

The University of Life plc*:
The "Industrialization" of Higher Education?

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Introduction

The increasing subjection of public institutions to the reductive rigours of monetarist economics has gradually, over the last 15 years or so, produced a crisis of confidence in certain quarters. No longer does it seem generally plausible to prescribe the forms and values required for public welfare on the basis of institutionalised expert authority, ie that of civil servants, politicians, professionals in general, or (in particular) educators. Instead, cultural authority is now projected onto "the market" and a bereft humanity seems to be condemned for the time being to organize *all* its affairs within the general parameters of capitalism, whose apparent claim is that matters of value and priority must be adjudicated simply by the forces of supply and demand. In other words, since there can be no welfare without profitability, the former can be subsumed under the latter: the good may be equated with the profitable. Faced with this ideological challenge, Higher Education staff, who have traditionally raised their own serious claim to cultural authority, are called upon to formulate a response which is both critical and constructive, neither retreating into a merely rhetorical expression of lost ideals, nor colluding with a social system whose disorders are plain to see. The problem is, as always, one of articulating an explorative, critical, yet practical understanding of the various forces and processes involved.

It is to this end that the argument of the paper is addressed. The contemporary university is inevitably bound up with the political and economic forces of capitalism, which threaten to submit the integrity of educational and academic values to the forms and priorities of market oriented production. Fortunately, however, these threats are

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* "plc": "public limited company", i.e. a company whose shares are quoted, bought, and sold on the commercial stock market, like Unilever and Ford but unlike (for example) a small "family" business, a charity, or a public service institution.

mitigated by the contradictions within the managerial ideology which tries to implement them. Hence, although we are indeed faced by *attempts* to impose an industrial, profit oriented logic onto Higher Education, this situation is not without real educational opportunities, both to shed some of the oppressive practices enshrined in Higher Education's traditional forms and to begin to realise some innovative and progressive possibilities. In other words, contradictions do not only generate "problems" (injustices, evasions, and suffering), they also generate spaces within which power can be contested, and reforms can be won. Let us begin, therefore, by looking at the *ambiguities* underlying current pressures for change in the UK Higher Education system.

Pressures for Change: Education *and* Economic Development

A significant aspect of current higher education initiatives in the UK is that they emanate not from the government Department for Education but from the Employment Department. (Employment Department, 1990; Duckenfield and Stirner, 1992). This of course may serve to confirm the worst suspicions of academics, that education is now officially equated with labour force training, having noted that the government's 1985 consultative document *The Development of Higher Education into the 1990s* begins, "The economic performance of the UK since 1945 has been disappointing" (DES, 1985, para 1.2) and immediately continues, "The societies of our competitors are producing . . . more qualified scientists, engineers, technologists, and technicians than the UK" (ibid, para 1.3).

But although some HE staff may feel antagonised when the Employment Department introduces accounts of its Higher Education initiatives by announcing, frankly, its concern "to support economic growth by promoting a competitive, efficient, and flexible labour market" (Employment Department, 1990, p.5; Duckenfield & Stirner, 1992, p.3), the relationship between educational values and economic development is not a simple opposition. The list of headings under which the Employment Department presents its funded projects includes not only "employer relevance" and "high level skills supply" but also such acceptable educational concepts as "increased learner responsibility" and "continuing professional development" (Employment Department, 1990, p.88 ff.). It also challenges the restrictive elitism of HE institutions through headings such as "wider accessibility" (ie "access for non-traditional students"), "alternative admissions mechanisms" and "accreditation of prior experiential learning" (ibid.).

The latter themes provide an obvious managerial issue, which is frequently presented as Higher Education's most urgent current problem: how can restricted, elitist HE be extended to become open access HE available to the mass of the citizenry without a loss in "quality"? (See Ball, 1990). But beneath this issue lies another, one which managerial rhetoric takes for granted and at the same time ignores. It is neatly symbolised by Ball's reference to "UK plc" (pp.3-4) which subsumes the entire nation state within the conceptual field of commerce. The issue here is the relationship between a theory of decision-making based entirely on market forces, competitive profitability, etc (as in "UK plc") and decision-making supposedly based on the direct analysis and judgement of human need, which has traditionally been the province (or at least the claim) of the various professions, including educationists. This is the real challenge currently facing Higher Education, a challenge which many current initiatives both conceal and render more acute (eg the nature of "personal skills" - Employment Department, op cit). The first step, then, is to explore the nature of this ideological challenge: how should we articulate the relationship between higher education institutions and those embodying commerce and industry?

Higher Education Institutions - Their Nature and Function?

We can begin with J H Newman's classic and still influential statement, originally published between 1852 and 1873. For Newman, the quality of knowledge appropriate to university education is that it should be both general and "liberal". The generality of knowledge is provided by the *unity* of different disciplines within an overarching *theological* framework (Newman, 1982, Discourses II, III, IV, IX) and by the community life of the institution (ibid, p.76) which is explicitly preferred to a prescriptively varied *curriculum* examined by the university but acquired through experiences and efforts elsewhere (p.109). This principled disjuncture between practical life and university education is embodied in Newman's concept of liberal education, in which "liberal" means "liberated" from the exigencies of manual, commercial, or professional work (pp.80-1). In other words, "knowledge is capable of being its own end" (p.77), and Newman therefore attempts to separate knowledge even from "virtue" (pp.91-3) in stark contrast to the complex analysis by Newman's authority and inspiration, Aristotle, concerning the intimate relationship between knowledge, wisdom, and virtue (Aristotle, 1976, pp.212-6). But Newman cannot, in the end, sustain this distinction, as is shown by his later description of the qualities of "the gentleman" as "the *ethical* character which the cultivated *intellect* will form" (Newman, 1982, pp.159-60, [emphasis added]). Newman's problem is that his exposition of the nature of knowledge is implicitly

subservient to his apologetics for theology-as-the-revelation-of-absolute-truth. His argument that academic freedom must mean independence from practical responsibilities in the moral and economic world is not intelligible in a secular culture, nor even within a broader theology where "good works" are as important, spiritually, as faith. As Newman himself concedes: "If . . . a practical end must be assigned to a University, . . . 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." (ibid p.134) But this unhelpfully avoids the very issues which are at stake ("good"? "fitness"?)..

The contradictions within Newman's vision of university autonomy explain in part the vulnerability of Higher Education to criticisms such as those of Bourdieu. In *Homo Academicus* (Bourdieu, 1988) Bourdieu extends his general critique of educational institutions (Bourdieu, 1977) to a specific indictment of the university, whose effect is to reproduce and to "consecrate" oppressive social inequalities behind a "mask of neutrality" (Bourdieu, 1988, p.204) by converting contingent social class differences in cultural and economic advantage into the legitimated terminology of intellectual qualities and deficits (ibid, p.194 ff., "The Categories of Professional Judgement"). In other words, the effect of the university "community" upon its junior members is not, as Newman hoped, the expansion of mind through free critical discourse, but "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu, 1977, p.4) ie the "arbitrary" imposition of meanings which legitimate the exercise of authority "by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force" and thereby render it more effective (ibid pp.4-5). ("Meanings" here would include, for example, academic grades and their supposed significance in terms of talent and merit.) In this way, Bourdieu exposes the incompleteness (to say the least) of Newman's conception of the university as an institution insulated against worldly motives of politics and economics, devoted simply and exclusively to the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake through the free and critical exchange of ideas. (See also, in this context, Thompson, 1970.)

However, Bourdieu's formulation of academic authority as "arbitrary" (ibid p.5) is a key to the unsatisfactoriness of his approach. Neither Bourdieu's deterministic vision of cultural oppression nor Newman's vision of genteel autonomy can encompass the ideological subtleties of the UK government's Higher Education initiatives, whose complex ambiguities have already been noted above. What is needed, therefore, is a theory of the relationship between the changing processes of Higher Education and the general economic, political, and organizational forces which are shaping these developments and thereby challenging conceptions of the professional role of Higher Education staff. The following analysis is intended as a sketch of some of the resources from which such a theory might be developed.

Changes in Higher Education and the Industrialization of the Labour Process

Let us begin with an interpretation of the broad historical context, namely Mandel's argument that the fundamental historical pressure of a capitalist economy is a general drive to extend the logic of the market into more and more areas of social activity (Mandel, 1978, p.47) which, therefore, is now affecting universities, along with schools, hospitals, ambulance services, prisons, the civil service, etc. Mandel's argument is as follows. At any point in time (since the Middle Ages at least) areas of economic activity have been structured in one of two ways: 1) as the investment of capital (seeking dividends) in order to manufacture goods for a market (seeking profits); 2) as the primary organization of available resources in order to produce goods through craft labour in direct response to cultural definitions of social need. The superior dynamism of the former (due to the possibility of dividends and profits, leading to the rapid accumulation of capital for further developmental investment) means that it has tended to supersede the latter: gradually, but (it would seem) inexorably, craft work has yielded to highly capitalized production (Mandel, 1978, pp.46-8). The increasing pace of technological innovation (ibid, Chapter 8) is dictated by the fact that it is the creativity of workers, not machines themselves, that create profits (because machinery must be bought at a price which has already made a profit for the seller). Consequently, the higher the component of capital expenditure in the costs of production (ie with advancing technology) the lower is the *rate* of profit per unit of cost.. Hence the necessity of continually seeking new domains in which capital can be invested, advanced technology applied, and profits created, ie such areas as research and development (ibid p.249), the provision of services (transport, power utilities, accounting, stock control (ibid p.385)) and thus finally (for the purposes of our analysis here) education. "Far from representing a 'post-industrial' society, late capitalism thus constitutes *generalized universal industrialization* for the first time in history." (ibid p.387)

From the perspective of Mandel's argument, therefore, Higher Education may be seen as a sector currently dominated by craft processes and now due for "industrialization". The new initiatives and rationales already referred to are thus not simply the imposition of a political dogma, as a set of arbitrary, barbarous, and implausible metaphors, but an expression of the inherent developmental logic of capitalism. The next question is, therefore, if this is the nature of the underlying historical forces at work, what does this imply in terms of the actual experience of university staff? What is entailed in a move from craft work to "industrialized" production in the context of Higher Education?

Harry Braverman's account of the changing labour process in manufacturing contexts offers various chilling suggestions (Braverman, 1974). Braverman looks back to a period of craft labour in which "the worker was presumed to be the master (sic) of a body of traditional knowledge, and methods and procedures were left to his or her discretion." (ibid p. 109, p.443) and argues that the process of industrialization has entailed a sustained and successful attempt by management (inspired by Frederick Taylor's theories and exhortations) to impose rigid control over the production process by subdividing the complex ensemble of craft work into simple stages, none of which allows the worker to comprehend or to take responsibility for the overall process. Decisions about the production process are taken centrally by management, through their control of the complex equipment which in turn dictates the "methods and procedures" required. From the point of view of the worker, therefore, work becomes fragmentary, and its meaning is displaced from an awareness of its contribution to human needs onto its function within a determined production process over which the worker has no control. This displacement of the meaning of the labour process corresponds to the displacement of the meaning of the product of labour, from its value in meeting human needs ("use value") to its ability to command a profitable price on the market ("exchange value"). In other words, the labour process and the product of labour become mere "commodities", whose value is defined solely by their capacity to generate profits. This in turn means that the worker is subjected to unmitigated control by management, since management is in charge of decisions affecting the profitability of the enterprise, ie concerning the disposition of resources.

Let us see how far Braverman's analysis can be applied to Higher Education, ie to teaching and research. One of the most important of current educational initiatives, strongly endorsed by the UK government, is "competence-based vocational education", in which curricula (in vocational areas) are cast in the form of competence statements which guide students in presenting work-derived evidence to be assessed mainly by staff employed in the student's workplace. These competences (which function rather like curriculum objectives) are established by consortia consisting mainly of employers ("Industrial Lead Bodies"). Attempts are currently being made to apply this curriculum model to professional education within universities, especially in the field of management (See MCI, 1991) It appears to entail a reduction in the role of the teacher to that of a supportive tutor: the setting of objectives and the design and sequencing of learning has been on the one hand appropriated by the Industrial Lead Body and on the other hand delegated to the students, and responsibility for assessing students' work is redistributed from HE staff to a) workplace assessors and b) university quality control procedures.

Similarly, university courses are increasingly being recast into integrated systems of "modular" units, allowing students to construct their own "customized" courses by selecting their own combination of modules. This means that HE staff no longer have responsibility for designing a sequence of learning experiences which might profoundly affect student identities; instead they merely make available a circumscribed fragment of expertise within a computerized system of options. Gone is the general authority of the individual "educator" (parent-figure or cultural crusader); instead HE staff are purveyors of commodities within a knowledge "supermarket", which may or may not be selected by the student-as-customer. Responsibility for the overall coherence and progression of students' education is assumed not by the staff who teach individual modules but by the academic managers who design the modular system and by the academic counsellors who guide student choice of modules.

Parallel expressions of the loss of formerly comprehensive responsibilities occur in the context of research. Sandra Harding proposes the rejection of "industrialized" forms of social inquiry (capital intensive, hierarchically managed) in favour of a return to an earlier model of the scientist as a "craft worker," who is responsible for the whole process of inquiry, from the selection of problems and methods to the interpretation of results, and thus requires a "unity of hand, brain, and heart" which is the antithesis of the modern labour process (Harding, 1986, p.248). (See also Julius Roth's strictures on "hired hand research" (Roth, 1965).)

But is this link between the alienation of the assembly line worker and the alienation of the contemporary university lecturer / researcher merely a plausible emotive analogy, or does it also have a theoretical basis? Let us now consider, therefore, in more detail, the sense in which the "products" of education and those of manufacturing industry are comparable, ie the nature of the "commodity" form.

Commodities, Knowledge, and Qualifications

Many would wish to restrict the analogy between the labour process in manufacture and the labour process in education by maintaining a theoretical distinction between "productive" and "non-productive" labour. The original basis for this distinction, however, is between labour which *produces* commodities (thereby adding value to raw material) and labour involved merely in the *circulation* of commodities (eg transport) (Mandel, 1978, p.401). But Mandel then generalizes the notion of "unproductiveness" from the sector of circulation to services in general (ibid, p.406) and continues: "The logic of late capitalism is therefore necessarily to convert idle capital into service capital

and simultaneously to replace service capital with productive capital, in other words, services with commodities: transport services with private cars, theatre and film services with private television sets, tomorrow television services and educational instruction with video cassettes" (ibid).

However, the theoretical significance of this latter step is not clear: services begin to be incorporated into the relationships of an industrialized market economy when the provision of what is *needed* is converted into the provision of what can be profitably marketed, without necessarily requiring that the consumption of services take the form of purchasing an object. Production and consumption are complementary halves of the same circle of supply and demand (Samuelson, 1980, p.41); and "services" are one form of all those "goods" that can be produced and supplied, demanded and consumed. Thus, in a university context, although there is indeed pressure upon staff to create products that can be *sold* (videos, computer software, patentable technology) it is also recognised that profits can be made through *franchising* other types of product (course units, quality assurance procedures) and by *hiring out* facilities (human and material) for research and "consultancy". In the same way, some enterprises *sell* cars and TVs while others hire or lease them. In other words, following Burrell (1990, p.292) it can be argued that surplus value can be created and realized wherever a market exists, and that commodities may be "material or non-material".

The essence of a commodity, then, is not that it actually is a "thing", but that its *value* is determined by its capacity for being marketed for profit, rather than by its usefulness in contributing to "genuine" human need. Its form therefore must be such that its profitability may be calculated, and for this reason it must be considered *as if* it were a "thing" (with calculable properties). This thing-like quality disguises the fact that these properties are merely constructs necessitated by the social relationships embodied in the structure of the market, within which alone the commodity has value and meaning. The commodity form is thus a *displacement* of meaning: the market acts as a self-justifying decision-making mechanism, prioritizing social activities according to a systematically limited reality, in which the meaning and value of artefacts, actions, and people are reconstructed in terms of the restrictive logic of profit generation.

According to this "market logic", the relationship between teacher, student, and curriculum is reconstructed as a relationship between producer, consumer, and commodity. This might be seen in two ways. Firstly, knowledge is packaged into pedagogical units ("modules") which correspond to numerical units of academic credit, based on average learning time. Secondly, academic qualifications constitute a currency with exchange value in relation to employment. The argument would then be as follows.

Higher education staff and institutions will promote those pedagogical units and qualifications which have marketable value and students may be expected to attempt to acquire academic credit and profitable credentials at an advantageous "price" (ie for relatively little effort). Clearly, such an analysis is not convincing as a *description* of current educational realities; rather, it delineates the form of an ideological *pressure*, with which HE staff will need to come to terms, a set of *metaphors* whose new-found plausibility may be used to legitimate (in the name of supposedly universal and inescapable market forces) the subjection of educational processes to specific political interests.

However, it is important to recognise that this type of analysis (economic imperatives leading to the commodification of culture) can easily lapse into yet another form of determinism, whose pretensions are always undermined by its lack of reflexivity: if culture in general has succumbed to commodification, then this very piece of writing itself must have the status of a commodity; and if so, what credence can be given to it? We must emphasize, therefore, that the increasing influence of the ideology of market relationships does not mean that human experience is about to be wholly encapsulated in commodity form, as Baudrillard and Wernick, for example, would have us believe (Baudrillard, 1988; Wernick, 1991). More precisely, an increase in the tendency towards the commodity formulation of knowledge, research, and academic qualifications must not lead us (in an excess of melodramatic and self-important pessimism) to deny the possibilities for critical understanding and innovative practice (See Willmott, 1990, p.358). Indeed, the argument in the next section is that the managers of market oriented educational institutions will not wish *simply* to restrict the scope of staff responsibility in order to achieve the commodification of the educational process; that (on the contrary) managers appear to have their own reasons for defining workers as possessing the capacity for critical, innovative autonomy.

The Contradictions of "Management"

Higher education as the craft work of individual academic staff has always operated under some sort of institutional regulation and sanction, originally that of the church and latterly of the university bureaucracy, itself regulated by the state. What is new is the subjection of teaching, curriculum design, and research to detailed management processes imitated from those of market oriented manufacturing enterprises. How far will these new management processes interfere with that freedom of creation, interpretation and criticism which academic staff would wish to claim (following Newman, perhaps - see

above) as traditionally characteristic of their work, but which they now see as being under threat (see Thompson, 1970).

Braverman's pessimism concerning management's inexorable domination of the labour process has been criticised as oversimplified (Littler, 1990; Wardell, 1990). Instead it is suggested that industrialized labour processes are structured by managerial *attempts* at controlling the methods and procedures of work which are only partially successful (Thompson, 1990, p.100), generating antagonisms which are nevertheless limited by management's need to maintain consent and creativity on the part of workers (ibid, p.101). This is the contradiction at the heart of the management role, reflecting, of course, the continuing contradictions at the heart of capitalism (Mandel, 1978, p.472) which necessitate "the huge machinery of ideological manipulation" designed to "integrate the worker into late capitalist society as a consumer, social partner, or citizen" (ibid p.485). However, ideology is not an integrated, rationalized structure of illusions, but a series of fragments, reflections of the contradictions it seeks (with only partial success) to disguise (see Winter, 1989). Management theory, therefore, in presenting its insistently harmonious view of the aims and processes of commercial enterprises cannot help accidentally revealing the contradictions it wishes to ignore and thus cannot address.

Hence the manifold inconsistencies of Peter Drucker's perpetually reprinted classic text on management (Drucker, 1974, reprinted 1991). For example, we are told that "the ultimate test of management is performance" (p.24), and that performance must be measured against objectives (p.347), but that no-one knows how to measure or even conceptualise objectives (p.92): even profitability is only measured with "a rubber yardstick" (ibid). Similarly he emphasizes that managers must live with *uncertainty* (p.119) but that their decision-making must above all be "systematic" (p.120). In other words, management is formulated both as the necessity for control and as an understanding of the impossibility of control. Hence, there is an emphasis that every job has to focus on the company's objectives and thus on the need for "clear decision authority" (p.357) and, at the same time, that workers are colleagues, not inferiors (p.360) who "make genuine decisions" (p.358) and "take on the burden of responsibility" (p.233), so that "rank and file jobs are potentially managerial, or would be more productive if made so" (p.40). (Except that we don't know how to "define, let alone measure productivity" - p.167.)

The analytical power of management theory is thus undermined by its own ideology. On the one hand it promotes a self-justificatory portrayal of the senior executive as the organizational "brain", activating the enterprise by imposing objectives for all staff on the basis of management's exclusive understanding of the organization's

relationship with its economic and political environment (Garratt, 1987, pp. 74-81)(which would seem to justify Braverman's nightmare of a triumphant Taylorian hierarchy). On the other hand there is Total Quality Management (TQM), inspired by the work of Kaoru Ishikawa, which emphasises that *every* worker can (and must) take responsibility for the overall purpose of the organization and for the continued improvement of the quality of its work - *their* work. The TQM model was explicitly developed as a rejection of Taylorian theories, which Ishikawa (like Braverman) saw as responsible for the alienation of workers from the objectives and results of their work (Hutchins, 1988, pp.148-9).

However, the TQM focus on management's responsibility to establish "commitment" on the part of the whole workforce (Hakes, 1991, pp.66-8) is itself, as one would expect, highly contradictory. The commitment to "never ending improvement" which provides the motivation for staff involvement in their "quality circles" is based on supposed efforts towards "making [their] organization the best in its field" (Hutchins, 1988, p.23) within a competitive market whose main rationale for efficiency is that failure will be widespread. Hence, workers' sense of "responsibility" is constructed (through organizational procedures) as a state of mind which management aims to manipulate: "People have an innate loyalty to their group and to their company, even when their needs are not satisfied and even when they are unsuccessful" (ibid p.132). (The expectation of an absolute loyalty to a specific organization must bring profound professional dilemmas for Higher Education workers, who will rather subscribe to an *academic responsibility* towards the wider critical community of their discipline.)

TQM's confidence in its vision of no faults, no delays, and the harmonization of all organizational interests rests on a failure to address the contradictions between manipulation and responsibility, between customer sovereignty and preempting markets by anticipating and creating demand (Hakes, 1991, p.66), between "quality" as "conformance to requirements" (ibid p.61) and the continual raising of targets (ibid p.14). There are therefore grounds for hope: the inherent contradictions of the management role formulated by the model and, in particular, its commitment to the criticism of decisions by those to whom they have been delegated (ibid p.16) will ensure that industrialized educational institutions will, like their predecessors, afford conceptual and political space in which to formulate alternative practices to those anticipated in managerial rhetoric.

Conclusion: Educational Possibilities

Let us recapitulate the argument so far. The initiatives currently being urged upon higher education may be explained in terms of the ideological forces of fundamental historical developments. It is not helpful, therefore, to react with nostalgia, contrasting the malign logic of the market (mediated through the power of a profit oriented management) with a supposed "golden age" when the craft of the academic was simply the direct expression of moral value, educational need, and the search for truth: traditional university culture has its own ambivalent involvement with oppressive social and political power (Bourdieu, 1977; 1988). It is also important to note that there is a real sense in which a market decision-making structure can liberate citizens from subjection to elitist cultural authority by enfranchising them as consumers with "money votes". But it is equally clear that a market orientation (for educational processes as for any thing else) involves not simply a rational functional relevance but a systematic distortion of meaning, an evasion of questions of value, need, and ultimate purpose. To acquiesce completely in the commodification of knowledge would thus be, at the very least, a cultural disaster. It might also threaten the continued existence of humanity, since the purposes of market oriented organizations are limited to the tiny period over which accountants can claim to be able to calculate profitability, while their ecological effects are immense and hardly calculable at all. Management theory is too pragmatic, too self-serving, to acknowledge its contradictions, its inadequacies. Hence, for Higher Education institutions (as for other organizations) it is essential (for justice, for understanding, even for planetary survival) that managerial perspectives be challenged; and it is the accidental merit of modern management theory that its unacknowledged inconsistencies offer scope for such challenges. In the light of these considerations, then, let us consider how Higher Education institutions might formulate a critical response to a market-oriented ideology, through the redefinition of some key concepts.

1) Theory

"Theory" is linked etymologically with the idea of the spectator, and we have seen how Newman, for example, tried to formulate HE as insulated from worldly practices. As universities are drawn by market forces into a structured relationship with economics and politics, theory will no longer be a refuge from the world, and will have to protect itself against commodification by identifying its "use value". The separation of theory and practice will then not only be a matter for repeated lament, but will have to be addressed, not only in theory but in practice (Winter, 1991). Theory may thus finally cease being merely abstraction (and thus as readily transmuted into commodity form as money itself [Sohn Rethel, 1978]) and become (essentially, not merely as an option) intellectual critique, political challenge, and a moment in the development of practice.

2) Scholarship

The scope of decision-making within market oriented organizations is inherently limited: (i) by the priority given to the objectives of the organization), (ii) by the priority given to profitability), and (iii) by the exclusive focus on the current accounting period).

Scholarship's concern with the preservation, collection, and mastery of bodies of knowledge will thus be needed to expand the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear to inform (and hence to challenge) the limitations of market decision-making. It will offer the possibility of assembling a tradition and a multifarious range of understandings, from which alternatives can be derived and authorized. It will thus make available a variety of resources for disputing the legitimacy of managerial ideology.

3) Intellectuals

One aspect of the legitimating ideology of late capitalism is a general belief in "technical rationality", which claims that fundamental antagonisms (ie other than those of "opinion") have been abolished through rational organizational procedures and the application of innovative technology, thereby rendering obsolete any value systems beyond the calculation of instrumental means and functions (Mandel, 1978, pp.501-2). We can assume that this ideology will come to exercise increasing influence in the debates over educational knowledge, and will need to be contested. Thus, in formulating principles and objectives for the curricula offered by HE institutions, the conceptions of "the intellectual" to be found in the work of Gramsci (1971) and Gouldner (1979) will be an essential complement to the purely technical specifications which will be promoted by employers. Gramsci's work focuses on the general critical and integrative understandings which are potentially available to all citizens because they can be created upon those "general conceptions of the world" which are already "implicitly contained . . . in their practical activity" (Gramsci, 1971, p.344). Whereas Gramsci is explicitly outlining an educational programme for the future, Gouldner describes a certain aspect of (middle class) culture as though it were already achieved. But his analysis of the "culture of critical discourse", with its emphasis on reflexivity, self-monitoring, metacommunication, and problematic justification (Gouldner, 1979, pp.28-9) is nonetheless relevant for planners of HE curricula and assessment criteria. In other words, the ambition of HE staff should be that those who emerge with qualifications from our courses should not only be "employees", possessing technically relevant knowledge, but should also be (in ways derivable from the ideas of Gramsci and Gouldner) "intellectuals", and thus equipped to exploit to the full the opportunities for autonomy which the organizations in which they work are likely (following TQM principles) to make available.

4) The Educative Workplace

Reference has already been made to the increasing introduction of educational curricula based on evidence gathered and assessed in the workplace, led in the UK by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ). In many ways the current format for this work, based on pre-specified "competences", follows the organizational rationality of "management by objectives" (Drucker, 1974, p.38); but it also rests explicitly on a learner-centred educational theory (Jessup, 1991, chapter 1), and this permits reinterpretations of the competence format aimed at reintroducing educational principles, such as critical reflection upon values, into the purely market oriented version (Winter, 1992). The work of the NCVQ evokes the possibility of the "educative workplace" as an institutional form for the decentralization of knowledge creation, one of the progressive aspects of the "postmodernist" epistemology (Winter, 1991) which, together with the

"technical rationality" previously noted, constitutes the complex ideological underpinning of late capitalism (Jameson, 1984). This will pose an interesting challenge to the current institutional structure of Higher Education. However, where work is structured by the processes and relationships of capitalism there are contradictions inherent in the very phrase "educative workplace", and these are already beginning to appear. The construction industry is complaining about the narrowness of the competence-based curriculum, suggesting that managements do, in some ways, take seriously the need to increase the scope of workers' responsibilities (Callender, 1992); and evidence from the initial phases of our own workplace focused honours degree in social work suggests that staff find the pressures of the workplace so intense that finding genuine "space" for reflection is a major problem. (Winter and Maisch, 1992, pp.11, 16-17, 29).

In conclusion, Higher Education institutions are already (and unavoidably) caught up in the contradictions of capitalist development. But for higher education staff this ought not to signify the doleful ending of a sacred tradition; rather, it should constitute the current challenge to our understanding of our role in a historical process which it would be futile to ignore, and which (like earlier phases of the process) offers not only threats but also opportunities.

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