The New Academic Work

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ABSTRACT

The problem of organizing work and a workforce to do it has always troubled human societies. Fundamentally, the means of material production of human existence profoundly shape the nature and character of social systems. Historically the university was set aside from this process and was organized around the principle of a group of scholars set aside from the rest of society. These formulations were not static and throughout time the structure and function of the university has taken many forms. However, a core ideal has remained that the imperative to produce and contribute in some material way towards the ends of immediate existence has not been prominent in universities. This is no longer the case in Australian Universities. They have undergone considerable reform over the past 20 years or so, and much of this reform has struck at the core ideal to the extent that they are expected to contribute to society in very material ways. Higher education has become commodified.

Such changes can be interpreted in the light of the Marxian idea of the subsumption of labour by capital. This is a process wherein production processes and methods come under the rubric and control of capital, through two stages. The first is the formal subsumption of labour by capital, and the second is the real subsumption of labour by capital. When this happens, planning, decision making, motivation and control of the work process is taken out of the hands of the workers, and productive process become routinised, automated and simplified. Work intensity requirements are stepped up. This leads to a fundamental change in work methods whereby the profit motive, increasing efficiency demands and an increased need to control the nature and pace of the work often destroy crafts, and is part of the commodification of labour.

This paper analyses the recent changes to the higher education sector in light of the theory of subsumption. It concludes that whilst change will be an ongoing feature of higher education, the singular and defining change of our times has been the subsumption of labour by capital within the university system. It alters the nature of academic work and sets up new employment relationships amongst academics and their superiors.

Keywords: Higher education; Australian Universities; capitalism.
Introduction

The fundamental historical pressure of a capitalist economy is a drive to extend the logic of the market into more and more areas of social activity. Whilst it has happened only recently to them, universities are being brought into the wider capitalist system. Mandel (1976) argued that at any point in time, areas of economic activity have been structured in one of two ways. First, as the investment of capital, in pursuit of profits, in order to manufacture goods for a market; second, as the primary organization of available resources in order to produce goods through craft labour in direct response to cultural definitions of social need. There is a fundamental dynamic in the first type (as a result of profit seeking) that has led it to supersede the latter. Thus craft work has come under its sway, and has been transformed into highly capitalized modes of production.

Marx (1976) viewed industrialization as an unfolding development of market relations, arising, in part, out of a series of contradictory and uneven social transformations, innovations and burgeoning human productiveness. A central element in these developments was (and is) a major shift in the control of human labour; encapsulated in the term “labour process”. This is the purposeful combination of human beings, raw or semi-finished materials and the instruments of labour such as tools, machines, knowledge and so on. Obviously, as labour was (and is) transformed in this fashion by the industrializing processes, so too do the social relationships of human beings within the transforming system.

It can be seen that there are some distinctive features associated with the labour process, and two of the main features are considered. First, labour is increasingly fragmented or sub-divided. For example, there is a separation of mental and manual operations, accompanied by constant innovations within the labour process, along with changes (perhaps upheavals) in the modes of organisation. Tasks become simplified and routinised, and consequently trades, skills and crafts are destroyed. Second, as the capitalist labour process develops, there occurs a widening disjunction between it and the productivity of labour. Marx (1976) elaborated upon this aspect by describing what he called the subsumption of labour by capital. Basically, his argument was that labour becomes subjugated to the market driven institution of wage labour, and it is only in rare instances that some people can survive without having to sell their labour power. In other words, a given labour process is reorganized according to specifically capitalist social relations, so that the products of labour can be commodified and made available for exchange to realise the self expansion of capital.

Subsumption

Generally, subsumption can be seen as a process by which production systems for social needs are taken over and transformed by capital. Production and social relations are simultaneously transformed, and the changes are not spontaneous, but happen relatively steadily. It is probably best to consider a set of stylized ‘facts’ to understand subsumption, and to adopt a type of systems approach to it for expository purposes.
The first stylized fact is to posit the nature of production prior to its take over by capital. The examples of cottage industries such as spinning, weaving, soap manufacture, growing foodstuffs, and the like are brought to mind. Consider weaving, whereby a person possessed a loom and produced cloth for the household and could sell surplus amounts to local people, in order to purchase items not otherwise available. In other words this form is predominantly about the production of socially necessary goods. This system was altered with the rise of merchant capitalism. Merchants could, and did, acquire yarn and handed it on to weavers to make cloth of it. Under this putting out system, the merchant returned and picked up the finished cloth at a later time and paid the weaver for the weaving. Thus the merchant capitalist owned the raw material inputs to production as well as the completed output in the form of the cloth. The weaver, usually on a piece rate, received monies in proportion to his output. The system was such that the merchant capitalist did not own the means of production and only had indirect means to control it, usually by way of monetary incentives. The control of the pace of the work and the quality of the output were still largely the prerogative of the worker or artisan. In elementary systems theory then, the merchant capitalist had control over the inputs and outputs of production, but was denied access to the process of production. This state of affairs Marx (1976) called the formal subsumption of labour by capital.

Competition amongst merchant capitalists tended to increase and as a consequence there arose an imperative to raise the intensity and pace of production. This implied that capitalists must gain control of the entire means of production and were (are) forced to direct and control every aspect of the production process. This might be done in any manner of ways, for instance through technological change, or by buying up existing means of production. In acquiring the means of production, merchant capitalists became outright capitalists. Given the fact of control of the means, and therefore the processes of production, the capitalist gained a new relationship with producers or workers; a power relationship. The result is that the capitalist controlled the entire means of production; the inputs, the processes and the outputs. Marx called this stage the real subsumption of labour by capital.

Once real subsumption had occurred, workers lost control over most aspects of their working lives and the nature of the work and social relationships changed irreversibly. Work was paid by the hour (although this could also be an aspect of formal subsumption). The pace, intensity and direction of the work resided in the hands of the capitalist, the method of work was removed from the artisans and workers, jobs were simplified and destroyed, and industrialization took hold.

Increasingly, the means of subsistence was traded in markets, as was labour itself, and as a consequence of this commodification (or as part of it), workers’ alienation from the means and products of labour was intensified. A need then arose wherein the capitalist had to monitor workers and production to ensure sufficient output and adequate standards of output. Workers thus became objects of the owners’ control, and contingent upon growing competition in the markets for outputs, work was steadily intensified and extended.
Generally speaking these changes led to massive increases in productivity (output per worker), and rapid technological change. Thus, the outputs of industry and their variety became cheaper to consumers.

**The Australian Higher Education Sector**

Most forms of production have been transformed in this way, and new types of production processes have become manifest. There is one area of society however, which came late to these changes, and this is higher education. In Australia, the process of real subsumption in Higher Education is under way, and it is reasonable to argue that formal subsumption occurred some time ago, if for no other reason than academics have been paid salaries for many years now. The results of subsumption are that academic work has been transformed beyond anything that existed before in the hundreds of years that universities have operated. Without doubt, the industrialization of most other forms of production have led to hitherto unimagined increases in productivity, increasing material standards of living and the rise of consumer society, albeit at the cost of alienation, mind numbing repetitious work, industrial psychoses, and the like. It is reasonable to argue that whilst the industrialization of most industries leads to more output, possibly of improving standards, in the case of higher education, this is not possible. It is not possible for people to sell to other individuals the capacity and the urge for rigorous, independent honest thought and inquiry. These are attitudes developed over years, and not in penny packet lots. It has only been recently that this complete transformation of universities from societies engaged in the training of minds into capitalist systems has occurred.

In the case of the Australian higher education sector, change has been present at all times, dating from the foundation of the University of Melbourne. Since the end of the Second World War, change began to accelerate when the Commonwealth became involved in Australian higher education (Anderson, Johnson and Saha 2002). The involvement was limited until the advent of the Murray Committee’s report in 1957, which led to the formation of the Australian Universities Commission, and a concomitant increase in federal funding of universities. During those years, up to 1972, universities were left to run their own affairs, and this included everything from what courses they would teach, the regulation of employment (albeit given that wage fixing was under the auspices of an independent tribunal), through to the regulation of student entrance policies.

In 1972 the Whitlam government took over the full funding of universities, removed the States from their roles, and abolished student fees. In 1975, Whitlam was sacked and the new government reviewed all Commonwealth expenditures, including universities’ funding. This led to tightened financial constraints, but the universities continued to run their affairs in their own way, although under the supervision of the Universities Council of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission.

By 1987 a Labor government was in power and John Dawkins, as Minister of Education, abolished the binary system by forcing the colleges of advanced education to amalgamate and to become universities. In addition, he did away with the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission and set up a Higher Education Council with a policy advice role, but without a capacity to allocate
funds. Universities were also explicitly expected to contribute to economic growth and to engage in closer relations with industry, and to provide more vocational courses. In other words, there was a conscious movement toward integrating universities more with business and its ethos. There were important industrial changes associated with the Dawkins reforms, to the extent that universities became industries and the academics became workers and employees. Industrial laws specifically regulated academic work, staff associations were registered as unions, the Australian Higher Education Industrial Association was formed as an employer collective and enterprise bargaining began. Simultaneously student fees were introduced and a deferred payments scheme, the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS), allowed students to borrow these funds until such time as the could pay them back.

In 1998, the then federal Minister of Education, (Kemp) commissioned West (1998) to examine Australia’s higher education sector and to bring to down a program of reform to be implemented subsequently by the federal government. Although the reforms were never carried through (the Prime Minister scotched the scheme), much of what West suggested was implemented by Kemp’s successor, Brendan Nelson.

The West report, “Learning for Life”, took the subsumption process further than anything that had gone before. Government sponsored reforms were to be, “underpinned by a commitment to strengthening higher education as an industry” (West 1998), which can be seen as taking Dawkins ideas and bolstering them. West also argued that, “higher education institutions are a vital part of our economy.”, yet he didn’t want to recognize that their impacts are much more widely social then the narrow economism he sought to advance. Knowledge creation, along with free and independent thought were to be linked to the capitalist economy and would aid in its expansion. He wrote, “Australia’s universities must transcend local, sectional interests and the historical perception of their role as educators to become major partners in further promoting a world class education industry that can play an even wider role in driving the growth of our economy.” Moreover, universities’ research was to “take a strategic view of Australia’s total research effort, with an emphasis on transferring knowledge, technology and skills to industry and the broader community.” (West 1998).

Undeniably, West saw students as consumers and argued for a “direct financial relationship between providers of higher education and students.” Thus students would exercise their consumer choices, and because of this, somehow universities would become, “increasingly responsive to the preferences and needs of individual students.” West also argued that collegial decision making was a serious impediment to the “business like operation” of universities and therefore to the “efficient delivery” of education. Marginson (1997) has argued that the “self directing autonomy of academics (is) being replaced by management regimes that create and implement policies based on managerial formulae, targets and plans. These days, those who do not directly produce academic “products” decide what will be produced, how they should produced, as well as who should produce them.”

The West report was never implemented, although much of what it proposed was taken up by the succeeding federal Minister of Education, Brendan Nelson.
Nelson brought down his report, “Our Universities: Backing Australia’s Future” (Backing Australia’s Future) in May 2003. Since then, his reform program, outlined in the report, has been moving ahead on schedule. Generally the broad thrust of West is taken up in Backing Australia’s Future, with possibly further and deeper changes than envisioned in West. Nelson made the point that in Australia, “the higher education sector makes a substantial contribution to regional economic growth and development. It provides jobs for Australians, educates our future workforce, creates future leaders, drives much of our economic and regional success, facilitates important cultural and trade links with other countries and enriches our social and environmental landscape.” (Nelson P8) The report goes on to point out that Australian graduates possess skills that, “are eagerly sought after in the international market place” and argues that, “if we are to ensure a sustainable university system able to drive the future economic and social success in (Australia)...increasing resourcing and regulatory reform are essential.”

Doubtless, many of the things the higher education sector does as described by Nelson, are true, but these things are not the core of the sector, if it were not industrialized. The intention of encouraging independence, the pursuit of truth, the development and dissemination of knowledge, and so on, are its core. Nelson seemed to take these “outcomes” or outputs as the sine qua non of the sector. Moreover, he proposed to carry out the full subsumption of the sector, when talking about the necessity of creating partnerships between universities and industry, as well as facilitating industry influence in research and teaching.

The report put forward a new vision for the sector, which comprises four key principles of sustainability, quality, equity and diversity. It is reasonable to argue that the use of such terms helps shroud the fact of subsumption and destructive change in higher education. It (subsumption) can be seen in the discussion about the new vision. On sustainability, for example, it is suggested that, “Universities...should be able to respond flexibly to the needs of their constituencies, including...employers, industry, local, regional, and national communities.” In a consideration of quality, it was held that universities will, “ensure that students develop knowledge and skills that are relevant to their own needs and to those of employers, professional associations, labour markets and society.” This style of reasoning sets up a situation whereby those who argue about the points are made to seem stupid for even questioning them in the first place. Moreover, it is correct to out point out that the higher education sector does this sort of thing anyway, without having the outcomes as its central aim. All this aside, the skills and knowledge alluded to are potentially contradictory in the sense that those which are relevant to students’ own needs might well be anathema to employers, or even society. The older premise for the existence of the university was that knowledge was valued for its own sake. Presumably, these days universities are simply meant to satisfy their customers.

Later, “Backing Australia’s Future” went on to argue that given the four principles, sustainability, quality, equity and diversity, universities will be able to “determine the value of their course offerings in the market place.” It need hardly be said that commodification of academic labour and the subsumption of higher education is a fact of life. Thus, “Backing Australia’s Future” carried
West and Dawkins to the logical end of subumption. It is useful to consider the impact of the changes discussed in the reports and papers on academics in specific aspects of the occupation. In what follows, the work of an academic is considered through the areas of teaching, research, as well as the wider area of administration, collegiality and governance.

**Academic Labour Process**

It has become fashionable to refer to the role of an academic as being composed of parts, such as teaching, research, administration and community work. This is symptomatic of the industrialization of higher education. The labour process theorists, such as Braverman (1974), pointed out that crafts were broken down into their simplest components and were eventually destroyed. This deskilling is intimately bound up with the subsumption process, particularly in the real phase. In point of fact, teaching and research go to the core of an academic occupation, whilst simultaneously being congruent with some administration, usually by way of collegial decision making, so as to ensure development and advancement of knowledge, criticism, “truth” and some contribution to the betterment of the university, as well as the wider community. Teaching and research are typically treated separately, as Nelson (2003) did, and the administration and decision functions gained a central place in the modern, industrialized university.

Traditionally, students and their teachers came together in a community of scholars, so as to facilitate, for the student, a kind of apprenticeship in the pursuit of knowledge. Thus the system was perpetuated and grew. The pursuit of truth, along with modes of inquiry required that the teacher be “on his or her game” meaning that he or she must engage in research. It was necessary to be at the frontier of a discipline in some small way, in order that the teacher be effective. Teaching and research were two sides of the same coin.

The fragmentation of academic work has been going on for some time and this deskilling has been accompanied by its devaluation, both within universities as well as by wider society. More and more of the intellectual planning function has been progressively removed from the academic practitioners and placed in the hands of corporate – executive style managers and strategic planning groups. In many Australian universities it is common to hear of executive Deans trying to run faculties as profit or cost centre managers, with little or no discussion or decision making being extended to the mass of academics who comprise the faculty. It is a straight corporate model and is indicative of the extent to which subsumption has progressed in higher education.

The introduction of corporate – executive managers, along with the rise of managerialism generally, has both happened as a result of, and led to, further levels of academics becoming constrained, monitored and documented in respect of their “performance”.

Miller (1995) has argued that, whilst academics might still retain some degree of technical control of their work, they have lost ideological control. He sees this as occurring through three interrelated factors. First, policy pressures from governments that research and production of skilled labour should meet
the needs of increased international competition; second, the reduction of state spending is being met by funds from corporate sources, along with increasing numbers of foreign students, third, the promulgation amongst many senior academics of a corporate management style. This last was alluded to in the discussion above.

In order that these things gain traction in university settings, executive management enlist the help of increasing numbers of clerical functionaries and administrative, non academic staff generally.

**Burgeoning Bureaucracy**

At one level, the proliferation of people working in purely administrative and reporting functions is understandable; the federal government has increased the reporting requirements of universities in receipt of public monies. At another level, subsumption, with all its implied deskilling and accompanying alienation, creates a need for a class of persons who are reporting, monitoring and score keeping entities. Forms are invented which have to be filled in and filed. Processes are promulgated which must be adhered to and reported upon. Stentorian language is visited upon those who do not comply, whether accidentally or deliberately. The academic begins to feels like a minor character in a Kafka novel. Parkinson (1958) recognized that administrators tend to expand and multiply their numbers and used the Royal Navy as a case study. He found that quite rapidly, the ratio of shore based personnel to sea going sailors grew to alarming proportions. Parkinson concluded that some natural tendencies or “laws” were in play as administrators spread through the organization. Amongst other things, he realized that in the absence of socially necessary or “real” work, administrators desire to create and expand empires, with the intent of bolstering their perceived importance and indispensability to the organization. A virtue was made of administrative functions, and they become central to the operations of organizations. So it is with universities.

The production and scheduling of examinations, examination papers, course outlines, applications for research grants, production and scheduling of e-learning products, in fact a whole raft of work and make work occupy the time of administrators. Eventually they format and censor academics’ documents and work. For example, academic’s control of study guides is now heavily contested terrain in many Australian universities. A large part of the explanation for this aspect of subsumption of academics’ work is to be found in the fact of technological change.

Technological change is one of the central means by which real subsumption is accomplished. Postman (1996) argued that technologies and technological change all carry an ideological element to them that is often antithetical to other technologies, particularly those that they attempt to displace. Technologies have their own unique views of the world and they compete with one another for dominance. Moreover, Postman (1996) pointed out that technological change is ecological and not additive, as many people would believe. New information technologies are displacing the older technologies in universities which involved a corporeal relationship between academics and students. This change necessitates the conversion of a body of knowledge and its discourse (the discipline itself) to a state where it can be incorporated into
the electronic information technologies. Such a conversion or takeover requires the presence of an instructional designer who is an integral part of the subsuming technology. This person changes the presentation mode of the knowledge, along with many of its meanings, and the ways in which it is best culturally understood. Moreover, the seamless whole is broken down into arbitrary units often called modules, and in the process, knowledge is walled off against itself, as well as from other types of understanding. This change leads to an alteration of the knowledge, if only a decontextualising, and this in turn changes the discipline. In the end, the needs of the technology triumph. Thus, the industrialisation of higher education means that society (or a culture) pays a price for technology; the adulteration and destruction of knowledge, as well the means of understanding and inquiry that are essential to better ways of living.

In most universities throughout Australia there are the equivalents of learning and teaching management committees and research committees. Very often, these committees attach to themselves greater importance than faculty boards and academic boards. Academic boards are traditionally universities’ senior academic body, and they are usually established under their respective university foundation and enabling acts. It is the academic board which is the repository of the intellectual ethos and direction of the university, and it is usually run by, and presided over by, the professoriate. The roles of academic boards and their effectiveness are being usurped, or limited by the newer committees mentioned above. It is often the case that research and teaching and learning management committees usually have non academic members; that is to say, people who are not actively teaching, learning nor researching. Indeed, they may constitute the majority of the members. Some might justify their presence as having been school teachers and who bring special insights into what they might see as educational processes. Others’ presence is apparently justified by their being students’ counsellors, operatives from student administration and services, or as note and minute taking operatives.

Research Management Committees, which may run research grants schemes, typically decide on research priorities and have some oversight of the operations of various research centres. Academics may find that their capacity to determine their own research directions and interests are becoming constrained. Obviously, this has been the case for some time now, since the federal government has been setting research priorities and has structured the Australian Research Council and other bodies, so as to meet these priorities.

Committees concerned with learning, teaching and research, may, as is the case at the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC), come under the auspices of an executive unit concerned with teaching and research. At USC, at one stage, not one of the people who populated the unit was an academic, yet they have a major impact upon the way in which academics conduct their working lives. The office has an important and powerful surveillance function; through the operation of a compulsory system of student evaluations of teaching. It has a strong say in which research grant applications should be successful, it operates a “school” where academics are presumably trained as teachers by administrators. It appears that this system of instituting committees in parallel with academic boards stems from the invention of the positions of Deputy Vice Chancellors for research, teaching, administration and
so on. Basically Deputy Vice Chancellors need to reach deeply into the operations of the university, and to do so create administrative hierarchies which expand and broaden themselves on a basis of self justification. This phenomenon can be seen in nearly all Australian universities. It is the essence of real subsumption in the higher education sector.

**Quality and Surveillance**

As a craft is industrialised, broken down into simpler parts and destroyed by technologies brought into being by the over riding need to make profits, the problem of surveillance and control becomes paramount, particularly as the work intensifies. There is a need to establish work rates and progressively intensify them, and standards of output have to be specified. In modern times, the pre eminent surveillance and control technology is that of “quality” and “quality assurance”. Whilst being a suitably undefinable term, quality translates particular rationalities and moralities into new forms of governance, control, and (professional) behaviour. Thus quality is an ideological and political technology functioning as a regime and a relay of power. In the university, academic habitus is transformed by subsumption, and quality is one of the main means of achieving this result.

Foucault (1979) gave some indication of the power of surveillance and control technologies by elaborating upon Jeremy Bentham’s concept of the panopticon prison and arguing that it was symptomatic of a new emphasis on surveillance and control in society at large. The panopticon, geared to personal reform as well as confinement and punishment, incorporated ideological and organisational features as well as architectural ones. These included a strictly regulated working day, based around the reformatory influences of hard work and prayer, based on a single cell system so as to avoid moral contamination as a result of association with other criminals. Obviously, to argue the direct translation of the panopticon into wider society and especially universities may be to overstate the case, but none the less, there are considerable metaphorical gains to be made in comparing it with modern work life, in the university sector, as a consequence of the use of quality technology. The imposition of quality technology into higher education has meant that people are required to constantly report what they are doing and are loaded down with demands to be in a mode of “continuous improvement” This leads to a subtle use of the notion of original sin wherein people, unless they constantly strive to improve their work and themselves, are branded as reprobates. Thus the subtlety of quality; people save the employer money by surveilling themselves, and even report their own supposed work shortcomings. Standards fall as quality takes hold. Work intensifies as more and more students are pushed through higher education, and this is occurring with less and less resources per student being made available.

The changes sweeping through the higher education workers’ occupation have led to the situation whereby those who resist or question the changes, are seen as being without a capacity to adjust in a new world. Generally quality has led to an impetus for conformity; both on the part of those who resist and question as well as in the operation of quality itself. Quality, and indeed most forms of industrial production, is about conformance to pre ordained levels of practice, “benchmarking”, reporting on variations and responsibilisation. This
last is a method of having those whose output is different from those conditions that are prescribed, or whose output cannot be benchmarked, accept responsibility for their shortcomings, and thence to repent and never again to err. The point is that given the drive for conformity, academic and intellectual ideals regarding differences and diversity are necessarily eliminated. Holding opinions contrary to the business ethos and logic, or those which contradict the conventional wisdom of the dominant group inevitably imply ostracism for the undesirables. Reading (1996) has suggested that quality and quality assurance appear to be client focussed and democratising, whereas they have deeply conservative underpinnings and are repressive in nature. They snuff out originality and difference.

A client focus in higher education has meant that students are now conceived of as customers. This is a necessary corollary to subsumption; the process itself implies that the mass produced outputs must be sold to someone, otherwise they are of no use to society. The people who buy are customers. At one level, Subsumption can be seen as process in which knowledge is tamed from having a wild and uncontrolled aspect to being controlled by packaging and modularising. It is regularised and domesticated; that is, it is made fit for bourgeois consumption.

Knowledge and higher education in their unpackaged form is challenging and even terrifying to those engaged in and in receipt of it. In this wild form, for the individual, it is about personal growth and development through access to other significant forms of thought and feeling; it is about breaking the stranglehold of the present on the mind. However, once modularised and emasculated, books and knowledge are apparently made accessible and safe and therefore consumable like other commodities. Musgrove (1978) argued that massification and modularising seemed to create an artificial problem; the distribution of the superabundance of knowledge. For him the main issue is the restricted access to miniscule stocks of real experience, and his concern is about the “need to bring back wonder and terror into the university experience.” (Musgrove 1978).

Yet it is only by the conversion of wild beasts of knowledge into T.V. dinners that people in thrall of an under funded massified higher education can accept it. Given the packaging of knowledge, it is possible to set it up as having exchange value, and this implies the existence of customers. In a most basic way students are seen as customers. The analogy is carried through to a conclusion when students are expected to pay increasing levels of tuition costs, and thus they come to see themselves as customers.

The system is destructive: students pay for what they want, and if not satisfied, can often demand their money back, or at least complain loudly about the poor service. In higher education (indeed, in most forms of education) it is not possible for anyone to know what they want. In simple terms, if a person knew what they wanted educationally, there would be no need for them to engage in the process of acquiring it. However, if they leave the experience feeling unsatisfied, they feel compelled to complain. Their reasons for feeling let down might be because they found the gaining of knowledge extremely difficult, or terrifying, or perhaps upsetting to their equilibrium. Yet such is the stuff of a real education. A sense of feeling at odds
with the world is no bad thing. From such feelings, societies and cultures evolve and change.

**Conclusion**

The subsumption of higher education was inevitable. Formal subsumption was a fact; real subsumption would follow. Moreover, the logic of industrial capitalism is to extend the market throughout all sectors and spheres of society. What is surprising is that it is only now in Australia that it has finally happened. It would be idle to speculate as to why it was so long in coming; what is important is that higher education has been transformed completely from all that went before. It represents a singularity in the history of change in universities. Just as it is impossible to reverse the changes that occurred in other areas, so it is impossible to reverse what has happened in higher education. There are without doubt many benefits accruing to society as a result of the industrializing process; massive productivity gains mean that the vast mass of people enjoy increased material living standards. The cost is in alienation, insecurity of employment, creeping consumerism, and the like. It is difficult, however, to see much that is good coming out of the transformation of higher education. There is a unique relationship between the method of higher education production and its consequences or results. Change the act of creation and the consequences alter into something completely different; at the very least, they become "products". In the case of other areas of social system, the means and relations of production change and the society is simultaneously transformed. However, the products or the consequences of creation remain the same; cloth is still cloth and shoes are still shoes. In universities changes in the methods of production change what is produced. It is no longer university education.
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