THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Doug Ogilvie
Department of Education
University of Queensland

The Function of a University
Contrary to the myth widely promulgated by vested interests and their advocates (and the label is largely irrelevant), its function is to:

- distract inquisitive people from posing questions that might seriously inconvenience societal dominants.
- socialize such people into an uncritical accep­
tance of the hegemonic-society.
- institutionalize enquiry into academic and com­
cmercial research that does not embarrass the domi­
nants and which generally promotes their sectional interests.
- institutionalize education into socialization (for professions and trades) which does not embarrass the dominants and which generally promotes their sectional interests.
- institutionalize common-sense understanding into scholarly knowledge (of facts and their authori­
tive interpretations) and to deny the legitimacy of any interpretations which might seriously embar­
ass the dominants.

In this task, the university makes use of subsidiary school systems and elitist professions. Together, they tempt able people with the promise of a relative status and away from the intrinsic rewards of personal development. It is a temptation that our intellectuals find irresistible and this applies to our left-wing tides and faddists equally as much as to our right-wing traditionalists and conservatives.

The Historical Tradition
Essentially, the university supplants the temple which, traditionally, has institutionalized privilege (in official church or lodge), understanding (into dogma) and education (into apprenticeship). Temple and university thus share a common commit­
ment to:

- hermetic knowledge (i.e. facts and their authorita­
tive interpretations, which are known to super­
ordinate people who can transmit them to subordi­
nate people if they can prove their fitness for this privilege),
- the privileged elitism that is associated with vary­ing degrees of mastery over this uncommon knowl­
edge.

The ideology of the university is, hence, supple­
mented, by that of the Freemasons, the Rosicruc­i­
ans and the Cabalists.

This institutionalization of privilege derives largely from Asia (the patronage of the Christian Church, as obvious in the teachings of Zaraathrustra (Zoroaster), Abraham, Moses and Solomon. This priestly tradi­
tion, which believed in a belief sacred secrets which are available to, and obtainable from, a lineage of privileged priests or masters) was absorbed by the Roman Empire via the oligarchical and tyrannical states of Greece. Later, it resurfaced with the Eastern revival that char­
acterized the Renaissance and was reinforced by the consequent Scientific Enlightenment (when the professional specialists became the most authorita­

tive of priests and eventually introduced us to the heavenly delights of battery vibrators, television commercials and fast foods).

In similar fashion, the professionalization of educa­
tional administration and management is now used to intimidate parents, teachers and workers who might otherwise be tempted to assume responsibil­
ity for coordinating their own activities within colle­
gial organizations (and also to legitimate manageri­
al practices that would not have been tolerated back in the Stone Age).

Certification
Professionalization depends upon certification.

Hence the privileged people who control a modern university, together with those who are privileged to use its facilities for personal advantage, have a vested interest in maintaining the certification myth.

According to this myth, examinations and assign­ments provide an accurate measure of worthwhile capacities and knowledge. Certification based on these measurements (and recorded on a ninety degree angle diploma) can then be used to legitimate claims to advancement, personal preeminence and the right to exercise authority. The reality, of course, is that the tests merely measure the statistical correlation between the examiner's interpretation of reality and the student's interpreta­
tions. I have never yet found a satisfactory answer to the question of who eventually examines the examiner and answers the questions.

In any case, the greatest threat to the marketability of this myth is cheating—particularly cheating that can be exposed. The most obvious deterrent is that the student would have a whole line of worms, beginning with the moral issues raised by the claims of bourgeois academics to the private ownership of mental constructs, and ending, who knows where!

As one would expect, the reaction of human clones to this type of threat has been programmed for thousands of years.

Wherever they are faced with a smart-ars'd kid who threatens to expose the innocent and vulnerable, they close ranks to protect the one thing that they have a shared capacity to understand, i.e. the myth. Depending on the size of the audience attracted by that myth, they can either crucify, poison or pinch a teacher and have a whole line of worms, beginning with the moral issues raised by the claims of bourgeois academics to the private ownership of mental constructs, and ending, who knows where!

Student作弊 is a phenomenon that has a long history, and it continues to be a serious problem for educators and school administrators. In the modern era, it has become more prevalent due to the increased availability of technology and the ease with which students can access and share information. As a result, educators and administrators must continually develop new strategies to combat cheating and maintain academic integrity.
mistake their natural ability to educate their own 
children. They are intimidated to depend on experts 
even though many of these so-called experts have 
children of their own who are unmitigated 
dislayers."

The Facelosa Man
Who are the dominants serviced by the universities 
and the professions? They are the controllers and 
directors of society: the bureaucratic managers of 
commerce and industry and service in capitalists 
countries and their counterparts in 'socialist' lands, 
together with the elitist professionals most closely 
associated with them in the professions of law 
(enactment and enforcement) and accountancy and 
the military.

The modern state (with its institutionalized govern­ment, 
trade, law, education, communication, health 
and amusement) is most sensibly understood as an 
institution for the preservation and maximization of 
sectional privilege. Alternatively, it may be viewed as 
a mechanism for the institutionalization of corrup­tion.

Crucial to this conspiracy are the university aca­demics who structure knowledge in such a way as 
to perpetuate the hegemony, and the legal profes­sionals who structure and enforce law in such a 
way as to perpetuate the system. In both cases, 
what is not done is much more important and con­sequential than what actually is done.

The inhibition of free enquiry, whether enforced by 
or for societal dominants, inevitably breeds and 
maintains corruption. For example, to identify 
clearly societal dominants in Australia would 
require free access to company records and taxa­tion returns and the right to subpoena witnesses, 
yet the secretive hegemony makes this virtually 
impossible. Nevertheless, an educated guess can 
be made if one examines political patronage (e.g. 
via mining leases, gambling concessions, statutory 
appointments, industry concessions, crown land 
transactions, taxation concessions, imperial 
honours).

However, with the possible exception of the occa­sional vice-chancellor, university academics are 
more hacks and functionaries, in unwitting, witless 
serve of the dominants.

Social Science
As an example of academic contribution to the wel­fare of societal dominants, we might consider the 
role of social scientists. Most of the research carried 
out by social scientists merely confirms the old 
cliche that 'garbage in means garbage out' as far as 
empirical research is concerned.

Social scientists can 'prove' virtually anything (and 
do) by being selective in the questions they ask and 
the methods they use for collecting and interpreting 
data (and it is impossible for them to carry out their 
number-crunching in any other way than by using 
the technique of selective ignorance). This was 
clearly established in the early studies of commun­ity 
power in the U.S.A.3 and probably dozens of 
times since.

What is more, these ambitious fellows normally 
don't get funding until their detailed research pro­posal is perused by their sponsor.

It is not that our social scientists are necessarily 
sinister. Most of them are simply naive. And so is anybody who accepts their findings as authorita­tive.

For example, if an academic concludes that Austra­lian society is relatively fluid in relation to most of 
its jobs, this may be interpreted to mean that the coun­try enjoys a remarkable equality of opportunity.4 
However, this interpretation of the facts hides the 
more important fact that a small clique has a 
monopoly of the relatively few jobs where the vast 
majority of society's crucial decisions are made (e.g. 
concerning tax laws, corporate law, libel laws).

Anybody seriously concerned about equality of 
opportunity in Australia might ask a more pertinent 
question: i.e. did 200 families (local and foreign) 
control the Australian economy in 1970, for sec­tional advantage, and if so do they still control it 
now, and if so how is this dominance maintained, 
and what role do universities play in maintaining 
this inequality of opportunity?

But then, neither I.C.I. Ltd., nor C.R.A. Ltd., (nor the 
C.I.A. nor Queensland University for that matter) 
would be prepared to sponsor research into that 
question, would they?

And when somebody like Raskall does and finds 
that 46% of the country's wealth is in the hands of 
5% of the population, and that the richest 2000 
people in Australia own as much as the poorest 
2½ million Australians5, the findings are easily ignored 
and our institutionalized academics get back to the 
trivialities that gains them professional recognition 
and scholarly status.

Conclusion
If we are seriously concerned about equality of 
opportunity and the search for truth, we need to 
review the role of the university in institutionalizing 
our current system of privilege.

I suggest that:

- the appropriate organizational structure for such 
enquiry is collegial (i.e. egalitarian and consensus) 
in place of the present mix of academic feudalism 
and administrative bureaucracy,
- the appropriate candidates for such enquiry are 
impartial scholars motivated by curiosity, rather than 
acquisitive academics motivated by greed or the 
craving for relative status,
- the time to do something about all this is now, 
while some of us are still tenured rather than con­tracted; and the place is here, where some of us are 
still enjoying academic freedom instead of man­aged efficiency.

I will not hold my breath waiting for an enthusiastic 
response to this from either authoritarian vice­ 
chancellors, or feudal professors, or bolshevik revo­lutionaries, or journal referees, or Queensland 
cabinet ministers. We Celts, by definition, are not 
found in the halls of power, either going in or com­ing out.

However, sometimes we remember, with Tom, 
... how our folks took care of themselves, an' if 
they was a fight, they fixed it themselves; an' they 
ain't no cops waggin' their guns, but they was better order than them cops ever 
gain. I been a-wonderin' why we can't do that 
all over. Throw out the cops that ain't our 
people. All work together for our own thing — 
all farm our own land.6

But, this They call romantic nonsense or commu­nistic subversion, don't they? I wonder why?

REFERENCES
1. Zev ben Shimon Halevi, The Tree of Life, Rider & Co., 
2. P. Kropotkin, Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution, 
Horizon, Boston, (undated).
3. O. Cigoule, Community Power and the Australian Edu­ 
4. See references above.
5. T. Wiltshire, Australia Ripped Off, A.M.W.S.U., Sydney, 
1979.