
Occasional Essay

THE CARDINAL, THE WRITER AND THE PHILOSOPHER: REFLECTIONS ON TEACHING AT UWS

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I INTRODUCTION

It is old wisdom that confession is good for the soul. It might have useful work to do by way of an introduction to this essay. There are four considerations that have prompted the writing of this essay. They are:

1. A profound conviction of the essential worth of what I might call the UWS Project, (UWS being throughout an abbreviation of The University of Western Sydney);
2. An equally strong conviction, based upon some 50 years of professional practice as a Solicitor, a Barrister and a Judge, that the Common Law is one of the masterworks of Western civilisation and that its preservation is essential to the maintenance of what any appropriately informed Australian would understand by any reference to a civilised society grounded firmly in the Rule of Law;
3. The accumulated experiences deriving from eight years of teaching in the School of Law at the Campbelltown campus of UWS; and
4. The perception that in the year in which UWS celebrates the 25th anniversary of its foundation, there ought to be, among the tumult of rejoicing and satisfaction at things achieved, space for at least one voice willing to suggest that there are things that are not, perhaps, what they ought to be.

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II THE UWS PROJECT

UWS was formally established by the *University of Western Sydney Act 1988* (NSW) ('1988 Act'). The Act received the Royal Assent on 15th December 1988 and came into formal operation on 1st January 1989. Section 7(1) of the 1988 Act defines as follows the functions of the new University:

- (a) the provision of education facilities at university standard for persons attending it, having particular regard to the needs and aspirations of residents of the western districts of Sydney; and
- (b) the dissemination and increase of knowledge, the undertaking and promotion of research and scholarship and contribution to the intellectual life of western Sydney; and
- (c) the development of consultancy and entrepreneurial activities, including research and development initiatives, which will contribute to the development of western Sydney; and
- (d) the conferring of diplomas and the degrees of Bachelor, Master and Doctor and the issuing of such certificates as the by-laws may prescribe.

Interestingly, the term 'western districts of Sydney' was not defined in the 1988 Act.

In 1997 the 1988 Act was repealed and replaced by the *University of Western Sydney Act 1997* (NSW) ('1997 Act'). Section 8 of the 1997 Act redefined the object and functions of the refashioned University, but unlike the 1988 Act, it included a specific statement respecting the objectives of the refashioned body:

- 1) The object of the University is the promotion, within the limits of the University's resources, of scholarship, research, free inquiry, the interaction of research and teaching, and academic excellence.
- 2) The University has the following principal functions for the promotion of its object:
 - (a) the provision of facilities for education and research of university standard, having particular regard to the needs and aspirations of residents of Greater Western Sydney,
 - (b) the encouragement of the dissemination, advancement, development and application of knowledge informed by free inquiry,
 - (c) the provision of courses of study or instruction across a range of fields, and the carrying out of research, to meet the needs of the community, beginning in Greater Western Sydney,
 - (d) the participation in public discourse,

- (e) the conferring of degrees, including those of Bachelor, Master and Doctor, and the awarding of diplomas, certificates and other awards,
 - (f) the provision of teaching and learning that engage with advanced knowledge and inquiry,
 - (g) the development of governance, procedural rules, admission policies, financial arrangements and quality assurance processes that are underpinned by the values and goals referred to in the functions set out in this subsection, and that are sufficient to ensure the integrity of the University's academic programs.
- 3) The University has other functions as follows:
- (a) the University may exercise commercial functions comprising the commercial exploitation or development, for the University's benefit, of any facility, resource or property of the University or in which the University has a right or interest (including, for example, study, research, knowledge and intellectual property and the practical application of study, research, knowledge and intellectual property), whether alone or with others, with particular regard to the need to contribute to the development of Greater Western Sydney,
 - (b) the University may develop and provide cultural, sporting, professional, technical and vocational services to the community, *with particular regard to the need to contribute to the social, economic and intellectual life of Greater Western Sydney* [emphasis added],
 - (c) the University has such general and ancillary functions as may be necessary or convenient for enabling or assisting the University to promote the object and interests of the University, or as may complement or be incidental to the promotion of the object and interests of the University,
 - (d) the University has such other functions as are conferred or imposed on it by or under this or any other Act.
- 4) The functions of the University may be exercised within or outside the State, including outside Australia.

It is interesting that the expression 'Greater Western Sydney' is nowhere defined in the 1997 Act and it remains undefined in any of the subsequent amendments that have been passed from time to time to the original Act. The Minister having legislative sponsorship of the 1988 Act said, during the course of his Second Reading Speech:

I emphasize also that the university about to be created will be not only for western Sydney but also for the State and the Nation. Universities are institutions devoted to advancing the frontiers of knowledge. As well as teaching institutions, they are places of research and

scholarship. A first-class university is not only of benefit to the locality in which it exists, it is an asset for all mankind.¹

How does that ambitious agenda stand 25 years later? In attempting an answer, I turn for help to each of the three persons to whom reference is made in this Essay's title.

III IDEALS – THE CARDINAL

The Cardinal is John Henry, Cardinal Newman (1801-1890). Cardinal Newman was, in his time, an outstanding and nationally recognised Oxford academic and cleric, first in the Church of England and later in the Catholic Church. For four years from 1854, and at the request of the Catholic Bishops of Ireland, he was the first Rector of the newly established Catholic University of Ireland, now known as University College, Dublin. In connection with that work in the field of tertiary education, he published in 1873 a book which has become an iconic work on the topic of University education. The title of the book is *The Idea of a University*.²

The core of the book is a series of lectures, which Cardinal Newman refers to as Discourses. In them, he canvasses in great detail his concepts of what University education ought to be about. His language is, of course, the language of his time and, of course, when citing passages from such a work it is necessary to attend to the spirit of what is being said rather than to sneer derisively at the idiom in which it has been said. Approached with that simple and common sense adjustment, certain of the ideals which are spelt out in *The Idea of a University* are, I contend, fully as relevant and important now as they were then.

One of the Discourses, Discourse V, is entitled 'Knowledge Its Own End'. It is here that Cardinal Newman distils his basic concept of the fundamentals of authentic University education. He says, speaking of a student enrolled in such a University as is envisaged:

He profits from an intellectual tradition, which is independent of particular teachers, which guides him in his choice of subjects, and duly interprets for him those which he chooses. He apprehends the great outlines of knowledge, the principles on which it rests, the scale of its

¹ New South Wales, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 17 November 1988, 3636 (Terry Metherell).

² John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1982).

parts, its lights and its shades, its great points and its little, as he otherwise cannot apprehend them. Hence it is that his education is called 'Liberal'.

A habit of mind is formed which lasts through life, of which the attributes are, freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation and wisdom; or what in a previous Discourse I have ventured to call a philosophical habit. This then I would assign as the special fruit of an education furnished by a University, as contrasted with other places of teaching or modes of teaching. This is the main purpose of a University in its treatment of its students.³

It is, of course, simplicity itself to deal with those propositions by deriding them as 'old fashioned', 'out of touch', and, of course, that favourite thunderbolt of the modern egalitarian pretender, 'elitist'. I observe that Parliament, when setting out what it thought the University ought to be doing, included specifically a function and an objective recognising in terms the proper place of intellectual improvement in the statutory remit of the newly established UWS. And what, when all is said and done, is that if not a differently expressed acknowledgment of the perceived importance of knowledge as its own end?

Cardinal Newman shows in the Discourses which follow Discourse V that he was wholly aware that a principal criticism of what he had said about knowledge as its own end would be that the concept is all very well in an ideal world, but what, in a world which is anything but ideal, is the use of it all? He meets this projected criticism by devoting a number of Discourses to the practical advantages in various vocational settings of the 'Liberal' education as he had previously expounded that notion.

Particularly relevant in that connection is Discourse VII, which is entitled: 'Knowledge Viewed In Relation To Professional Skill'. Contained within this particular Discourse is a summary which is so comprehensive in its coverage, so eloquent in its expression and so compelling in its perception, that any attempted abbreviation, still less any attempted gloss, is not only presumptuous, but also misrepresentative. The complete passage is:

If a practical end must be assigned to a University course, I say it is that of training good members of society. Its art is the art of social life, and its end is fitness for the world. It neither confines its views to particular professions on the one hand, nor creates heroes or inspires genius on

³ Ibid 76, 77.

the other. Works indeed of genius fall under no art; heroic minds come under no rule; a University is not a birthplace of poets or of immortal authors, of founders of schools, leaders of colonies or conquerors of nations. It does not promise a generation of Aristotles or Newtons, of Napoleons or Washingtons, of Raphaels or Shakespeares, though such miracles of nature it has before now contained within its precincts. Nor is it content on the other hand with forming the critic or the experimentalist, the economist or the engineer, though such too it includes within its scope. But a University training is a great ordinary means to a great but ordinary end; it aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principles to public enthusiasm and fixed aims to popular aspiration, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power, and refining the intercourse of private life. It is an education which gives a man a clear, conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them. It teaches him to see things as they are, to go right to the point, to disentangle a skein of thought, to detect what is sophistical, and to discard what is irrelevant. It prepares him to fill any post with credit, and to master any subject with facility. It shows him how to accommodate himself to others, how to throw himself into their state of mind, how to bring before them his own, how to influence them, how to come to an understanding with them, how to bear with them. He is at home in any society, he has common ground with every class; he knows when to speak and when to be silent; he is able to converse, he is able to listen; he can ask a question pertinently, and gain a lesson seasonably, when he has nothing to impart himself; he is ever ready yet never in the way; he is a pleasant companion, and a comrade you can depend upon; he knows when to be serious and when to trifle, and he has a sure tact which enables him to trifle with gracefulness and to be serious with effect. He has the repose of a mind which lives in itself, while it lives in the world, and which has resources for its happiness at home when it cannot go abroad. He has a gift which serves him in public, and supports him in retirement, without which good fortune is but vulgar, and with which failure and disappointment have a charm. The art which tends to make a man all this, is in the object which it pursues as useful as the art of wealth or the art of health, although it is less susceptible of method, and less tangible, less certain, less complete in its result.⁴

It can be allowed at once that this is not the language of modern management, that is to say, language which is not intended so much to convey comprehensible information as to create in words what muzak creates in sounds, that is to say, an agreeable but essentially pointless, general sensation.

⁴ Ibid 134, 135.

It can be allowed as readily that ideals of the stated kind are, in contemporary Australian society generally and in Australian Universities particularly, as likely to be roundly derided as to be correctly understood and, therefore, to be enthusiastically adopted. All of which having been said, why, precisely, is the following recent reformulation of UWS's objectives any better:

- Goal 1: A distinctively student-centred university
- Goal 2: A vibrant research-led university with regional, national and global impact
- Goal 3: A unique learning experience that is innovative, flexible and responsive
- Goal 4: An expanding international reach and reputation
- Goal 5: A leading advocate and champion for the Greater Western Sydney region and people
- Goal 6: A dynamic and innovative culture that secures success.⁵

The point of the comparison is not that there is something essentially wrong with the stated goals, as muzak-like generalities. But where is the inspiration? Where is the challenge to a UWS student, personally and individually, to aim for the highest standards of personal development as the ultimate fruit of a UWS education as distinct from a University X or University Y education?

From time to time I find myself putting to my classes the simple, (I should have thought the self-evidently correct), proposition that simply because something is unfashionable, it does not by any means follow that it is unsound. So with ideals of the kind expounded by Cardinal Newman about an authentic University education. Perhaps it is time to go behind the veil of the management, money and mumbo-jumbo paradigm and to refocus in simple and encouraging language upon putting before our students, but especially prospective students, that studying at UWS is centred upon having each one of them, looked at in a real way as an individual, aim consciously for precisely those

⁵ These stated goals appear in a draft forward-planning document approved in September 2014 by the UWS Board of Trustees: University of Western Sydney, *Securing Success: 2015-2020* (Discussion Paper, University of Western Sydney, September 2014) 6, <http://www.uws.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/753146/Securing_Success_Discussion_Paper_FINAL_.pdf>.

Each goal is developed extensively in the document. In connection with the 'Strategic Goals and Objectives' for UWS in the period of 2015-2020 which are said to underpin these goals, it is stated on page 5 of the draft *Securing Success* document that the students are both 'customers' and 'clients'. These misconceived adjectives are thankfully absent from the final version: University of Western Sydney, *Securing Success: 2015-2020 Strategic Plan* (University of Western Sydney, 2015), <http://www.uws.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/844672/OVP5222_Securing_Success_Strategic_Plan_v10.pdf>.

attributes of which Cardinal Newman spoke and wrote in his Discourse VII.

IV DISTRACTIONS – THE WRITER

The writer is Lewis Carroll (1832-1898). Carroll is probably best known for his novel *Alice in Wonderland*. In 1871 he published a sequel, *Through the Looking Glass*. It contains a poem, 'The Walrus and the Carpenter', one verse of which is still frequently quoted in part. It reads:

'The time has come,' the Walrus said,
'To talk of many things:
Of shoes--and ships--and sealing-wax -
Of cabbages--and kings -
And why the sea is boiling hot -
And whether pigs have wings.'

The poem, read as a whole, is not merely a fine example of nonsense poetry. It is a cautionary tale. The Walrus and the Carpenter are predators. They have decided to eat some oysters, so they approach an oyster bed and entice a number of splendid young oysters to leave the safety of the oyster bed, disdaining a warning to the contrary from an old and experienced oyster and, to borrow from modern management, to embark upon an exciting journey of discovery. When the Walrus makes the statement quoted above, the little oysters respond enthusiastically and, thus distracted, are promptly eaten by the Walrus and the Carpenter.

It strikes me that the moral of that story is highly relevant to contemporary education at UWS. The distractions, in the UWS context, are of course different. No sensible commentator could, or would attempt to, make the case that a huge, multi-campus University such as UWS can be operated as though it were a tuck shop at a small suburban school. Plainly, there has to be some formal administrative structure and a basic framework of rules in order to hold the institution together and to have it function efficiently in pursuit of its essential purposes.

It is, however, surely relevant to learn from the lessons that are taught daily by government and public administration at all three of the Federal, State and Local Government levels. One lesson is that while it is frivolous to suggest that there should be no such structured framework, it is demonstrably not the case that more and more means

better and better. Another is that while it is equally frivolous to suggest that there should be no formal legislation, whether primary or subordinate, it is demonstrably not the case that a blizzard of Acts of Parliament accompanied by a further blizzard of Rules and Regulations necessarily entails steady, principled improvement in the affairs of the Nation. Upon what basis could it be thought reasonably that the same is not true of such an institution as UWS?

Two or three years ago I had occasion to look carefully at one in particular of the formally promulgated Policies of UWS. As a matter of interest, I looked up on the relevant website the number of then active Policies. There were some 200, plus a further five said to be not currently active. I find it impossible to accept that such a level of bureaucracy is truly necessary. Bureaucracy is the same the world over. One can describe it usefully by a paraphrase of Lord Acton's celebrated aphorism about the corrupting effect of power: all bureaucracy tends to straightjacket, all expansion of bureaucracy tends to tighten the straightjacket, and virtually absolute bureaucracy tends to straightjacket absolutely, which is another way of saying that it simply strangles useful movement.

The current Federal Government has introduced a device called Repeal Day. The objective is to have regularly a deliberate and resolute look at current bureaucratic structures and red tape to the end of rooting out those that are either not doing useful work, or are positively inhibiting the carrying out of some perceived useful work. Two questions obviously arise. Is the idea sound in principle? If so, has its implementation thus far been sound in practice? The second question is irrelevant to this essay, but the first question seems to me to be very relevant.

Why should there not be put in place some simple, but resolute, procedure for revising, say once every year, every formal Policy of UWS in order to audit thoroughly the effects that each such Policy is having upon the attainment by UWS of the ideals earlier herein discussed? That process would entail necessarily, were it carried out independently and frankly, the assessment, not of elegant and ideologically fashionable abstractions, but of practical consequences: consequences for the recruitment of top quality teaching staff and their retention; consequences for the morale, personal and professional of current front-line teaching staff; consequences for the attainment by any normally intelligent UWS student of those personal characteristics and capacities articulated so eloquently and so convincingly by Cardinal Newman, being characteristics and capacities that encourage

the correct formation of personal and professional standards that transcend the mere acquisition of a formal degree or diploma.

I am not unmindful of the ease with which what I have been saying can be attacked upon the basis that it is wholly unrealistic in that it fails to take account of questions, imperative questions, of funding. Any commentator who was not fully alive to those questions could be thought of only as having had a very sheltered life. So, let us think about funding. Does not the current state of affairs boil down to this:

- an institution such as UWS cannot operate at all, let alone successfully, without having access to a colossal operating income;
- a significant part of that income has to come from student fees;
- that entails constant and sharp increases in the number of prospective students, and constantly improving rates of retention of current students;
- all of that entails, in turn, that nothing must be done that is likely to discourage students, prospective or current;
- to that end, every possible step must be taken in order to keep prospective and current students happy, no matter how shallow their happiness and no matter how peremptorily they demand to be kept happy;
- an equally significant component is formal Government subsidy;
- Government, any Government, cannot simply fund University education on a blank-cheque basis;
- Government, of all political persuasions, has tried to keep a lid on escalating costs by several devices one of which is to link the amount of funding to the number of students;
- this, too, entails the same imperatives as those previously noted in connection with the recruitment and then the retention of ever increasing numbers of students?

If that analysis is even broadly correct, then has the time not come for exchanging the current respective positions of the relevant cart and the relevant horse?

Judging, as I must always admit to doing, through my experience of my own classes, I do not accept as a simple and self-evident fact that the students at UWS who are there to get a University education in the best sense, rather than to have a good time while acquiring with the minimum effort the minimum marks necessary to graduate at the minimum level, would not seize with enthusiasm an opportunity to use their UWS years as a vehicle for developing themselves into both efficient and effective professionals in their chosen fields, and

authentically cultured and well-rounded individuals in the Newman sense.

Funding is an important part of the UWS project, no doubt about it. It is not, however, the most important part. That role is reserved for the standards, personal and professional alike, of the graduating student. If those standards are both articulated and insisted upon simply, clearly, and with the irreplaceable impetus of the good example of the teaching and research staffs, then the funding will come, whether from suitably appreciative Government, from suitably impressed private philanthropy and commercial investment, or from students whose understanding of the opportunity made available to them is more admirable and better centred than a perception that the opportunity is essentially that of being rich and famous. If those standards are dismissed outright, or disdained in practice albeit proclaimed in principle, or squeezed lifeless by ever encroaching bureaucracy and its suffocating distractions, then the desired funding might well be found nevertheless, but it will not be funding a University, and certainly not a University of the very special and important kind that Parliament thought it was establishing when it legislated for UWS.

V REMINDERS – THE PHILOSOPHER

The philosopher is Pierre Ryckmans (1935-2014), who frequently wrote under the pseudonym Simon Leys. Ryckmans was born in Belgium, but migrated to Australia. He was a scholar of international standing and distinction. He was Professor of Chinese Studies at the University of Sydney from 1987 to 1993 having previously taught Chinese Literature at the Australian National University. His standing as a scholar of Chinese culture and affairs was such that *The Economist*, in its issue of 23rd August 2014, devoted its one weekly Obituary page to him. Speaking of Ryckmans's assessments of the Communist Chinese regime throughout the Mao period, the author of the obituary said of him '...he was stubborn and principled, and besides, he was right.'⁶ Any regular reader of *The Economist* will know that it is very sparing with that level of praise.

⁶ Obituary, 'Pierre Ryckmans (Simon Leys), an Old China Hand, Died on August 11th, Aged 78', *The Economist* (London), 23 August 2014, <<http://www.economist.com/news/obituary/21613159-pierre-ryckmans-simon-leys-old-china-hand-died-august-11th-aged-78-pierre-ryckmans>>.

In 2011 Ryckmans, using his pseudonym, published a book entitled *The Hall of Uselessness*.⁷ The book is a collection of essays, speeches and occasional writings spanning many years. It is an altogether exceptional book. Everything in it is instinct with high intellect refined by learning and culture both broad and deep. Its scope is extraordinary. One of the items reproduced is the text of a speech delivered by Ryckmans on 23 March 2006 to the Campion Foundation Inaugural Dinner, Campion College being a liberal arts college in western Sydney. Ryckmans takes as his title *The Idea of a University*, in explicit acknowledgement of the previously discussed work of that name and written by Cardinal Newman. Ryckmans turns, in an early passage of his speech, to the correct definition of a University. He says:

Intellectual impostures always require convoluted jargon, whereas fundamental values can normally be in clear and simple language. Thus, the commonly accepted definition of the university is fairly straightforward: a university is a place where scholars seek truth, pursue and transmit knowledge for knowledge's sake - irrespective of the consequences, implications and utility of the endeavour.⁸

Developing this theme, Ryckmans suggests that there are four things required by any University correctly so denominated. The first of them he describes as a community of scholars. He explains as follows what he has in mind by that description:

Sir Zelman Cowen told this anecdote: some years ago in England, a bright and smart politician gave a speech to the dons at Oxford. He addressed them as 'employees of the university'. One don immediately stood up and corrected him: 'We are not employees of the university, we are the university.'

And one could not have put it better: the only employees of the university are the professional managers and administrators - and they do not direct or control the scholars, they are at the service of the scholars.⁹

He continues:

The second essential thing, a good library for the humanities and well-equipped laboratories for the scientists. This is self-evident and requires no further comment. Third, the students. The students constitute, of course, an important part of the university. It is good and fruitful to educate students; but students should not be recruited at any

⁷ Simon Leys, *The Hall of Uselessness: Collected Essays* (Black Inc, 2011).

⁸ Ibid 398.

⁹ Ibid 398.

cost, by all means, or without discrimination. (Note: in this country, foreign students who pay fees bring every year nearly \$2 billion to our universities. In the university where I last taught, in a written communication addressed to all staff, the vice-chancellor once instructed us to consider our students not as students but as customers . On that day, I knew that it was time for me to go.)¹⁰

The fourth essential is money, but not as the principal focus of the University's efforts. Speaking of what he sees as serious shortcomings in contemporary University education, Ryckmans says:

[The] elitist character of the ivory tower (which results from its very nature) is denounced in the name of equality and democracy. The demand for equality is noble and must be fully supported, but only within its own sphere, which is that of social justice. It has no place anywhere else. Democracy is the only acceptable political system; yet it pertains to politics exclusively, and has no application in any other domain. When applied anywhere else, it is death – for truth is not democratic, intelligence and talent are not democratic, nor is beauty, nor love – nor God's grace. A truly democratic education is an education that equips people intellectually to defend and promote democracy within the political world; but in its own field, education must be ruthlessly aristocratic and high-brow, shamelessly geared towards excellence.¹¹

...

Vocational schools and technical colleges are very useful – people all understand that. As they cannot see the usefulness of the useless universities, they have decided to turn the universities into bad imitations of technical colleges. Thus the fundamental distinction between liberal education and vocational training has become blurred, and the very survival of the university is put in question. The university is now under increasing pressure to justify its existence in utilitarian and quantitative terms. Such pressure is deeply corrupting.¹²

...

When a university yields to the utilitarian temptation, it betrays its vocation and sells its soul. Five centuries ago, the great Renaissance scholar Erasmus defined with one phrase the essence of the humanist endeavour: *Homo fit, non nascitur* – One is not born a man, one becomes it. A university is not a factory producing graduates, as a sausage factory produces sausages. It is a place where a chance is given to men to become what they truly are.¹³

I have taken time to quote from this remarkable modern-day scholar, teacher and commentator for what is, I should imagine, an obvious

¹⁰ Ibid 398, 399.

¹¹ Ibid 399.

¹² Ibid 400.

¹³ Ibid.

reason: reminders from such a one cannot simply be dismissed, as my own commentaries might well be dismissed, as the rather skewed perspectives of someone not at all remarkable on any of those counts. When such a one as Pierre Ryckmans reminds us that it is time to cut through the stifling distractions of modern University-level academic life and get a renewed grip upon the basics, then any reasonable person who is currently enmeshed in that life and in those distractions cannot simply shrug off what has been said with a languid wave of the hand and a few dismissive and patronising remarks about the commentator's not knowing what he is talking about.

VI ADDENDUM AND CONCLUSION

I imagine that it will be apparent from the body of this essay that it was written originally last year and with a particular focus upon the anniversary then being celebrated by UWS.

I wrote originally a Conclusion in which I attempted to distil into a practical example the principles discussed in the essay. The example which I took entailed comparing and contrasting the contents of the current Learning Guide for a particular core Unit in the Law Course, and what I was intending to propound as a much better focused and structured Learning Guide for that Unit. For reasons the detail of which is not here relevant, the time lapse between the original writing of this essay and the time of its editorial revision before clearance for publication has been such that in many respects, but most importantly in respect of the intended Conclusion, events have overtaken what had been thus written and revised.

As it happens, however, one of those events has brought into perfect focus the concerns that the principal essay attempts to raise. In recent times a decision has been taken to rename UWS. In future, our institution is to be styled Western Sydney University. This is a decision that has been taken at the highest level of University administration. It will require a major redesign of such things as the University logo, the University stationery, and any other University material that requires a precise University identity. The change has been promoted not as a renaming, but as a 'rebranding', a description that I always associate with consumer goods like, for example, laundry detergent. It is, by any reasonable reckoning, a major change in the life and work of the University.

It would be reasonable to ask the perceived justification for the change. The official answer is that the 'rebranding' will emphasise in a way that the former 'brand' did not, the intimacy of the link between the University and what might be described as its core constituency, or in management-speak its core catchment area. Let it be assumed for present purposes that such a perception is something more than yet another triumph of form over substance. There remains, surely, the further question: what does this disruptive change say about the priorities of those set in lawful authority over the University?

It seems to me to be a fair comment that the change symbolises in a particularly stark and disturbing way those tendencies that the body of the essay questions: the tendency to confuse change with progress; the tendency to prefer the snappy gesture to the patient laying down of the highest and most rigorous academic standards as the fundamental measure of the worth of the University; and, perhaps worst of all, the seemingly ineradicable tendency to regard teaching as an adjunct of management rather than to maintain the correct relationship of management as an adjunct of teaching.

It is precisely this perverse mismatch that risks institutionalising the deficiencies to which the principal essay is directed. The only positive thing that I can see in the 'rebranding' is that it might cause, at long last, some serious questions to be asked in the appropriate quarters about what is being done with, and more importantly what is being done to, the vision splendid of the UWS project as Parliament originally conceived it.

May the former UWS flourish.