status represents and rewards is easily achieved by employing a combination of economic and intellectual criteria that serve to maintain the elite status of the mix of social, intellectual, and economic capital that elite students both demand and are prepared to pay for.

That this is the case suggests why it has been so difficult to realise the admirable idea advanced since the 1980s that universities ought to be opened up potentially to all citizens. This actually is a good idea, especially if large numbers of people can experience something of a rich yet

contemporary experience of higher education. Again, however, the means used to promote the growth of once-elite institutions into a mass democratic system of higher education have worked against the accomplishment of more equitable access, to say nothing of working out how to provide a challenging and rewarding experience of higher education.

One of the most insidious effects of this new order is the erosion of trust—and truth, words etymologically linked by a common root word—‘troth’. We properly trust those who tell the truth: when truth is abrogated we should no longer trust those who abuse the truth. We cannot afford to believe what the modern managers of universities tell us. Martin Trow (1998) explains this when he says that ‘the decline of truth telling within the academic community about its own activities, and especially about where those activities need to be improved’. As Trow (1998) says, one of the gravest consequences of central government policy—and I would add the rise of the new university manager—over the past few decades has been the destruction of truth because the ‘incentives are all to report that everything is well and getting better’ (Trow 1998: 119). Because they have accepted that the value of knowledge is determined by its capacity to satisfy certain interests, the modern managers of universities now have no interest in telling the truth *for its own sake*. This means, as Trow, says that—

no Vice Chancellor (or university President), Dean or Head of School/Department has any interest in telling the truth about the impact of public policy on the quality of work done in their institution, quite apart from the inherent difficulties of knowing very clearly and being able to demonstrate clearly what the quality of work in one’s own institution actually is (Trow 1998: 117)

We can go further and see the passivity of the institutions and their leaders in the face of this falsification of language, in the way university managers now talk about staff as ‘employees’ and students as ‘customers’. This, says Trow, is ‘a symptom of the evolving loss of independent self-conceptions by the academic community, its loss of its own language by which it referred to itself and its activities’ (Trow 1998: 120). And at the heart of the problem, universities now find themselves in is the absence of a commitment to a basic idea about the university as a place committed to the pursuit of truth. As Nietzsche reminded us, ‘Forgetting purposes is the most common form of stupidity’ (Nietzsche 1996: 206). That our universities should become stupid in this way is a tragedy.

What I have tried to do in this book is to say *what* is actually happening to teaching in the university, to the student experience, and to doing research and then to begin to explain *why* this has happened. As Sonia Livingstone (2011) has suggested, the last question that we should always ask is, how might we do better?

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Karl Kraus, the great Viennese culture critic, was asked soon after Hitler's elevation to the chancellorship of Germany in January 1933 what he would do. He said sensibly enough, 'I have no bright ideas about Herr Hitler'. Like Kraus I have no bright ideas about the modern university.

The best universities of America, Britain, and Australia will largely continue to do what they have been doing since their beginnings—mostly during the last few centuries—namely, equipping people drawn from a variety of socially elite backgrounds to be good doctors, engineers, veterinarians, dentists, psychologists, architects, policy-makers, research scientists, managers, economists, creative writers, musicians, and academics.

The not-so good universities now working determinedly under the sign of the market will also probably continue to do what they have been doing since the 1980s, namely, teaching and graduating teachers, social workers, accountants, construction project managers, nurses, human service workers, IT designers, criminal justice workers, and real estate agents. Regrettably, unless things change, the fact that many of these students have been short-changed in the past decade or so is likely to continue to be a problem. These universities have not collapsed—yet. Enough is done by enough people, including hard-working academics and by the armies of low-paid casual teachers, to keep the whole system operating, but the stresses and strains are getting worse and are beginning to show.

The question what is to be done needs primarily to be directed at those universities and the people in them, especially the academics.

The thickly intertwined coils of knowledge and ignorance that now define the state of self-awareness of too many academics and managers in too many universities is a crucial problem. This is not a new problem. There have always been highly particular, historically situated forms in which the complex interrelationship between knowledge and ignorance has been instantiated. William Clark (2006) has illuminated some of the particular forms this relationship took in the past.

Today there are many instances in each discipline currently found in modern universities in which this relationship is patterned. I think straightaway of the extraordinary state of modern economics, which preserves its theological stance toward ‘markets’ and economies by an obdurate refusal to let too much reality into the discipline, a position bolstered by its equally intransigent ‘physics envy’. The point is that this state of affairs in economics (or in psychology, history, philosophy, physics, satellite imaging, and, yes, even real estate studies, etc.) is both entirely normal and inevitable, because that interplay between knowledge and ignorance is what universities at their best, and when they are doing their job properly, necessarily address. This is what Hegel was hinting at in his *The Phenomenology of Spirit* and is what Bertell Ollman (1987) once called the ‘dance of the dialectic’.

This is another way of making the point Kathryn Schultz makes when she writes about the idea that ignorance or error is bad. She says this ‘is our meta-mistake: we are wrong about what it means to be wrong’. Schultz says that rather than a sign of intellectual inferiority, ‘the capacity to err is crucial to human cognition. Far from being a moral flaw, it is inseparable from some of our most humane and honorable qualities: empathy, optimism, imagination, conviction, and courage.’

The essential question this leads to is this: can the bulk of our universities ever begin to work in such a way as to enable teachers and students to create, promote, and sustain that intricate dance between wanting to know and to understand, while knowing that we have to be wrong quite a lot in order to gain deep knowledge and understanding?

My concern is that many of the universities we now have lost the capacity to make this a possibility. Too many university leaders and managers now manifest a very particular kind of presumed knowledge. This takes the form of the delusion that ‘we’ have actually created a ‘higher education market’, and have really turned universities into businesses in which ‘knowledge’ is a ‘commodity’ that can be created, sold, and packaged for delivery. To preserve this delusion and to keep reality out of the ‘ways of seeing’ peculiar to the modern university manageriat all sorts of techniques and devices are relied on: these include branding, expensive advertising campaigns, senior executive contracts, bonus payments tied to KPI’s, leadership training and ‘360 degree assessments’, authoritarian policy regimes, online systems for work-planning and curriculum delivery, and elaborate quality-assurance metrics produced by customer satisfaction surveys. In these ways, that most important of human goods, the good of knowledge

(or truth), is sacrificed in that place where above all other places no such sacrifice of this kind should ever have been contemplated.

My concern is that this richly imbricated pattern of knowledge and ignorance that constitutes the actual regime of market-crazed governance found in too many universities today is getting in the way of (re)creating the conditions in which teaching staff and students might embrace in the dance of ignorance and knowledge, while doing so in ways that enables the great project to establish a genuinely democratic system of higher education to continue.

Can a book like this hope ever to give some reason or cause for reflection on the part of today's managers and academics to think again? Let me make a brief case that might help.

We need to do several things: We need to defend the democratic project and we need to reclaim academic time. We might also begin to think through in a serious way the actual implications of the new networked technologies not as delivery platforms that simply emulate the academic pedagogy that treats knowledge as a package of information to be transmitted and memorised, but as a relationship and a practice of inquiry that draws on the resources of the digital commons that understands that knowledge is a human and public good.

IN DEFENCE OF MASS HIGHER EDUCATION

I have argued that the odd thing about the conservative defence of 'the real university' and the claim that this rests on a normative argument is that no such normative argument has actually been offered. My defence says there is positive value of moving to a mass higher-education system.

Against conservative defenders of elite universities like Leys, Coady, and Gaita, I read the elaboration of a 'liberal arts' tradition by foundational figures in western philosophy like Socrates (ca. 469–399 BCE) and Seneca (4–65 BCE) as indicating why higher education has to be available to all citizens. Such a conception of higher education is marked by its commitment to a vital public culture in which people learn how to develop their capacities to think about what they do, a task at once intellectual and ethical. This is what is usually referred to as the republican tradition.

One starting point is to ask what does being a teacher, social worker, accountant, construction project manager, nurse, human service workers, IT designer, or a good 'anything' entail?

It certainly means being ‘practical’. To be practical means two things simultaneously. It means firstly having technical skill. We can never have enough good technique, and we can never have enough people who are actually technically competent. Yet good practice involves more than a surgeon’s capacity to cut a straight line down an abdomen, or an accountant’s capacity to add and subtract. Good practice is not just about skill or technique, though it certainly includes it. Good practice is inclusively defined above all as an ethical capacity. It means being thoughtful or reflective and having a strong ethical sense. It means being able to both perform and think well. It also means being a ‘citizen of the world’. Thinking through what this means may begin to open up new ways of thinking about how a mass higher-education system might begin to emerge.

Citizenship is minimally and in a sense ‘literally’ a set of political rights granted to citizens which includes rights to participate in political processes of self-governance. ‘These includes rights to vote; to hold elective and appointive governmental offices; to serve on various sorts of juries; and generally to participate in political debates as Equal community members’ (Smith 2002: 105). Yet citizenship also needs to be understood as ‘full membership in society’ (Holston and Appadurai 1996: 187). Citizenship could be defined as a legal status in a political community connected with rights (political, civil, and social) and to some degree duties (paying taxes and obeying the law) (Smith 2002: 105).

Drawing on the insights afforded by the republican tradition, we see an emphasis ‘on both individual and group rights’ (Isin and Turner 2002: 4). A republican belief is that public life enriches people’s life since it draws people out of privacy and draws them together. It also extracts the talents and capacities of the citizen. It creates a community with connection and solidarity, but also creates conflicts between the citizens. For a republican, individualism or family will not be enough (Dagger 2002: 146–8). Two aspects that come from publicity are the rule of law and civic virtue. Politics should be public to avoid corruption or nepotism. As a members of a community, people must be prepared to set aside their private interests to do what is the best for the public as a whole. The one who does this displays civic virtues. The rule of law is the frame and rules of the practical politics: it sets the limits of with whom and when debates take place and how decisions are made. Publicity needs rule of law to be a practical solution. ‘Citizenship has an ethical dimension, in short, because there are standards built into the concept of citizenship, just as there are standards

built into the concepts of mayor, teacher, plumber and physician’ (Dagger 2002: 146–8).

From such a perspective a student is positioned in a relationship that has regard for and values the goods common to any community. This perspective is rather far away from being a consumer isolated within a gigantic market for the economy. In the republican perspective, a student could be seen as someone living in and shaped by a democracy and its constant struggle to negotiate the particular interests of people while paying due regard to those common goods that go beyond the pursuit of individual needs or desires.

Today a human development practico-ethical framework grounded in that tradition is well represented by Amartya Sen (1999, 2002) and Martha Nussbaum (1997, 2003). Each indicates precisely why we need higher education and why that higher education should be open to all.

What this also entails is that any institution like a university ought to have as one of its core objectives the securing of the conditions whereby all who come to it will be further assisted to flourish. Two and a half thousand years ago, Pindar wrote movingly about what a young grape vine—and a young person—needs if it is to grow well. Pindar (cited in Nussbaum 2003: 1) says—

But human excellence grows like a vine tree, fed by the green dew, raised up
among wise men and just, to the liquid sky.

Among the basic requirements needed to achieve this idea of human excellence (the Greeks called this *Arete*), Pindar identifies a good heritage, fostering natural and social circumstances, the avoidance of catastrophe and/or good luck, and the ability to develop ‘confirming associations’ with other human beings. As Pindar insists, ‘We have all kinds of needs for those we love: most of all in hardships, but joy too, strains to track down eyes that it can trust’ (cited in Nussbaum 2003: 1).

The idea of working to promote human excellence and to assist people to flourish has a great deal to commend it. It requires that we understand better the conditions and circumstances in which humans can both not live at all well and those in which they might flourish.

Nussbaum (1997) embellishes the powerful capability ethics of Amartya Sen (1999, 2002). Sen’s work has strengthened certain traditional liberal ideas about freedom by both extending and grounding them. Nussbaum extends the idea of freedom by reminding us that freedom is not just about being ‘negatively free’. She (1988: 183) reminds us that—

Some policies of non-interference actually extinguish human freedom to choose what is valuable.

That is, someone can be free from external interference yet still be ‘radically unfree’ because of the absence of basic options in general (like food or water) or valuable options (like the capacity to access higher education).

There is, says Nussbaum (1995: 81), a threshold of capability to function beneath which a life will be so impoverished that it will not be ‘human’ at all. There is another, second, threshold beneath which those characteristic functions and activities are available in such a reduced fashion that though we judge the form of life a *human* one, we will not think it a *good* human life. Nussbaum asks, do we really want societies to allow their citizens only a capacity to live at the bare minimum? ‘Was not Aristotle right when he suggested that a good political arrangement is one in accordance with which anyone whatsoever might do well and live a flourishing life?’ (cited in Nussbaum 1995: 81).

As Nussbaum argues, the move from ‘bare human life’ to ‘good human life’ involves quite complex judgments. In some cases, as she notes, crossing of the thresholds needs to be addressed by being ‘self-reliant’. This is because the move from ‘bare’ to ‘good human life’ is propelled by the ‘citizen’s own powers of choice and self definition’. This might be the case in acquiring ‘practical reason’ via the provision of schooling. Once social institutions permit a child to cross the first threshold, its own choices will be central in raising it above the second. Equally, there may be other social circumstances like mindless or oppressive forms of work, or traditional gender relations, that require public regulation to create the conditions for people to cross the second threshold. This will certainly be so in cases of bodily health and nutrition, even though, as she allows, there are complex issues of what the thresholds are for the good human life. Nussbaum (1995: 83–866) goes on to argue for a list of some ten groups of complex human capabilities ranging from life expectancy, good health, and nutrition, through the capacity to play, imagine, think critically, form good relations with others, and with the natural world, to being able to live one’s own life by being free to make choices about marriage, sexual expression, or employment .

This formulation of the capabilities—as distinct from what people actually do—forces us to avoid false binaries like ‘nature’ versus ‘nurture’. As Mary Midgley (2001: 46–50) has forcefully reminded us, if we had no nature there would be nothing to nurture. (Midgley also reminds us why this academic distinction is so stupid, by suggesting that if we were

only the work of nurture, pigs would fly with a few hours of nurturant pilot training.) In this regard addressing the conditions under which we can flourish begins with a robust recognition that all of us are born with diverse natural constitutions. We are all natural creatures who are constitutionally born short, fat, thin, tall, male, or female, and all with different kinds of intelligence. We are not born as indeterminate creatures as if we really were the proverbial Lockean blank sheet of paper.

Crocker (1995: 183; Sen 1989: 77) also draws on Sen's work when he argues that—

The concept of positive freedom is important because it marks out how a person is actually able to act, live, function or achieve. Positive freedom is 'what a person is actually able to do or to be.

Crocker notes that positive freedom in this way means freedom in the sense of being able to determine or to control one's life and so have a significant impact or effect upon the direction of one's own life and the circumstances under which one must live. Crocker draws on Sen's (cited in Crocker 1995: 183) argument that positive freedom—

also includes the real availability of an array of options, and that freedom is increased to the extent that the number and goodness of these options are increased.

Crocker adds that positive freedom is enhanced when there is also an increase in the diversity or probability that options will actually be available.

This account of human capabilities forces us to ask whether interventions into others lives—by individuals or governments—will help them to flourish or to wither. Nussbaum insists that the capability of a person to choose depends not simply on our natural constitution like being born tall or short. It will also depend on social factors, like the kind of family one is born into, the kinds of state policy are in place, or what is made available by prevailing economic activities. Finally, it will also depend on whether the person has a *developed power of choice*. For example neither stones nor three-day-old babies can choose right now to do anything. Babies, however, unlike stones, will eventually acquire the power to make choices.

One purpose of good development, says Nussbaum (cited in Crocker 1995: 184), is to see that this power is 'acquired by the young, maintained by the mature, and restored—when possible—to those who lose it'. The

point and task of good government especially via services like health-care education and welfare systems, is to facilitate the formation of good capabilities, remove impediments to their exercise, and provide the means for their use. This requires that all policies need to face in two directions simultaneously. They need to do this to ensure that more people are given the actual power to make choices, and secondly to ensure that there are real options made available so that when they exercise that power, they actually have real choices to make.

To enter into higher education is to begin to encounter the capacity of good thinking—or ‘reason’—to reconstruct not just the way we think or what we think but our very personality. To engage in good thinking, as Nussbaum (1999) argues, has the capacity to shape our ethical and emotional motivations as well as our logical capacities and what we know. As Seneca (1999) indicated in his famous letter on ‘liberal education’ (*studia liberalia*), the point of a free education is to enable people to take charge of their own thought process and to conduct a critical examination of the norms and traditions at play in their own communities. The task of such an education is to assist people to become responsible for themselves, to become people whose reasoning and emotions are under their own control.

This means developing in students the requirement that we do not accept any belief as authoritative, simply because it has been handed down by tradition or habit, or because it is currently fashionable. We will be able to question all beliefs and accept only those that meet the criteria of rationality, consistency, and justification. This means being able to reason logically and to test what one reads or hears for consistency, correctness of fact, and accuracy of judgment.

In working toward these objectives, university teachers may well want to consider one basic proposition about the universal character of higher education, drawing, as Martha Nussbaum does, on Socrates’s practices and Seneca’s advice on liberal education. The principle: higher education is for everyone. The challenge for university teachers is how to turn that into good practice.

RECLAIMING TIME

Another way of bringing this possibly abstract idea down to earth is to grasp that there is something intrinsically challenging about the idea of being a university student which involves taking responsibility for the kind of learning that matters. This has been well expressed by Don Watson (2014), who notes, firstly, that university graduates need to make sense of

their own higher education, which ‘cannot be done necessarily immediately, and in some cases not for a considerable time’. Equally, as he says, if you have had an ‘authentic higher education experience’, you will be compelled to and be able to—

practise answering difficult questions. You are given a safe place in which to do so. Depending on your subject or discipline (or combination of these), you will gain a powerful evaluative toolkit. You will be required to communicate what you have learned. This is hard work but for centuries students have found it to be immensely satisfying and it has, generally, helped to make the world a better place. (Watson 2014: 4)

The logic here is clear enough. The encounter between student and teacher should be a direct relationship in which there is a concern on the one side to teach and a concern on the other side to learn—with the possibility that occasionally these roles might shape shift.

If learning in a university requires that a student give of themselves and give themselves up to the experience such that they can pursue knowing while understanding how wrong they often are, then academics will need to both draw on decades of research into ‘deep learning’ and reclaim control of academic time. Though it may seem an odd idea, what modern academics need to do now is reclaim time. Academic staff need to reclaim the time that is needed to discharge the responsibilities that being a teacher involves.

Many academics now talk about what has happened to their time. Ylijoki and Mäntylä (2003) argue that in the modern university there has been a significant reduction of ‘timeless time’ and an increase in ‘scheduled time’ or what I would call managed time. ‘Timeless time’ is time not controlled by administrative constraints because it is time for reflective thought. Managed time is the time that might lead us to say, ‘I have no time’ (Heidegger 1998: 463).

Clegg (2003), Ylijoki and Mäntylä (2003), and Ylijoki (2004) have all argued that the increase in managed time affects the research work academics do by accelerating the pace of work and increasing time pressures. Put simply, university teachers need to be able to restore something of the capacity to be lost in time. To use the terminology of Giroux and Giroux (2004), how do we restore the public time gifted for the use of the university for thinking, reflection, and critical appraisal of society, its knowledge and its moral positioning? As they note time ‘refers not only to the way in which temporality is mediated differently by institutions, administrators,

faculty and students, but also how it shapes and allocates power, identities, and space through a particular set of codes and interests' (2004: 226).

Universities that represent higher education as a 'commodity', offer unchallenging curricula, translate learning into satisfaction and claim to offer pathways to careers that are short-changing those students. Klassen reports that in the marketing of higher education, modern university values and priorities are typically represented by the message 'that students will not need to change in order to be successful' (2000: 21). Even more disturbingly, he concludes that for the students in half his sample, the perspective of university study offered is 'practically devoid of commitment and loyalty to anything beyond having a good time while waiting to graduate'.

THE DIGITAL COMMONS

Yochai Benkler makes a profound observation about the actual point of the web and the evolution of things like free and open source software. He observes that while Microsoft established a major business model for designing and selling software in the 1980s, a bunch of engineers, academics, and amateurs working in their own time established a new model when they designed Apache as a freely sourced software operating system (Benkler 2013: 285). In the decades after this breakthrough, Apache took the lead from Microsoft, while Nginx, another example of free and open source software, took third place. Mozilla Firefox and Linux are additional examples of the new model of free and open source software development that is not tied to a commodity model of research and innovation. No less striking is the example of Jimmy Wales and his development of Wikipedia.

The point of this is that the enormous success of free and open source software, and of Wikipedia, highlights how 'the most important inputs into the some of the most important economic sectors of the most advanced economies of the world are radically distributed in the population' (Benkler 2013: 291). This is what Benkler rightly calls a new mode of production, namely, 'social production'. It exemplifies the central point made in this book, that knowledge as a process is a deeply human and a public good. People have always posed questions, talked to each other, made images, written, made music, and generally made sense of the world in a dazzling variety of ways because these are deeply satisfying activities for a whole range of emotional, social, aesthetic, ethical, and intellectual reasons. This is why gathering people in places called universities worked for a long time, however imperfectly. The opportunity now is to reimagine how the new technologies will engage people in far more fluid but no less connected ways.

The challenge to modern universities is to see this opportunity for what it is and not try to constrain the forms of social production marked by fluid, multiply connected, and non-hierarchical relationships and processes to a ‘business model’ that is already under threat and has never actually operated anyway. Too many modern universities marked by often toxic cultures of audit and authoritarianism, compliance for the sake of compliance, and endless spin madly dedicated to pretending that the university has become a business selling commodities are the last places where the very real opportunities for social production can flourish. We need to try to ensure that modern higher-education stakeholders become much more able to see and grasp the point of social production as a ‘new–old’ paradigm of knowledge.

CONCLUSION

Parents, community leaders, employers, and current and prospective students themselves ought to be seriously worried at the way too many universities are short-changing their students. They ought to be seriously worried about the failure of too many universities to give our young people a rigorous, challenging, and engaging education offered by committed and excellent teacher teaching the things that matter. They ought also to be very worried about the capacity of our universities to be places that cultivate what we call ‘knowledge’.

Ironically, this also applies to the neo-liberal policy-makers, the business community, and the manageriat who have made over the university. This makeover has been done in ways that will ensure that even the very narrow vision of the university as a place simply ‘selling’ or ‘delivering’ ‘education’ in a market or producing ‘commercially relevant research’ will become less practicable—or valuable. If universities proceed to degrade the quality of their education or do research that is rapidly converted into commercially viable products, the point of doing this becomes a self-negating activity. As cases from private enterprise like Blackberry prove, when a business enterprise selling itself as site of technological innovation gives up on the relentless pursuit of new technical design in favour of new retail strategies or managerial innovations it has lost its way and cannot but fail. The privatised university which engages in providing its students with soft-option curricula faces precisely this fate. That is why we need to think again.

As earlier chapters have documented, we need new models for our universities, many of which are quietly imploding or reaching a tipping point from which recovery will not be easy. This, of course, is not the impression

you would get if you rely only on the glossy brochures, billboard advertisements, and television campaigns, let alone the websites which showcase beaming students, serious-looking academics, and gleaming corporate-style buildings—or in some cases ‘ye olde worlde’ faux gothic building redolent of tradition and elite status. But that’s the point. Universities long dedicated to the boring, dull work of trying to get at the complex truth of things have surrendered to a Dionysian multi-coloured exercise in PR-driven fantasy aided and abetted by armies of recruiting agents.

Insisting on some essential antagonism between vocational and university education is misleading, unwarranted, and has led to an inversion of the relationship between scholarship and vocational skills. A healthy scholarly environment forms the basis for establishing good practice in the intellectual, ethical, and technical skills specific to a number of professions and occupations, and accounts for why the role of universities extends into these areas.

Universities ought to be spaces for public scholarship, rational debate, and dissension, and they ought to play an indispensable role in nurturing a wider democratic and humane culture. They can also become places for social production. Public universities constitute a public space in which ideas and claims to expertise can be tested transparently and made available to the entire society. They are places where standards of rational justification are elaborated, put to work in the detailed practices of inquiry, and themselves rationally evaluated; and this informs and flows into various other arenas of civic life. They also enable members of society to inquire into how best to define and pursue fundamental human goods such as justice and truth.

REFERENCES

- Benkler, Y. (2013). Distributed innovation and creativity: Peer production and commons in networked economy. In *Change* (pp. 285–308). Madrid: BBVA.
- Clark, W. (2006). *Academic charisma and the origins of the research university*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Clegg, S. (2003). Learning and teaching policies in higher education: Mediations and contradictions of practice. *British Educational Research Journal*, 29(6), 803–819.
- Crocker, D. (1995). Foundations of development ethics. In M. Nussbaum & J. Glover (Eds.), *Women, culture and development* (p. 183). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dagger, R. (2002). Republican citizenship. In E. F. Isin & B. S. Turner (Eds.), *Handbook of citizenship studies*. London: Sage.

- Giroux, H., & Giroux, S. (2004). *Take back higher education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Heidegger, M. (1998). *Being and Time* (4th ed). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Holston, J., & Appadurai, A. (1996). Cities and citizenship. *Public Culture*, 8(2), 187–204.
- Isin, E. F., & Turner, B. S. (2002). Citizenship studies: An introduction. In E. F. Isin & B. S. Turner (Eds.), *Handbook of citizenship studies*. London: Sage.
- Klassen, M. L. (2000). Lots of fun, not much work, and no hassles: Marketing images of higher education. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 10(2), 11–26.
- Midgley, M. (2001). *Wickedness*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Nietzsche, F. (1996 [1878]). *Human, all too human: A book for free spirits* (trans: Hollingdale, R. J.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nussbaum, M. (1988). Nature, function and capability: Aristotle on political distribution. *Oxford studies in ancient philosophy* (Supp. Vol., pp. 144–184). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nussbaum, M. (1995). Human capabilities, female human beings. In M. Nussbaum & J. Glover (Eds.), *Women, culture and development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nussbaum, M. (1997). *Cultivating humanity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nussbaum, M. (2003). *The fragility of goodness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ollman, B. (1987). (ed.) *The Left Academy: Marxist Scholarship on American Campuses*, (3 vols) New York: McGraw Hill.
- Sen, A. (1989). Food and freedom. *World Development*, 17(2), 68–84.
- Sen, A. (1999). *On human development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sen, A. (2002). *Freedom and rationality*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Seneca. (1999). *Selected letters*. London: Penguin.
- Smith, R. M. (2002). Modern citizenship. In E. F. Isin & B. S. Turner (Eds.), *Handbook of citizenship studies*. London: Sage.
- Trow, M. (1998). American perspectives on British higher education under Thatcher and Major. *Oxford Review of Education*, 24(1), 111–129. doi:10.1080/0305498980240109.
- Watson, D. (2014). “Only connect”: Is there still a higher education sector? HEPI, Occasional paper 8, 2014.
- Ylijoki, O.-H. (2004, July 1–3). *Orientations of future in academic work*. Paper presented at the 20th EGOS Colloquium the Organization as a Set of Dynamic Relationships, sub-theme 22. Ljubljana: Ljubljana University. Available from http://www.uta.fi/tasti/papereita/ylijoki_egos04_paper.pdf. Accessed 18 Feb 2008.
- Ylijoki, O., & Mantyla, H. (2003). Conflicting time perspectives in academic work. *Time & Society*, 12(1), 55–78.

INDEX¹

A

- academic authority, 15, 184, 221, 223, 233, 235, 291
 changing locus of, 13, 19, 184, 197, 198
- academic capitalism, 5, 300, 302–5, 311
- academic culture
 after neoliberalism, 142, 149, 200
 before neoliberalism, 96, 98
- academic experience
 academic model as knowledge transmission, 70, 84, 88–93, 100n8, 227
 loss of autonomy, 9, 182, 215, 224, 237
 teaching, 19, 93, 199, 200, 216, 230
- academic freedom, 17, 47, 52–6, 59, 70, 93, 97, 98, 215, 234, 249, 252
- academic model, 70, 84, 88–93, 100n7, 100n8, 227
 disdain for teaching and students, 70, 84, 88–93, 227
- accountability, 9, 19, 20, 31, 32, 60n1, 79, 121, 122, 149, 183, 188, 196, 197, 208–10, 234, 235
- administrative bloat, 14, 182
- advertising
 expenditure, 203–5, 337
 mission statements, 201, 203, 208
 value of, 204, 273
- aporia*, 22
- ARC. *See* Australian Research Council (ARC)
- Australian Research Council (ARC), 301, 310–12, 314, 319–21, 324, 332n13
- autonomy and the university, 44–5

¹Note: Page numbers with “n” denote notes.

B

Blair government, 124, 125, 188, 189
 Bradley report, 132
 bureaucracy, 191
 as stupid, 184, 325
 bureaucratic authority, 184

C

CAEs. *See* Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs)
 Cameron government, 3, 13, 29, 31, 117, 126, 127, 196, 203, 245, 268
 capability as freedom, 33, 344–6
 casual teaching staff, 15, 182, 209, 222, 223, 230, 244–6, 283, 294n7, 317
 categories, 32, 40, 41, 42, 109, 114, 115, 116, 224
 role of metaphors, 42
 category mistakes, 8, 18, 40, 43, 106, 114, 150–2, 165, 166, 172, 173n3, 187, 207, 315, 330n9
 classical theory of language, 41, 42
 colleges, 3, 6, 7, 24n8, 30, 60n1, 69, 71–3, 78–81, 83–5, 87, 99n1, 120, 121, 130, 134, 136–40, 151, 171, 185, 187, 210n1, 220, 242, 246, 248, 253n2, 259, 262, 264, 286, 302, 315
 Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs), 7, 23n4 78–80, 83, 84, 130, 315, ix
 commodification
 of education, 59, 112, 148, 149, 163–5, 200, 273
 of knowledge, 59, 148, 163, 165, 200, 273, 300
 of research, 107, 149, 165, 273, 300

 of universities, 59, 95, 107, 116, 148, 149, 155, 163, 200, 273, 276, 300
 communicative action, 47–9
 conservatives and the ‘real’ university, 80–4, 342
 course evaluation surveys, 14, 208, 218, 220, 223
 criticism, 10, 55, 58, 59, 60n4, 86, 207, 303
 culture of audit, 14, 16, 19–21, 52, 118, 185, 196–200, 209, 216, 223–5, 229, 235, 242, 252, 317, 318, 323
 curriculum, 15, 51, 53, 55, 58, 79, 80, 90, 109, 159, 187, 206, 209, 216, 218, 228, 229, 230, 231, 241, 261, 292, 293, 337, 338, 341
 control by managers, 15, 218, 228–31, 337, 341

D

Dawkins reforms, 105, 128, 235
 Dearing Report, 123, 124

E

education
 as commodity, 12, 106, 150, 163, 166, 173, 182, 201, 349
 as delivery, 20, 194, 226, 317, 329n2, 341
 as human good, 17, 18, 34, 59, 114, 188, 351
 as positional good, 171, 263, 266, 304
 under the sign of the market, 105–41, 152, 196, 315–18
 educational capitalism, 162
 education market idea, 156

efficiency, 22, 23n5, 32, 43, 58, 92, 109, 115, 116, 118, 119, 122, 125, 126, 134, 135, 148, 149, 153, 154, 167, 184, 193, 196, 208, 216, 217, 229, 234, 236, 245, 247, 252, 282, 317, 336, 337
 enquiry-based learning belongs, 19, 51, 52, 216, 224, 226–8
 ethic of care, 56, 231

F

freedom

academic freedom, xiv, 17, 47, 52–6, 59, 70, 93, 97, 98, 215, 234, 249, 252

G

Gender, 261, 303, 345

equity, 9, 15, 116, 140, 267, 317, 336, 338

globalization, 109

and the university, 4, 8, 12, 106–9, 113, 140, 189, 190, 302

H

Hawke-Keating governments, 117

higher education

as capability, 20, 33, 34, 90, 126, 344, 345, 347

as human good, 11, 16–18, 33, 34, 59, 114, 188, 341, 351

knowledge

as positional good, 169, 171, 263, 266, 304

under the sign of the market, 105–41, 152, 196, 315–18

teaching,

higher education market

as category mistake, 8, 18, 150–2, 172–3, 207

as commodity, 10, 12, 106, 125, 149, 150, 163, 167, 173, 182, 201, 251, 316, 341, 349

competition, 8, 18, 19, 116, 119, 156, 157, 160–2, 164, 170, 171, 188, 196, 201, 217, 234, 260, 271, 272, 317, 336

efficiency, 22, 23n5, 115, 116, 118, 119, 125, 126, 134, 135, 148, 149, 167, 193, 196, 216, 217, 234, 236, 317, 336

idea of, 18, 112, 116, 119, 147–76

market crazed governance, 8, 18, 183, 187–92, 216, 217, 221, 223, 242, 245, 317, 318, 336, 342

quasi-markets, 131, 149, 150, 156, 160–3, 209

Howard government, 131, 132

human capital theory, 76

human goods, 11, 16–18, 32–7, 44, 59, 61n6, 114, 151, 188, 306, 341, 351

human resource units, 209, 248

Humboldtian conception of university, 17, 44, 49–52

I

ignorance

as preferred ignorance, 38, 43, 217, 224, 230

as presumed knowledge, 38, 326, 341

intellectual property, 138, 169, 206, 300, 301, 304, 308–10, 312

international students, 11, 14, 120, 131, 132, 193, 195, 205, 206, 209, 236–8, 259, 260, 264, 293n3

J

Johnson Administration, 135
 justice as freedom, 135

K

knowledge
 contradictions of, 19, 95–7
 as a human good, 17, 18, 32, 35–7,
 44, 59, 61n6, 151, 188,
 306, 341
 and power, 95
 as a private benefit, 105, 167, 168,
 307
 as a public good, 7, 17, 18, 47, 50,
 52, 56, 165–9, 173, 176n14,
 302–10, 317, 318, 330n7–9,
 342, 349
 knowledge and ignorance, 37–44,
 151, 230, 308, 340–2
 knowledge economy, 4, 5, 12, 19,
 126, 181, 188, 272, 299, 304,
 316, 317

L

learning
 as ontological change, 56, 57
 quality of, 217, 234, 291, 322
 as student responsibility, 225
 liberal arts model, 86

M

Magna Charta Universitatum, 44, 98,
 209
 major government, 14, 71, 119, 122,
 124
 managerial revolution, 325
 manageriat, ix, 18, 181–211, 246,
 318, 337, 341, 350
 market crazed governance

culture of audit, 196–200, 216,
 223, 317, 318
 imagined competition, 18, 188
 imagined markets, 18, 188
 new public management, 183,
 192–6, 317
 marketisation
 as advertsings, 140n3, 160, 185,
 200, 201, 203, 204, 341
 as category mistake, 8, 18, 43, 106,
 150–2, 165, 166, 172, 173n3,
 187, 207
 enterprise culture, 105
 funding cuts to promote, 119, 134,
 139
 of higher education, 7, 9, 10, 14,
 16, 18, 70, 80, 116, 118, 131,
 137, 138, 149, 150, 160, 161,
 169, 174, 181, 183, 184, 187,
 196, 197, 200, 216, 252, 299,
 300, 305, 328, 336, 337
 of knowledge, 18, 169, 181, 200,
 299, 300, 305, 328, 336, 337
 of universities, 7, 9, 10, 14, 16, 18,
 70, 80, 116, 118, 131, 137–40,
 149, 156, 160, 161, 169,
 174n7, 181, 184, 187, 196,
 197, 200, 216, 252, 299, 300,
 305, 328, 336, 337
 and visions, 105, 112, 208, 350
 Martin report, 77, 129, 135
 mass higher education system
 in America, 71, 170
 in Australia, 71
 in Britain, 71
 massification, 261, 264
 McUniversity, 181
 measuring quality of research
 fallacy of, 327
 use of proxy measures, 230
 measuring quality of teaching
 fallacy of, 235, 238–45

Menzies government, 78
 metaphors, 83, 271, 294n11
 mission statements, 201–3, 208
 modernisation, 108, 118, 125
 moral imagination, 12
 Murray report, 71, 77, 129, 135

N

neoclassical economics, 175
 neo-liberalism
 contradictions of, 111–13, 153
 as ideology, 5, 107, 113, 134
 as performative discourse, 107,
 114–16, 271
 as political process, 107, 111, 112,
 114–16, 140, 152, 153, 155
 Newman and idea of university, 11,
 56, 80–4
 new public management, 5, 8, 107,
 112, 116–18, 141n6, 168,
 183–5, 192–7, 207, 208, 216,
 229, 234, 299, 317

P

performance based measures, 3, 121,
 123, 129
 Ph.D thesis, viii, 290, 325
 positional good, 169, 171, 263, 266,
 304, 330n7
 postgraduate research, 131, 174, 182
 private for-profit universities, 23n2, 31
 private not-for-profit universities, 31,
 139, 174, 262
 privatisation, 10, 137–9, 161, 173,
 191, 193, 203, 303, 330n8
 problem-based learning, 51
 public, ix, 3, 29–63, 69–100, 105,
 149, 166–9, 183, 192–7, 216,
 262, 299, 302–10, 336
 idea of, 7, 13, 29, 45–7, 55

public goods concept, 166
 public reasoning, 16, 45–7, 52
 as communicative action, 47–9
 public relations
 advertising of universities, 160
 branding of universities, 185, 210n1
 public scholarship, 47–50, 52–6, 59,
 79, 93, 94, 216, 249, 252, 351
 public university
 in America, 11, 18, 29, 30, 33, 44,
 53, 54, 59, 61n11, 69–74, 80,
 81, 84–7, 94–7, 134
 in Australia, 7, 11, 18, 21, 29–31,
 33, 53, 59, 60n1, 69–71,
 76–80, 84, 85, 92, 94–7, 99n2
 in Britain, 69–76, 84, 95–7,
 105, 107

Q

quality
 managerial approach to, 14, 20,
 197, 217, 236, 252, 350
 as neoliberal idea, 149
 quality assurance, 20, 32, 52, 123,
 126, 191, 192, 208, 229,
 236–8, 249, 252, 272,
 299, 341
 quasi-markets, 149, 150, 156, 161

R

Reagan Administration, 137
 reasoning
 private, 46, 49
 public, 16, 45–7, 49, 52
 research
 academic capitalism, 300, 302–5,
 311
 applied research, 303, 304
 commercialisation of, 138, 168,
 169, 311, 312

funding, 16, 122, 129, 131, 149, 250, 254n11, 311, 314, 315, 318, 319, 321
 higher-degree research, 325
 income as proxy measure of research, 122, 217, 314, 318, 329
 intellectual property, 138, 169, 300, 301, 308–10, 312
 measurement of, 225, 290, 322
 metrics, 171, 191, 242, 318–19, 324, 328
 Ph.D, 7, 16, 325–8
 public good, 7, 47, 50, 52, 55, 56, 166–9, 173, 302, 305, 306, 308, 309, 316, 318
 pure research, 304, 316
 research university, 21, 351
 origins of, 16, 18, 23n4, 49, 53, 263
 Robbins report, 71, 73–6, 119, 124

S

sessional staffing, 219, 220, 253n2
 social equity, 9, 317
 social mobility, 9, 74, 79, 126, 266, 267, 270
 student as customer, 197, 199
 student-centered learning, 15, 225–34
 student debt
 America, 15, 215
 Australia, 15, 130, 267
 Britain, 15
 equity issues, 15, 267
 student experience
 as customers, 199, 271–3, 275, 287, 288, 291, 294n11
 motivations, 272, 273, 275, 278–85, 291
 work-study balance, 275–8

student fees, 124, 130, 132–4, 195, 206, 216, 254n11, 265, 266, 268, 311, 337
 student loans, 99n2, 125, 262, 267–9, 294n10
 supervision of higher degrees, 249

T

teaching in universities, x, 2, 30, 50–2, 56–9, 70, 105, 147, 181, 215–54, 267, 299, 336
 culture of audit, 14, 19, 20, 52, 185, 196–200, 209, 216, 223–5, 229, 235, 242, 252, 317, 318, 323
 learning, x, 14, 15, 17, 19, 22, 51, 52, 56–9, 75, 90, 105, 112, 123, 162, 167, 194, 197, 199, 226, 228, 234–8, 245, 247, 252, 315, 337, 338
 loss of academic autonomy, 224
 metrics, 171, 197, 216, 230, 231, 234, 236, 242, 245, 248, 317, 337
 as public scholarship, 47–50, 52, 56, 94, 216, 249, 252
 teaching-research nexus, 51
 Thatcher government, 118–21
 thinking, 3, 5, 10, 14, 16, 17, 21, 29–63, 81, 88, 90, 94, 96, 97, 147–76, 199, 216, 219–21, 225, 235, 242–4, 252, 260, 261, 286, 289, 290, 304, 306, 311, 327, 335–51
 truth, xi, 21, 36–8, 41, 44, 54, 55, 124, 189, 217, 241, 303, 339, 342, 351
 as a good, 11, 17, 20, 35, 48, 75–7, 82, 83, 94, 100n5, 106, 151, 152, 209, 306, 351

U

Unified National System
of higher education,
ix

University Grants Commission,
73, 74, 120, 121

utilitarian conception of higher
education, 85, 87, 97, 99

V

value freedom, 32

W

Whitlam government, 79, 129, 265

wilful blindness, 43

wissenschaft, 50, 306, 308