



ACADEMY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES IN AUSTRALIA

Dialogue

Volume 18 4/1999

Contents

- 2 **About the Academy**
3 **President's column**
 Fay Gale
6 **Vice President's note**
 Ian Castles
20 **Ethics and the Social Sciences**
 Ethics are good for you
 Robert E Goodin
22 **A scientific revolution**
 Michael Kirby
28 **Special friendships, monological illusions**
 and the ethics of East Timor
 Val Plumwood
35 **Academy News**
49 **Letters to the Editor**
 Les Hiatt
 JA Barnes
53 **Recent Publications**
55 **Officers and Committees of**
 the Academy
 2000 Calendar
-

About the Academy

The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia was established in 1971. Previously, some of the functions were carried out through the Social Science Research Council of Australia, established in 1942. Elected to the Academy for distinguished contributions to the social sciences, the 342 Fellows of the Academy offer expertise in the fields of *accounting, anthropology, demography, economics, economic history, education, geography, history, law, linguistics, philosophy, political science, psychology, social medicine, sociology and statistics.*

The Academy's objectives are:

- to promote excellence in and encourage the advancement of the social sciences in Australia;
- to act as a coordinating group for the promotion of research and teaching in the social sciences;
- to foster excellence in research and to subsidise the publication of studies in the social sciences;
- to encourage and assist in the formation of other national associations or institutions for the promotion of the social sciences or any branch of them;
- to promote international scholarly cooperation and to act as an Australian national member of international organisations concerned with the social sciences;
- to act as consultant and adviser in regard to the social sciences; and,
- to comment where appropriate on national needs and priorities in the area of the social sciences.

These objectives are fulfilled through a program of activities, research projects, independent advice to government and the community, publication and cooperation with fellow institutions both within Australia and internationally.

WEB SITE: <http://coombs.anu.edu.au/~assa>

DIALOGUE, the newsletter of the ACADEMY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES IN AUSTRALIA (ISSN 1038-7803) is published four times a year. Copyright by the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia but material may be reproduced with permission. The views expressed in Dialogue are not necessarily those of the Academy. Enquiries: ASSA, GPO Box 1956 Canberra 2601 Tel 02 6249 1788 Fax 02 6247 4335 Email ASSA.Secretariat@anu.edu.au.

President's column

Fay Gale



Not only is this the last *Dialogue* for 1999, popularly if inaccurately known as the end of the Millennium, it is also the last *Dialogue* to come from our rooms upstairs in University House. During the recent Annual General Meeting many Fellows were able to view the new rooms, just across the road from University House. For those of you who were unable to attend the AGM, let me explain that in addition to offices for each member of staff, our new accommodation will provide us with a large and versatile conference room, a library, an office for both the President and the Vice-President and a large Fellows room where Fellows will be able to meet when visiting Canberra. More car parking, no stairs and a large garden are an extra bonus.

The central topic for this *Dialogue* concerns 'Ethics in the Social Sciences'. It is a topic that concerns us all as most of our research deals directly with people. Universities now have ethics committees to deal with research grant applications and to ensure that codes of conduct are being followed.

At the July Executive meeting and the last AGM there was discussion about the new revised code of conduct for research dealings with humans. This new code was proposed and developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council. Some of our Fellows who were consulted had a substantial input into the revised code and considered it superior to the one now in force. Some other colleagues, especially in anthropology and psychology, expressed concern that those disciplines had not been adequately consulted. But as usual in such matters our required response time was short. However the Academy will continue to monitor the new code and would wish to hear what changes in the future Fellows consider we should request.

The Academy has been successful in winning funding for another major research project, 'The Economic and Social Costs of Unemployment'. This means the Academy, thanks to Dr John Robertson, now has four large research studies in operation. Because of the recent growth in our research activity it was felt that a Research Projects Committee should be established. This was done at the last AGM and Associate Professor Sue Richardson was appointed to chair it. All four Panel Chairs are on this new Committee. If you have ideas that might be pursued by the Academy for a major research project please contact either your Panel Chair or Dr Robertson. These projects lend themselves to socially significant transdisciplinary topics where several Fellows can advise and participate. In addition to our highly successful workshop program they are an important role for the Academy to pursue and one which will publicise the profile of the Academy.

Also at the AGM a new Finance Committee was established and by-laws passed to help guide the financial side of the Academy's work. A Finance Committee is allowed for in our constitution and its nominal membership is reported in the Annual Report. But none of the present staff can remember it meeting. The work has been carried out by the Treasurer and Executive Director reporting to the Executive Committee. Whilst this has been done meticulously and well audited, a committee to consider future policies and new developments is necessary to enhance the work and funding base of the Academy. It is hoped this new Committee will play a role in enlarging the budget thus allowing new initiatives and greater public profiling. The Committee will be chaired by the Treasurer, Professor Gavin Jones.

In my report in the last edition of *Dialogue* 3/1999, I referred to my meeting with Lord Plant in London. Lord Plant had been chairing a committee to set up an Academy of the Social Sciences. This new Academy has been launched. In my report I did express pleasure with this move as this would link our Academy more closely to our British colleagues. I was aware that not all social scientists who are fellows of the British Academy were happy with the move, although I did not discuss this, considering this was not really my business to comment on. Professor John Barnes, a Fellow of our Academy, has explained these concerns in a letter to the Academy and this letter is published later in this copy of *Dialogue*. I am sorry if I upset some of our British colleagues but I am pleased to see that *Dialogue* is so widely read.

In October I attended the Biennial Conference of the Association of Asian Social Science Research Councils held in Seoul, South Korea. It was held at the SangNam Institute of Management. It is a new building just completed this year, thanks to the magnificent gift of the benefactor after whom it is named. It is situated in the beautiful grounds of Yonsei University, a leading private university very close to the old city. We were hosted extremely well and generously entertained by the Korean Social Science Research Council and its President, Dr Ahn Byung-Young. He was also President of AASSREC and the former Minister of Education.

The primary topic for the three day meeting was 'Reflections on Sustainability: Past and Future'. The various papers dealt largely with environmental and social sustainability in the face of economic growth. A paper was presented by the delegate of each member country. My paper on social sustainability in Australia examined improvements and drawbacks to the current social policies and their effects on poverty and health. It examined the changes in social policy with the present government and was based on research material emanating from the Academy's project on Unequal Futures, directed by Ruth Fincher and Peter Saunders. It was indeed valuable to have a topic that fitted so well with one of our projects. At the Conference I was elected Vice-President and incoming President of AASSREC. The next Conference will be held in Hanoi

in 2001 on the topic of 'Globalisation and its Impact on the Asia Pacific Region: economic, social and cultural dimensions'. It would be enormously useful if we had a project running by then on Globalisation and its effects on Australian society.

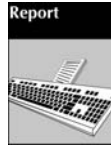
Australia is committed to hosting the meeting after Vietnam, in 2003. This will be an honour for Australia, now clearly accepted as part of the Asian Social Science Research Council. The meeting with Asian representatives demonstrated how important the Social Sciences are. There are considerable expectations that our research will help to solve a range of social problems resulting from rapid change in the economic and physical environments in many regions. We are not always recognised for this role and often we ourselves forget how crucial our research is. In spite of the high public profile of medical and scientific research, it is social scientists who are so often asked to comment on significant community issues. This is evident by the number of times our Fellows appear in the press. Our real problem seems to be in communicating our importance, and in being recognised, like scientists are, as social scientists, irrespective of our particular discipline base. This is even more important now with the growth in transdisciplinary research.

Research is our core interest and thus as an Academy and a member of the National Academies Forum, we have been active in responding to the recent green paper on research and postgraduate training. As part of this profiling, I am speaking at a research conference on the topic 'Where do the Social Sciences fit in the New Research Framework?'

Our projects and workshops show clearly that we fit extremely well in terms of relevance, but in terms of a substantial increase in non-government funding it is another story. Conflict of interest is a major concern when funds are tied to particular beneficiaries. Although the papers which address Ethics in the Social Sciences in this edition of *Dialogue* deal with very different cases, they invite a wider consideration of ethical issues, with both immediate and global implications.

Vice President's note

Ian Castles



New Knowledge, New Opportunities: A Discussion Paper on Higher Education Research and Research Training

Comments by the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia

The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia supports the central aims of research excellence and institutional diversity to which the proposals in the discussion paper are directed, and agrees that achievement of these aims will be facilitated by adoption of the key features of the proposed new arrangements. In particular, the Academy supports

- 'an invigorated and strengthened national competitive grants system based on investigator initiated research';
- 'a restructured Australian Research Council providing strategic advice to government'; and
- 'an enhanced strategic and priority setting role for institutions, both in relation to research and research training'.

From the standpoint of the social sciences, however, the Academy questions those aspects of the proposed arrangements which seek to make Australian higher education institutions 'more responsive to business needs' and to develop 'an entrepreneurial culture among researchers'.

'Public goods' and public funding of research

Any redirection of the research effort of Australia's universities towards entrepreneurial activity in support of the needs of individual enterprises can only be at the expense of vital research that produces 'public goods'. As the paper recognises, this research has been shown to yield high returns, and constitutes 'the rationale for the Commonwealth Government's major investment in higher education research'.¹

The reasons why research activities yielding 'public goods' are worthy of public support have been outlined by Professor Peter Dixon, FASSA, Director of the CoPS/IMPACT Project at Monash University:

The defining characteristic of a public good is that members of a community cannot be excluded from enjoying benefits from it. An example is space exploration. We can enjoy the achievements of space programs without making any financial contribution. Because people cannot be excluded from enjoying the benefits of public goods, these must be government-financed.

To make a public-good argument for government support, scientists must show that (i) the products of their research cannot be sold because of lack of excludability, and (ii) that the community places sufficient value on these products to be willing to pay for them *via* taxation.

Apart from space exploration, other areas in which public-good arguments can be made include greenhouse research, research on the origins of the universe, archaeology and analysis of the arms race. ...

An argument for public funding of research can be made if there is a need for public exposure of the details of discoveries and these discoveries can be copied easily. In the social sciences, there is often a need to expose data collection and estimation methods to detailed peer review. Once exposed, these can be copied with sufficient variations to make copyright protection impossible. Thus, left to market forces, research of this type is likely to be underperformed.²

These arguments are not well understood, even by many in the research community itself. At a recent conference on scholarship, intellectual ownership and the law, Dr Colin Adam, FTSE, Deputy Chief Executive of CSIRO, urged scientists to

. . . understand the way a deal is constructed. Returns from intellectual property rights are negotiable. . . If you don't understand the value of your intellectual property, you are at a disadvantage to someone who does.

One aspect of globalisation is that CSIRO has become more like a high-technology company than a university. The research of many Australian universities is not yet internationally competitive. We have to ask: Is the Australian community getting a reasonable return on its investment in these universities?³

It will be noted that, far from arguing that the products of publicly funded CSIRO research could not be sold because of lack of excludability, Dr Adam claimed that CSIRO **was** selling the products of its research, and that universities should do the same. In subsequent discussion, he urged academics to

. . . talk to their colleagues in business schools. They could construct a deal which would benefit authors and undergraduate students. What strikes me is that many Australian academics are naive in business.⁴

The implication of these comments is that the benefit to the Australian community from publicly funded research can be measured by the returns obtained from the sale of the resulting intellectual property. Professor Dixon, one of only a handful of Australian economists whose international reputation has earned him a place in *Who's Who in Economics*⁵ has advanced the opposite view in successive submissions to independent reviews of the

CoPS/IMPACT project at Monash University which he directs. The following extracts come from the submission to the 1994 review:

From its inception in 1975, the IMPACT Project adopted the policy of allowing open access to the models, databases and software systems developed under its umbrella. With almost all the funds coming from the public purse, it seemed appropriate that the outputs of the project should be freely available. The social benefits of the policy were seen to be potential improvements in the scope and consistency of policy analysis and debate allowed by the ready availability of a common framework using a rich information base about the structure of the Australian economy. . .

The result of the policy of openness . . . has been that the facilities developed by the group have been adopted by a wide range of users. These include many Commonwealth and State government departments in Australia, several overseas research organisations, numerous academics and a number of consulting agencies.⁶

It is ironic that CSIRO, which points to its revenue from the sale of intellectual property as a measure of its success, has been assured of public funding amounting to \$600 million annually until June 2003; whereas the Commonwealth's funding of \$0.3 million per annum for the IMPACT project, which has made the output of its research freely available as a matter of principle, was terminated in June 1998.

The Government's decision to withdraw support, advised to Professor Dixon in May 1998 after 23 years of government funding at IMPACT, was taken without any explicit consideration of an evaluation by Professor Alan Woodland, FASSA, of the Department of Econometrics at the University of Sydney. In the course of his review Professor Woodland interviewed many users of the Monash models in Commonwealth and State Government agencies and the private sector. Under the heading 'Public Good Aspects of the Project', he reported as follows:

The respondents to the User Questionnaire and the interviewees were uniformly of the view that the project has produced significant externalities . . . [which] outweighed the cost of Commonwealth government funding. . . Some respondents and interviewees were particularly emphatic that the benefit-cost ratio is extremely high, making the point that the costs of **not** having a publicly accessible model such as MONASH, in terms of bad policy decisions, was very high. . . The fact that the model and software outputs from the CoPS/IMPACT project are in the public domain is extremely important, a point recognised and, indeed, emphasised, by virtually all respondents to the User Questionnaire and interviewees. . . The externalities arise from the transparency of the outputs, which are available to everyone. The quality of

public debate is thereby improved. . . It also seems to be an accepted fact that private consultants have made use of the ORANI product to enhance their own models.⁷

In discussing funding options for the 1998-99 to 2000-01 triennium, Professor Woodland expressed the view that 'the removal of public funding is not a serious option' because this 'would mean that CoPS would most likely turn into a private consulting firm' and that 'Much of the value of MONASH as a public good . . . would [then] be lost'.⁸

The Academy recognises the potential benefits of a more entrepreneurial research culture in the higher education sector, especially in some fields of applied science and technology. But we are concerned that its application to many other areas of research will be at the expense of scientific values of openness, freedom of inquiry and perceived objectivity.

In the area of economic modelling, the dangers inherent in an entrepreneurial approach were highlighted in 1998 by the Commonwealth Ombudsman, following her investigation of a complaint by the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) about the funding arrangements established by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural Economics (ABARE) for its climate change economic modelling activities. In her report, the Ombudsman said that she

considers that ABARE's climate change modelling is best characterised as a public good and relates to important public policy. In the circumstances, it is generally desirable that such activities be funded from consolidated revenue in the public interest. If external funding is sought, a range of protections are required including clear mechanisms for transparency of process and ensuring a balance of community views.⁹

The Academy considers that the Ombudsman's observations are equally applicable to many areas of research in the higher education sector, especially in the social sciences.

We also draw attention to the 'Declaration on Science and the Use of Scientific Knowledge' adopted at the UNESCO/ICSU World Conference on Science at Budapest on 1 July 1999, which stressed that 'full and open access to information and data belonging to the public domain' was important 'for scientific research and education';¹⁰ and to the associated implementation document, which urged that efforts be made 'to ensure that results of publicly funded research will be made accessible'.¹¹

The Academy rejects the view expressed in the discussion paper that Australia's higher education institutions 'need to recognise the importance of commercialisation to our national economic and social interest'.¹²

We consider that these interests will be best served if the product of publicly funded research remains in the public domain.

This country's total expenditure on research and development represents little more than 1 per cent of the world total. Obviously the returns from this investment should be maximised, but it does not follow that the intellectual property created by publicly funded research at the nation's universities needs to be alienated. Although there may be advantages in the commercialisation of the intellectual property embodied in some technological advances, most of the research output of the higher education sector should remain accessible to all. This will facilitate the transmission of knowledge created in Australia and enhance the country's capacity to make effective use of the 98 or 99 per cent of the world's knowledge that is created elsewhere.

Funding research: ensuring incentives are appropriate

The consideration of incentive structures under the above heading in the discussion paper recognises the pervasive influence of funding formulae on the behaviour of institutions, and acknowledges the propensity of Australian universities to 'seek to structure their affairs to score well against the measures included in formulae in order to attain a greater share of available funds'.¹³

The potentially adverse consequences for the national research effort of these rational institutional responses are well illustrated by experience following the introduction in 1995 of a publications component in the formula used to determine the Research Quantum. The discussion paper acknowledges that:

It seems likely that the publications component of the Composite Index has stimulated an increased volume of publication at the expense of quality due to the view that every publication is associated with additional funding through the Research Quantum. This is not in the best interests of Australian research.¹⁴

The Academy welcomes the proposal 'to drop the publications measure in any future indices used to allocate block research funds',¹⁵ but is concerned that the funding formulae under the proposed new arrangements will have equally undesirable effects on the quality and balance of research in the higher education system.

In the new scheme it is proposed to provide block funding, allocated according to formulae, amounting to \$890 million annually. This is more than three times the total amount to be allocated according to peer/merit review criteria under programs administered by the Australian Research Council (ARC).

Under the proposed new arrangements, 60 per cent of total funds for the Institutional Grant Scheme (IGS) will be allocated to universities according to their share in the **number** of actual equivalent full-time research student places, and a possible 65 per cent of total funds for the Australian Postgraduate Research Student Scheme (APRSS) will be allocated according to 'The **number** of commencing research scholarships awarded the previous year . . .'

and 'The **number** of Commonwealth-funded or fee-paying research degree completions'.¹⁶

These provisions seem likely to give universities an incentive to 'chase' research student numbers, at the expense of devoting resources to improving the quality of their research output or of their research training activities (for example, by the provision of course work and seminars in areas which are not covered adequately in undergraduate courses).

The proposal to allocate 40 per cent of funding under the IGS (\$183 million annually) and a possible 35 per cent of funding under the APRSS (\$151 million annually) according to an institution's share of 'research-related income from all sources' is also open to serious objection. The Academy is particularly concerned about the proposal to include 'consultancy income which contributes to innovation'¹⁷ in this aggregate.

It can be expected that institutions will seek to respond to the new incentive structure by offering their research more cheaply, in the knowledge that their prospects of winning contracts will thereby be enhanced. They will then be able to recoup the revenue foregone from the additional funds yielded by the block grants formulae. Users will also be aware that the income which higher education institutions earn from contracts will be 'topped up' as a result of the operation of the block grant formulae, and will take this into account in planning their research acquisition programs. The probable outcome will be a major shift in the balance of research activity in the higher education sector: research with immediate commercial applications will expand at the expense of basic 'public good' research.

In the social sciences, the willingness of users to pay for research will often be unrelated to its quality, or even to the costs incurred in its production. The main objective of many research users is not the advancement or even the acquisition of knowledge, but the securing of academic authority for arguments which support their interests. For their part, researchers know that their prospects of securing future contracts will be strongly influenced by the value of their product in supporting the interests of those who have commissioned their research.

The Academy is concerned about the probable effects of the proposed formulae on institutional policies. Much of the research effort can be expected to be directed towards immediate commercial applications, and away from the forms of research which are of greatest value to society in the long run.

In order to avoid such an outcome, the Academy recommends that:

- the Government reaffirm that the rationale for the Commonwealth's major investment in higher education research lies in the 'public good' benefits resulting from the product of that research; and

- the formulae for allocation of block funds for research to universities be redesigned to reflect that rationale.

The Role of Users in Defining the Research Agenda

Under the heading 'The Role of Users in Defining the Research Agenda', the discussion paper suggests that

. . . a user perspective on the merit of [research] proposals in terms of future benefit to society will provide an important adjunct to the more traditional processes of peer review. The Government accepts that decisions regarding the provision of publicly funded grants should continue to be based on the excellence of proposals. At the same time, the involvement of users would help both in discriminating between proposals and also in achieving the public acceptance of outcomes.¹⁸

The Academy agrees that this argument may have force in relation to research at the applied end of the spectrum. But we see dangers in the proposal that users appointed by government should have a role in 'discriminating' between proposals for research in fields in which they are unlikely to have the necessary expertise to judge the relative likelihood of successful outcomes, or to understand the potential value of such outcomes (both directly and in opening up avenues for further successful research).

The Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council

The discussion paper states that 'the Government, through such bodies as the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council (PMSEIC), has a broad role in identifying and advising on research priorities'.¹⁹ The Academy rejects this view of the Council's role, and believes that the Council as presently constituted is not equipped to draw upon the knowledge and expertise of researchers in the social sciences.

The establishment of PMSEIC followed a review of arrangements for publicly funded science and technology conducted in 1997 by Professor John Stocker, then the Commonwealth's Chief Scientist. In response to a request for comments from Professor Stocker, the immediate past President of ASSA, the late Professor Paul Bourke, advised the review as follows:

In considering areas of science and technology that are 'of particular benefit to Australia', and which should, therefore, 'receive preference in the allocation of funds through the Budget', we draw your attention to the crucial role of relevant areas of research in the social sciences in supporting the performance of governmental functions, and to the failure of successive governments to provide adequate and secure funding for such research.²⁰

In the event, Professor Stocker did not take this Academy's advice to draw this issue to the Government's attention in his report. In fact,

there is no evidence that PMSEIC has even been informed of the decision to terminate the funding of the CoPS/IMPACT project at Monash University, notwithstanding the strong recommendation of the expert reviewer that 'The Commonwealth Government should continue to recognize the importance of having at least one high quality economy-wide model of the Australian economy that is capable of being used for detailed policy analysis and that adheres to the principles of being publicly accessible and fully documented'.²¹

The need for 'detailed policy analysis' and input from the social sciences is nowhere more evident than in many of the papers prepared for PMSEIC by Working Groups of the Council. For example, a paper which was considered at the meeting of PMSEIC on 25 June 1999 ('From Defence to Attack: Australia's response to the Greenhouse Effect') stated that achieving the negotiated target of 8 per cent growth in greenhouse emissions over the 1990 baseline which Australia had accepted under the Kyoto Protocol

. . . will be a formidable challenge, requiring a cut of about 35 per cent, or some 135 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, from expected 'business as usual' growth by 2010.

To put this into perspective, eliminating all Australian road transport, including private cars, would achieve a cut of 60 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent.²²

The paper went on to assert, on the basis of 'analysis within the Australian Greenhouse Office, based on model comparisons', that 'the net cost of abatement to the economy is likely to be only a fraction (10-30 per cent)' of an indicative permit price of \$30 per tonne of CO₂ equivalent (ie, \$3 - \$9 per tonne), and pointed out 'that it would be less expensive to adopt abatement measures necessary to meet the Kyoto targets than to purchase quotas covering all Australian emissions'.²³

The authors of the paper, including the Chief of CSIRO Energy Technology, did not see the need to know the assumptions underlying the 'model comparisons' upon which they relied, or even to find out which models were being compared. And they appear to have been unaware that the implied total abatement costs completely destroyed their case for massive public support for high technology solutions to greenhouse emission reductions.

If the cost of abating CO₂ emissions is \$6 per tonne (taking the midpoint of the cited estimate), the total annual cost of abatement of 135 million tonnes CO₂ equivalent would be \$810 million, or **less than one-tenth of one per cent of projected GDP** of over \$900 billion (1999 prices) in 2010. The annual reduction required in Australia's economic growth rate to meet this cost over the next decade would therefore be **less than one-hundredth of one per cent**. To put into a more relevant perspective the statement that 'eliminating all Australian road transport, including private cars, would achieve a cut of 60 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent', the cost of abating emissions equivalent to the total volume originating in

road transport would be only **one-fifth of one cent per kilometre** of vehicle travel on Australia's roads. (This figure is based upon the mid-point of the estimate of unit abatement costs cited by the authors of the paper and ABS estimates of motor vehicle usage of 166.5 billion kilometres in the year ended 30 September 1995.²⁴)

After citing figures implying that abatement costs will be negligible, the authors went on to emphasise 'The extent and pace of structural change [which would be] imposed as a consequence of acceptance of the Kyoto protocol watershed' and the 'significant implications for economic growth over the transition period' arising from their proposals for massive expansion of Australia's high-technology industries. They suggested that their 'ambitious goal for Australia' (to 'capture and maintain at least 5 per cent of the world greenhouse market using the Australian market as a prototype') was 'unlikely to be achieved without a greater level of commitment to commercialising Australian technology and nurturing the emerging firms which will be the medium through which success in achieved'.²⁵

An attachment to the paper listed 'a range of Commonwealth government policies, funding and activities contributing to greenhouse gas abatement', including the 'renewable energy commercialisation program', the 'renewable energy showcase', the 'renewable energy Internet site' and the 'mandatory targets for the uptake of renewable energy in power supplies'.²⁶

In a letter of 7 September 1999, the Minister for the Environment, Senator Robert Hill, cited the PMSEIC paper in responding to representations from the Electricity Supply Association of Australia (ESAA) about the costs to electricity users of the last of these measures (a major purpose of which is 'to contribute to the development of internationally competitive industries which could participate effectively in the burgeoning Asian energy market'²⁷). Senator Hill told ESAA's Managing Director that he expected

. . . your industry to get fully behind these [greenhouse gas reduction] measures and to support their early introduction. . . I ask the electricity supply industry to move beyond its current questioning of Australia's economic and greenhouse policy frameworks, and instead renew its past commitment to working together with the government . . .²⁸

In his letter, Senator Hill cited analysis presented to PMSEIC in support of his contention that 'there are strategic advantages for companies and for countries prepared to invest in a cleaner, smarter and more profitable future'. He did not make it clear that this analysis had not been subjected to expert scrutiny.

Some members of PMSEIC have made it clear that their primary objective is the promotion of 'high tech' at any cost. For example, the President of the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS) - an *ex officio* member of PMSEIC - has declared that 'I believe Australia needs to seek a high

technology future, based on science', and that a 'low wage, low skill path' for Australia 'seems inevitable under the present mix of government policies'. FASTS states that it sees policy change as being 'achieved by the steady building up of pressure on key people and organisations', and advertises that its President's membership of PMSEIC provides it with an excellent opportunity 'to press our policies with the Prime Minister and his Cabinet colleagues'.²⁹ The Executive Director of FASTS has given the following advice to scientists about how they should 'go about helping set government policy':

The first rule is to think of the people you are trying to convince. Who are they? What do they want? What do they know already? Will they be familiar with technical terms? Do they have the expertise, the time or the interest to read detailed material? What options do they have in mind?

Generally, simple material is most effective with these audiences. Get to the bottom line quickly, and remember that policy makers (like most people) are more interested in the effect of your results (sic) than your clever science.³⁰

Inadequacy of Research Library Facilities in Australia

The Minister refers in the opening paragraph of his 'Foreword' to the discussion paper that Australia must 'ensure that we . . . can share in the advances in knowledge taking place in the world'. In order to achieve this aim, adequate library facilities in the higher education sector are essential.

In the course of reviewing the advice on Australia's response to the greenhouse effect which was provided to PMSEIC in June, the Academy's Vice President, Ian Castles, sought to obtain a copy of a Special Issue of the *The Energy Journal* (the world's leading journal of energy economics) which had been published in May 1999. Entitled 'The Costs of the Kyoto Model: A Multi-Model Evaluation', the issue consisted of an 'Introduction and Overview' by John Weyant, Director of the Energy Modeling Forum (EMF) at Stanford, and a series of papers prepared by each of thirteen international modeling teams. These included the ABARE team led by Dr Brian Fisher, FASSA and the G-Cubed multi-country model team of which Professor Warwick McKibbin, FASSA is a principal.

Introducing the publication, which had been 'made possible by generous financial support from the US Department of Energy, the US Environmental Protection Agency and the Electric Power Research Institute',³¹ Professor Weyant explained that it

. . . represents the first comprehensive report on a comparative set of modeling analyses of the economic and energy sector impacts of the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change. Organized by the Stanford Energy Modeling Forum (EMF), the objectives of this study were . . . (1) identifying policy relevant insights and analyses that are robust across a

wide range of models, (2) providing explanations for differences in results from different models, and (3) identifying high priority areas for future research. This study has produced a particularly rich set of results in all three areas . . . This summary focuses on the motivation for the study, the design of the study scenarios, and the interpretation of results for the four core scenarios, which all the teams ran.³²

In seeking to obtain a copy of this publication in mid-September 1999, Mr Castles found that

- The National Library had ceased to receive *The Energy Journal* in 1995 (though it agreed to obtain individual chapters identified from abstracts on the journal's website through interlibrary loan arrangements);
- No library in Australia which contributes records to the National Library's 'Kinetica' database reported holding the journal;
- The Australian National University Library subscribed to the publication, but had not received the Special Issue and did not intend to order it;
- The CSIRO Library had ceased to receive *The Energy Journal* in 1993;
- The Department of Industry, Science and Resources Library does not subscribe to *The Energy Journal*;
- The Australian Greenhouse Office does not subscribe to the journal;
- The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission Library subscribes to the journal but did not have the Special Issue;
- The ABARE Library subscribes to the journal but did not yet have the Special Issue; and
- The Monash University library search engine Voyager was unable to locate *The Energy Journal* (although articles appearing in this publication are listed in *The Journal of Economic Literature* and the *Environmental Periodicals Bibliography*, and indexed in *SciSearch*, *Research Alert*, *Energy Abstracts*, *PAIS Bulletin*, *Trade and Industry*, *DOE Energy*, *Energyline*, *Enviroline* and *Wilsonline*³³).

The cost of the Special Issue of the *Energy Journal* to subscribers outside the United States is **\$US 55**. In the three years to 1999-2000 CSIRO's spending on various 'atmospheric research' activities (mainly 'climate processes', 'climate modelling', 'climate impact' and 'air quality') totalled almost **\$60 million**.³⁴ Legislation currently before the Commonwealth Parliament provides over **\$800 million** over four years for measures directed to the abatement of greenhouse emissions so that Australia can achieve its obligations under the Kyoto protocol.

These comparisons suggest the possibility of serious defects in Australia's arrangements for the allocation of funds for research infrastructure and, by extension, to the allocation of funds for research in energy economics. Although only one publication is

involved, it is clearly a publication of crucial importance for policy formulation.

Conclusion

In a discussion of Australia's administrative arrangements for publicly funded science and technology in the *Academy's Newsletter* in 1998, Academy Vice-President Ian Castles wrote that

It is a mistake to suppose that 'science' considerations informing public policies should be dealt with in isolation from other aspects, and discussed by a cross-portfolio science and engineering council. Australia's Academies have recognised for decades that environmental research should not be the preserve of scientists and engineers, and have been active in supporting and publicising multi-disciplinary research in this area.³⁵

The conferences on climate change convened by the National Academies Forum in November 1996 and May 1997, both of which were addressed by Senator Hill, are examples of this multi-disciplinary activity. Members of all four Academies contributed to both meetings, and the social science representatives included the model builders Professor Warwick McKibbin and Dr Brian Fisher. For a very small expenditure of public funds, the scope and quality of the presentations on climate change issues made to the Academy meetings were far superior to those which have been made to PMSEIC.

This suggests that a key objective of the reformed research funding arrangements in the higher education sector should be to enhance support for policy-related 'public good' research in Australian universities, and to facilitate its transmission to governments and the wider community. A possible model would be 'to have an Australian counterpart to Britain's ESRC Macroeconomic Modelling Bureau directed by Professor Ken Wallis at the University of Warwick and funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)'. In his report on the review of the CoPS/IMPACT project, Professor Woodland noted that

This bureau undertakes analyses and tests of a range of six macroeconomic models of the British economy and publishes the outcomes. Models that receive public funding are required to provide the complete model and documentation to this bureau for testing. They are therefore required to be in the public domain and to be subject to professional scrutiny.³⁶

The Academy suggests that consideration be given to applying this principle to research funding in a range of fields. Within designated areas of research of a 'public good' kind, grant recipients could be required to ensure that research outputs remained in the public domain.

-
- ¹ Australia. Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (1999). *New Knowledge, New Opportunities: A Discussion Paper on Higher Education Research and Research Training*, para 3.16.
 - ² Dixon, Peter and Daina McDonald (1998). 'Economic Arguments for Public Funding of Research: The Case of Economic Modelling' in Herzberg, AM and L Krupka (eds) *Statistics, Science and Public Policy*: 108-109.
 - ³ Adam, Colin (1999). 'Issues in the Technological Sciences' in National Academies Forum *Scholarship, intellectual ownership and the law*: 6.
 - ⁴ *Ibid*: 7.
 - ⁵ Blaug, Mark, (ed) (1986) *Who's Who in Economics: A Biographical Dictionary of Major Economists 1700-1986*.
 - ⁶ Dixon, Peter and Brian Parmenter (1997). *1997 Evaluation of Government Contributions to IMPACT and CoPS Funding*, Attachment 1.
 - ⁷ Woodland, Alan (1998). *External Review of the CoPS/IMPACT Project: 1995-96 to 1997-98 Triennium*: 20-21.
 - ⁸ *Ibid*: 26.
 - ⁹ Australia. Commonwealth Ombudsman (1998). *ABARE and ACF: Report of the investigation into ABARE's External Funding of Climate Change Economic Modelling*: 20.
 - ¹⁰ UNESCO/ICSU World Conference on Science (1999). 'Declaration on Science and the Use of Scientific Knowledge', para 16.
 - ¹¹ UNESCO/ICSU World Conference on Science (1999). 'Science Agenda – Framework for Action', para 17.
 - ¹² Australia. Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (1999). *op cit*: 6.
 - ¹³ Australia. Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (1999). *op cit*: para 5.11.
 - ¹⁴ *ibid*: para 5.15.
 - ¹⁵ *ibid*: para 5.16.
 - ¹⁶ *ibid*: 63.
 - ¹⁷ *Ibid*: paras 5.16 and 7.13.
 - ¹⁸ *ibid*: para 4.13.
 - ¹⁹ *ibid*: para 3.12.
 - ²⁰ Bourke, Paul (1997). 'Organisation of Publicly Funded Science and Technology in Australia: Submission to the Chief Scientist', *ASSA Newsletter 2/1997*: 13-17.
 - ²¹ Woodland, Alan (1998). *op cit*: 30.
 - ²² Australia. Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council (1999). 'From Defence to Attack: Australia's Response to the Greenhouse Effect', Third meeting, 25 June, Agenda Item 2: 2.
 - ²³ *Ibid*: 4.
 - ²⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (1999). *Australia Now – A Statistical Profile: Transport – Use of Motor Vehicles*.

-
- ²⁵ Australia. Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council (1999). *op cit*: 9.
- ²⁶ *Ibid*: 23-25.
- ²⁷ *Ibid*: 26.
- ²⁸ Hordern, Nick (1999). 'Industry greets plan for carbon tax with horror', *Australian Financial Review*, 15 September.
- ²⁹ Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (1999). Membership brochure.
- ³⁰ Gascoigne, Toss (1996). 'The Voice of Reason: Scientists Influencing Government', *Search*, September: 237.
- ³¹ *The Energy Journal* (1999). 'The Costs of the Kyoto Protocol: A Multi-Model Evaluation', Special Issue, May: iii.
- ³² *Ibid*: vii.
- ³³ *Ibid*: i.
- ³⁴ Australia. Parliament (1998). *Investing in our Natural Heritage: The Commonwealth's Environment Expenditure 1998-99*, Statement by the Hon Robert Hill, Minister for the Environment, 12 May 1998: 93.
- ³⁵ Castles, Ian (1998). 'Director's Note', *ASSA Newsletter* 1/1998: 5.
- ³⁶ Woodland, Alan (1998). *op cit*: 28.
-

Dialogue is produced within the Secretariat of the Academy and published three times per year. The Editor is Peg Job. Readers are welcome to comment or enquire regarding matters mentioned in *Dialogue*. Letters to the Editor will be published. General enquiries may be posted, faxed or sent by email to ASSA.Secretariat@anu.edu.au. Editorial enquiries should be sent to:

The Editor, at pegs.books@braidwood.net.au

Ethics are good for you

Robert E Goodin



Ethics might be good for you because they **make** you good, or because they **do** you good. Whether ethics are a matter of inner virtue (Aristotle) or external duty (Kant), respecting their marks you as a Good Person. In a more Hobbesian spirit, ethics are pragmatically good for you insofar as you benefit from others being bound by ethical requirements, even net of the costs to you of being bound by them yourself. All that has been familiar ground for centuries.

Modern social science points to yet another non-Hobbesian sense in which ethics can do you good. It is not just a matter of your benefiting from the constraints that ethics imposes on others. Ethics, this new model suggests, is empowering as well as constraining. Thanks to ethical norms, and social and legal institutions giving further force to them, you are actually able to do more things than you would have been able to do in the absence of them.

For a practical example, consider the old moral philosophy chestnut of promising and contract law built around that practice. At first brush, it seems daft to say that it is of any great benefit to you to be able to put yourself into a position to be sued for all you are worth. But upon reflection, the fact that you can render yourself vulnerable in that way is precisely what makes your commitments credible. It is precisely the fact that you can be sued if you default that makes people take your contractual promises seriously, in the first place¹. And being able to make and rely upon promises and contracts is of course a great advantage to each of us in trying to order our future affairs.

Ethical norms and institutions underwriting them sometimes emerge quite gradually, and in a really rather disorganised way. One example, a favourite among contemporary economic historians, concerns the emergence of the Law Merchant at medieval trade fairs². Courts were simply convened on the spot, from among the traders who happened to be present, to resolve any disputes arising. Over time, the judgments of those disparate bodies cumulated into an informal body of common law, subsequently taken to be binding on commerce across all jurisdictions.

Conversely, it is important to realise that those ethical norms and institutions which are so useful in empowering us all can also be eroded, whether gradually or quickly. Welching on a contract simply serves, in the first instance, to mark one particular person's untrustworthy for purposes of future dealings. But where too many people welch on contracts, in a situation where there are too many people for us to know each of their reputations in detail, welching undermines the institution of promising and contracting as a whole.

Seeing ethical norms, and social institutions giving force to them, as empowering leads us to realise that those are 'public goods', of a relatively pure sort. And one upshot of that is to say that welchers, when

welching, are not just securing an unfair advantage over particular others: they are harming us all, insofar as their welching serves to undermine norms and institutions which benefit us all³.

For one practical example, consider the first Howard Ministry's distinction between 'core' and 'non-core' electoral promises — as innovative an Australian contribution to democratic theory, in its way, as the secret ballot was in another. Insofar as such cynical breaches of promise undermine confidence in electoral promises in general, we would all be the poorer for that. Parties could then no longer credibly campaign on the basis of what they intend to do. At most, they could campaign on the basis of what they (or their opponents) have already done.

Without any capacity to trust any party's promises, though, we simply find ourselves in an endless cycle of 'voting the rascals out' — without any reliable forward-looking reason to believe that the others will be any better. Declining product quality is the natural consequence of a cycle of decline such as this⁴. That is just one more lesson of modern social science that we ought take to heart, in insisting upon the care and maintenance of ethical standards in public life.

Professor Robert Goodin is in the Philosophy Program, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University.

goodinb@coombs.anu.edu.au

¹ Hardin, Russell (1982), 'Exchange theory on strategic bases', *Social Science Information*, 21: 251-72.

² Milgrom, Paul R; Douglass C North; and Barry R Weingast (1990), 'The role of institutions in the revival of trade: the law merchant, private judges and the Champagne fairs', *Economics & Politics*, 2: 1-23.

³ Putnam, Robert D (1993), *Making Democracy Work*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

⁴ Hirschman, Albert O (1970), *Exit, Voice & Loyalty*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press: Chapter 5.

A Scientific Revolution

Michael Kirby



Many of the most important issues in the Social Sciences today are presented by advances in the physical sciences and technology. When the twentieth century is viewed in retrospect, it is likely that the assessment of its most significant developments will concern technology - particularly the discovery of the atom and of nuclear fission, the advent of informatics and the elucidation of the structure of DNA. Each of these developments presents global problems and requires global solutions. Social scientists, including lawyers, will have to respond to these challenges. They will have to do so at an international, regional and local level.

We will only be able to respond efficiently if we are aware of the developments which are occurring and if we familiarise ourselves with at least the rudiments of the science and technology which those developments reflect. Here's the rub. So rapid are the advances and so sophisticated and complex are the details of the science and the explanations of the technology, that even an informed lay person finds it difficult today to comprehend exactly what is occurring. Yet the outcomes are vital to our society, its democratic institutions, its laws and even to the survival of the human species. These are not, therefore, issues that can be left to technologists alone.

In response to the challenges of the genome, the former Conservative government in Britain established the Human Genetics Advisory Commission. It is a high powered affair. Sir Colin Campbell, Chairman of the Commission has described the way in which the Commission is obliged, under its terms of reference, to keep under review scientific progress at the frontiers of human genetics; to report to government and society on issues arising from the new developments that can be expected to have wider social, ethical and economic consequences; and to advise on ways to build public confidence in, and understanding of, the new genetics. Sir Colin describes the endeavour to bring the complex issues to a wide audience in Britain and to ensure that the Commission's advice will mirror the broad range of opinion which these complex and sensitive questions evoke.

There is no such body in Australia. The closest we get to it is the Australian Medical Health Ethics Committee which is chaired by Professor Donald Chalmers of the Law School of the University of Tasmania. There is insufficient public debate in Australia about the genetic revolution. Most people must depend upon articles in the popular media for the rudiments of their knowledge. Inevitably, such articles tend to concentrate on highly contentious and sometimes sensational issues such as the potential for reproductive cloning of a human being. The full picture is much more complicated. Before embarking on a few of the social themes, let me sketch, as briefly as

I can, some of the general scientific background which it is essential for all of us to know.

A Scientific Primer

In 1953 two scientists, one from the United States and the other from Britain, Drs JD Watson and FHC Crick, published in *Nature* an essay that was to revolutionise understanding of the basic forms of life. Not just human life, but all forms of life. They provided a model for understanding the process of the transfer of genetic information between generations of the same organism.

This article was not, of course, the first step on the path of genetics. Even in primitive societies farmers knew the benefits of mating particular domestic animals or cross-breeding particular crops. But the early, primitive discoveries came together, and were explained, by Watson and Crick. They proposed that the basic determinates of living matter were to be found in DNA, in a structure described as a double helix. DNA was the molecule which carried the genetic code that would unlock the truth known instinctively by farmers and described in a primitive, but accurate, way by Mendel. From that moment to this, the search has been undertaken to explore the DNA and to unlock its remaining secrets.

The coincidental development of information technology presented the means which would help scientists to perform the analysis necessary to understand the control mechanisms residing in the DNA. In 1990 a group of scientists decided that they should cooperate in sequencing the entire human genome. The genome represents the complete set of genes and chromosomes of the organism. The intention of this project, which became known as the Human Genome Project, was to construct a 'high-resolution genetic, physical and transcript map' of the human being with, ultimately, a complete sequence of the genome. The outcome is the largest research project ever undertaken. The object is to determine the location of the estimated 100,000 human genes. The purpose is to provide the source book for biomedical science in the 21st century [which would] be of immense benefit to the field of medicine. The object is to understand and eventually treat many of the more than 4,000 genetic diseases that afflict mankind, as well as the many multi-factorial diseases in which genetic predisposition plays an important role'.

The sequencing of genes is being performed by automatic machines of the most tremendous computer power. More than 50,000 genes have already been identified. For a majority of these, the function is still unknown. Yet gradually, in the manner of the *Rosetta Stone*, the genetic language will be deciphered. Patterns will be discovered which are distinct and which exist only in a person with known genetic conditions, such as Huntington's Disease or Alzheimer's Disease, Cystic Fibrosis and so on. Similarly, distinct patterns will be seen in the case of persons who are bald; those who are tall; those who have blue eyes; those who are disposed to obesity or other

genetic propensities. One by one, and by a process of reasoning, experimentation, logic and elimination, the encyclopaedia will be rendered into a language which human beings can understand. This is the mighty challenge of the Human Genome Project. It is already happening. Scarcely a week goes by without some new discovery which allows scientists to point to a particular gene or sequence of genes as being the cause of, or related to, the presence of some genetic condition in the human subject.

The Ethical Choices

Take the following problems, stated in very general terms, which the foregoing scientific developments present for ethical choices and, ultimately, for the law and social controls.

- 1 *Medical therapies:* Scientists are now discovering the genes which 'trigger' various genetic diseases which, in turn, constitute a large part of the inherited causes of the suffering of humanity. For example, the genes which express themselves in Huntington's Disease, a serious affliction. Their discovery permits the conduct of extremely accurate tests which can now identify those people who carry and may transmit this genetic condition. That knowledge would, theoretically, in combination with prenatal tests and abortion, permit the future elimination of carriers of Huntingtons. Is this desirable? Can it be distinguished from the abortion of a foetus with Down Syndrome? Where does this process of medical elimination of the results of 'defective' genes begin and end? Is there a less life-destructive means of using the genetic information to delay the onset or diminish the symptoms of Huntington's disease whilst respecting the life of a person born with those genes or others like it?
- 2 *Criminal Law:* For the lawyer, the discovery of genetic causes of disorders and of some antisocial conduct may have implications for the future. The criminal law is built upon a general hypothesis of free will. For the crime to be established it is normally necessary to prove both the act of the accused (*actus reus*) and the will (*mens rea*) occasioning that act. But what are the implications for society of discovering that, in some cases at least, for some people, the act is practically nothing but the product of a genetic characteristic? Can we persist, in all cases, with the unquestioned hypothesis of free will in the face of scientific knowledge which casts doubt upon it?
- 3 *Privacy and Confidentiality:* The basic rule of the healthcare professions has long been respect for the confidences of the patient. This rule goes back at least to the Hippocratic Oath. It existed in ancient civilisations. But when a disorder is of a genetic characteristic, is the 'patient' the individual or the entire family? Does a 'family' in such circumstances

have a right to override the wishes of the patient and to secure data about the patient's genes relevant to genetic features important for them all? Should a patient have a right *not* to know the determinants of his or her future medical conditions?

- 4 *Third Party Interests:* This last question leads to the rights of third parties. Should an employer have a right to require an employee to submit to genetic testing to show, with greater perfection, the likely future health status of the employee? Should an insurer be entitled to secure a detailed genetic profile of the insured? Until now, insurance has generally involved the sharing, within the community, of the risks attached to medical conditions which are largely unpredictable. If such conditions can be predicted with perfect or near perfect accuracy, would that not shift the scales unfairly to the advantage of insurers? Yet, where insurers can require those seeking insurance to submit to old-fashioned medical tests, is it sensible to close off knowledge of the best medical information that may be made available by genetic tests?
- 5 *Patenting genes:* One of the key issues of genetic research concerns the desirability of permitting the patenting of human genes or their sequences as the basis for future therapeutic applications. Of course, in every country, the patentability of such matter depends upon the terms of the local law on intellectual property protection (patents, copyright etc). That law is itself normally the product of national legislation and is often influenced by international law. At conferences on the genome, strong views are commonly expressed by participants from developing countries and elsewhere about this topic. They urge that the human genome is the common heritage of humanity. That it belongs to the human species as a whole - some say to God - and not to private corporations engaged in research, however potentially beneficial such research may prove to be. They point to the fact that Watson and Crick never attempted to secure the slightest commercial advantage for themselves from their discoveries.

International developments

There are at least two important international institutional responses to the foregoing developments, apart from those which exist in learned academes, universities, national bioethics commissions and other local institutes. I am associated with each of them. One is the Ethics Committee of the Human Genome Organisation - the international scientific association which is supervising the Human Genome Project. The other is the International Bioethics Committee of UNESCO. The latter Committee produced the *Universal Declaration*. It was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in November 1997. It represents an endeavour to state the basic

principles which should provide the ethical and legal framework within which national responses may be developed to the challenge of the genetics revolution.

The main substantive provisions of the new *Declaration* insist upon the requirement of rigorous and prior assessment of potential risks and benefits for any research, treatment or diagnosis affecting an individual's genome. In every case, the prior free and informed consent of the person concerned must be obtained. It is specifically recognised that each individual has the right to decide whether or not to be informed of the results of genetic examination. No one is to be subjected to discrimination based on genetic characteristics such as will infringe that person's human rights, fundamental freedoms and human dignity.

The Social Science Approach

The issues which I have outlined may seem daunting. It is necessary for social scientists to respond to such problems. It is also necessary for them to develop the institutions and methodologies which can respond efficiently and the frameworks within which national responses can be rationally worked out.

Those responses will be founded on a good knowledge of genetic science. They will involve multidisciplinary dialogue such as is achieved in the United Kingdom Commission which Sir Colin Campbell leads. They will require us to think positively as human beings and as social scientists about the potential of genetic science to relieve suffering and to save people from premature death.

Social scientists will teach the importance of involving the public in discussion about the legal and ethical choices which genetics presents. They will explain the difficulties of securing agreement, on a global level, when there are so many different regimes of religious and ethical principles. Thus global prohibitions on experimentation with foetal material are unlikely to succeed. Whereas some Christian groups regard life as beginning at the very instant of conception, Judaism and Islam consider that the embryo does not acquire human characteristics until after 40 days. Other religions and philosophies, and humanists, may choose to recognise an even later time. Clearly, it is important to develop global institutions and to provide global solutions to a problem which literally concerns all humanity, involved as it is with nothing less than the future makeup of the human species. The highest common denominator of agreement may not be very high.

A Few Conclusions

Human beings are moral creatures. They are also gregarious. They group themselves in societies, ultimately international society. The genetic revolution will be overwhelmingly for the benefit of humanity. It will provide the universal textbook for medical science in the next century. It is happening. It is happening quickly.

Important social, ethical and legal challenges are presented. It is vital that the best scientific minds should be engaged upon these problems and challenges. Such exciting developments deserve to be shared with all people. Social scientists have a responsibility to promote, both in their own countries and internationally, a regime which is equitable, respectful of the dignity of the individual and mindful that the individual is always much more than a collection of his or her genes. These are topics which, in the future, will increasingly engage the attention of our Academy.

The Hon Justice Michael Kirby AC CMG is a Judge of the High Court of Australia.

The **Secretariat is connected to e-mail**. The general address for all Academy matters is: ASSA.Secretariat@anu.edu.au

Individual staff may be reached at the following addresses:

Barry Clissold, Executive Director: Barry.Clissold@anu.edu.au
(*International Relations Program* matters)

Ian Castles AO, Vice President: Ian.Castles@anu.edu.au

Dr John Robertson, Research Director: jrobertson@anu.edu.au

Mrs Pam Shepherd, Executive Assistant: at the general address

Ms Sue Rider, Project Officer: Sue.Rider@anu.edu.au
(*Workshop Program* matters)

Ms Elizabeth Lovell, Project Officer: at the general address

Dr Peg Job, *Dialogue* Editor: pegs.books@braidwood.net.au

Special friendships, monological illusions and the ethics of East Timor

Val Plumwood

The Fallacy of the 'Special Friendship'



In my garden two dwarves, one wielding a spade and the other a concertina, peep out from behind a fern. The DFAT dwarves, two of an original three, have an honoured place in the garden: they are relics of a demonstration protesting Australia's East Timor policies held in Canberra outside DFAT (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) a few years ago. Equipped variously with blindfold, ear muffs and gag, the dwarves summarised succinctly the policies of 'see no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil' Australian officialdom followed for so many years as our nation pursued a 'special friendship' with Indonesia while atrocity followed atrocity in the 25 years of the Indonesian Army's occupation of East Timor. Certain events allow the clouds of ideological hegemony to part and the resulting shafts of light shatter irreversibly the monological illusion of power that the world is the way 'relaxed and comfortable' people would like it to be and have been assured by other relaxed and comfortable people that it really is. The terrible days of early September 1999 after the independence vote when Indonesian military terror reigned unopposed in Dili were among those times when events took a hand to smash long-cherished, comfortable Australian illusions of the 'special friendship' with Indonesia and its accompanying rhetoric of Asian identity and Asian values. The world, or at least our part of it, can never be seen in the same way again.

The special horror of the massacres and destruction affected Australians strongly and widely for many reasons. Long years of work by East Timorese protest groups and their supporters in Australia had produced a basic and widespread understanding of the reasons for Timorese resistance. We shuddered at the vulnerability of an unarmed population confronted by small murderous gangs of armed men. We witnessed their atrocities at close quarters (and contrary to rationalist-utilitarian ethics, proximity does make an ethical difference, especially through the increased opportunities it offers for intervention and emotional involvement). What democratic spirit could not be moved by the extraordinary courage of those Timorese who voted or worked for the UN to bring the referendum to others in the knowledge that they were risking a terrible death? We witnessed the disgraceful racism of the last desperate days before the UN evacuation, the UN's abandonment of its East Timorese workers and contrasting evacuation of outsiders (heroically resisted by the head of the UN mission in Dili who refused to follow orders and evacuated all his staff).¹ We learnt of the systematic and planned character of the atrocities, and the emerging evidence of high-level involvement. We felt sickened and helpless as we heard daily of new killings only a short distance from our

shores, and had to savour the bitter knowledge of our own government's aid and assistance to military units involved, especially the Koppassus units.

The abstract concept of a 'special friendship' with Indonesia cherished by Australian security and foreign affairs bureaucracy contributed to the disastrous failures of Australian security intelligence and policy that surrounded these events. The illusions of moderating influence that were part of the special relationship doctrine seem to have been behind the Howard government's refusal to advocate an armed peace-keeping presence in East Timor before and after the vote despite its prior intelligence, available as far back as March, about TNI intentions to devastate East Timor in the event of an independence vote. It was utterly characteristic of the special relationship approach that instead of making this crucial information available to concerned parties (eg Portugal), and exposing and opposing TNI plans in US and UN forums, Downer sent a confidential Air Marshall to Djakarta to talk the good chaps there out of it, and worked on the optimistic assumption that the worst would not happen (while ensuring that if it did we could pull out our own people, leaving the East Timorese to their fate). Whether this failure was the result of the government refusing to **hear** any evil or of the intelligence and foreign affairs bureaucracies long-established refusal to **speak** any evil of its erstwhile friends has yet to be established in the upcoming intelligence inquiry. The blindfold at least fell off after the independence vote and the Howard government was forced, along with the rest of us, to **see** the evil of the TNI, and to see the special relationship for the house of cards it always was. It is to Howard's credit that he did change course from previous policies to promote and assist the referendum and did eventually (too late to stop the worst of the violence) support armed intervention.

There are important lessons to be learnt from the failure of our intelligence and its contribution to the tragedy of East Timor. The failures and illusions of the 'special relationship' are a monument to the distortions and limitations of the view from the top, the outcome of our security intelligence and political understanding being overly statist, too much '**with power**'. The result was a lack of correctiveness through the system which catered to the illusions of the Australian political elite about their counterparts in Indonesia. Through our access to the good chaps in charge, they said, we could cultivate ethical outcomes, when mostly those we tried to influence were neither in charge nor concerned with ethics. 'With power' approaches foolishly conflated friendship for the state power structure with friendship for its people. In the name of the 'special friendship' for Indonesia successive Australian governments befriended a *de facto* dictatorship which stole from the people: they helped feed a military machine that stifled democracy and destroyed the economy through one of the world's most notorious corruption. This 'with power' focus was closely tied to economic rationalism and justified by economic self-interest. But the greater the distance

between the people and the state in terms of economic and other benefits, the more crucial for ethical action it is to distinguish clearly between them. In the case of Indonesia, that distance has been very great indeed. By failing to make this distinction, the Australian government wound up performing such 'friendly' actions for the people of the archipelago as training the military whose main purpose was to suppress them.

The Ethics of the Special Friendship

The special horror of East Timor collided in a spectacular way with the special friendship, making it impossible to avoid seeing the ugly aspects of our long-term involvement with the Indonesian military regime that most of us had evaded prior to the vote. That 'special friendship' was not passive but active, involving not only a ban on official public criticism, but also active recognition of the occupation, active assistance in international forums, and other active if tacit support such as military training. High level Australian security bureaucrats were probably privy to Indonesian plans for the annexation of East Timor from the very beginning, as was the USA; in 1975 the Ford-Kissinger duo had paid visits to both Canberra and Djakarta just a few days before the invasion. The 1975 Woolcott cables set the tone for our relations with Indonesia over East Timor². The cables were cast in the instrumental terms characteristic of Cold War foreign policy, but anticipated the era of economic rationalism with their frank advocacy of seizing the economic advantages of having only two players, Australia and Indonesia, to share in the Timor Gap oil bonanza. 'Pragmatism' (as these flagrantly immoral policies were dubbed) evolved as a policy of muting official protest on atrocities in East Timor in the interests of strengthening economic links with Indonesia. Special friendship mythology mystified the naked self-interest of these economic rationalist policies through the absurd optimism of the 'Gareth Evans Doctrine', that those in power in Djakarta were constantly working at improvement, and could be influenced for the better by our example, strenuous moral efforts and often conveniently lucrative advice and assistance.

But the events that followed the referendum demonstrated a much grimmer and less comfortable reality that has long been familiar to Indonesian dissidents, to the East Timorese and to other oppressed peoples like the West Papuans who knew that after 1965 Indonesia had become a 'prison of nationalities' (not unlike the Soviet Union), a state kept united by fear. Human rights violations were systematic, especially at the periphery, for a corrupt military regime that has nothing to offer its people but systematic exploitation and theft by the state/military elite has few resources to hold itself together in the face of mounting popular disaffection other than escalating violence. When such military regimes both alienate populations by their brutality yet require their absolute loyalty to the national ideal, the only answer to the contradiction their machinery can deliver is more punishment, heightened terror. (To the extent that such a logic is unviable on a large-scale, such regimes are unstable, and this one

has typically proved to be so). An investment in a state thus held together by fear is an investment in oppression, and a special friendship with it is only viable for those who can stomach its full militarist logic of atrocity and vengeance. When it came to the crunch, neither the Australian people nor, eventually, even the Howard government could do that.

The reaction of the Habibi regime to Australian criticism of the violence surrounding the vote and the demonstrations outside our embassies made it painfully clear that the special friendship had turned to special hostility and that price of recovering it was refraining from any public criticism whatever of what was clearly a mounting human rights catastrophe on our doorstep. The policy of speaking no evil and of 'showing privately understanding to Indonesia of their problems' that was part of the special relationship had clearly helped to bring about these expectations. The TNI attempt to repeat its 'civil war' justification of the 1975 invasion by running a supposedly 'civilian militia' front as its instrument of vengeance against the population that dared to defy its terror failed dismally in 1999, because journalistic coverage of the subterfuge was so extensive, because the independence vote was so overwhelming, and because Fretilin so astutely refused to be drawn. But the fact that those at the top of the TNI who set up the violence expected this fabrication to succeed and bring around world opinion shows how out of touch they were. This probably reflected both their belief in their own propaganda overstating the extent of support for autonomy among the East Timorese and the absence of an appropriately unambiguous response to previous smaller-scale atrocities from the outside world, including Australia.

Subsequent events revealed not only the fundamental immorality of the 'trade-first' policies of economic rationalism we followed but also the way our commitment to a militaristic neighbour, failure to protest invasion and failure to support the cause of democratic internationalism in Indonesia and in our region were working against our own long-term security interests.³ As the threatening face of the TNI was turned for a time in our direction, and the international response effort, so frustratingly slow to emerge, was still uncertain, the roles of the winners and losers were for a time reversed: we were obliged to contemplate our own vulnerability in the disturbing possibility that what had been unleashed against the East Timorese could also be unleashed against us, and that no one would move to help us either. The belief in the protective advantages of our 'special friendship' with the USA was a further significant casualty of this period. The parallel between our own official indifference to the East Timorese and the indifference of the US to the situation in our region was inescapable. If our own survival was in question, we could not wish others in the world community to turn aside from us as we had for so long turned aside from the East Timorese. We could not evade the knowledge that we had followed unethical policies, policies that we could not possibly universalise or hope others would follow in our own case should we ever be similarly placed.

A New Way Ahead? After the Special Friendships

There are those, economic rationalists from both sides of Australian politics, who regret the passing of the special relationship, who would like to restore its prioritising of the economic over the ethical, and who contrive to blame the Howard government's departures from it for the violence in East Timor. The fault was Howard's in making policy not determined exclusively by economic interest and in supporting East Timor's aspirations for freedom in the first place, according to Paddy McGuinness and Paul Keating.⁴ On the face of it, there is much still to be explained about the political motives for Howard's generosity, since his behaviour in the domestic sphere does not show any similar compassion for those who have nothing, as the East Timorese now have. The Liberal –National Party Coalition, like most governments of the right, is a pragmatic and often uneasy alliance between economic rationalists (or neo-liberals) and conservatives. On present evidence it seems that on this issue John Howard acted as a conservative of principle rather than as an economic rationalist. In other words, the intervention marks a movement (whose completeness we cannot now know) from a neo-liberal to a conservative foreign policy framework. In the context of East Timor, this is a distinct improvement, since economic rationalists act ethically only by accident, if the ethical policy happens to coincide with the economic maximising one, (and the opposite was the case for East Timor). Conservatives at least have some space available for ethical action - even if they go on, as John Howard did later in the 'Howard Doctrine', to put a colonial and conservative spin on their ethics⁵ - and they open space for **contesting** ethical action.

The slide back into complacency is now well underway in Australia, but there is much that is worth retaining in the insights the period threw up. The major task is to resist the conservative and colonial interpretations of our new roles that are emerging from Howard camp, along with the neo-liberal camp's efforts to reinstate the special friendship, and to put forward an alternative vision. This is easier now because events have undermined the appeal to Asian identity and values that was strongly associated with the Keating period. The 'Asian values' idea was a classic 'with power' fallacy, reducing the political to the economic, conflating the people and the state, treating the nation as a monolith and ignoring the very diverse ways people are positioned in access to national resources. Although invoking cultural diversity, it offered no protest to the elimination of cultural diversity by the market or by powerful central states (rigidified through the new global treaties and institutions) subduing their peripheries. Few Asians not identified with state elites would accept that the events in East Timor expressed 'Asian values', and few Asian states took that view either. But if the acceptance of horrors like those in East Timor did express 'Asian values', we would be entitled (indeed some would say obliged) to try to change those values, which are hazardous to other nations in the region as well as to internal populations.

The events that shattered the special relationship also shake the idea that Australia is obliged to develop itself as an unjust market society because it is 'part of Asia', the simplistic identification of identity with geography used by neo-liberals to support demoting ethical concerns in favour of economic self-interest. Howard's conservative version of Australian identity appeals alternatively but just as simplistically to our European past. But on the theory of overlapping multiple identities developed by feminists and others, there is room for a more complex set of choices that could orient our political identity more strongly to action in the Pacific region and internationally, while reflecting our various, cross-cutting historical and cultural alignments with Europe, North America and with indigenous nations. We should welcome the formal arrival in regional councils of a new neighbour with diverse European and indigenous origins like our own who promises to contribute to the region just what it most greatly needed, a powerful sense of the meaning of freedom. We must critically consider whether the injustice of our past policies to them has reflected the eurocentric attitudes that devalued indigenous lives and culture, and ensure that we behave respectfully, fairly and generously in the future.

The conservative political agenda that is beginning to fill the vacuum left by the special friendships urges an increase in our own capacity for military coercion as a means of protection and is poised to pour resources into the military at the expense of systems of care for people at the domestic and international level. But while some improvement in our defence capacity seems wise, we should realise that militarism is a contagious virus that feeds off arms buildups, and presents the same sort of danger to our society as it did to our neighbour's. Rather than aiming to match in scale our neighbour's force and ruthlessness, we might try to do now what we should have done earlier, work through international forums to starve the military monster we helped create and encourage others to do the same. This could assist our own future and that of East Timor, and help democratic forces in Indonesia to maintain control. A better form of long-term defence than an arms build-up would be for us to become good internationalists ourselves, using our military forces and influence to strengthen UN peacekeeping efforts and supporting the UN in our region and generally in the world. We should consider making our military forces available regularly for peacekeeping in the expectation that if we are conspicuously good international citizens others are likely to be more inclined to help us if we need it.

Finally, for defence resources we should look less to armaments than to our own reputation as a just and fair nation. International and especially Asian reactions to our protests and peace-keeping involvement make it painfully clear how much we are diminished and weakened in the world by our continuing reputation for racism. No one is going to come to our aid if we can be represented as a younger sibling of the white-supremacist regime in South Africa, as much of the world believes that we are. In the context where our indigenous policies have been condemned by the UN Human Rights

Commission, it is greatly in our long-term interest to achieve a satisfactory and widely acknowledged settlement with Aboriginal people, and to do so as soon as possible. The East Timorese, in freeing themselves, may in the end force us to do the same.

¹ Racism has been an important background feature of the East Timor policy context from the first. As I argued in Plumwood, Val (1992), 'East Timor: the Ethics of Australia's Role' (presented at 'Australasian Association of Philosophy' Conference, Brisbane July 1992.) *Silenus Laughed*, 5 Nov/Dec: 25-34, in pursuing policies that implicitly assumed that their lives were of lesser value, we extended to the East Timorese the racist assumptions that governed our relationship with indigenous Australians.

² Extracts from the cables appear in Aarons, M and R Domm (1992), *East Timor: A Western Made Tragedy*. Left Book Club: Sydney. For a discussion of their instrumental character see Plumwood, Val (1998), 'Noam Chomsky and Liberation Politics' (presented at 'Visions of Freedom' Conference, Sydney Jan 1995) in Peter McGregor (ed), *Visions of Freedom*. Visions Press: Sydney.

³ Woolcott quoted in Aarons and Domm *ibid*.

⁴ As I argued in Plumwood 1992, *op cit*.

⁵ For some the habit of speaking no evil that was part of the special friendship dies hard; thus one ADFA academic recently urged the International Commission of Jurists to desist from documenting the atrocities in case it angered Indonesia, (although such documentation is surely the best way to support the need for intervention).

The colonial spin emerged in the 'Howard Doctrine' that Australia would police the Asian region as deputy to the USA, (a naïve and absurd position possibly foisted on Howard by the economic rationalists at *The Bulletin* with a view to discrediting the move away from neo-liberal foreign policy). The conservative spin appears in Howard's interpretation of public support for our intervention in East Timor as a vindication of past Australian military involvements from Vietnam to the Boer War.

Dr Val Plumwood is a feminist philosopher and an independent scholar.

Academy News



Eleven new Fellows have been elected to the Academy. They are:

Dr Jock Anderson, Rural Development Department, World Bank, Washington DC. Dr Anderson's early research led into pioneering economic analysis of risk in agriculture involving modern decision theory. He is recognised internationally as a leader in risky agricultural decision analysis, and in the theory and practice of the evaluation of agricultural research.

Associate Professor Verity Burgmann, Department of Political Science, University of Melbourne is a leading scholar of Australian social and political movements. Her study of early Australian socialism and a close analysis of the activities of the NSW branch of the Builders Labourers Federation during the 1960s and 1970s have gained recognition among leading international scholars of labour history and political radicalism.

Associate Professor Moira Gatens, School of Philosophy, University of Sydney. Professor Gatens' book *Feminism and Philosophy* has become a standard text, and her three most recent books - *Feminist Ethics*, *The Oxford Companion to Australian Feminism* and *Gender and Institutions* - confirm her status as a main player within Australian feminism and feminist philosophy worldwide.

Professor Annette Hamilton, School of Behavioural Sciences, Macquarie University, first established her reputation as an anthropologist in the field of Aboriginal Studies. As well as fieldwork in Thailand, where she focused upon the media and on tourism, Professor Hamilton has maintained her interests in Aboriginal Australia, especially following the proclamation of the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act.

Professor Michael Hogg, School of Psychology, University of Queensland is a distinguished scholar and researcher in social psychology. He is a leading expert on the social psychology of group processes and intergroup relations. In addition to his influential theoretical work, Professor Hogg has made a major contribution to applied research on questions such as stereotyping and prejudice, behaviour in organisations and the social psychology of communication and language.

Dr Margaret Jolly, Gender Relations Project, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University. Dr Jolly enjoys an international reputation for her work on gender, sexuality and reproduction in the postcolonial Pacific region. Her research publications over the last two decades have established her as amongst the foremost of those scholars working in her chosen fields of expertise.

Professor Marilyn Lake, Professor of History and Women's Studies, La Trobe University, has a national and international reputation for

her highly important contribution to modern history. She has been at the forefront of scholars who have placed Australian historical experience firmly within a comparative western context with an originality and strength that has promoted her ideas centrally on a world platform.

Professor Russell Lansbury, Professor of Industrial Relations, the University of Sydney has a high international reputation in the study of industrial relations. From 1995 to 1997 he was joint co-ordinator of a major comparative study of evolving patterns of employment relations in industrialised economies.

Associate Professor Robert Manne, Department of Politics, La Trobe University is a highly regarded scholar in his field, with a list of books and articles that is impressive in its range and depth. His recent writings on 'the stolen generation' provide a striking example of the way his convictions have led him into (and through) complex moral problems and an immense amount of research into tangled factual matters.

Associate Professor Henry Reynolds, Department of History and Politics, James Cook University, is among Australia's best-known and most influential historians, both within and outside Australia. His works have contributed richly both to scholarship about Aborigines and to public awareness of black-white relations in Australian history. The popularity of Professor Reynolds' publications, and their educational and political impact, is matched by their profound influence on continuing historical research.

Professor Patricia Springborg, Department of Government, University of Sydney, has established herself over the past decade as one of the leading historians of political thought, and political theorists, in Australia. She is an internationally recognised scholar on the work of Thomas Hobbes, and is known throughout the scholarly world for her work on the image of orientalism in the development of western political theory.

Update The recent agreement between the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) to make available Confidentialised Unit Record Files (CURFs) to researchers at Australian universities has succeeded beyond all expectations. By mid-November, 186 applications to use CURFs had been received by the ABS - an average of one per working day since the agreement was signed on 15 February.

The 1996 Census household sample file has been the most sought after CURF. Other files for which significant numbers of applications have been received include the 1997 time use survey, the 1995 national nutrition and national health surveys, the 1997 survey of the mental health and wellbeing of adults, the 1996-97 income and housing costs survey and the 1997 survey of education and training experience.

There are now 29 participating universities, which account for more than 95 per cent of the total research expenditure and activity in Australia's higher education sector. Application booklets for CURFs may be downloaded from the ABS website at <http://www.abs.gov.au>.

News of Fellows. *Professor Michael Clyne*, Research Director of the Language and Society Centre at Monash University, has been awarded the Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm Prize for his work in German linguistics German as a foreign language and German studies. Presented annually, the Prize honours scholars who have contributed to international scientific cooperation and cultural understanding. Professor Clyne is the first Australian, and only the second linguist, to have won the Prize.

Associate Professor Marian Sawyer, Political Science, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, has been awarded a grant for Canadian Studies research and teaching.

Research Projects



Postgraduate Training in the Social Sciences. The ASSA project committee and Simon Marginson met in Melbourne on 4 August to discuss the structure of the project and potential contributors. The terms of reference have now been agreed and contributors have been approached. The first workshop is scheduled for Monday 6 December in Canberra.

People of the Rivermouth. The research team has undertaken more software development than anticipated and is currently incorporating the audio interviews undertaken in Maningrida last July. A final research visit is planned for next month. The extremely valuable material which is being compiled leads the research team to consider there is good potential for a future book to be published. The scheduled completion date is mid April.

Special Research Project 2000. Special project grants have recently been announced for the Learned Academies. ASSA has been successful in gaining funding of \$105,000 for a project entitled 'The Economic and Social Costs of Unemployment'. The research team leaders are Professor Peter Saunders of the Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW and Associate Professor Richard Taylor, Department of Public Health and Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Sydney. A project committee comprising a number of ASSA Fellows and outside experts has been formed to assist in the implementation process. The project will:

- analyse the literature on the economic and social costs of unemployment, giving appropriate weight to research evidence

on the social as well as the economic costs in a range of domains including health.

- review existing measurements of the costs of unemployment, identify their current limitations and suggest areas of research to improve the methods of costing.
- identify a framework for estimating the various costs in regard to the social conditions in which unemployment is occurring; e.g. the changing nature of Australian unemployment, its longer-term duration and its geographical location vis a vis city and non-urban areas and the identification of appropriate action to alleviate them.
- prepare a synopsis that would enhance public awareness of the issues.
- note the implications of the synthesis for policies to alleviate the costs of unemployment and/or to reduce unemployment.

It is considered timely to examine the effects of unemployment on the community at the family level, including the implications for population health. There is increasing evidence in Australia of the links between socio-economic status and health parameters. At the same time there is a need to draw on the lessons of international experience to study how policies have been successfully implemented elsewhere beyond the parameters of narrow economic costing, and to avoid the limitations of earlier studies.

Creating Unequal Futures? Rethinking Poverty, Inequality and Disadvantage in Australia. The final editing of the manuscript resulting from this research project is being undertaken by Ruth Fincher and Peter Saunders and will be completed by the end of November for formal submission to Allen & Unwin.

Academy Workshops



.Professor Margot Prior has reported on the *Psychology and Health* Workshop held in September: In 1998 the Australian Psychological Society set up a working group to enquire into the relationships between health related psychological research and policies and practices of the National Health and Medical Research Council. Discussion and consultation via the work of this committee revealed that the level of knowledge and understanding of the contributions of the social and behavioural sciences to research in health in Australia was very limited. This is despite the fact that the strong influence of psychological factors in health beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours is well accepted by researchers and practitioners, at least in theory. The influential West report on health and medical science research for example, made minimal mention of any social and behavioural aspects.

It was suggested that a Forum for the discussion and dissemination of knowledge, and enhancement of understanding of the

relationships between psychological research and health in Australia was greatly needed, and that bringing together members of the NHMRC and eminent behavioural scientists working in health related domains would be of great value in addressing these issues.

A meeting which would gather together a range of social and behavioural scientists to articulate the models and exemplars of such research which are currently making salient contributions to health, and which could generate responses from key NHMRC personnel could lead to greater mutual understanding and a better informed approach to the process of generating and funding research into social and behavioural science and health issues in Australia.

Given the multidisciplinary expertise in the membership of the Academy of the Social Sciences and the stated aims and criteria of its workshop facility it was considered that an approach to the Academy with the purpose of convening of a Workshop on *Psychology and Health* should be made. It is also the case that some members of the APS working group as well as a number of eminent academics involved in health and medical research are Fellows of the Academy, and thus could be expected to play a major role in the Workshop.

Thus the *Psychology and Health* Workshop sponsored by the ASSA and the Australian Psychological Society was convened. It was held at Melbourne University on 9-10 September 1999.

The stated objectives of this workshop were to explore relationships between social and behavioural science research and diverse facets of health in Australians, and to consider ways and means of increasing the relevance and salience of social and behavioural science research in a number of health domains.

In particular our focus was upon:

- the raising of awareness in the scientific, health and medical research community of the value of partnerships in research with behavioural and social scientists;
- presentation and review of the current and potential contributions of behavioural and social scientists to health related research by presentation and discussion of salient examples of theoretical models and empirical research projects with both psychology specific and multidisciplinary foci;
- the exploration of any barriers to the funding of psychology related projects and discussion of avenues for increased health/psychology collaboration;
- the consideration and identification of training and professional issues relevant to social and behavioural sciences and health, which could lead to improved research output and expansion of knowledge of the salience of this research and its applied implications in medical practice.

The outcome of the meeting was expected to be greater mutual knowledge and understanding of the relationships between the social, behavioural, health and medical sciences, and enhanced appreciation of the role of psychological factors in health research and practice. It was also anticipated that the collegial discussion and feedback generated by the Workshop would lead to greater cooperation and increased development of multidisciplinary projects in the future. This in turn would focus greater attention on the significant role of social and behavioural scientists in contributing to the generation of health policies which will benefit Australia as a whole.

Participants included social and behavioural scientists from across Australia, the Chairs of the NHMRC and its research committees, members of a number of NHMRC committees, prominent health researchers, and representatives from the government health bureaucracy. The Shadow Minister for Health Ms Jenny Macklin also presented a paper. The meeting was opened by the Academy President, Professor Fay Gale.

Paper presentations came from participants whose work illustrated a variety of differing health-related concerns. These encompassed diverse and many-faceted connections between social and behavioural sciences and specific health issues including: depression, mental health literacy, public health problems such as cancer control, differing understandings of the management of headaches derived from varying research viewpoints, psychological factors in illness, multidisciplinary longitudinal studies of child growth and development, theoretical models of health related beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours, and challenges for the funding of behavioural and social scientists in the current NHMRC scene.

Short papers were interspersed with lively discussions focused on how better to integrate social and behavioural knowledge with medical aspects of health, and how to foster partnerships which would value add to health research. Specific areas, particularly in the public health arena were identified as of particular relevance for developments in social and behavioural science research. Speakers from the NHMRC identified important areas for psychological research in the future.

The roles of NHMRC committees were discussed in a mutual exchange of information which served to enhance mutual understanding between social and behavioural scientists and health researchers from other disciplines. This information transfer also provided pointers towards improved strategies in communicating social and behavioural research and health outcome contributions, in developing partnerships in research, and in promulgation of social and behavioural issues in urgent need of further research.

Key Issues identified, and recommendations agreed upon by workshop participants included:

- the preferred use of the term 'social and behavioural sciences' rather than Psychology, to be more broadly inclusive of our field in health and medical research;
- acknowledgment and publicising of the fact that social and behavioural research does not necessarily generate products but generates social and economic benefits, contributes to well-being, and social capital. For example many such research outcomes can save money thus making significant economic contributions. Strategic examples of this include injury prevention, mental health, social support/caregiving, disease and medication compliance, aboriginal health, families and child development, occupational health and safety, driver safety.
- It is important to incorporate psychological models in health related research, which show directions for interventions.
- It is essential to increase national awareness of social and behavioural factors in health outcomes.
- We should target social and behavioural research to specific national health priority areas and become involved in setting national health priority agendas.
- We should develop social and behavioural research with researchers and practitioners from other disciplines and form partnerships in research. This was demonstrated in a number of the papers presented.
- There is a need to foster a culture of teams in research, which include social and behavioural scientists.
- The workshop allowed considerable progress to be made towards increasing s/b researchers' understanding of the funding system and how to work within it. This needs to be widely communicated amongst research colleagues.
- We also considered the development of a social and behavioural National Research Institute, perhaps focused on a theme such as stress research.
- We recommend formation of an NHMRC discipline panel to deal with non-randomised (non-traditional) types of social/behavioural science research.
- We proposed the equitable distribution of funds across discipline panels, and noted the need for adequate social and behavioural science researcher representation on key committees, to support and monitor current NHMRC moves.

A publication is in preparation which will reproduce the key papers and abstract the discussions of the workshop. It will conclude with a summary of recommendations to enhance future health related social/behavioural research and scholarship.

n The Academy also jointly sponsored a Workshop on *Demanding Democracy: The Future of Democracy in Australia* held in Melbourne in April. Trevor Batrouney has submitted the following report. The symposium was conducted by The Cranlana Programme in partnership with the Committee for the Economic Development of Australia. Participants included prominent individuals in key areas of

Australian society such as government (federal and state), the media, education, public service, business and the community sector. The twenty or so participants spent two days considering many aspects of the future of democracy in Australia stimulated by a diverse set of readings on the topic. This paper does not claim to be a summary of all of the issues raised in the symposium but rather a selection of some of the key ideas that emerged from the discussion. In accordance with the protocol of The Cranlana Programme, they are presented here without attribution and without claiming that they represent the consensus views of participants. These ideas are organised around the general theme of 'challenges facing Australian democracy.'

A major challenge for democracy is to ensure that civic society in Australia, as measured by peoples' participation in a diversity of interest groups, continued to be vigorous, without leading to excessive fragmentation of society. This view holds that we need to accept, respect and cater for diversity but at the same time encourage these diverse groups to see that they are part of a larger entity — the nation as a whole. It was suggested that a false dichotomy was often drawn between a nation with a 'common purpose' and one which was divided into many groups. Instead, we should acknowledge that people belong to a number of groups and have multiple social identities. Thus a democratic society should be inclusive of all people as individuals and as members of different groups.

The lack of participation poses a challenge for democracy. While it is common for elites to take control in society, in a democracy the powerful must guarantee that others have a chance to participate. The right of all to participate is a key characteristic of democracy and one that should not be dependent on factors such as wealth, education or socio-economic status. Participation is possible in a minimalist way, for example, compulsory voting every few years and nothing more or, in a more extended form, which involves active citizen participation. The formal process of elections is often not the end of debate nor does it always settle an issue. However, elections are a critical element of democracy. Without elections all other aspects of democracy are at risk.

The way we earn our living may not be conducive to democratic participation. For example, both over-employment and unemployment may contribute to lack of participation in the democratic process. In particular, the economic and social pressures on the younger generation are inducing anxiety about their employment and economic security. This can lead to a degree of self-interest which may not leave room for participation in the formal political process. On the other hand, different forms of participation are emerging. For example, single issue groups such as environmental groups, gay rights groups and women's groups are attracting young people and this is a positive for Australian democracy.

A pre-requisite for informed participation in a democracy is the provision of citizenship education in our schools; in short, education on how to participate meaningfully in a democratic society. While there is a growing focus on vocational education in our education systems, this should not be to the detriment of education in the nature of Australian democracy and citizenship. Thus citizenship education, both at school and beyond, constitutes an important challenge for Australian democracy.

Another challenge lies in the nature of the political elites that emerge and their relationship with the public at large. In democracies political elites make decisions that determine the extent and form of participation. At worst, elites can be hidebound and restrict social development. At best, they will constitute 'the best and brightest' in terms of character and intellect. However, in a democracy the public should not be seen merely as the passive recipients of decisions made by the elite. The views of the public can be an important catalyst for change and, on occasions, they can be in advance of the government.

Another challenge for democracy is to ensure that the groups, which wield power in a democracy, are broadly based. There is a need to ensure that women and groups from a diversity of religious and cultural backgrounds are not excluded from positions of power. This involves redefining normal power groups, *viz*, white Anglo-Saxon males, to include individuals from a range of backgrounds in our society.

A major challenge facing Australian democracy is to ensure that Australian democracy not only provides the structures but also the encouragement for citizen participation in government. People can participate in different ways: through formal structures of government and through informal interest groups. However, it is possible to have the structures of democracy without the genuine participation of citizens. Examples abound of societies that had democratic constitutions and laws but which were arguably not operating democracies.

Thus governments in a democracy should do more than just provide structures or institutions; they should also exhibit the 'will' to be democratic, the 'will' to genuinely consult. Governments that do not have this will to consult can thwart democracy in a number of ways. For example, they can refuse to make available information on government contracts through 'commercial in confidence' clauses. They can limit community and opposition scrutiny of proposed legislation through control over parliamentary procedures. They can prohibit government employees from making public comments in their areas of responsibility. And they can deny or severely limit resources to agencies that facilitate access of people to institutions such as law, education, health, among others. These mechanisms hinder the democratic process of holding governments to account.

A further challenge facing democracy is to ensure that consultation is not an empty process but that it actually involves listening to people. The people consulted must feel that they are respected, that their opinions are valued and that they can make a difference. Consultations can be informative to government at all levels. The example was cited of the great range of organisations and groups that gave evidence to the Senate inquiry on the Goods and Services Tax and the breadth of issues it uncovered. However, consultation presents difficulties for those conducting the consultations. The key question is how to listen, record and weight particular representations. It is important to note that no single form of consultation is suitable for all purposes but there can be different forms depending on the issues and those being consulted. There may be a place for more fluid, flexible and informal forms of consultation on some issues. Perhaps the most important measure of democracy is that of responding to the wishes of the people but doing so in a wise manner.

A challenge for a democratic government is when minorities enter the political system. When governments show themselves to be listening to minority groups they are often criticised for pandering to those groups in the name of political correctness. Similarly, policies such as multiculturalism and reconciliation are sometimes seen as a threat to the identity and well-being of other Australians. Such sentiments seem to be based on a static view of Australian identity and to deny the inclusive notion of Australian democracy.

Another challenge to our democratic system comes from the growing disparity in our society between rich and poor. At the community level a lack of resources can affect the provision of education and other services, thus restricting the opportunities available for the poorer sections of society. Similarly, a lack of resources can also cause voluntary and welfare groups to disband because of a lack of support from government.

The 'bigger is better' syndrome, where councils are forced to amalgamate and where smaller community groups are being incorporated into larger ones, presents another challenge for democracy. This is being aided by government tendering out processes which invariably favour larger bodies. Another loss brought about by amalgamations is that of the experience of the small group manager who is typically no longer required in the new structure.

Another challenge for democracy is the diminution in access of people to their legal rights and especially their right to legal representation. The evidence is clear that disparity of wealth leads directly to disparity in legal access and legal representation. Incompetent representation or the lack of representation can lead to the miscarriage of justice. If the legal system is seen to be unfair then there will be a mistrust of, and disregard for, the law.

The view was put that democracy was underpinned by a successful economy. Without wealth creation and an economy in surplus we may not be able to afford the necessary consultations and transfers to individuals and community groups. It was suggested that economic and social developments were interdependent and that democracy would be furthered by progress on both fronts.

n Two workshops will be held early in 2000.

Volunteering for the New Millennium – Is there a future? This workshop, convened by Drs Jeni Warburton and Melanie Oppenheimer, will be held in Sydney on 10-11 February 2000. Participants representing labour history, economy, sociology, women's studies, social policy and social work as well as managers and administrators involved in volunteer organisations will reflect on the past and explore the future of volunteering in Australia. It will be opened by Professor Janice Reid and Fellows participating include Professors Michael Pusey and Jill Roe.

Population, Gender and Reproductive Choice: the Motherhood Questions. This workshop, convened by Professors Alison MacKinnon and Lois Bryson, will be held in Adelaide in April 2000. It is jointly sponsored by the Department of Family and Community Services, the University of South Australia and the Academy. The workshop will bring together researchers who can cast light on reproductive choice including a focus on issues relating to relevant population trends, economics, social policy, health, education and family dynamics. The historical context in which 21st century women are marking their reproductive choices will be examined, the nature and effects of these choices considered, and policy settings examined for their capacity to enhance or constrict women's choice and associated citizenship issues.

The next meeting of the Workshop Committee will be on 24 March 2000, and Fellows are urged to obtain a copy of the *Workshop Guidelines* before submitting a proposal. Convenors should allow at least six months' lead time for organisation.

International News



Professor JJ (George) Smolicz is representing the Academy at meetings in Thailand in November. He will attend the XIVth International Federation of Social Science Organizations General Conference 'Interface of the Social Sciences with Science and Technology: A Social Science assessment of development and application of Science and Technology' on 17-19 November at the Naresuan University in Phitsanulok.

Following this meeting, Professor Smolicz will attend the Consultative Meeting of the International Social Science Council, also being held in Phitsanulok on 19-20 November. As the

Academy is considering possible affiliation with ISSC, Professor Smolicz will discuss this issue with the Council.

Further activities in the International arena have been undertaken by President Fay Gale, and are reported in the *President's column* of this edition of *Dialogue*.

Australia-China Exchange Scheme

Philosophy Summer School in China, China - Britain - Australia. Since 1996, the joint Australian Academies of the Humanities and the Social Sciences have participated in co-sponsoring a Philosophy Summer School in Beijing with the Royal Institute of Philosophy and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The Summer School is held in July-August and lasts for three weeks, followed by a week of travel supported by CASS. The Summer School provides the invited staff members with an opportunity to work intensively in English with a group of gifted and eager young philosophers.

On 2-8 August, 1999, the Philosophy Summer School held a one-week colloquium on Robert Nozick's influential and provocative defence of libertarianism *Anarchy, State and Utopia*. This was the first time that a work of political philosophy has been studied at the Summer School, and judging by the high level of applicants and the enthusiastic response from the participants, this is a welcome addition to the program.

A full report by the organisers of the colloquium is available on request from Sue Rider at the Secretariat.

At the 2000 Session the theme will be Political Philosophy and Professor CAJ Coady, FAHA, FASSA, the University of Melbourne will contribute a course on *The Morality of Political Violence*. In 2001 the Summer School and the Institute of Philosophy, CASS are planning a major conference on *Political Philosophy and Political Reform* and a Colloquium: titled Genevieve Lloyd: *The Man of Reason*. In 2002 the theme will be Philosophy of Language and Professor Graham Priest, FAHA, University of Queensland will contribute a course on *Names and Descriptions*.

Australia-Netherlands Exchange Scheme. Professor Guus Extra, Director of Babylon at the Center for Studies of Multilingualism in the Multicultural Society at Tilburg University, The Netherlands will be visiting Australia from 20-28 November 1999. His host is Professor Michael Clyne at the Language and Society Centre, Monash University. Professor Extra will be involved in discussions with academics, education planners and educators on multilingualism and education in the multicultural context of Europe.

Australia-Vietnam Exchange Program. A delegation from the Vietnam National Centre for the Social Sciences and Humanities, led by Vice President Le Huu Tang, will visit Australia from 15-23 November 1999. The delegation is interested in discussing issues

such as industrial development, especially in the period of 1980s-1990s; agricultural development; training and human resource development that meet the requirements of socio-economic development; and ways of solving social problems. Professor Michael Webber, FASSA, Department of Geography at the University of Melbourne and Professor David Marr, FAHA, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies will be involved in talks with the group. The delegation will be wholly sponsored by NCSST.

Later in the month, 28 November-12 December 1999, *Professor Cao Xuan Pho* and *Mr Trinh Minh Cu* will visit Australia. They will be hosted by Professor David Marr, FAHA. Professor Pho and Mr Cu will discuss intercultural relationships between communities living in Australia, especially in the current context of regionalisation and globalisation; and relations between the Vietnamese and other communities with particular focus on education and participation of ethnic minorities in remote and isolated areas. They will meet with scholars at the Multicultural Research Centre, the University of Sydney, the Faculty of Humanities, Monash University and the Faculty of Asian Studies, Australian National University.

National Scholarly Communications Forum

Archives in the National Research Infrastructure. On 1-2 November, the National Archives of Australia hosted a Round Table meeting of archivists, scholars, librarians, academics, academy fellows, bureaucrats and others to consider key questions including funding and the operation of archives in Australia.

A range of Australian and international speakers from diverse backgrounds addressed such topics as: the role of archives in research practice today; archives and their use for societal accountability; and the use of archives in the digital networked environment. The Research Director chaired one session entitled 'The Role of Archives in Research Practice Today' which was addressed by Professor Stuart Macintyre, Professor Eric Ketelaar, Professor of Archival Studies, Amsterdam University and two independent scholars, including Neil Manton formerly of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

At the conclusion of the Round Table a communique was issued which contains 12 resolutions for practical action aimed at ensuring that present and future generations of Australians have easy access to the documentary heritage that constitutes their birthright. Resolutions endorsed by the Round Table included agreement on:

- establishing a coalition of organisations to develop strategies to promote the importance of good recordkeeping to Australian business and to set in place appropriate arrangements to facilitate long term preservation of and access to significant Australian business records;

- commissioning of a series of studies and reports on the archival needs of researchers;
- creating an integrated Web-based infrastructure based on the use of common standards to facilitate the searching of and access to distributed archival holdings;
- the need to establish an appropriately funded program for managing the creation, preservation of and access to the records of the Australian Capital Territory government and significant private records relating to the ACT; and
- commissioning of a comprehensive report on the state of archives in Australia.

A full set of the resolutions, together with the text of many of the papers delivered at the Round Table can be found at the National Scholarly Communications Web site at <http://www.asap.unimelb.edu.au/nscf/>

Letters to the Editor

The Passing of the Anthropologists.

In her editorial introduction to 'Reconciliation: Voices from the Academy' (*ASSA Occasional Paper 2/1999*), Professor Lenore Manderson passes lightly over the now well-known stigmata of anthropology (a discipline invented to legitimise the theft of land and children from Indigenous peoples) in order to grant a dispensation on the present occasion from the usual confessions and apologies. The respite, even if only short-lived, provides an opportunity to clarify whether the indictment is meant to have any relationship to the discredited and largely obsolete notion of 'factual and objective truth', or whether it derives its validity from the modern concept of a 'healing truth' which enables various historically-disadvantaged peoples and interests to improve their position.

The institutional origins of British anthropology are plain enough. In 1838 Quakers and Evangelicals prominent in the anti-slavery movement formed an organisation called the Aborigines Protection Society. Five years later a scientific splinter group named the Ethnological Society of London emerged, with a charter to study the physical and moral characteristics of the varieties of mankind. In 1863 this body in turn spawned a breakaway racist organisation calling itself the Anthropological Society of London. The two learned societies fought a running battle until a truce was signed towards the end of the decade, and in 1871 amalgamation was achieved in the form of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. Although the ethnologists conceded the name, they consolidated their intellectual and moral ascendancy under the new rubric.

With the emergence of anthropology as a university discipline, and more particularly with the recognition of prolonged fieldwork as a basic requirement of research, the altruistic origins of the profession became increasingly manifest in the humanistic temper of its writings. The similarities of people everywhere, rather than their differences, were emphasised in books such as Malinowski's *The Family among the Australian Aborigines*; not uncommonly, anthropologists elevated indigenous institutions above their Western counterparts, as Margaret Mead did in *Coming of Age in Samoa*. Sympathetic assessments, like Elkin's *The Australian Aborigines: How to Understand Them*, sought to overcome crass stereotypes and were transmitted to anthropology students year after year throughout the second half of the twentieth century. While the subject and its practitioners may have been seen in some quarters as potential aids in the administration, religious conversion, and economic exploitation of subject peoples, they were also widely mistrusted as potential sources of subversion.

He who pays the piper also calls the tune. In Australia the financing of field research in anthropology depended on guarantees that even if it was not useful it would at least not be troublesome. Yet despite the assurances and the inevitable quietism imposed by political

realities, there is little evidence to suggest that anthropological research workers from university departments were ever received into frontier society as collaborators, and no reason to believe that they were ever regarded with anything less than suspicion. The suspicion was justified. The revolution we have seen in public attitudes towards Aboriginal people over the last quarter of a present century occurred not because of the moral insights of a new generation, but because values inherent in the British anti-slavery movement and the anthropological organisation it gave birth to were able finally to come to full flower.

Why, then, has the discipline in Australia come under persistent attack by its own members, members of other academic disciplines, and representatives of various sections of the Aboriginal community itself? Much would have to be said about international developments since World War II for a full answer. But we can go a long way, at least for parochial purposes, by focusing upon Geoffrey Gray's discussion of the relationship between anthropology and the diaspora (*op cit*, pp15-29).

The charge, in essence, is that the diaspora was excluded from the club. The subject matter of social anthropology was deemed to be first and foremost the traditional institutions and practices of native peoples, uncontaminated as far as possible by intrusions from Europe. The remnants of Aboriginal communities in heavily-colonised parts of Australia were therefore of little interest, and then only for what they could remember of their pre-colonial past. Anthropologists who studied them were unlikely to be on the Royal Anthropological Institute's annual list of prizewinners.

Gray interprets this state of affairs in terms of a collusion between government and anthropology to portray Aboriginal culture as spatially and temporally remote from mainstream Australia. People of the Dreamtime, locked irretrievably in the past and soon to disappear from the planet altogether. But there is an alternative explanation for which the evidence is firm and not speculative in the least. By 1880 the complex kinship and totemic systems of the Australian Aborigines had become matters of great theoretical interest in the anthropological centres of the northern hemisphere. For the next three-quarters of a century and more, fieldworkers departed for the hinterland not because the authorities wanted to keep them away from the urban hotspots but because that was where the ethnographic goldmines were. Read Radcliffe-Brown and Levi-Strauss, the two most glamorous and influential twentieth-century analysts of Aboriginal society, and you will encounter few issues on which data from the diaspora would have been of more than marginal relevance.

For some people this is a deeply shameful episode for which anthropology should apologise. Maybe it should. My own view is that intellectual and political ostracism in this case had little connection with each other; and that, when the diaspora began to make its presence felt through the Tent Embassy and the NACC, the truly

damaging reaction on the part of the establishment was to insist that reparation was available only to those who could prove continuing adherence to the traditional culture. Inevitably this forced people whose cultural heritage had been eroded and impoverished into a position of strategic weakness. No doubt it is proper academic caution to place sceptical quotation marks around the word 'traditional' in order to question whether any Aboriginal cultures have been totally insulated from alien influences (see Francesca Merlan's paper, p 44). The fact of the matter is that the gulf between what Donald Thomson witnessed in Arnhem Land and what was available to Judy Inglis and Diane Barwick in southeastern Australia is forensically unbridgeable.

Given that the archives and classic works of Australian anthropology contain what the diaspora has lost, it is small wonder that activists have come to regard them with mixed feelings at best and more likely unqualified hostility, especially now that the texts are being employed as a basis on which to reject their claims for justice. A new kind of anthropology is called for, one that despatches to the wings the arcane preoccupations of an imperial leisure class and puts on centre stage the history of colonial appropriation that made them possible. And who better to develop and teach it than revisionist historians, political scientists, economists, post-modernist literary scholars, and possibly even young anthropologists who have denounced the sins of their forefathers?

The Indigenous people themselves, perhaps. This is the direction espoused in the final two essays in the *Occasional Paper*, one by Professor Tracey Bunda and the other by Professors Colin and Eleanor Bourke. How much room will be left for the non-Indigenous (either as research workers, teachers, or students) once issues of Indigenous intellectual property rights are settled is unclear. One favoured model for an Indigenous university conceives it as a place where, for the main part, core Indigenous values and knowledge are transmitted by Indigenous teachers to Indigenous students.

The desire to establish an institutional centre for the cultural rehabilitation and regeneration of the Aboriginal diaspora may be understandable and worthy. It is open to question, however, whether the university provides the most appropriate model. Universities have a bad habit of encouraging students to be critical of traditional values rather than to venerate them. As for the view that native peoples should have intellectual property rights over their own culture and history, it is worth quoting from the last page of the first essay in the collection by Professor Etherington, 'Writing Truth and Reconciliation History for Nelson Mandela's South Africa':

In many ways I am the ultimate outsider: a white man, born in America, now an Australian citizen whose experience of South Africa is drawn entirely from research trips and books. But I do not, for all that, feel disqualified from the task. . . The task of writing new histories of South Africa - histories that all South Africans can share, histories that will sweep away the

texts dedicated to emphasising the superiority of this or that race or culture - is too big to be undertaken by insiders.

This is the sort of thing anthropologists used to say. Until they were vaporised, that is.

Les Hiatt, London. October 1999

A New UK Academy?

In the President's account of her recent visit to Britain (*Dialogue* 18, 3/1999: 3) she mentions her conversation with Lord Plant about the proposal by the (UK) Association of Learned Societies in the Social Sciences (ALSISS) to establish a new Academy. She says that:

It was thought that the long-established British Academy more appropriately represented the leading scholars in the Arts and Humanities and that Social Scientists were less acknowledged and the time had come for a separate Academy.

I think Fellows should be aware that this view, although held by some social scientists in Britain, is rejected by many others. Indeed only a few months ago, the British Academy, at its annual general meeting, voted to modernise the wording of its 1901 charter so as to indicate more clearly that the scholarly disciplines it promotes include the social sciences as well as the humanities. Ever since the Royal Society decided to restrict its scope to the natural sciences, the British Academy has served as the premier learned association covering the humanities and social sciences, as indeed is indicated by the now rather dated reference in the original charter to 'the moral and political sciences'. There are currently eighteen sections in the Academy, of which eight clearly belong to the social sciences, seven to the humanities; the remaining three might be classified either way.

ALSISS was founded in 1982 and has only recently mooted the possibility of transforming itself into an Academy. There have been discussions between representatives of the British Academy and of ALSISS and we can hope that some amicable relation between the two bodies can be worked out. I am sure that Fellows will see some parallels between Britain and Australia in these matters. Fellows with long memories may even recall with some amusement the symbolic importance attached to the label 'Academy' in 1971 when the SSRC of Australia took on the academic mantle.

JA Barnes, Cambridge. September 1999.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Occasional Paper Series

Wealth, Work, Well-Being

Cunningham Lecture and Symposium 1997

Occasional Paper 1/1998

Cunningham Lecture 1998: Shared Space – Divided Cultures. Australia Today

Fay Gale

Occasional Paper 1/1999

Reconciliation. Voices from the Academy

Annual Symposium 1998

Occasional Paper 2/1999

Arising from Academy workshops

No Place for Borders. The HIV/AIDS epidemic and development in Asia and the Pacific

Edited by GJR Linge & DJ Porter (Allen & Unwin), 1997

The Politics of Retribution

Edited by C Bean, S Bennett, M Simms & J Warhurst (Allen & Unwin) 1997

China's New Spatial Economy. Heading Towards 2000

Edited by GJR Linge (Oxford University Press) 1997.

Contesting the Australian Way: States, Markets and Civil Society

Edited by Paul Smyth & Bettina Cass, (Cambridge University Press),
1998

Standing Against the Stream: Women, Religion and Social Action

(various papers published in **Australian Feminist Studies** and
Women's History Review (UK and USA) 1998.

The ESD Process: Evaluating a Policy Experiment

Edited by Clive Hamilton & David Throsby (Academy of the Social
Sciences in Australia and Graduate Program in Public Policy),
Canberra. 1998.

Contemporary Perspectives on Social Work and the Human Services

Edited by Ian O'Connor, Paul Smyth & Jeni Warburton, Addison
Wesley Longman, 1999.

NOTES

Officers and Committees of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia

President: Professor Fay Gale AO
Vice President: Ian Castles AO
Executive Director: Barry Clissold
Research Director: Dr John Robertson
Treasurer: Professor Gavin Jones

Executive Committee: Professor Fay Gale (Chair), Ian Castles, Professor Gavin Jones (Demography, Australian National University), Professor Pat Jalland (History, Australian National University), Professor Lenore Manderson (Key Centre for Women's Health, The University of Melbourne), Professor Leon Mann (Melbourne Business School, The University of Melbourne), Professor John Nevile (Economics, The University of New South Wales), Professor Candida Peterson (Psychology, The University of Queensland), Professor Sue Richardson (Economics, the University of Adelaide), Professor Peter Saunders (Social Policy Research Centre, The University of New South Wales).

Committees: Standing Committee of the Executive; Finance Committee; Membership Committee; International Relations Committee; Workshop Committee; Public Affairs Committee, Research Projects Committee and Panel Committees.

Branch Convenors: Professor Michael Hogg (Qld); Professor Peter Groenewegen (NSW); Professor David Andrich (WA) Professor Leon Mann (Vic); and Professor JJ Smolicz (SA)

Panels:

A *Anthropology, demography, geography, linguistics, sociology.*

Chair: Professor RG Ward

B *Accounting, economics, economic history, statistics.*

Chair: Professor Peter Saunders

C *History, law, philosophy, political science.*

Chair: Professor Stuart Macintyre

D *Education, psychology, social medicine.*

Chair: Professor RAM Gregson

2000 Calendar

1	March	Deadline for <i>Dialogue 1/2000</i>
16	March	Meeting of International Relations Committee
23	March	Meeting of Public Affairs Committee
24	March	Meeting of Workshop Committee
13	April	Meeting of Executive Committee
1	July	Deadline for <i>Dialogue 2/2000</i>
5	July	Meeting of Membership Committee
28	July	Meeting of Workshop Committee
30	July	Closing date Australia-China Program
31	July	Closing date Australia-Vietnam Program
2	August	Meeting of Executive Committee
15	August	Closing date Australia-Netherlands Program
27	October	Meeting of Workshop Committee
1	November	Deadline for <i>Dialogue 3/2000</i>
12	November	Meeting of Executive Committee
13	November	Annual Symposium
14	November	Annual General Meeting

University House
Australian National University
Canberra Australia
Postal Address:
GPO Box 1956
Canberra ACT 2601
Telephone: 02 6249 1788
Facsimile: 02 6247 4335
Email: ASSA.Secretariat@anu.edu.au
Web site: <http://coombs.anu.edu.au/~assa>