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University corporatisation: The assault of rationalism on the academic spirit

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UNIVERSITY CORPORATISATION: THE ASSAULT OF RATIONALISM ON THE ACADEMIC SPIRIT

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ABSTRACT

The world-wide obsession with rationalistically-based decision-making processes has resulted in individuals and societies alike suffering at the hands of bureaucrats and their masters, federal and state politicians. Institutions, industries, and even governments are now being seen as organisations to be managed by cold reason with little or no account being taken of the human spirit or of the attitudes and values of individuals. It appears that human worth and dignity have been replaced by rationalistically-motivated expediency cloaked in jargon divined by corporate management. Sadly, this form of rationality has found its way into Australian universities and is detrimentally affecting the mission of, and academic culture within, these institutions of higher learning. Such reshaping has resulted in most publicly-funded universities now evolving as businesses rather than autonomous centres of learning, research and scholarship. The present work explores the antecedents of rationalism, challenges the value of this prevailing ideology, and presents an alternative paradigm for maintaining the mission and culture of the university.

INTRODUCTION

Australian society is in the throes of experiencing a rationalist hegemony implemented by successive Federal and State governments. Obsession with privatisation, corporatisation and efficiency has left social systems in chaos in a country where the words *unpredictability* and *uncertainty* are on the lips of many. The once "Lucky Country" seems now to be very much down on its luck.

Universities have not remained unscathed by this prevailing political ideology. Like other organisations, they too have been swallowed into the vortex of economic rationalism, with most not only capitulating to but wholeheartedly embracing, a worldview in which the functions of management take precedence over academic matters. One result has been

that university academics can no longer say “*we are the university*” (i.e. the academy of scholars), as has been the university tradition for centuries but rather, are now forced to affirm “*we work for the university*” (i.e. in a master-servant relationship). Such a reorientation has struck at the very core of what university life and academic freedom are about.

The new order has radically redefined the task and life of the university. As significant decisions are now being made on rationalistic rather than educational grounds, academics have suffered the erosion of autonomy for it is no longer teaching, research and scholarship which hold pre-eminence. Consequently, considerations such as course availability, capital improvement, staff employment conditions, availability of resources, and academic promotion, are routinely no longer determined by educational need, justice, principle or desirability, but by whether or not potential changes are cost effective and produce the type of efficiencies which are of benefit to the university corporation (Coady, 2000). In other words, university managers no longer ask ‘is this educationally desirable’ but rather, ‘is this sound business practice?’.

Such a climate has led to academics becoming dispirited, demoralised, frustrated, intimidated by management, and fearful of job loss. With the ostensible removal of academic freedom, many individuals have accepted redundancies or simply walked away. This has led to a reduction in the number and quality of Australian academics - as regularly attested to in national newspapers. As a result, subject offerings have shrunk with a commensurate impact on program diversity. With fewer full-time academics to advise them, students have often been left confused and the burgeoning part-time lecturing contingent, which has little or no knowledge of the intricacies of the system, has done little to alleviate this situation. Coupled with this, a weak student union (in Western Australia at least, since the passing of legislation banning compulsory unionism in the middle 1990s), is powerless to help them. In fact, some student unions now rely heavily on university funding for their very existence. In such an environment, student union autonomy is an ideal of a bygone era.

Australian universities seem to be in the midst of an identity crisis. Whereas in previous eras universities have operated within a liberal-democratic environment, today’s rationalistically motivated and so rationalistically funded government agenda has meant that universities have been forced to scramble to redefine themselves. Such redefinition, however, has amounted to little more than capitulating to the prevailing *Zeitgeist*. Little thought has been given to the detrimental effects of rationalism on university life, mission and culture and so, its pre-eminence continues to thrive unchallenged. Rationalism thus enjoys the status of a *fait accompli*. Carolyn Allport, president of the National Tertiary Education Union, was poignant in stating that “universities, whether public or private, exist for the public interest. Their Acts of Incorporation are clear on this front” (p. 2). Given such a charter, they are now, “under the influence of

economic rationalism, in danger of being turned into a mere auxiliary of the international market and monetary system" (Self, 1995, p.341)

RATIONALITY - ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

In terms of its etymology, rationality is grounded in reasoned thinking (L. *rationalis* = reason). A rational approach to understanding does not discount other forms of knowing, it does however, insist that rationally motivated arguments must be subjected to the rules governing reason, logic and objectivity. Rationality has accurately been described as "the ability and inclination to look for reasons - it is an essential feature of one who is capable of seeing the world right, of discovering truth, or of recognizing when one line of argument is better than, one way of life is preferable to, another" (Parker, 1997, p. 43). Rationality is first of all reasonable, then methodologically defensible, and finally unbiased. As such, it is opposed to "the universalism and naked instrumentalism of positivism on the one hand and subjectivism or arbitrariness on the other" (Parker, 1997, p. 49).

The potency of the rational mind in seeking to understand the world has a long heritage. The concept in the West can perhaps be traced back to the Classical Greek period. Aristotle, who may represent the apogee of Greek rational thought, is best remembered as the great classifier, orderer, and systematiser of knowledge. For Aristotle, according to Mayer (1973), "man's most important attribute is his rational capacity....." in that ".....reason can understand the totality of life; it can give order to chaos" (pp. 106, 108). In this, Aristotle stood in contrast to Plato who did not consider the emotional life as merely "a prelude to our rational development" (Mayer, p. 106), but as having at least as much existential value as rationality itself. Some have argued, however, that a thinking/feeling dichotomy in Hellenistic thought is a recent Western aberration and that Greek thinkers did not see the head and the heart as being autonomous but rather, as operating in synchrony. The eighteenth century German literary writer Friedrich Schiller (2001), for example, advanced the view that for the Greeks, reason was never seen as independent but existed in harmony with feeling. This harmony, according to Schiller, resided in the fact that the Greeks did not see themselves as free individuals in the sense that their conscience was independent of the views of the community. In Schiller's view, reason for the Greeks was tempered by what may be today referred to as a humanistic orientation.

Despite the debate over head-heart polarisation, writers such as Schaeffer (1975) have argued that all Classical Greek thinkers had three important principles in common;

The first is that they were *rationalistic*. By this is meant that man begins absolutely and totally from himself, gathers information concerning the particulars, and formulates the universals..... Second,

they all believed in the *rational*. This word has no relationship to the word 'rationalism'. They acted upon the basis that man's aspiration for the validity of reason was well founded. They thought in terms of antithesis. If a certain thing was right, the opposite was wrong..... The third thing that men had always hoped for in philosophy was that they would be able to construct a *unified field of knowledge*..... They hoped that by means of rationalism plus rationality they would find a complete answer - an answer that would encompass all of thought and all of life.

(pp. 34-35, italics added)

Hellenistic rationality persevered in powerful ways throughout subsequent eras with little change taking place until the thirteenth century when Thomas Aquinas, "the great rationalizer of the Catholic faith" (cited in Ulich, 1971, p. 62), produced his famous five proofs for the existence of God. Aquinas is remembered for using a purely rational approach, insisting that reason "is the only thing that constitutes us men and distinguishes us from brutes" (in Ulich, 1971, p. 313). Pure reason was gaining ascendancy over humanistic concerns, and the stable platform which had supported Aristotle **and** Plato for some 1600 years, was beginning to develop serious fissures.

It was probably the sixteenth century event known as the *Reformation*, which gave reason exponential rise over its ailing antagonist. Vesey and Foulkes (1990) suggested that "The main effect of the Reformation was to undermine the spirit of obedience to any clerical authority, which paved the way for the development of modern science and philosophy. Thus the humanist efforts of the Renaissance were able to grow into a permanently secular movement of intellectual enquiry, which has lasted ever since" (pp. 250-251). The Reformation, together with its historical sibling the Renaissance, became huge levers which prised open the harmony previously existing between reason and feeling. Reason had now not only become autonomous but was "held to be the solitary font of knowledge, while the whole idea of spiritual meaning in the universe was cast aside like a wornout garment" (Burns, 1958, p. 520). Aristotle and Plato were no longer speaking to each other. The result? Philosophies of a purely rationalistic view of life began to abound.

Rationalism was further advanced by "the great 17th-century metaphysicians Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz, who believed that the general nature of the world could be established by wholly non-empirical demonstrative reasoning" (Bullock, Strallybrass, & Trombley, 1988, p. 721). Rationality was becoming increasingly more arrogant and self-assured, and even more detached from emotion.

The eighteenth century produced Rousseau, who insisted that there existed in every child, as exemplified by *Emile*, (Rousseau, 1759/1911) a 'noble savage' who had been corrupted by the process of enculturation, but who could be redeemed by being encouraged to make "the best use of his

reason" (Rousseau, in Ulich, 1971, p. 425). Rousseau's contemporary, Emmanuel Kant in *Critique of pure reason* (1781/1934) and *Religion within the limits of reason alone* (1793/1960) showed a clear epistemological disposition in favour of pure reason, suggesting that there existed in human nature an irreconcilable split, even in the rationale of ethics, between reason and other forms of knowing.

Rationality's position was strengthened in the nineteenth century through the rise of Hegelianism with its emphasis on reason and individuality. Hegel (1837/1953) as an *idealist*, saw the breakdown of Schiller's harmony between reason and feeling as being developmentally necessary for the detachment of the individual conscience from its immediate community. For Hegel (2001), the real was rational and the rational real. Such a position asserts that "the citizens of Hegel's organic community do not obey its laws and customs simply because they are there. With the independence of mind characteristic of modern times, they can only give their allegiance to institutions that they recognise as conforming to rational principles. The modern organic state, unlike the ancient Greek city-state, is self-consciously based on rationally selected principles". It was also Hegel who reinvigorated interest in the Greek concept of the "speculative unity of all knowledge" (Appignanesi & Garratt, 1995. p. 105), believing that the scientific method had the power to one day explain and unite physical and metaphysical reality.

With the arrival of the twentieth century, the divide between objective reason and emotion became irreconcilable. Reason was now free, absolutely free from the constraints of emotion. Whereas in the past, according to writers such as the previously cited Schiller, Ancient Greek moral consciousness did not make the modern distinction between morality and self-interest, Modernist and Postmodernist thinkers now felt freed to do precisely that. The path forward for the human race would now be determined by reason alone, without regard to moral consciousness.

The rationalist imprimatur is clearly evident in the work of twentieth century philosophers such as Bertrand Russell (1961) in the area of religion *vis-a-vis* science; Karl Popper (1934/1959) in the form of critical and science-based rationalism; in the logical positivism of A. J. Ayer (1951, 1959); and in the atheistic existentialism of Sartre (1972). In psychology, the behaviourist B.F. Skinner (1971) had much to say about the type of determinism which found its roots in the waters of autonomous reason. The humanistically oriented Carl Rogers (1961) likewise appealed to reason for answers when he wrote;

I have little sympathy with the rather prevalent concept that man is basically irrational, and that his impulses, if not controlled, will lead to the destruction of others and self. Man's behavior is exquisitely rational, moving with subtle and ordered complexity toward the goals his organism is endeavouring to achieve. (p. 194)

In the realm of twentieth century economic theory, the rationalist worldview became visible in the assembly-line technology of Henry Ford (Morgan, 1996); the bureaucratic organisation identified by Max Weber (1947a,b); the scientific management of Frederick Taylor (1947); the monetarist views espoused by Milton Friedman (1962); and ultimately, in the “McDonaldisation” (Kolb, Osland, & Rubin, 1995a) of much of the corporate sector. Such thinking emphasises, among other factors, a free market economy, objectively measurable productivity gains, a mean-and-lean workforce, and highly honed efficiency indicators as the key criteria of success and value (Haynes, 1997).

The twentieth century, and especially the latter half, witnessed a redefined rationalism being used as the vehicle for transporting a crass form of capitalism to the masses. In essence, authoritarian management had been harnessed in the service of capitalistic gain, with this new rationalism providing the necessary ideology. Chomsky (1996) showed perspicacity in understanding this when he wrote:

As state capitalism developed into the modern era, economic, political and ideological systems have increasingly been taken over by vast institutions of private tyranny that are about as close to the totalitarian ideal as any that humans have so far constructed. ‘Within the corporation’, political economist Robert Brady wrote a half century ago, ‘all policies emanate from the control above. In the union of this power to determine policy with the execution thereof, all authority necessarily proceeds from the top to the bottom and all responsibility from the bottom to the top. This is, of course, the inverse of “democratic” control; it follows the structural conditions of dictatorial power. What in political circles would be called legislative, executive, and judicial powers’ is gathered in ‘controlling hands’ which, ‘so far as policy formulation and execution are concerned, are found at the peak of the pyramid and are manipulated without significant check from its base’. As private power ‘grows and expands’, it is transformed ‘into a community force ever more politically potent and politically conscious’, ever more dedicated to a ‘propaganda program’ that ‘becomes a matter of converting the public ... to the point of view of the control pyramid’.

(p. 71-72)

In summary, the assumptions and values underpinning rationalism have changed over the past two and a half thousand years. Ideals have taken root which, to borrow from Husserl, “retain the word but not the task” (1970, p. 15). The shift has occurred in three main areas - ontology, epistemology, and sociology. First, the rise of humanism removed God’s ontological necessity, thus paving the way for an autonomous humanity. Second the epistemological relationship between thinking and emotion

changed, with the former gaining ascendancy over the latter. Finally, with the shift from an agrarian to an industrialised and later a technocratic society, the notion of human relationship was replaced by one of human capital. These factors in combination, yielded fertile ground in which the seeds of a reinterpreted rationality, along economic lines, could be brought to full maturity.

Philosophical rationalism, then, originally a method for acquiring knowledge of metaphysical realities by using faculties that transcended purely empirical experience, had been hijacked. A genuine rationalism had been replaced by a naïve form which can perhaps be described as *irrationalism*, and entangled with a nescient form of capitalism where the 'bottom line' for measuring worth and value had become monetary gain. The ideological ideal known as *economic rationalism* was born - an ideal under which Australian universities are currently labouring.

THE RISE & RISE OF ECONOMIC RATIONALISM

At its best, economic rationalist thinking embodies a strong commitment to empirical investigation which leads to reasonable benefits for all members of society. By economic means, rationalists strive for such ends as the absence of global conflict; the efficient management of the world's resources; the development of effective ways of meeting human needs; and the creation of workforce accountability. The mind which creates, however, is the same mind which can destroy. At its worst, economic rationalists place financial considerations ahead of any other concerns and so deny "Adam Smith's recognition of moral bonds and altruism" (Marginson, 1997, p. 103). The result is a system in which market forces are allowed to operate in ways which advantage society's fiscally powerful and elite citizens. Concomitantly, human individuality is dispassionately bleached out in favour of mass conformity; established structures and systems are obliterated to destroy any memory of more humane regimes; institutional heritage is seen as possessing little value; the existing culture of relationships is destroyed with a chilling sense of detachment; and Machiavellian strategies are enthusiastically endorsed for dealing with ideological dissidents. This rational hegemony gives little or no thought to the worth, value, desires, preferences or predispositions of those being affected by its economically-driven agenda. This is Weber's notion of 'rational capitalism' taken to the extreme and regrettably, is the type of rationalism which appears to be evident in the majority of Australian universities.

Rudyard Kipling once defined jingoism as "patriotism gone mad". At the risk of personifying the term, excessive economic rationalism could well be defined as "rationality gone mad". Excessive rationalism is essentially the ideological deification of reason. It consists of taking a leap from seeing all knowledge of the world as being based on reason, "to the view that the

world is itself constructed on rational lines; that is, in ways that belong to reason". This leads to the belief that "the world is reducible to simple elements, from which everything can be constructed by logic alone" (Vesey & Foulkes, 1990, p. 248). Such a conviction is then harnessed in the service of justifying any action which aids an economically motivated endeavour.

Mitchell, Scott, and Nielsen (1995) have argued that such an approach is disastrous economically because its "values are 1) a present versus a future orientation, 2) an instrumental as opposed to a substantive focus, and 3) an emphasis on individualism contrasted with community" (pp. 145-46). Immediate gratification, pure instrumentality and rampant individualism, argued the writers, spell eventual unsustainability for any economic system. If these writers are correct, then economic rationalism has only limited longevity but the potential to cause great institutional and personal harm during its tenure.

Noll (1994) has shown how the rationalist agenda of programmed success is an assault on the human spirit in that it denies the complexities which make us human by reducing every action to a cause and effect relationship. Marginson (1997) has sounded his agreement, stating that the individual is given the commodity status of "human capital", "human resource", "economic citizen", or "economic unit". The term *labour* is replaced with *product* - the emphasis changing from the creator to what is being created. Such an approach strikes at the very core of what it means to be human. As such, a predetermined economic purpose will never fill the existential void created by loss of significance, the breakdown of relationships, or destruction of personal meaning.

George Soros (1998), corporate magnate turned humanitarian, arrived at similar conclusions to those expressed above. After reviewing theorists such as John Maynard Keynes and Milton Friedman in relation to the making of rational market predictions, Soros concluded that "there is a prevailing belief that economic affairs are subject to irresistible natural laws comparable to the laws of physics. This belief is false" (p. 28). Soros argued that although a distinction needed to be made between thinking and reality in order to have rational thought, the two must never be separated or the balance between the two be allowed to become skewed. If this happens, human fallibility will lead on one hand to cold rationality where the participant becomes less important than the thinking, or on the other, to a reality which is clouded and deluded. Current economic thinking, concluded Soros, venerates right thinking but ignores the agents of that thinking. This is disastrous, because what is valued in a society becomes distorted. One always needs to remember that;

.....economic behavior is only one kind of behavior and the values that economic theory takes as given are not the only kind of values that prevail in society..... The scope and influence of economic theory has expanded beyond the confines that the postulates of an axiomatic

system ought to impose. Market fundamentalists have transformed an axiomatic, value-neutral theory into an ideology, which has influenced political and business behavior in a powerful and dangerous way.

(Soros, 1998, pp. 45, 43)

What apologists for economic rationalism fail to realise is “the narrowness of the range within which reason is applicable, or its propensity for self-contradiction, or its manifest inability to solve most of the fundamental questions about experience” (Magee, 1997, p. 16). An environment which denies that human beings are anything more than *homo economicus* (Buchanan & Tullock, 1965) becomes ultimately soul destroying. Schaeffer’s words written in the mid 1970s are even more pressing at the dawning of a new millennium, namely, that “we are watching our culture put into effect the fact that, when you tell men long enough that they are machines, it soon begins to show in their actions” (1975. p. 39). One would do well to keep in mind the injunction of Soros (1998), that economically motivated decisions have social, emotional, and spiritual, as well as rational consequences. As such, economic rationalism is ultimately self-defeating because efficiency-driven productivity will fall as individuals feel more-and-more dispirited, marginalised, devalued and powerless.

Perhaps the most damning diatribe on excessive rationalism in recent years has come from the pen of John Ralston Saul (1993) in his book *Voltaire’s Bastards: The dictatorship of reason in the West*. Saul demolishes the religious-like axioms upon which rationalism has been founded and calls for a return to individual participation in the identification and creation of **values**. Lambkin (1998) has undertaken an extensive critique of Saul’s major works and prepared a summary which identifies the essential qualities of corporatist rationalism as identified by Saul. An illuminating exercise is to compare Lambkin’s summary with insights gleaned from organisational psychology. David Kolb, together with his associates, has established himself as one of the foremost authorities on organisational behaviour. His research and writings on ‘best-practice’ in the business world are mandatory reading in many university Business schools. A comparison of the two columns presented in Table 1 indicates that rationalism’s answer to organisational management is in diametrical opposition to the organisational principles espoused by one of the world’s leading organisational theorists.

The qualities of Saul’s corporate rationalism with responses distilled from sources found in Kolb.

QUALITIES OF CORPORATE RATIONALISM AS IDENTIFIED BY SAUL*	EXPERTS’ RESPONSES FOUND IN KOLB**
1. The ascendancy of reason as a moral weapon with the inevitable conclusion that the solution to problems lie in the determined application of rationally	Other factors such as personality, environment, culture, education, grouping, affect, will also determine the effectiveness and ultimate desirability of solutions.

organised expertise.	(Kolb, 1995a, p 382, 354-6)
2. The marginalization of the human qualities - spirit, common sense, doubt, perception, faith, emotion, intuition, experience; and a denial of our most important instincts - the democratic, the practical, the imaginative.	Once the “psychological contract” between employer and employee has been violated, more emphasis will be placed by the employee on obtaining personal satisfaction in out-of-work activities, situations, and relationships. (Kolb, 1995a, pp.7-10)
3. An obsession with certainty, with absolute answers, with simplification (where in reality there is great complexity), and with the need to remove uncertainty, through rational procedures.	“The process of problem solving does not proceed in a logical, linear fashion from beginning..... it is not the result of a single mental function such as logical thinking”. (Kolb, 1995a, p. 249)
4. A fixation with, and servility to intricate structure, systems and processes which are developed through the application of a clean, unemotional logic.	‘Master managers’ transcend the rules of mechanistic logic and adopt a more comprehensive and flexible logic. “Structure is not organisation” (Kolb, 1995b, pp. 48, 578-589)
5. The denial of history - successive absolute answers are provided for major public problems without reference to previous experience.	Old-timers-in-the-know are what give a business or an institution a sense of history and prevent it from repeating errors of the past. (Kolb, 1995a, p. 72)
6. The creation in the individual of passivity and conformity in those areas which matter, and non-conformity in those which don't.	“every manager must motivate and encourage his employees, somehow reconciling their individual needs with the goals of the organization.” (Kolb, 1995b, p. 37)
7. An obsession with efficiency and productivity as values in themselves.	Efficiency and productivity without consideration of human relationships has the potential of leading to an “oppressive sweat shop” mentality. (Kolb, 1995b, pp. 50-53)
8. A fixation with specialist knowledge and expertise, and with arcane technical dialects which split the language into a public and a corporatist domain. It therefore becomes difficult for anyone, either insider or outsider, to grasp reality.	“reverential and utopian” ideologies, with associated “near mystical terminology”, do not provide a framework for action. Goals must be communicated in clear and meaningful ways. (Kolb, 1995b, pp. 97, 398)
9. A fixation with management, and an obsession among the corporatist elites with structure, systems, processes and expertise.	“A major reason for Japan’s famous ‘economic miracle’ has been its recognition that its chief resource - almost its only resource - is its people” (Kolb, 1995a, pp 23; 496)
10. A fixation on qualification, measurement and planning.	The search for “simple, quantifiable standards” against which to measure and reward performance invariably “cause goal displacement”. (Kolb 1995b, p. 558)
11. An obsession with haste (in reality as a means of control and power) - problems need solving through efficiently rational processes, without the need for considered reflection by groups at large.	Gathering as many perspectives as possible about a situation is extremely important as there is never one best perspective from which to see. (Kolb, 1995a, p. 37)

* Distilled from Saul (1993, 1997a, 1997b) by Lambkin (1998, pp. 6-7), and adapted here.

** As envisaged by a variety of experts in Kolb et al. (1995a,b).

Over the past decade especially, organisational and business psychologists have contributed much to developing an understanding of the tenuous relationship which exists between systems, structures, and people (see for example Funnell, 1995; Isaksson et al., 2000; Lauder, et al., 1999). In the main, advocates of rationalism have, understandably, chosen to either ignore or completely disregard such insights. University administrators are no exception. Consequently, the assault of rationalism on the university sector has occurred on several major fronts, six of which are explored in the next section.

RATIONALISM AND ITS EFFECTS ON UNIVERSITY LIFE

It is well known that people don't like change. University administrators, aware of this fact, attempt to soften the blow by making reference to "necessary initiatives". Unfortunately, such a phrase is a misnomer as many of the changes are neither necessary nor innovative (a quality implied by the term initiative). There appear to be six key areas being targeted by rationalist administrators. These strike at the very heart of university life and endanger its mission.

'Initiative' One: Centre rather than Circumference

The adoption of the industrial model with its hierarchy of corporate managers sourced from private companies has replaced the educational one in which managerial tasks were assigned to senior academics. The agenda, then, is to run the university like a corporation rather than an institution of higher learning. As such, huge sums of money have been poured into developing a corporate upper echelon ('the centre') with an impressive sounding *structure*, whereas the true *functions* of the university - teaching, research and scholarship - receive proportionately less funding.

There is no doubt that over the last decade or so, successive governments have made severe cuts to education budgets. In a context of declining resources universities, of necessity, have had to make adjustments. Harrold (2000) reported that in the late 1970s government spending on education was 6.5% of Gross Domestic Product, whereas today it is around 4%. Such a comparison finds support in available statistics from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Figure 1, below):

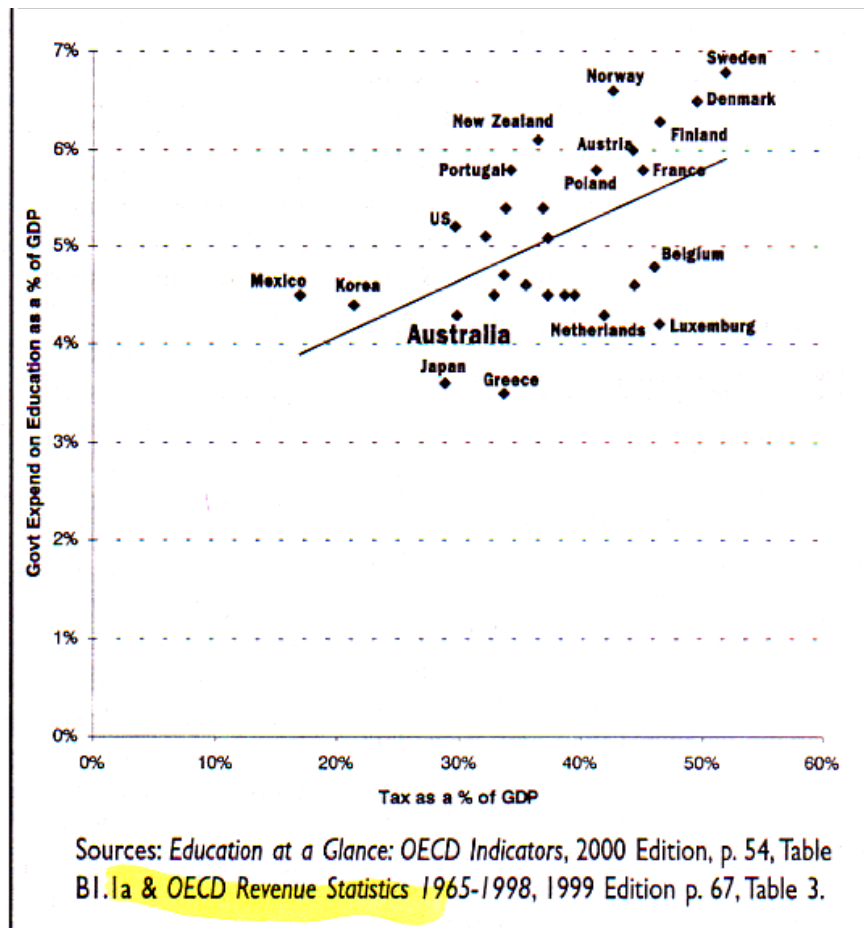


Figure 1. Correlation between tax and public spending on education, 1999.

Along similar lines, Marginson (1997) under the subheading *Economising Education*, makes the observation that “overall, between 1975-76 and 1992-93 the ratio of government consumption expenditure to load fell by over one-third, dramatically weakening the public contribution to teaching and research” (p. 220, see Table 2).

Table 2

Government final consumption expenditure on higher education compared to student load, 1975-1993, 1975-1976 = 100.0

Period	Government final consumption expenditure	Student load (average over financial year)	Ratio of expenditure to student load
1975-76	100.00	100.00	100.00
1979-80	106.24	109.13	97.4
1980-81	108.01	109.83	98.3
1981-82	110.65	111.18	99.5
1982-83	109.10	112.15	97.3

1983-84	109.04	114.13	95.5
1984-85	108.41	117.83	92.0
1985-86	113.97	123.33	92.4
1986-87	112.59	129.67	86.8
1987-88	113.85	138.20	82.4
1989-90	119.86	160.29	74.8
1990-91	106.73	176.35	60.5
1991-92	114.48	188.78	60.6
1992-93	122.40	194.36	63.0

Marginson, 1997, p. 220 (sourced from ABS, CTEC, and DEET data)

Marginson's data highlights the fiscal plight of universities which, understandably, have had to respond to government policy by invoking cost-cutting measures. In such a climate, one would expect available funding to be apportioned in a way which reduces bureaucracy and so protects existing educational programs. Unfortunately, this has not been the case. OECD *Indicators* for 1998 report a telling table under the heading *Educational Expenditure on Tertiary Education* (p. 130 Table B5.1 b). Of the available statistics for 17 participating countries, Australia is second lowest in terms of compensation for lecturers (29%), but highest in terms of compensation for other staff (40%); yet expenditure per student relative to GDP is more than for any other country, bar one (see also p. 31). In other words, comparative government expenditure on tertiary education is relatively high, but Australian universities spend more on administration and less on academic staffing than any other OECD country, bar one.

Such grossly disproportionate expenditure *within* the universities suggests that these institutions are in the process of metamorphosing into self-serving bureaucracies rather than remaining true to their charter as centres of teaching, research and scholarship. As such, decisions made on purely rationalistic grounds, although appealing, have had, are having, and will continue to have dire consequences for the mission of the university. Much of the available funding goes into supporting and further developing the central bureaucracy, while more-and-more is siphoned from teaching and research. It seems that, like a parasite, the central bureaucracy must survive, and does so by feeding off three necessary but nevertheless inconvenient hosts - teaching, research and scholarship.

'Initiative' Two: Publications rather than Pedagogy

The catch-cry "publish or perish" has been a precept defining academic life within the modern university. In recent years, however, the balance between research, teaching and scholarship has become severely distorted. This has occurred because of the rationalist obsession with control, quantification, and efficiency - 'number of publications' lends itself much

more readily to such scrutiny than 'quality of teaching' or 'level of scholarship'. Such an emphasis, however, has led to two undesirable ramifications. First, is "..... the mindless pursuit of publications for its own sake that bedevils the modern university" (Noll, 1994, p. 30). Academics have been forced into the situation of publishing *anything* and *everything* in order to have it registered as a publication. Quantity has in many cases replaced quality, for after all, it is quantity that is reported to government by university statisticians.

The second undesirable manifestation of the obsession with publications is the effect on university pedagogy. The situation has been well documented by Kerr (1995) who wrote:

Society *hopes* that teachers will not neglect their teaching responsibilities but *rewards* them almost entirely for research and publications..... Rewards for good teaching usually are limited to outstanding teacher awards, which are given to only a small percentage of good teachers and which usually bestow little money and fleeting prestige. Punishments for poor teaching also are rare. Rewards for research and publications, on the other hand, and punishments for failure to accomplish these, are commonly administered by universities at which teachers are employed. Furthermore, publication-oriented resumes usually will be well received at other universities, whereas teaching credentials, harder to document and quantify, are much less transferable. Consequently it is **rational** for university teachers to concentrate on research, even if to the detriment of teaching and at the expense of their students.
(p. 551, bolding added)

If a third obsession were to be identified, it would be the development of a new category of university worker, namely the *academic entrepreneur*. Individuals within this category are a valued commodity as they bring funds and therefore prestige to the university. Their *modus operandi* is to buy out as much teaching time as possible, so being able to concentrate on vying for grants (preferably large ones), researching, publishing, and being rewarded through the university research points incentive scheme. These individuals play the game well, for they have realised that the three big Ps - Prestige, Promotion, and Productivity - are measured in terms of research output and grant acquisition. So, how desirable and valuable is teaching when those who receive the greatest rewards have off-loaded as much of it as possible?

'Initiative' Three: Accountants rather than Academics

Universities are now committed to business value rather than academic virtue. In the past senior academics held key administrative positions. This meant that administrators, who had worked their way up from grass roots

level, knew how the system functioned, what were its sensitivities, and what would and wouldn't work. Their agenda was to improve the teaching and learning which went on in the university. Individuals in these positions were normally well qualified, experienced, loyal, had a sense of the history of the institution, and possessed a high level of commitment.

By contrast, many of today's senior administrators are recruited from the business world. As such, they are novices to how tertiary institutions function and are more at home making decisions along corporate business rather educational lines. They are less well qualified, far less experienced, have little or no sense of continuity or traditions of the institution, and will leave at the drop of a hat to go to a higher paying position should one present itself. It is not that such individuals are necessarily more desirable than those previously promoted from the academic arena, it is simply that they cost less, can be disposed of at any time, and are prepared to make decisions on the basis of the 'bottom line' - and that fits in admirably with the rationalistic agenda.

In a comprehensive study, Kolb, Osland and Rubin (1995a) compared "mechanistic" with "organic" work environments (p. 496). Their investigations revealed that the mechanistic type of environment is characterised by McDonaldisation, which emphasises the importance of a rationalistically developed *structure*, which although efficient, yielded low job security, high staff turnover, and low job satisfaction. The organic type of environment, by contrast, which was likewise effective, is characterised by Matsushitisation (after Matsushi, a successful but non-rationalistically driven Japanese corporation), which stresses *function* and is spiritualistic in nature - characterised by high job security, low staff turnover, and high job satisfaction. With their unprecedented emphasis on developing rationalistic corporate structures, Australian institutions of higher learning are in danger of becoming "McVersities" (Kolb, Osland, & Rubin, 1995a).

In this new age, the characteristics of expertise, loyalty, and commitment are not valued by universities to the same degree as in the past. The new broom of rationalism must sweep away all in its path so that no semblance of the old remains. 'Old ways' of doing things must go and the 'old guard' must be removed. What rationalism fears above all else is any remnant of the past - any evidence which suggests that there have been different ways of doing things, of perceiving the world, of understanding reality. As long as money is saved (usually from the teaching program) and productivity gains can be shown to have occurred (at least in prospect - audits are rarely undertaken), then the corporation considers itself to be healthy.

Unfortunately, what such a rationalist agenda fails to realise, is that a vast amount of recent research has shown that it is ultimately the spiritualistic type of environment which produces greatest productivity gains and this occurs primarily because staff have a sense of commitment to, and ownership of, the organisation (Korten, 1995; Scott, 2000; Pusey, 1991, 1993; Smith & Wexler, 1995).

'Initiative' Four: Pain rather than Pleasure

In the past, morale, camaraderie, appreciation of and commitment to academic values were key attributes of university life. Today, this does not seem to be the case. How people feel about their work, what they think about the changes taking place, and how such changes affect them, seems to hold a very low priority in the eyes of management (Coady, 2000). To the contrary, the culture which is developing promotes and rewards unquestioning allegiance to management and obedience to 'initiatives' such as downsizing, outsourcing, and restructuring. The concern with structure is paramount, while people are simply seen as economic units akin to pawns, to be used in a fashion which best suits the purpose of the management agenda. People are stripped of their dignity, value, and significance, but then, such qualities are of little concern in a rationalistic world.

If individuals are forced to work in a culture of intimidation and bureaucratic conformity, they feel disenfranchised, and their spirit begins to protect itself. Individuals enter what Barnard termed long ago (1938) a "zone of indifference", where interest plummets and accordingly, so does productivity. The pleasure has gone out of work. This tends to affect life in general and individuals suffer a type of institutionally-induced depression. Camus once made the comment that "without work, all life goes rotten, but when work is soulless, life stifles and dies" (in Kolb, 1995a, p. 547).

Without necessarily being able to express their feelings, individuals begin to feel like Joseph K., in Franz Kafka's (1925/1968) *The Trial*. The following excerpt is illustrative of the feeling which is engendered by continually being subjected to a work environment which discounts people and which, prima facie, doesn't seem to make any sense;

The only sensible thing was to adapt oneself to existing conditions. Even if it were possible to alter a detail for the better here or there - but it was simple madness to think of it - any benefit arising from that would profit clients in the future only, while one's own interests would be immeasurably injured by attracting the attention of the ever-vengeful officials. Anything rather than that! One must lie low, no matter how much it went against the grain, and try to understand that this great organisation remained, so to speak, in a state of delicate balance, and that if someone took it upon himself to alter the disposition of things around him, he ran the risk of losing his footing and falling to destruction, while the organisation would simply right itself by some compensating reaction in another part of its machinery - since everything interlocked - and remain unchanged, unless, indeed, which was very probable, it became still more rigid, more vigilant, severer, and more ruthless. (pp. 131-132)

Kolb (1995a) makes the observation that “sociologists and psychologists tell us it is pain that makes people and living systems change. But crisis management - pain management - is a dangerous way to manage for change” (p. 42). The epithet “no pain, no gain” is nonsense. Change ought to be managed in ways other than tearing the heart and soul out of people. In a comprehensive study relating to what people saw as the most important qualities of a job, Yankelovich and Immerwahr (1983), found that the most important were: working with people who showed respect (88%); recognition of good work (84%); having the opportunity for creative thought and discretion rather than merely engaging in the execution of instructions (83%). Those who fail to find satisfaction within the system are liable to become passive-aggressive in their behaviour. Such a defence mechanism acts to protect the individual while at the same time punish the system. Ultimately, if leaders are not perceived as leading in a caring fashion, desired change will be doomed to fail. Leaders can affect an organisational culture, but they cannot unilaterally determine what that culture should be. It is a mistake to think otherwise. Culture in any social system emerges from a consensus of values held by the community as a whole (Trice & Beyer, 1993).

‘Initiative’ Five: Rhetoric rather than Reality

The language of propaganda in an organisation is a powerful tool and the way in which it is used provides insight into the workings of a social system. Those who speak with perspicuity and honesty tend to be believed, whereas those who speak from behind a smokescreen of jargon and gobbledegook are perceived as having something to hide. An investigation of a number of Australian university websites (search undertaken by the author December, 2000), indicates an unprecedented trend toward the use of corporate jargon by university management (Table 3).

Table 3

Corporate Jargon used by University Management

-
- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| • outsourcing | • client- centred | • seamless education |
| • downsizing | • sessional staff | • political correctness |
| • interfacing | • customer- focused | • globalisation |
| • corporatising | • stakeholders | • productivity gains |
| • multi-skilling | • products | • reform agenda |
| • reskilling | • synergism | • networking |
| • reclassifying | • career path | • the Red team |
| • retooling | • delivery systems | • future-oriented |
| • targeting | • product orientation | • market strategy |
| • restructuring | • human resources | • market share |

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • realigning | • resource focus | • strategic alliance |
| • reshaping | • service culture | • marketplace philosophy |
| • product packaging | • mission statement | • human resources |
| • realignment | • efficiency driven | • productivity savings |
| • reconfiguring | • purpose statement | • gender inequalities |
| • strategic repositioning | • designated functional areas | • management initiative |
-

Words such as those cited are often combined in a formulaic fashion. The final product may be seen in the following examples found on various university websites. A translation for the uninitiated, has been provided by the writer;

- “Reshaping a career path to fit in with the reform agenda”
(= downgrading someone’s job);
- “Strategically restructuring designated functional areas to ensure productivity gains”
(= fewer people doing more work);
- “Targeting stakeholders to produce a strategic alliance”
(= getting more money or influence);
- “Targeting gender inequalities to better reflect the marketplace philosophy”
(= getting rid of, or discriminating against, males).

The following three examples which were found have no translation as their semantic import was too difficult to determine:

- “The Director Corporate Liaison..... will help us to anticipate and nurture positive relationships with some key stakeholders, who have a public and political dimension, to enhance [the University’s] interests and reputation.”
- Relating to a Planning Workshop for Divisional Staff:
“The group had an opportunity to explore [the University’s] corporate identity, consider how we can foster a service culture and break down the “silos” that inhibit administration performing at its best for the Institution.”
- The Faculty will "create synergies through inter-disciplinary approaches and appropriate alliances and achieve efficiencies through consolidation."

The philosopher Bryan Magee (1997) made the pertinent observation that for those who have nothing to say, “obscurity..... provides a smoke-screen from behind which they make their advances in the world” (p. 468). A fair comment. Why can people no longer “say what they mean and mean what

they say"? Perhaps it is because they have nothing of any value to contribute, or conversely, because they are too frightened, *a la* Kafka, to say something clearly for which they will later be held accountable. Hiding behind the rhetoric of corp-speak is much easier than admitting that we live in a highly complex world which poses questions for which there are sometimes no glib rationalistically-motivated answers.

'Initiative' Six: Mascara rather than Meaning

To the outside community, universities are still largely seen as the bastions of intellectual prowess, integrity, and learning. Those who are inside the system, however, know better. They realise that these institutions are showing signs of disorganisation and disintegration, that, in like fashion to the accusation levelled at the Pharisees by the Prophet of Galilee, they are like a sepulchre: beautiful on the outside but on the inside, full of dead men's bones. Those who engage the tools of rationalism to counter the problem are acting a bit like the passengers on the *Titanic*- fussing over the placement of the deckchairs while the ship is approaching an iceberg.

Today's university is has far fewer tenured academics and more individuals employed on a sessional basis than ever before (Coady, 2000). Sadly, the remaining tenured academics, rather than being involved in scholarship, research, and the teaching program to the same degree as they were previously, now act as co-ordinators, administrators, managers, and inductors of an ever-changing pool of sessional staff. Academic tasks have been replaced by administrative and managerial ones - people with PhDs are being used to organise those with BAs to do the teaching and thus by default, run the programs. In this way, knowledge as the product of systematic accretion is becoming greatly devalued. What is valued, is the saving made on staffing costs. Given such a scenario, it becomes difficult to argue that the quality of university programs is not suffering. Neither can it be argued that students are getting real value for their ever-increasing fees. Australia as a nation will never approximate the status of what a one past Prime Minister termed "the clever country" (see Maslen & Slattery 1994), if excessive rationalism continues to flourish in the country's universities.

All the glossy brochures and attractively constructed websites fail to compensate for real substance - for disaffected staff, disgruntled students, and a system in chaos. One wonders whether management really believes its own propaganda about how wonderful things are or whether, in the absence of any real solutions, it uses this sort of mascara as a way of hiding the bones of disintegration. Apart from issuing never-ending publications, management has another way of addressing the problem - further enlarging the bureaucracy by creating new managerial positions such as protocol manager, facilities co-ordinator, risk manager, space manager, director of corporate liaison, and office of corporate review.

Kolb et al. (1995a) identify four stages in organisational growth - inception, high-growth, maturity, and decline. Of the final stage they write:

The fourth stage, *Decline*, is characterised by rigid, top-heavy, overly complex organisational structures. Communication breakdowns are common. There is often blind adherence to a 'success formula', regardless of environmental changes that make this formula obsolete. Decision making emphasises form [planning process] rather than substance [important results], and self-serving politics are the norm.
(p. 357)

Sadly, features of this final stage are recognisable in many of Australia's once thriving universities, thus signalling their decline. Universities are only as strong as the people who make up the fibre of their very existence. While management remains bent on pursuing a rationalist agenda with its form rather than substance, all the whitewashing in the world will never be able to hide the evidence of functional disintegration. Sadly, although university managers seem to be oblivious to the obvious, not so private enterprise. Large corporations are currently entering into discussions relating to the establishment of Corporate Training Centres aimed at bypassing the universities. Chief among these is Microsoft with the development of *Microsoft Professional Certification*. Such qualifications concentrate on providing industry-specific training with guaranteed employment at the end of a course. A time is coming, and not too far off, when universities will no longer be able to hide behind their status as the only available accredited service providers. If things do not improve in the very near future, they may find themselves touting products that nobody wants.

DOES HOPE REMAIN?

Korten (1995) speaks of a world-wide 'institutional systems failure' (p. 11), declaring that "public-opinion polls reveal a growing sense of personal insecurity and loss of faith in major institutions..... confidence in our major institutions and their leaders has fallen so low as to put their legitimacy at risk" (pp. 22, 23). Universities are not excluded from Korton's subsequent diatribe. And the reason for this perceived failure? Korton concluded that the corporate model, based on rationalist assumptions, has discounted the individual in favour of the dollar, has courted profits instead of people. This situation may well be the final destination of the kind of rationalism which Aristotle would have never envisaged and which Plato would have totally abhorred.

With further reference to institutions of higher learning, Parker concluded that "Educational contexts are simply too rich to fall readily under the kind of universal laws which enable predictions to be employed to such useful effect in natural science, car manufacturing and pharmacy" (1997, p. 36).

Peter Karmel (2000), a long-standing luminary in the Australian tertiary education sector has sounded a similar warning, stating that "in developing public policy for resourcing education, decisions need to be made, not on the basis of ideological predilections, but on an assessment of the consequences that flow from the decisions with all their efficiency and equity implications. Anything less than this risks the future of Australia as a just and equitable society based on democratic principles" (p. 9). In the same article, he further insisted that efficiency alone can never be the sole criterion for determining educational provision in Australia.

There is no doubt that universities have had to respond to the *Zeitgeist* in which they now find themselves. This is not in question. What is being considered is whether the paradigm of economic rationalism is the best one for meeting present as well as future challenges, *within* the university. External challenges such as public funding are difficult if not impossible to control, however, internal ones such as distribution of available resources are directly within the ambit of university managers. The time seems well overdue for university administrators to critically evaluate the assumptions and values upon which the pervading ideology of economic rationalism is built.

Numerous writers (e.g. Haynes, 1997; Korten 1995; Parker, 1997) have done just that. When distilled, three major features of this ideological position become evident, namely that:

- economic self-interest takes pre-eminence over any supposed common good;
- free market distribution of wealth on the basis of entrepreneurial activity is to be applauded;
- any intervention should be implemented through general impersonal rules.

These assumptions squarely attack that which universities have traditionally coveted, namely, the pre-eminence of knowledge; the inherent value of education as social capital; and the community of scholars with its culture of collaboration.

It may be illuminating at this juncture to once again refer to the work of Aristotle - the great rationalist but not purveyor of rationalism - for whom the distinction between "reason" and "character" was far from clear cut. For like the ancient Greek philosophers in general, Aristotle equated reason with personal stability and happiness. Under the Greek conception, reason necessarily included notions concerning personal integrity, virtue and morality. In Book 6 of the *Ethics*, Aristotle (1953) wrote that there were "Five modes of thought or states of mind by which truth is reached". The first four of these he identified as:

1. Science or scientific knowledge (episteme)
2. Art or technical skill (techne)
3. Prudence or practical judgement (phronesis)

4. Intuition (nous)

The modern rationalistically-based university system, however, has evolved into a notoriously reductionistic one, reflecting the empirical and positivist base from which it has emerged throughout modernity. Consequently, due attention has not been paid to Aristotle's fifth and most important mode - Wisdom (*sophia*). Aristotle described this as "the most finished form of knowledge", defining it as the whole which emerges when scientific knowledge, art, prudence and intuition are combined.

In similar vein, the great Danish philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard, discussed education in terms of "edification". By "edification", he meant the "upbuilding" of personal virtue or wisdom. For Kierkegaard (1947), the main question for education was always: What kind of person it is desirable to build? This places "moral education" and "personal development", in their fullest senses, at the very heart of educational philosophy. According to this view, the primary aim of education ought to be the development of persons of "character".

But is all this merely a pining after the past? The mythologizing of an era that never really was? Reminiscing rather than restructuring for a new millenium? Recent writings pertaining to human organisation indicate otherwise. They chronicle a picture which suggests firstly, that the tenants of raw rationalism are bankrupt; and secondly, that unless deeper human values are considered, no rationally-driven system will ever endure, the university included. Such writings appear to fall into three broad categories.

First, those which appeal to the great religions for guidance; second, those which see benefit in wisdom of philosophers of society; and finally, those which turn to the twentieth-century business world for illumination.

The first school, which references itself against the great religions (usually seven are identified: Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Confusianism, Toaism, Buddhism, Islam), is exemplified in the writings of Scott (2000), who suggests that unlike the great religions of the world:

most corporations, by contrast, have achieved a collective history of no more than 50 years. Their level of collective understanding about their core constituents, their people, is infinitely less mature than that of the great religions. They engage in formal market research to accelerate the process, but virtually none of this is aimed at understading themselves. It is aimed at understanding their external customers. The only systematic self-diagnosis most firms engage in is done by management consultantants. This on the whole leads us back to the mechanistic approaches..... you can't reengineer your soul! (p. 21).

Scott then presents “seven common qualities” in which the religions find agreement and which corporations must consider if they are to inspire adherence in people. It is proposed that these qualities satisfy a deep psychological/spiritual need in individuals and revolve around:

- a moral authority
- collective interests rather than self-interest
- a deeply ingrained ritual and symbolism
- a well-understood tradition
- a fundamentally optimistic outlook
- the ‘big questions’ about life
- mystical authority

Such a list would be perceived as being fatally toxic to the purveyors of economic rationalism.

The second group, which appeals to the distilled wisdom of the great philosophers of social organisation, is typified by the recent work of writers such as Das (1999) and Levin (2001). This approach questions whether the application of scientific logic to the study of human affairs is philosophically defensible, that is, whether the assumptions of scientifically-based rationalism are sufficient for explaining human behaviour. With reference to the employer-employee relationship, writers generally conclude that rather than the ‘scientific management’ espoused in Taylorism, an inviolable ‘social contract’ ought to be the basis of all forms of industrial and human organisation. It is their contention that social philosophy through the ages has clearly and successfully argued for the position that people must take precedence over products, if the social fabric of community is to be prevented from freying. Table 4 highlights the contributions of the most prominent philosophers in question. As with the previous group, a perusal of this Table makes it immediately obvious that most of the ‘principles’ articulated here are anathema to the ‘ethic’ of rationalism.

Table 4
Insights from philosophers of societal organisation

Type of Principles	Author	Brief Outline
1. Personal virtues	Aristotle	Avoidance of actions that are not honest, open and truthful and which cannot be made public
2. Theological injunctions	St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas	Do not pursue actions that are not kind and compassionate and that interfere with building a sense of community; reciprocity and compassion are key
3. Government requirements	Hobbes and Locke	Do not violate law and regulations
4. Utilitarian benefits	Bentham and Mill	Ensure actions are taken that will lead to greater good than harm for the society
5. Universal rules	Kant	Do not take any action that you will not like others to take
6. Individual rights	Jefferson and King	Actions must not undermine individual rights without due process (seizure of property, interference with privacy, deprivation of liberty)
7. Economic efficiency	Smith, Friedman and Blinder	Aim for maximization of profit within legal and market constraints, thereby indicating efficiency
8. Distributive justice	Rawls	Do not take any action that will cause harm to the underprivileged
9. Contributive liberty	Nozick	Do not interfere with individual right for self-development and self-fulfilment to the limits of each one's abilities

[After Das (1999), p. 52]

The third approach to human organisation is found in the writings of what may be called the 'social rationalists', that is, those who indeed see the value of a rational approach but insist that such an approach must be tempered by humanistic values. Advocates of this position largely come from the world of business economics. The values they espouse have been defined by different names, but their characteristic attributes are surprisingly similar, as can be seen by reference to Table 5. There seems to be a heart here, a deeper spirit, a soul, which is lacking in the formula-driven, mechanistic approaches which have littered the landscape for the past quarter of a century. Indeed, there appears to be a recognition of values which are inherent in the very nature of what it means to be human. As one of their sympathizers insists "when you look at the world through an ideology you are finished. No reality fits an ideology. Life is beyond that" (De Mello, 1990, p. 148).

Table 5
Reported Characteristics of Effective Human Organisation

<u>KORTEN (1995, pp. 271-3)</u>	<u>KOLB (1995a, p. 496)</u>	<u>TOMASKO (1993)</u>	<u>COVY (1990)</u>
[Principles for social health in the 21st century]	[7 Spiritual Values]	[Architecture of corporate change]	[Habits of highly effective people]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic justice • People's sovereignty • Intrinsic responsibility • Common heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National service through industry • Fairness • Harmony & co-operation • Struggle for betterment • Courtesy & humility • Adjustment & assimilation • Gratitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start from the bottom up • Repeal work fragmentation • Structure horizontally • Organize around processes, not functions • Make individuals count • Pyramids are for dead Egyptians! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compassionate communication • Fostering self-esteem • Engaging the emotions • Valuing difference • Explaining motives • Defining and pursuing strengths • Developing an environment of trust

The attributes espoused by the great religions, the philosophers of human organisation and the advocates of what I have called social rationalism, appear to have identified a common human longing in the workplace, and one which rationalism is incapable of satisfying. Thinkers from all three camps insist that individuals will give their best when they feel they are engaged in worthwhile work; when they are respected, appreciated, and valued; and when they feel they are being heard. Economic rationalism cannot meet such needs because its foundational values and assumptions are incapable of supporting them. Hence, as suggested earlier, it is these very values and assumptions which need to be reexamined. For as Kolb (1995a) has argued, "change almost always requires examining and rethinking the assumptions people hold about the environment, the way the organisation functions, and their working relationship with other people" (p. 620). Without such open and accountable examination, change for the better is unlikely to occur. Indeed, the 'Gentle Galilean', may have been right when he said "where your treasure [assumption] is, there will your heart [value] be also" (Matt 6:21 NIV).

If it is true, as Pascal suggested, that “the heart has its reasons which reason knows not of”, then administering a university like a corporation will severely damage its chief resource, its personnel, thereby endangering its very mission. Pring (1999) wrote insightfully when he insisted that “human beings are not machines that can be worked harder with the only requirement being a regular service and lube. Human beings require recognition, praise, and above all, a degree of care that machines do not need. Human resource allocation is therefore not always rational” the key question to human organisation is ‘how ought we to live?’ (translated in the workplace context into ‘How ought we to treat our staff?’)” (p. 33-4)

What has been argued here echoes the words of Magee (1997), that it is now time to venture forth out “of the shallows of rationalistic humanism to an appreciation of the mystery of things” (p. 564). Do we really want to fashion Australian universities along corporate lines when “corporations are free to act solely on the basis of profitability without regard to national or local consequences; relationship, both individual and corporate, are defined entirely by the market; and there are no loyalties to place and community” (Korten, 1995, p. 131)? Universities must not become further degraded by continuing down the same path as rationally-motivated *corporations*. Rather they must strive to reinvent themselves as *institutions* of higher learning, motivated by the imperatives of academic excellence, intellectual pride, a spirit of compassion, and principled decision-making. Rather than following the pied piper of rationalism on what is fast becoming his terminal outing, Schaeffer (1975) may well have been correct when he suggested a quarter of a century ago that “man will have to renounce his rationalism, but then..... he has the possibility of recovering his rationality”(p. 82). Hope indeed remains!

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