

*Ideas and Identities:
Representations of
Australian Public Universities*

Thesis submitted by

Diane Solomon Westerhuis B.A. (Hons) *Sydney*, Dip. Ed. *Sydney*

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the School of Anthropology, Archaeology & Sociology
James Cook University

2006

ELECTRONIC COPY

I, the undersigned, the author of this work, declare that the electronic copy of this thesis provided to the James Cook University Library, is an accurate copy of the print thesis submitted, within the limits of the technology available.

Signature

Date

STATEMENT OF ACCESS

I, the undersigned, author of this work, understand that James Cook University will make this thesis available for use within the University Library and, via the Australian Digital Theses network, for use elsewhere.

I understand that, as an unpublished work, a thesis has significant protection under the Copyright Act and I do not wish to place any further restriction on access to this work.

Signature

Date

STATEMENT OF SOURCES

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

Signature

Date

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Dr. Peter Kell with whom it all began so enthusiastically, and to Professor Judith Kapferer, who ably assisted me through some difficult 'crossroads'. I would like to particularly acknowledge the late Professor Stephen Crook, who for too short a time endeavoured to enhance my understandings of dreamings and imaginings. Special thanks to Associate Professor Sue McGinty, who was there at the beginning and at the end, and whose support and understanding enriched my experience of postgraduate research. Thanks to Dr. Rosita Henry who saw it to completion, and to those others who advised me along the way.

As always during the completion of a thesis there were times of emotional and intellectual stress. I would like to thank those who were there for me during those times, especially those women who showed me by example what women's networks should be like.

Thanks to James Cook University for their support and access to archives, and to staff from other universities who contributed texts. Warm acknowledgement also to Robin Gilliver, past University Registrar at James Cook University, whose knowledge of the history of JCU and universities, and his understanding of texts, universities and power, were invaluable.

I especially would like to thank Jacob Jacobus Westerhuis, my best friend and constant support.

Academicus Australiana



*Actors in great institutions
sit on committees of policies and power
dreaming of documents and dollars
relating narratives of networks and texts
tales of status and states
in wait for another time*

Diane Solomon Westerhuis 2003

Abstract

This thesis is a critical and discursive analysis of Australian public universities from a normative perspective, based on a commitment to values of social justice and equality.

I argue that ideas of universities in Australia have changed over time; that there were two major shifts of ideas since the liberal ideas that were apparent with the foundation of Australia's first university. Different ideas dominated in the 1970s when ideas of universities are described as egalitarian and democratic, but these ideas of universities changed again with reconstruction of Australian public universities in 1988. In the last two decades Australian public universities have been based on ideas that have produced different institutions, described as neoliberal, marketised and, in effect, privatised.

These neoliberal ideas privilege the economic over the social. I argue for a preferred model of equal rights based on citizenship and merit, which includes free access to a higher education in a public university.

The data that are analysed are policy texts, speeches and university mission statements that are representations of identity and agency. This is a critical analysis in which themes and concepts are identified in discourse that represents universities at different times, for example in the speech for the founding of the University of Sydney by Wentworth in 1849, or a speech by Whitlam in 1972 which describes the ideas of universities as free and access based on ability.

However, representations in contemporary mission statements and policy texts illustrate that the identities of Australian public universities have shifted. Findings include themes in texts of transformed relations, actors and communities, and mechanisms and strategies that illustrate changed practices, such as commercialisation, internationalisation and, most significantly, privatisation of Australian public universities. Australian public, not-for-profit universities have become more commercial than their predecessors, undertaking different activities, more governed yet in contradiction more flexible and shape-shifting. Specific neoliberal characteristics and strategies are now evident in their discourse and in practices. These neoliberal characteristics and strategies cross domains and operate at different levels, and in combination they achieve the hegemonic neoliberal project of the state. The consequences are that these neoliberal ideas have reshaped Australian universities.

Australian universities have become altered commercial and international actors in disparate networks and different market relationships. Reflexive Australian universities are very successful in these markets, and take on a marketised, private identity. The mechanisms of this are in place, but the effects are still to be proclaimed. There will, in the future, be no Australian public universities. A normative alternative is offered.

Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction	1
1a. Researcher in Context	
1b. The Research Problem	
Aims	
Scope	
Epistemology	
1c. Research Design	
Framework	
Methods	
Data	
1d. Overview of the Study	
Part I Background	
Chapter 2. Perspectives	24
2a. Reconstructing Australian Universities	
Academics and Vice-Chancellors	
Think-tanks and the state	
2b. Political Rationalities	
Liberalism	
Social Welfare	
Neoliberalism	
2c. Governmentality	
Chapter 3. A History of Ideas of Universities	62
3a. Early Ideas of a University	
The Corporate University	
Knowledge Producers	
Fees and Degrees	
3b. Ideas and the State	
Legitimation and Privileges	
Governance	
Autonomy	
Utilitarian ideas	
Humanism	
3c. Enlightenment Effects	
Early Liberalism	
Enlightenment Universities	
Newman Universities	
Utilitarian Universities	
Humboldtian Universities	

Chapter 4. Framework of Australian Ideas	93
4a. Foundational and liberal ideas	
Background to Change	
Post War Nation building	
University Reports	
Global Shifts	
4b. Egalitarian ideas	
Welfare state crises	
4c. Neoliberal Ideas	
Post-unification changes	
4d. Effects of Change	
Part II Analyses	
Chapter 5. Networks of Practices	139
5a. Social Practice	
Genealogy	
5b. Social Context	
A New Genre	
Management and Intertextuality	
5c. New Practices and Brand Identities	
Chapter 6. Themes and Ordering	183
6a. Method	
6b. Themes	
Actors	
Communities	
Relations	
Neoliberal Themes	
6c. Ordering	
Chapter 7. Semiotics	212
7a. Discursive Practice	
Identity and Agency	
Metaphor	
7b. Neoliberal Strategies	
Commercialisation	
Competition	
Relations and Networks	
Internationalisation	
Public and Private	
7c. Ordering and Resistance – Tensions of Identity	
7d. Enactments and Emergence	

Chapter 8. Mechanisms of Struggle	283
8a. Homogeneity	
8b. Dominance	
8c. Collocation	
8d. Natural and Inevitable	
8e. Hegemony	
Part III Discussion	
Chapter 9. Effects	334
9a. Enacted Ideas	
Politics and Culture	
Codes of Conduct	
9b. Contested Ideas	
9c. Global and Local Effects	
Chapter 10. Reflections	350
10a. Findings	
10b. Dystopia and Normative Alternatives	
10c. Future Research	
10d. Concluding Remarks	
Appendix	373
References	376

	Texts	page
1.	Reasons For Re-Establishing A University At Ferrara	79
2.	W.C. Wentworth, <i>For the University Bill</i> , 4 October, 1849	97
3.	Evidence of W. H. Moore to the Royal Commission, 1903	107
4.	Speech by Menzies to the Australian College of Education, 1961	116
5.	Address by Whitlam at the Harvard Club of Australia, Sydney, 1973	120
6.	<i>The Student as Customer</i> (DETYA 1999b)	129
7.	<i>Higher Education at the Crossroads</i> (DEST 2002a)	133
8.	Gilbert, excerpt from <i>The Menzies Oration 2003</i>	135
9.	The instigation: Letter to Vice-Chancellor Golding (DEET 1988b)	143
10.	James Cook University Mission Statement, 1988	148
11.	Resolution of the Academic Board Standing Committee, 1989	151
12.	Letter from the Dean, 1990	153
13.	Communications of the Vice Chancellor, 1997	155
14.	Draft <i>Medium Term Plan</i> , to Council and Senior Management Group, 1997	157
15.	Strategic Planning Committee, Revision of <i>Into the Third Millennium 2000-2005</i> , 2000	158
16.	Letter of 1229AD, from the Masters of Toulouse	173
17.	<i>Criticism Rages over University Management</i>	259
18.	<i>Private uni obeys state order on research</i>	260
19.	Excerpt from <i>Strategic Plan: Perspective 2000</i> , University of Melbourne	264
20.	Resolution of the University of Sydney Senate, 3.10.2000	269
21.	Foreword, <i>National Survey of Research Commercialisation</i> (DEST 2004b:iii)	280

Tables		page
1.	Earliest European Universities, 1088-1391	67
2.	European Universities, 1401-1600	70
3.	Selected European University Foundations, 1600-1900	84
4.	Year of Establishment of Australian Universities	104
5.	University type based on age	186
6.	University typologies	187
7a.	Actants located by university age	190
7b.	Actants located by type	191
8a.	Communities located by university age	194
8b.	Communities located by type	195
9a.	Networks relations located by university age	199
9b.	Network relations located by type	200
10a.	Neoliberal themes located by university age	203
10b.	Neoliberal themes located by type	204
11.	Frequencies of dominant concepts in mission statements	218
12.	University of the Year Award	239
13.	University groups on 20 indicators, Centroid Method	291
14.	University groups on 16 indicators, Centroid Method	292
15.	University groups on 20 indicators, Wards Method	293
16.	Concept frequencies in university mission statements	296
17.	Centroid Method, Cluster Membership	299
18.	Wards Method, Cluster Membership	301

	Figures	page
1.	The Ashridge Model of the Mission	162
2.	The Intertextuality of Management Texts	170
3.	Advertisement, The University of Melbourne, 2003	176
4.	Hierarchical Cluster Analysis, Centroid Method	300
5.	Hierarchical Cluster Analysis, Wards Method	302
6.	Concept Map, Australian University Mission Statements	306