Tracking the nomadic life of the educational researcher: - what future for feminist public intellectual(s) and/in the performative postmodern university

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Is the idea of the liberal university dead, has the post modern university any chance of being emancipatory, has the theory practice divide merely collapsed in an era of 'new knowledge work', or has the university just become one aspect of market states and global capitalism? Knowledge based economies simultaneously locate universities as central to the commodification and management of knowledge while the legitimacy of the university and the academic as knowledge producers is challenged by post modernist, feminist, postcolonial and indigenous claims within a wider trend towards the 'democratisation of knowledge' and a new educational instrumentalism and opportunism. What becomes of the educational researcher, and indeed their professional organizations, in this changing socio political and economic scenario? Is our role one of policy service or policy critique, technical expert or public intellectual? Or all of these? In particular what place is there for feminist public intellectuals in a so-called era of post feminism and public-/private convergence? The paper draws on recent debates around the nature of knowledge based societies, trends in relations between policy and educational research, situating these debates about the role of the university in wider debates about feminism, the impact of globalisation and intercultural relations.

Universities, knowledge, markets and governmentalities

Many social theorists argue that we have undergone a radical transformation in social, political and economic life in the late 20th C marked by shifts in relations between the individual, communities, the state and markets in the context of globalisation. One key aspect of these transformations is that information has become a core product of commercial exchange, and the management of information a key occupational sector(Webster 1995). The rise of the informational society based on technical and organisational innovation has led to a move from production to consumption and management work (Lash and Urry 1994, Castells, 1997), a society characterised by 'more and more information, and less and less meaning'(Baudrillard 1988 p. 95 ). Audiences are more creative and aware, more reflective and sceptical.

Have we, as Beck (1992, p.9) suggests, been 'eye witnesses, subjects and objects, of a break within modernity'? What does this mean for the future of the university and for us as academics who work within the interdisciplinary field of education, and indeed for professional organizations such as AARE. Is there a place for public intellectuals in a knowledge based society to work within/against governmentalities marked by performativity and corporatisation?
Knowledge, the primary rationale for the modern university's formation, is now the centre of the economy. Calas and Smircich (2001, p. 148) comment:

Knowledge production in universities has become a contested affair. The moment 'knowledge' was positioned as a commodity in the wider context of capitalist modes of production and 'free market' forces, universities were to receive declining support for continuing as sanctioned sites for the production of innovations in the arts, the sciences and the professions, and still less support for continuing as places of 'disinterested knowledge' in the quest for a better society.

Debate within the academy as to the future role of the university has centred around four positions described by Delanty (1998):

1. **Entrenched liberal critique.** This views the university as a site of cultural reproduction. The liberal left's opposition is to the generic competencies of the new vocationalism supplanting the generalist skills of a liberal education. The right's opposition, exemplified by attacks on cultural studies, feminism, and multiculturalism, rests on the defence of traditional culture of the canon that is elitist and patriarchal, a 'deeply conservative' strong humanism based on the arts and high culture. Both advocate a universal humanism that depicts postmodernism as producing an 'absence of values' (Barnett and Griffin, 1997, p. 60).

2. **Postmodern thesis** foresees the end of the state and of the university, the university having lost its emancipatory role due to fragmentation of knowledge and separation of research from teaching. This position is encapsulated in Lyotard's (1984) notion of performativity in which 'efficiency and effectiveness become the exclusive criterion for judging knowledge and its worth'. Whether it is true, just or morally important reduces to whether it is efficient, marketable or 'translatable into information quantities' (Bloland 1995, p. 12). The professor is no more competent than a memory bank network in transmitting established knowledge, no more competent than interdisciplinary teams in imagining new moves or new games' (Quoted in McWilliam 2002, p. 174). Higher education is less about what students learn and more about what students are 'worth' (Miller 1998).

3. **Reflexivity thesis** claims that there is new mode of knowledge based on a reflexive relationship between the user and producer of knowledge as old forms of knowledge are increasingly irrelevant to the post Fordist economies (eg. Barnett 1999). Traditional disciplinary based knowledge is now being replaced by transdisciplinary knowledge that collapses the artificial theory-practice dichotomy. Critics of this position simplistically equate interdisciplinarity with problem solving and the demise of theory, viewing it as a virus that lacks identity, is contentless, only producing 'strategies of usefulness' (Wortham 1999, p.79). Advocates cite the dynamic tension of interdisciplinarity, enjoyed in education and women's studies, in which experience, particularly of marginalised groups and so easily devalued by modernity, is now all the go, with a privileging of agency and reflexivity (McNay 2000).
4. Globalisation thesis focuses on the instrumentalisation of the university as it embraces market values and informational technology. Thus the university becomes integrated into capitalist modes of production through the strategies of corporatisation—managerialism, marketisation and privatisation. The enterprise university therefore is a major player in the global market and in information based capitalism and we, as academic capitalists, are complicit (Marginson and Consindine 2001, Slaughter and Leslie 1997).

Academic ambivalence towards recent restructuring of higher education arises from experiencing simultaneously all the above trends. Academics experience new controls (to be more accountable) and new freedoms (to be more entrepreneurial), all the time more visible in ways that 'contentments of stability are increasingly elusive, purposes are contradictory, motivations blurred and self worth slippery' (Ball 2000, p. 3).

These shifts have produced both external and internal threats to the modern university.

Externally, universities are no longer the primary definers of what counts as valued knowledge in the public sphere. The penetration of communication into both knowledge and cultural production has occurred at the same time that the notion of professionalism is under revision. The 'claim of universities as the formal credentialling institutions to be the rightful designers and deliverers of professional knowledge s are being weakened along with their capacity to define the attributes which all professionals should have' (McWilliam, Hatcher and Meadmore in press).

Academic curriculum and pedagogy is increasingly driven by student choice, student satisfaction surveys and teaching and learning management plans. Performativity based 'excellence' and 'image' has 'taken over from content or substance'. "What gets taught or researched matters less than the fact that it be excellently taught and researched''' (Wortham 1999, p. 74).

The university student is no longer the embodiment of generalised social, national or ethnic values' as the university becomes 'just another business' (Griffin 1997, p. 5). The student is a more volatile object /subject, no longer the passive recipient of knowledge, 'the reasoning individual of the Enlightenment. He or she is a consuming individual'(Griffin 1997, p.5). The 'learner earner' is presumed to be a self managing individual who is flexible, adaptable, self motivated, independent and who chooses courses on the basis of desire in order 'to be optimally positioned within the market' (Usher 1999, p. 110). These students know what they wish to learn and how to learn it.

Just as the consumer can accept or reject goods available ... so the 'consuming' student can reject the knowledge and expertise higher education has to offer at will, without a need to justify such as choice (Griffin 1997, p. 5)

The privileging of student demand and satisfaction thus creates a crisis for academic authority. On the one hand, specialist expertise is only valued for its perceived immediate vocational relevance. On the other hand, diverse student populations expect gender and culturally inclusive pedagogies, access, fair representation and inclusive curriculum, putting disciplinary pedagogies that have 'unproblematically fused liberalism, egalitarianism and meritocracy' at risk (Smelser 1994). The capacity of academics to deliver either is subverted by the material conditions of massification that equate bigger classes with 'better' (more efficient) teaching.
Internally the legitimacy of the university and of the academic as definers of valued knowledge has been challenged by the 'democratisation of knowledge' which has produced less of a collapse of knowledge or standards and more a type of 'epistemological wobble' (Scott 1999, p. 15). The universities dual historical role in the production of 'knowledge as science' and 'knowledge as culture' was challenged in the 1960s by student and women's movements. Post structuralism, feminism and anti-foundationalism took on the universities disciplinarity, autonomy and epistemological authority (Barnett and Griffin 1997, p. 17). The Gulbenkian Commission on the Social Sciences (Wallenstein 1996) pointed out that 'male social scientists have studied themselves' over the past 200 years' and studied 'others' as 'reflections or contrasts to themselves' (p. 54-5). The solution was to expand scholarly recruitment. While the universal consensual view of the modern liberal university was put under pressure, the 'radicalisation of democratic citizenship' arising from the advocation of civil rights of democratic socialism and feminism was largely extra-epistemic, concerned more with ideas of justice, happiness and equality, but which left 'disciplinary based knowledge unscathed' (Delanty 2001, p. 2).

By contrast, others see the democratisation of knowledge in the late 1990s has meant changes in the structure of knowledge itself, producing a different cognitive structure in society and a more reflexive role of knowledge (Wallenstein 1996). Postmodernism, together with new communications, have fundamentally changed power/knowledge relations. But is it the 'end of knowledge or has knowledge become the end' (Delanty 2001, p. 3)? The paradox is that with massification, 'higher education, once marginal, has become socially pervasive at the very time when traditional intellectual structures have been dismantled and allowed to decay' (Scott 1999, p. 15).

Finally, within universities, what counts as knowledge, how knowledge is constituted, and indeed how it is counted, has also been revised by the entrepreneurial or performative state, seeking not to invest in, but rather to accrue economic wealth from, education. The role of universities has shifted more towards managing knowledge production for the state in the national interest rather than for intrinsic value of production of disciplinary knowledge.

There is an emerging divide between academics and managers with this 'hybrid' managerialism. As the eminent sociologist Halsey (1992, p ) commented :

Managerialism gradually comes to dominate collegiate cooperation in the organisation of both teaching and research...Research endeavours are increasingly applied to the requirements of government and industrial demands. The academic becomes increasingly a salaried, even a piece work labourer, in the service of an expanding middle class of administrators and technologies’

The management of knowledge production and dissemination has become the core work of universities, as they seek to 'mastermind the volatility' (Harvey 1993, p. 287), repositioning academics as 'managed professionals' (Rhoades and Slaughter 1998). In this scenario, maybe 'The last (action) hero of the university is neither the student or the academic but the administrator' (Wortham 1999, p.4).

The conditions of academic work have also radically altered - marked by the intensification of labour, doubling the number of students since 1984, and doubling the proportion of casual academic labour from 7 to 14% since 1996. Leaner and meaner university governance further marginalises the academic voice in policy and decision making, while weakening the research professoriate. Partnerships with industry, government and communities have produced new public/private hybridities, weakening universities special protection against free trade agreements, while private providers gain access to public funding and academic intellectual property. There is a tightening of relationships between multinational
corporations and state agencies around product development and innovation, and global intellectual property strategies (Slaughter and Leslie 1997, p. 37).

The paradox is that as universities have become less financially dependent on government (excluding student HECS and fees government supplies about 33% income) they are increasingly more regulated by government in terms of what knowledge is valued and how it is managed with a potential loss of the conditions of academic freedom and ownership of their own Intellectual Property through international treaties eg GATS and not just national government policies.

In response to these risky environments, governments and universities have sought greater control through audits and a range of performativities eg research quantums, performance management, and quality assurance entrenched through enterprise bargaining. Marilyn Strathern (2000) refers to an ‘audit culture’ emerging in universities (see also Power 1997) in which these new accountabilities both obstruct and enable good practice. ‘Through accountability the financial and the moral meet in the twinned percepts of economic efficiency and ethical practice’. These new accountabilities have significant effects on intellectual life, yet audits are difficult to critique in principle as it advances the very language that academics hold dear such as transparency, responsibility and access. Under these new disciplinary technologies, academics have expressed a growing sense of being out of control, being more controlled and yet alienated individually and collectively from their core work of teaching and research (Ball 2000, Blackmore and Sachs 2000, 2001). ‘The world of impression management, judgements and penalties is creating new professional subjectivities, new modes of description and new organisational identities’ (Morley 2001, p. 3). There is psychic dissonance between doing what we have to do and what they ought to do that cannot be measured by staff consumer satisfaction surveys (Blackmore 2002). This produces a sense of institutional schizophrenia as the performativity exercises have less and less to do with core work of teaching and research and more and more to do with image management (Blackmore and Sachs 2001, De Groot 1997). This has led to the production of new enterprising identities (McWilliams, Hatcher and Meadmore forthcoming), self managing academics who reconstruct themselves continuously, simultaneously internalising and rejecting the performative. These exercises of performativity, while not real in their representations, are real in their effects (Baudrillard 1988). This focus on measurable outcomes ‘threatens ‘notions of broader intellectual qualities, knowledge and understanding’ (Griffin, 1999, pp. 4-5).

Many academics perceive universities becoming greedy and unhealthy organizations (Franzway 2001), high risk and low trust environments (Morley 2001). Academic work satisfaction is gained more from being valued outside the university. Academic’s loyalty is more localised in relation to their immediate colleagues, and internationalised through connections to networks of international researchers within their field, but less so to their university.

The Australian university is therefore simultaneously modernist and post modernist - with modernist discourses based on notions of academic freedom, professional training, the power of science, and the ‘generalisability’ of liberal education that gained legitimacy during the twentieth century circulating together with postmodern discourses of connectivity, diversity and inclusiveness as well as those of instrumentalism, relevance, aptitudes, problem solving and entrepreneurialism.

Collectively these ‘multiple crises’ signal new hard times for the modern ‘liberal arts’ university with its classics curriculum, teacher-centred learning and labour intensive research. Ann Griffin (1999) depicts this as producing a crisis in the humanities where only utilitarian knowledge is valued, and where technical competence rather than professional
judgement becomes the main game. This shift is evident in the new instrumentalism of Australian education policies.

The national higher education 'policyscape': unstable terrain for educational research

There was a new educational settlement in the 1990s. Australian higher education reform adhered closely to the structural adjustment policy orthodoxies of the IMF and World Bank promoting the Anglo model of market liberalism that disinvested in public education as opposed to the Continental or Asian models that reinvested in public education. In the case of the EU, equity and education are seen to be preconditions to promoting both economic growth and cultural cohesion and identity. (Lingard and Rizvi 1997, p. 270, Alexidioau 2002).

Recent policy discourses, both the Australian Coalition's Backing Australia's Ability and Labor's Knowledge Nation (2001), call upon notions of knowledge economies, adopting the instrumentalist view education and knowledge as a site of economic production that can be commodified. Western nation states seek to exploit the export-earning potential of education as a commodity through its massification, vocationalisation, marketisation and internationalisation. Australia is now fourth in the global education market in international students. Education has become a key industry in Australia. The return to the national economy of higher education was $22billion for the investment of $9b. Three of Australia's universities are in the top 100 Australian multinational companies, and Australia's education exports rank only behind wheat (Allport 2000). Yet the late 1990s national 'policyscape' highlighted the view that Australia was still considered by international finance markets an old (material based) not a new(information based )economy as indicated by government and business disinvestment in education, training, research and development. Since 1996, R&D fell by 5% while universities lost $3.5b in government funding (The Age 2001 July 12).

Under pressure from the scientific lobby of FASTS, government policies have constructed the crisis as one in science and technology. The Batterham Report (2000) argued, and one would not contest this, that innovation was central to Australian competitiveness and the shift from an old to a new economy relied upon research, a highly skilled labour force, coordination of communication flow based on a data base or inventory of skills and commercialisation of intellectual output (Batterham 2000, p. 20). But the Batterham report left 'little room for debates as to the role that knowledge should play in wider work related issues of access and equity/or indeed the role of humanities and the social sciences(Rawolle 2001). It rests strongly within the notion of universities being central to the productive capacities of global and state capitalism.

The current Minister, Dr Brendan Nelson, now argues we have no crisis in universities at all. While Crossroads was intended to focus us on how to rethink the role of the University for the 21st century, it indicates little understanding about the nature of knowledge based economies and how Australian universities fit (AARE 2002, Marginson 2002). Crossroads rehearses old instrumentalist policy solutions for what are new problems eg vouchers, fees

For educational research, Crossroad's implicit message is that 'one scientistic model fits all'. The social sciences and humanities should 'mimic science'(Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992 p. 177). We, as have other professional and academic organizations, have argued that social science and humanities are most productive when based on principles of diversity, diversification and dispersion and not research concentration. The social sciences and humanities require the 'maintenance of a reasonable diversity of disciplines within institutions (in part, to facilitate intellectual cross-fertilization) and a reasonable spread of university resources across the community'(AAP 2001, Lingard and Blackmore 2000).
Instead Crossroads exacerbates past dichotomies and old hierarchies. As Sheehan and Poole (2002, p. 57) comment:

The mechanisms and procedures distributing resources for research in the Humanities and Social Sciences play little heed to the character of these disciplines. Publication practices, data collections, definitions of socio-economic objectives, and the method of distribution of research resources are all much more heavily oriented to the Natural Sciences than to the Humanities and Social Sciences and this has been for a long time.

This policy mentality has severe implications for educational research. Broadly, it fails to realise the critical role of the Humanities and Social sciences in innovation. The Humanities deals with cultural, philosophical and ethical issues, provides 'critical analysis of value and meaning and the critical transformation of existing knowledges that involve uncertainty and doubt, and the lack of totally predictable outcomes" (Sheehan and Poole 2002 p. 56).

More specifically, the associated policy mechanisms, such as the current Research Training funding policy capping post-graduate expansion, will mean newer and regional universities, many with large Faculties of Education in the preservice, will become non-research institutions. This is at a time when the Australian educational research capacity has significantly reduced, with 90% of education research is done in universities compared to 45% in other fields (DETYA 2001, Lingard and Blackmore 1997), with increasing shortages of new academics (Preston 2002, Pearse 2002).

Crossroads indicates little understanding as to the differences between fields of research or the productive tension arising from interdisciplinarity, the strengths of reflexive knowledge approaches in educational research eg professional doctorate - truly the life long 'earner learner' strongly based in praxis. Instead, Crossroads and other policies perpetuate rather than collapse the theory/practice divide, focus on strong disciplinarity rather than interdisciplinarity, and consolidate applied/pure dichotomies (Blackmore 2002, AARE 2002). Current policyscapes fit squarely into Delanty's 'globalisation thesis' of universities centrality to global capitalism. This produces a number of tensions for education academics, our relationships to government, to our students, the professions and the wider communities, and indeed 'the public'.

Moving policyscapes for educational research

What do these rapidly moving policyscapes mean for educational research?

First, it signals the rapidly changing relationship between educational research and policy. Research policy relationships construe research as:

- Warning about problems
- Guidance for possible policy options
- Enlightenment in terms of reframing policy problems and
- Mobilising support for politically desired policy options ie legitimising policy


Past emphasis has been on policy as providing warnings and as post hoc justification for policy decisions. The predicament for educational sociologists is that we are complicit in the work of production of official problems. As experts we legitimate representations of the problem. Bourdieu comments:-
The difficulty with sociology is that everyone believes that they have innate knowledge of the social world...Sociology is amenable to immediate, direct judgement of outsiders .... At the same time sociology is expected to respond to demands for answers on questions that touch everybody (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992 pp. 186-7)

Marginson (2001, p. 4) argues that the social sciences are 'insufficiently pure in that they are too fond of getting their hands dirty, too broadly curious, to prone to borrow ideas, and too accommodating of others, too interfering in other's business'.

Mary Kennedy (1997, p.4) in the Educational Researcher, journal of the AERA, points to the current scepticism amongst educational researchers and policymakers as to the capacity of educational research to influence policy and practice (eg. Tooley and Darby 1998, Hargreaves 1996). The catalogue of complaints regarding the lack of usefulness of educational research are

i. research is not sufficiently persuasive and authoritative with compelling and unambiguous results
ii. the research has not been relevant to practice for teachers and has little regard to teachers constraints
iii. ideas from research have not been accessible to teachers or expressed in a comprehensible way
iv. education system is either intractable and unable to change or, overly susceptible to fads and there lacks the capacity for sustainable systematic change

These points echo the messages given to research leaders at the June 2002 AARE Research Leaders conference by the former Director of Higher Education Policy and now executive officer for the Higher Education Review, Dr Carol Nicoll.

Kennedy (1997, p. 10) argues that persuasiveness is less having a strong research design than having the appropriate design for the question; relevance is more than answering teachers' questions but is also about research influencing teachers thinking; and that the research practice relationship is very much about politics and context not just quality of research. We also know that generalisable research findings do not necessarily have greater explanatory power; conceptual accessibility does not challenge current thinking; and ambiguity and conflict arise because of the intransigence of popular beliefs or divergent political agendas. Kennedy also argues that 'educational researchers have no particular authoritative advantage in the public arena' confirming Bourdieu's analysis.

Donmoyer (1995) points to how we may be more aware of political processes in the research-policy nexus but less aware of our political position (Gitlin et al ). This has particular significance for AARE due to DEST's policy of 'Open for Business' that seeks increased consultation with stakeholders and MCEETYA's Working Party consultations on Leadership and Professional Standards, ICT and Schools, and Performance Measures. While these consultations promise some scope for researcher's capacity for 'guidance' and indeed 'enlightenment' of policy, AARE's positioning as a 'stakeholder' in this new scenario of consultancy needs to be treated carefully, being self conscious about our independence.

Second, despite this new openness, certain types of educational research are privileged by official policy discourses (Lingard 2001). Elizabeth Atkinson (2000b) sees this as a struggle between 'policy delivery' and 'policy critique'. The Australian government invests in research consultancies to directly inform policy problems as defined by them (McTaggart and Blackmore 1989), a position clearly stated by Dr Peter Shergold, Head of Education at DEST. In education, there is no equivalent federally funded independent dedicated research
funding body to fund pure research as exists for other 'industries' eg primary since the abolition of the Education and Research and Development Committee in 1981. For pure research, the most likely source of policy critique, the ARC provides funds that limited and thinly dispersed across numerous research fields and increasingly focused on national priorities.

Research for policy delivery constrains the way research is carried out and presented - truncated by the time limits, contractual arrangements, and questions of ownership(Tritter 1995). It often ignores the bigger picture, obscuring the true nature of the problem and the object of research. As a consequence, many academics experience 'critical schizophrenia' as they deliver government policies with the one hand and critique them with the other'(p. 15). This is difficult but important boundary work that is required, negotiating whether one does critical work from within or outside, putting oneself at odds with the normative strategies employed by policymakers that tend to have one right view of education. Ie the Ministers

Third, within the field of professional practice, there has been increased exhortation for evidence based policy and practice and on 'what works' ie applied research(Atkinson 2000a, Edwards 2000). While this has the appearance of moving towards greater reflexivity, evidence based practice is premised upon a medical model. This privileges statistical analysis of large populations to inform system wide policies on the one hand and simplistic reductions that equate evidence to 'raw data' in schools on the other.(Blackmore 2002, Willinsky 2001). Evidence based practice as it is currently constructed fails to question the epistemological assumptions and claims about different forms of knowledge, or to address the complexity underpinning 'what works' in schools. The dominant discourse of evidence based practice assumes teaching and learning can be understood as technological knowledge that has to be codified and explicated in common sense language. There is little place here for reflexivity while there is a privileging of practice and the applied as if it is not informed by theory.

Yet teacher practitioners are exceptionally nervous about the 'prescriptive' generalisations that policy makers favour, and prefer 'fuzzy' generalisations of research that allow them professional judgements to assess research in ways that fit with their own classrooms (DETYA 2001, Cochrane Smith and Lyttle 1993). Teachers may not be good at articulating theories about their practice, their practice is grounded in theories of learning. It is theory rather than evidence that permeates teacher's thoughts and actions, it is theory that points to new possibilities, that disrupts and that is the basis of teachers practical or tacit knowledge. This is evident in the infiltration of recent theoretical concepts in the everyday language of teachers(Atkinson 2000b, p. 325). What works provides only one dimension of this understanding of the dialectic between theory and practice.

Fourth, the capacity of researchers to influence policy is increasingly mediated by the media (Blackmore et al 2002). Governments use the media to manufacture consent for policy shifts, test reactions to policies, and disseminate policy. Bourdieu puts it harshly: 'Leaders of governments are happy to rule via the magic of public opinion polls. Yet pseudo scientific technology of rational demagogy which can give them little more than extort answers to imposed questions that the individuals surveyed often did not raise, in the terms until they were raised for them'. 'Public' opinion is then recycled back through market polling to justify policies. 'In depth journalism loses out to info-tainment ... and these 'staged exchanges' must avoid the 'quagmire of intellectual complexity', as journalists have propensities to 'opt for confrontations over debates', 'polemics over rigorous argument'. (Bourdieu 1999, pp. 2-4). Falk (1992) suggests the media creates policy hysteria and also 'catastrophic future events' that divert attention from really close policy analysis.
Researchers are caught between simplifying research for public or policy consumption and seeking to draw attention to the complexity that theoretically informed research brings to any policy problem. The case of Professor Alan Trounson and stem cell research is one example of what happens when you simplify research for consumption. In response, NGOs, philanthropic organizations, professional associations and unions also have begun to practice 'civic advocacy' through the media (Rutherford 2000).

Fifth, the status of educational researchers as experts and public advocates is challenged in the context of a wider shift in the nature of knowledge and the declining legitimacy of the professions in late 20thC. On the one hand, professional expertise is questioned as clients have access to new sources of knowledge. On the other hand, new public administration's focus on outcomes (retention and graduation rates) efficiency and profession's demands for graduate attributes, has reduced professionalism to a matter of technical expertise and away from the public advocacy models of the 20thC (Brint 1994).

Finally, the increasingly open market in the field of policy research finds consultancy arms of multinational companies now doing more public policy research than universities at the same time that public funding for university based research is decreasing(Blackmore 1999). These unregulated private providers are not governed by the same demands regarding ethics, intellectual rigour, and peer review and can therefore be more immediately responsive, and one could perhaps suggest, more subordinate to industry and government demands.

Is there space for the 'tenured radical' in the postmodern university?

So is in the above context, is there leverage left in the notion of the 'public intellectual' or are we merely idealising some past golden age? Can one argue that these changing circumstances reduced academic freedom or professional autonomy? Feminist, black and gay academics, while expressing concerns about corporate universities, also recognise that there was no ideal past when universities provided academic freedom. Academic freedom in the 20th C was premised upon knowledge production as an 'objective science' that co-opted, subjugated and marginalised their collective experiences.

Yet there has been little collective opposition to a radical restructuring of the sector. Perhaps the subtle infiltration into institutions of the processes of marketisation, privatisation and managerialism has weakened 'resistance to globalisations agenda (Currie and Newson 1998). Or are academics just more committed to their disciplinary cultures than their collective collegial culture?(Tierney 2001).

Academic freedom, the capacity to speak in public without fear is a consequence of social conquests of other times. Freedom does not come without the social conditions of, or responsibilities arising from, freedom (O'Neill 2002). The conditions to academic freedom are currently to have

- institutional autonomy

- individual autonomy

- autonomy of the disciplinary field.
While recent reforms tend to separate institutional from individual autonomy, Slaughter and Leslie (1998) argue that these are interdependent and that academic freedom requires some condition of collective right of self governance (Vidovich and Currie 1998 pp. 193-5).

To what extent is our freedom to be public intellectuals protected by the sponsorship of the increasingly privatised public institutions ie universities? During the middle ages, academics were nomadic scholars without any institutional base, attracting students as individuals. The 19th Century witnessed the institutionalisation of the scholar by the state, while state funded research universities exploded after 1945 (Wallenstein 1996). The academic then became a member of Gouldner's (1992) 'new class' -the 20th C employee of intellectuals and technical intelligentisa divided between technocrats and humanitarians (private and public sector professionalism). The question is whether academics in the 21st C will be the marginal or core workers within the globally mobile class of Reich's (1997) 'symbolic analysts', the professionals/ managers who design work for the technicians and service classes?

The dilemma for the postmodern university is how to exploit academic creativity at a time when the institutional base of higher education as well as the capacity of the nation- state to harness academic productivity is under threat. Perhaps the 'scholar traveller' of the 21st C will gain her academic authority increasingly from the global networks to which she is connected than to the institution (Van Ginkel 1995), engaging interactively online with virtual communities in which they create knowledge, exchange real time data, deliberate alternative meanings, and collectively evolve new conceptual frameworks (Bede 2000). This global connectivity can be self serving in the sense that academics can be into self promotion without any sense of local, national or institutional loyalties. Connectivity can also be altruistic, as exemplified in Willinsky's (2000, 2002) Public Knowledge project at UBC. Willinsky argues that scholarly publishing of research is too costly and becoming increasingly concentrated in the hands of fewer publishers. Yet 'from the lab to the classroom to industry to the public, the advancement of knowledge through research and teaching is an invaluable contribution made by higher education to the public good'. He promotes a knowledge exchange model based on peer to peer communication at the institutional level that provides an alternative to mainstream publishing but that also promotes research's public role, to increase public access and the public presence of research, and contribute to a new 'social contract for science' that includes a commitment to communicate their knowledge and understandings. Should educational researchers facilitate public access to educational research to be consistent with our commitment to foster education and further democratic participation.

The modern university of the 20th C has seen the institutionalisation of the intellectual and of critique. Intellectuals have been depicted variously as 'socially unattached intelligentsia', a class associated with ownership of capital and ownership of education, where redemption lies with education (Mannhein ). Some see the involvement of the intellectuals in public life as the problem, others see the decline of involvement as the problem. Foucault ( ) sees intellectuals as subversive of dominant order but disconnected from social movements, an intelligentsia complicit in the modes of governmentality that have turned intellectuals into experts Is the professionalisation of the intellectual the problem? Hannah Arendt ( ) argues against polarising intellectual and professional culture and advocates a form of civic professionalism. Will the intellectual of the 21st C be Said's (1994) marginalised exile or Foucault's complicit conspirator?

**Feminist academics, feminism as a social movement, and the conditions of engagement**

Let me explore some of these issues about intellectuals and another form of engagement with 'the public' by considering contemporary relations between feminist academics and
feminism as a social movement. Feminism has framed many female academics relations with the 'public' through a sense of obligation beyond the university and towards a collective political project that seeks to improve the lot of other women, to raise equity issues in public forums and to inform or take political action. The conditions of engagement between feminists within the academy and the feminist movement, while taking on specific historical nuances, is changing.

Feminism and feminists within the restructured academy have been repositioned in the past decade of structural reforms, cultural shifts, New Right political agendas, market driven policies (McKinnon and Brooks 2001). Feminism in the 1980s was largely a them(men) against us (women) position not confused by the complexities of black, post colonial, post modern feminist theory or indeed pro feminist theories of masculinity. It was a period in which feminist theory pushed the theoretical and political boundaries, dominated the shelves of bookstores, and excited academic publishers. Within universities, there were feminist debates about the emancipatory possibilities of critical pedagogy from the 1970s. The modernist critical and feminist intellectual was about empowerment through providing a voice, in which the intellectual was the autonomous resisting subject (Fendler 1999).

The liberal state was a site of negotiation and struggle, simultaneously mobilising and resisting the feminist project. In Australia, the femocrats, the feminist bureaucrats who precariously bridged the chasm between those advocating a practical politics and feminist ideals, pro-actively sought to reduce discrimination in the national and state political sphere while in feminist activists provided a groundswell of grassroots politics. Australian feminist politics by the late 1980s, Australian Labor sought to juggle between equity, efficiency and effectiveness, was a model of how to progress a national reform agenda, with bottom up and top down strategies that had produced a complex equity infrastructure and a set of strategic practices now adopted in Europe (Blackmore 1999, Brine 1999, Salisbury and Riddell 2001). These equity strategies relied upon close connections between feminist academics and the women's movement, and women's studies within the academy was seen to provide epistemological space for the voice of women's experiences. At the same time, the equity agenda in policy in most Western nation states was framed within a liberal feminist rights based discourse and the academic feminisms were grounded to some extent in the practices of a predominantly white middle class feminist social movement.

Since 1996, the Howard Coalition has actively undermined the feminist political project in Australia by promoting radical neo liberal market policies on the one hand, in Universities by deregulating academic and student markets and raising fees, while on the other hand promoting social conservatism by attacking targeted equity strategies impacting particularly on mature aged women's and indigenous students access to higher education eg. abolition of Abstudy (Bunda and McConville 2002 ). Post welfarism has put gender equity strategies of working within/against the state at risk with the dismantling and mainstreaming of the gender equity infrastructure. Australian state feminism found that it lacked the strong non governmental feminist organizations to lobby government as elsewhere. Feminist strategies increasingly appeal to international polities on human rights eg. UNIFEM. Howard has facilitated a discursive backlash against difference on the one hand by mobilising discourses against 'political correctness' in which notions of freedom and liberty have been appropriated and used against the majority of female, indigenous and immigrant populations while claiming to be acting in the national interest through xenophobic policies against 'the other'-refugees. At the same time he co-opts essentialising discourses of difference on the other eg 'what about the boys' that fails to recognise how the social relations of gender is inflected by difference based on class, indigeneity, race and ethnicity (Lingard and Douglas 1999).

This conjuncture of social conservatism and economic radicalism has produced a dangerous moment for social justice and for women. Deregulation in the marketplace has further
casualised labour differentiated along class, race, ethnic and gender lines, while highly
prescriptive and normative stances in the social sphere promote assimilationist views of
social cohesion for women, indigenous and migrants that fail to address difference as a
practical matter that has to be addressed alongside rights in the economic sphere. For
example, Howard’s policy of ‘practical reconciliation’ lacks any moral or normative dimension
about the relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Practical outcomes
can only be produced when ‘the practical’ is located within a needs and rights oriented
framework and a sophisticated sense of what constitutes the ‘public good’ (Nussbaum 1998).

Likewise, the managing diversity discourse of both Labor and Liberal governments is
premised upon improved productivity and getting a competitive edge without the moral
imperative valuing diversity (Sinclair 2000, Bacchi 2001). Within the academy, while many
see feminist project of equality achieved with the increase in the numbers of female VCs and
the feminisation of student body or the ‘natural’ rise of women from an expanding pool (Allen
and Castleman 2001), this is more symbolic than real (Currie and Vidovich 1998) as highly
gendered core periphery labour markets are emerging and women's studies and activities
continue to be marginalised (Reay 2000). So while women are being groomed for corporate
roles eg Women’s Executive Development program of the tech-unis (McKinnon and Brooks
2001 p. 4), we are, as Erica McWilliam (2000) comments, learning how to laugh out loud
within the academy in a ‘orderly manner’.

While feminism challenged the universal liberal humanism of the early 20thC, there have
been significant debates amongst feminists about the nature of theory, the ways theory can
inform the wider gender politics in the public sphere. Martha Nussbaum (1998) argues the
central dilemma for feminism is the tension between universalism (women as a class) and
relativism (specificity of women's experiences) and how we progress in terms of a practical
politics. Indeed the current crisis for women's studies can be located in this tension. For
feminists the issue has been about representation, and the struggle between essentialist
and universalising notions of female and male identity, on the one hand, and multiple
feminisms concerned with deconstruction and specificity, on the other (Tsoidis 1996, p.
273). Feminists struggle with who can speak for whom and under what conditions, as post
colonial, black and indigenous feminists have challenged white middle class feminists' voices, some of whom are in university management, representing all women.

Within feminism, there have been critical voices about the political paralysis of feminist
academics arising from postmodernisms popularity during the 1990s. Feminist postmodern
critiques, some black feminists suggest have become academic ones, epistemic and not
political, simultaneously 'legitimating the academic and emptying out the more political and
worldly substance' without decentring even within the academy the privileging of science and
technology (Collins 2000 p. 50). Some of the issues about theory and feminist practical
politics are :-

First, the linguistic turn has been both seductive and dangerous. Seyla Benhabib ( ???? pp.
235-6)points to the irony

that as the world has grown together and the globe became more unified to a
hitherto unprecedented degree, our theoretical discourse has turned local,
contextualist parochial and has shied away from thinking globally and
reflecting about principles of planetary independence.

The foregrounding of agency, the focus on identity and subjectivity (McNay 2000 ),
temporarily allowed slippage away from materialist analyses at a time when restructuring
globally produced increased polarisation of wealth along east/west; north/south; rural/urban
lines, differentially inflected by race, class, ethnicity and gender. The post modernist turn
away from grand theories and narratives has tended to produce a reluctance to theorise about humanity, racial division, the class struggle and women as a class.

Second, postmodernist intellectuals are criticised for their emphasis on the surveillance capabilities of new forms of governance and disciplinary technologies, for their reluctance to identify sources of power and pin down explanations, thus making strategic thinking difficult and leading to a refusal to adopt a position of political authority (intellectual at the center) on ethical grounds (Fendler 1999 p. 184). Their ethical position was one of 'pessimistic activism'.

Third, many black feminists see the substitution of the modernist politics of identity with the post modernist politics of difference as particularly dangerous for those groups who wish to be named. Patricia Hill Collins (2000), a black American feminist academic, sees difference as being commodified, marketed, consumed and eradicated in ways that strip it of a political meaning but reformulate it as a matter of style (p. 61). Chandra Mohanty (1989) argues that difference is being seen as a 'benign variation in the discourse of diversity'...rather than 'conflict, struggle or the threat of disruption....a harmonious empty pluralism' (p. 63). They suggest that postmodernism rightfully eschews essentialist notions of culture and identity but also rejects ethical positions and therefore eschews social policy recommendations that may advance particular truth claims. Collins points to the difference between what post modernism 'says and what it does'(p. 42) and an openended-ness that attracts 'the affluent, the desperate and the disillusioned'.

Finally Collins as others point to the privileged location of white middle class feminists. Social theories of difference deployed by intellectuals who are privileged within hierarchical power relations of race, class and gender may operate quite differently than comparable theories forwarded either by intellectuals emerging from the centres of oppressed groups or by those in outsider-within locations (black feminists within the academy) (Collins 2000 p, 42).

In Australia, Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2000) in her brilliant book Talkin’ up to the White Woman, critiques white middle class feminism from an indigenous post colonial feminist perspective. She likewise argues that the discourses about difference are still underpinned by a 'deracialised but gendered universal subject'(p. xi) and therefore not particularly helpful. Difference has become the marker of that which is not the same, in which whiteness as race, as privilege, as a social construction is not interrogated as a 'difference' within feminist political practice and theory'(p. xviii). She continues to work with the notion of difference, but sees it not a group attribute but a construction of relations between groups and their interactions with institutions, an 'ongoing interactional accomplishment' (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p. 56). Black, indigenous and postcolonial feminists caution white feminists to recognise that while we refuse to be colonisers, we as white women still benefit from the processes of colonisation, while claiming solidarity with the colonised. Ie reflexivity.

In response, post structuralist feminists argues that the 'masters tools' can be appropriated provide alternative powerful explanatory schema and the politics of difference can provide realistic strategic possibilities locally and globally. Habermasian feminists such as Seyla Benhabib (1995) are focusing on communicative competence and dimensions of agency. Martha Nussbaum's(1998) work on capabilities is to try and develop practical ways of promoting agency for women living in poverty and dependency in developing nation states. Educators are now working to critique and apply such ideas in education (Briggs and Unterhalter 2002). Nancy Fraser( 1997) has promoted critical thinking about the politics of recognition and redistribution, which has significant practical applications in education ( eg
Gewirtz ), While philosophers such as Amy Gutman(1996 ) are working through theories of deliberative democracy in global contexts. Moreton Robinson(2000), as an indigenous feminist, does not reject post structuralism and notions of agency and subjectivity, but argues for us all to become world travellers with mobile subjectivities who have to consciously manage our subjectivities in particular contexts in which we also may not be dominant, a point illuminated by recent events in New York and Bali.

So despite differences within feminism, there is a shared normative and political project in the long term amongst the feminisms focused on social justice and equity underpinned by a desire for some practical effect but that continually problematises what feminist theory means for political practice. This requires a level of reflexivity about how we position ourselves as feminist sintellectuals. Siraj- Blatchford (1995,p. 205) argues that outsiders inside (eg black, indigenous intellectuals) the academy need to adopt a 'committed perspective' to research, acting as organic rather than traditional intellectuals. This means challenging traditional intellectual and approaches to research within the academy as well as assuming a public role. For white feminist academics, it is about recognising we are both Gramsci's 'traditional intellectual' from the perspective of black or indigenous feminists, whose role is depicted by Edward Said (1993) as 'not to lead but to consolidate the governments policy', but also Gramsci's 'organic intellectual' committed to the interests of an oppressed group, and that we will simultaneously feel and act accordingly. Just as traditional intellectuals can no longer assume a position of 'being independent, autonomous and endowed with a character of their own'(Gramsci 1971, p. 8), being an organic intellectual is not just about the intrinsic nature of intellectual activity but also about the social function of intellectuals as producers of knowledge, influencing traditional intellectual epistemologies and undertaking the social function of action.

These feminist debates explicate ongoing tension between the theoretical and the political central to the role of the public intellectual. I would suggest that these tensions within feminism are not just feminist issues but questions central to the future of the university and public intellectuals.

**A temporary reprieve for the corporate university?**

But will the corporate university create untenable as well as untenurable conditions for public intellectuals? And ‘If the university is to be silenced, who will be able to make critical judgements within society(Currie and Newson 1998).

This relies upon the extent to which the post modern university can claim a distinctive position relative to other private providers of professional training and research now it is no longer the site of reason and enlightenment. Universities have to distinguish themselves in terms not only of their modernist claims of intellectual rigor based on peer review, ethical behaviours with respect to teaching and research. I would suggest that there are other dimensions to this repositioning of universities as working for the public. First, to make criticality central to relationships within the academy and to the universities various publics such as the professions. For example, Barnett (1999) sees criticality as providing the necessary ‘leverage’ by reinvigorating academic disciplinary authority to educate students entering the professions in the type of reflexive and critical thinking that is central to knowledge based societies. To ‘profess’ is not merely about interaction with clients but ‘it should embrace the idea of speaking out on one’s subject‘(Barnett, 1999, p. 133), to engage with society and the client as ‘professional knowledge is “critique-in -action”’(Barnett, 1999, p. 139). Criticality, he suggests, can work simultaneously within / against performativity. Take the case of teaching.
Teaching as a profession will continue to incorporate four dimensions. First, a broad commitment that involves being a public advocate for learners, the profession and the social good. Second, contributing to the development of the knowledge base and practice of the profession. Third, adhering to professional and ethical standards set by and for the profession, and being accountable to the profession, students, parents/carers, employers and the wider community. Fourthly being competent and knowledgeable about subject matter and pedagogy (Statement about Professional Standards 2002).

This notion of critical professionality may require us to promote a 'social science' of education that moves away from specialisms that have led to fragmentation of the field and return to thinking about ourselves as organic intellectuals, where we come to know the field of education and not just one's disciplinary field.

Second, the university has to become a key site of reflexivity, dissent and dialogue. This requires recognising difference within itself substantively and not just as a performative exercise marked by symbolic discourses about cultural diversity and internationalisation; The university should encourage not quieten internal dissent around its core (corporate) objectives. It means focusing the university on supporting the core work of teaching, research and service, making academic work central, and on developing more inclusive structures and practices. Relationships with community should be based not just on partnerships but on recognition of the significance of education within local, national and international community.

Finally, the university has to be a key actor in the public sphere and enhance the democratisation of knowledge, to 'mediate the mode of knowledge, and the articulation of cultural models and institutional innovation' (Delanty 2001 p. 9). This means universities need to encourage projects that do not just see knowledge production as intellectual property, develop programs that promote equity and enhance public life more generally. Ie attend to the social capital building. This is about universities taking up public advocacy, encouraging academic activism and not academic capitalism.

But is the university the only place where education, intellectual inquiry and critique, professional training and technology come together, where there is a capacity for knowledge / action /agency, and where reflexivity, criticality, activism / advocacy can be encouraged through a range of practices in policy research, production, evaluation, and critique?

**Reasoned utopianism: the space between sociologistic resignation and utopian voluntarism**

What role can professional voluntarist associations such as AARE play? As an association, a community of practice with a collective interest in educational research, how can we engage both with 'the public', our various imagined communities, and the real politik of government. Has the role of this educational research organization changed since Professor Bill Connell put the motion for the formation of AARE in 1969 and defined AARE's three functions as being a forum for discussion, a pressure group acting for the furtherance of educational research, and a clearing house for research(Bessant and Holbrook 1995 p. 38).

In the light of many of the issues raised in this paper, the AARE Executive have been considering AARE's functions with regard to its individual members, its institutional role and its public commitments. Here are some of the dilemmas we confront:
• How to protect the intellectual property of our members at a time when concentration of knowledge management is intensifying into the hands of a few commercial publishers;

• How to address the tensions between our commitment to democratise research as public knowledge eg through Australian Educational Researcher, our journal, on the one hand and on the other, maintain a strong professional institutional base, a base that is reliant upon membership fees and journal subscriptions, when role of professional organization is even more important to engage in the politics of educational research and to promote education as a field of knowledge?

• How do we represent the diversity of members voices while assuming a coherent policy position as a 'peak professional organisation' and stakeholder in government policy formation

• How to provide a range of choices in services to members as a client based organization while playing a public advocacy role as a professional association

• How to provide research training as educational research capacities are under threat

• Do we, as Terri Seddon asked at the European Educational Research Conference, want to maintain a hold on the notion of 'public'? If so, what practical steps can be taken about building a new public sphere and how can research contribute (Seddon 2002)?

• Is there something distinctively 'Australian' about our educational research, a question the European Educational Research Association was asking about European educational research and how then do we deal with internationalisation of educational research?

• What of our role in the region in the light of the formation of new regional polities eg EU? APEC. Already AARE has a growing regional membership in South Africa and Singapore.

One strategy we can undertake is to reinvigorate the social sciences and humanities. This could mean a project investigating the social capital building capacities of universities, that recognises how social science provide broad based public goods such as their contributions to knowledge, longer term economic capacity, and society and culture(Marginson 2001 p.14-16). One 'outcome' could be broader range of social indicators that foreground equity and social effects similar to, for example, the social development indicators developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum and used in UNESCO reports to measure the progress of gender equality.

In terms of a practical politics, this may mean AARE seeks new alliances nationally and internationally across the fields of the social sciences and humanities, and connections with other research organizations to change the dominant paradigm of Australian universities that assumes innovation is based only on scientific originality and laboratory work(Coaldrake and Stedman 1999, p. 22).

If we do take seriously as a professional association a desire to inform the public, this means working with / against the media . Journalists are dependent on academics as sources but
also act as gatekeepers as to the way in which educational research is represented to the public. Pat Thomson (2002) suggests we need to proactively shape the debates and provide, for example, a website that points to alternative positions and identifies experts in research fields. This would suit journalistic predispositions towards conflict as they do not possess the academic disposition to look at a range of sites. The British Educational Research Association has redeveloped its reviews of research to include both academic and professional reviews. The Public Knowledge project of John Willinsky at University of British Columbia is putting scholarly publications, media reports and government publications on open access webs and assist in developing free online journals. The Australian Academy of the Humanities has developed a portal into digital research-the Australian e-Humanities Gateway that would be clearing house and brokerage centre for digital resources and communication exchange. (The Australian nov. 6, 2002 Digital point of entry for humanities)

In conclusion, I have argued that we as educational researchers have to work within these new conditions of constraint of the corporate university more reflexively, collaboratively, critically and with commitment; to realise the obligations that go with academic freedoms; to get outside the safety of our disciplines; and to consider our relationship with our various public(s). Perhaps we need a new type of educational sociology, one of 'radical change' rather than 'regulation', one that 'focuses upon the visionary and Utopian, in that it looks towards potentiality as much as actuality, it is concerned with what is possible rather than what is, with alternatives rather than acceptance of the status quo' (Burrell and Morgan (1982) quoted in Siraj-Blatchford 1995, p. 211). Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992 p. 196) suggests we need to a move beyond 'academic adolescence' where revolt and subversion are based on idealism, and instead to work for 'scientific and political realism that can locate real points of application for responsible action' -- a reasoned utopianism that is in the space between sociologistic resignation and utopian voluntarism. This form of reason would not be afraid to advocate social justice, to invest in more than one's self interest and self promotion, to realise that part of our role as intellectuals is to continue to imagine that we do belong to a 'public' and that educational research can enhance the 'public good'. For those of us who are concerned about social justice and policy activism, we need to remain 'visionary opportunists' who practice 'an ethics of pragmatism' (Yeatman 1998, pp. 12-14)
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