FITTING OR BEING FITTED:
Participation, Equity and the Dominant Curriculum

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We understand Marxism to be an intellectual tradition of analyzing particular situations by uncovering the conditions on which they rest and, along with that, the conditions under which they can, politically, be transformed.

(Education Group. Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. 1991:243.)

(This thesis presents my own ideas unless otherwise stipulated. It is not a joint study.)

[Signature]

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Introduction

The main part of this study was written just as the Australian Government announced its new Participation and Equity Programme (P.E.P.) aimed at increasing the number of students staying on at school as post-compulsory students to Year 12. Under the programme schools were to be funded to develop programmes aimed at providing students, who would normally have left school at age 15 or 16 relatively unqualified and unskilled, with qualifications and skills that would give them entry to employment. The objectives, as stated, were to encourage all students to stay on at school until they had completed a full secondary education or its equivalent, and to ensure that the education and training would offer all the students the opportunity to develop their individual talents and abilities and thereby ensure more equitable outcomes to education (Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1987:145).

As the increasing rate of retention at school of students to Year 12 shows, at one level the P.E.P. has worked well. In the five years from 1981 to 1986 the retention rate had increased by 40% to 48.7% for the whole of Australia, but with some states well below this level and others, like the A.C.T. well above it.

Schools have not been so successful, however, according to the Commonwealth Schools Commission (1987:152) 'in translating the specific equity objectives of P.E.P. into projects ... it appears that schools have recognised that equity issues are important but P.E.P. has not provided a clear strategy for action in this area.' At best the projects undertaken by schools were aimed at providing better access to education to students who were seen to be at a disadvantage - including students described as being disruptive, passive or truant. Evidently there is still an awareness and a concern within the education systems here in Australia, as there is in similar systems in many other parts of the world, that education just does not work for some students.

The difficult thing to explain about schooling, especially about secondary schooling, is who drops out of or who misses out from
schooling. It is difficult to explain because it is not a range of students from all social classes, cultural groups and genders whom education fails. It is, in fact, special, clearly identified, categories of students. Governments and education systems are at pains to explain why, especially, as is the case at present, when governments are desperate to ensure that adequately qualified workers are entering the market place and giving its industries a competitive edge on world markets.

So far increasing the school retention rate has not achieved this, nor is there any indication, going on past experience, that it is likely to do so. Programmes in secondary education, such as those recently announced by the Chief Education Officer of the A.C.T. (Zakharov, 1988:2), aimed at broadening curriculum choice and streaming students into vocational curricula, are not new and are no more likely to solve the problems of participation and equity for students at the greatest disadvantage than did their predecessors.

One could be cynical and ask whether equity remains an issue in education for the present Australian government. On the evidence, it seems much more concerned about maintaining the economic and social relations of the working place than in achieving more equitable outcomes to education. However, until the government formally renounces equity as an educational goal, it remains part of its educational policy. As formulated, the policy is that all students should have an equal opportunity to gain an education, at a school which meets basic material and programme standards, so that any student who wishes, and who has the necessary scholastic ability, may progress to the very highest levels of education. It is a policy that has the general acceptance and support of the Australian population.

Equity of this kind is not achieved simply by improving the school retention rate. Nor is it achieved by streaming students from educationally disadvantaged groups into vocational courses. If, as is still the case, the majority of students who complete secondary schooling, matriculate and proceed on to post-secondary education at a university or college of advanced education will be the children of professionals, high level administrators and managers, and bureaucrats
(Connell, 1977:185), then access to the highest levels of education, and to the rewards this sort of education can bring, is still, as it has long been, the privilege of the privileged. At the same time it remains the case that 'working class kids get working class jobs' (Willis, 1977:1), and they, especially if they are poor, female, of Aboriginal descent or from particular Australian ethnic communities, are most likely to drop out from or to miss out on schooling.

**Explanations of Failure.**

Equality of educational opportunity takes, as its fundamental premise, that all children, regardless of race, gender or creed, are educable and that, barring totally inhibiting factors like gross physical or intellectual impairment, a cross-section of children from the full range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds will evidence the same range of intellectual capabilities.

Consequently it could be expected that an educational system, open to all, and offering programmes of similar quality designed to achieve similar outcomes for all students, would see at its points of certification comparatively equal proportions of students from all backgrounds.

It doesn't. So, what is going wrong?

Logically, one of three things: (i) The endeavour rests on a false premise in that there is not the same range of intellectual capabilities among the socio-economic, cultural and gender groups who fail, though there may be the occasional exception who makes it; (ii) If not that, then perhaps those groups are still not getting equal access to schooling of equal, or near-equal, quality; (iii) And if not that, then somehow or other a mis-match must have developed between the students of particular groups and the school.

It is unthinkable and, on the evidence, unsupportable to accept that over 100 years of government intervention in schooling was doomed to
frustration from the beginning. Besides, any evidence establishing a link between class or ethnic background and intelligence, seems to establish only that environmental factors, not common group genetic traits, are involved (Connell, 1977:16).

So that leads on to inequality of access to schools and to schooling of quality. There is plenty of evidence still of disadvantaged schools and students. Disadvantaged in that schools are still not able to meet the material and educational needs of the students they serve. Disadvantaged, too, in that students find themselves unable to get the sort of educational service and results they expect. There is much still to be done in building and improving schools, in understanding and applying alternative pedagogical techniques to the variety of teaching/learning situations teachers now encounter, in developing relevant curriculum and appropriate curriculum resources and in improving understanding and levels of communication between the teachers and the taught. Is the answer to inequality, then more of the same, much more, and better?

If it isn't, or if it is only partly that, then we are left with the possibility of mis-match. This is a question of fit. There are deeply held beliefs among educators about what are the basic qualities and abilities students need if they are to pass easily through the education mill. The qualities are innate, the abilities are acquirable - though not all students acquire them. Students who come to schooling without the necessary qualities or with abilities undeveloped are at a disadvantage, either because of their difference or their deficiency. Before they can commence schooling they will need to acquire the basic abilities or 'cultivate' (sometimes by force-feeding) the desirable qualities. The remedy for the mis-match is firstly to attempt to change the student to fit the system. At the same time an attempt may be made to adjust the system to accommodate the student's difference, or to modify the programme to match the student's deficiency. Either way the mis-matched student is already being programmed to experience inequality, both in access to education and to its outcomes. The less successful the school is in achieving a fit with any individual or socio-economic/ethnic/gender student group.
the less likelihood there is of students achieving equality of outcomes from their schooling.

Compensatory education seems to be the preferred solution to the problem of mis-match. Essentially it tries to isolate the factors causing difference and deficiency, whether they be factors in the child's family and environmental background, or underdeveloped qualities and abilities in the child, and then attempts to compensate for them through school-based remedial action programmes, and through general social welfare programmes directed at the home or the environment. The education system's view is summarised, in relation to Aboriginal education, by one Aboriginal educator, in this way:

1. The education systems operating in state schools are seen by state educators to be suitable for Aboriginal children, if they are improved in certain ways.

2. Desirable educational outcomes for Aborigines are seen to be the same as for non-Aborigines.

In the last decade then Australian schooling systems have developed the idea that they can accommodate Aboriginal children within the general system without expecting the child to assimilate, in the educational sense (Willmot, 1978:18).

Willmot goes on to explain that educational assimilation means learning the same way as others, and that the education systems are experimenting with a process of accommodation which allows Aborigines to approach learning differently, without precluding the same outcomes.

But there precisely lies the problem, for Aborigines and everyone else the system sees as being mis-matched.

Can the student who is either different or deficient, according to the educator's definition of the child who fits the system, ever be made to fit the system? Alternatively, can a system, designed to fit a certain type of child, ever change or even want to change so as to accommodate, with the same ease and efficiency, the child who does not meet the system's norms?
This study will argue, on the basis of the documented evidence, and through an examination of Gramsci's theory of the hegemonic process through which the dominant class in capitalist society negotiates its dominance, that those who seek real equality of educational opportunity have to break the nexus between the middle class and the dominant school curriculum or else go outside the system to develop a schooling process which fits them.

In arguing this it will be necessary to establish the parameters of the problematic by, first, tracing the development in Australia of egalitarian schooling and of the egalitarian ideal, and then teasing out from the evidence the forms and levels of educational inequality and who experiences them. This done, then the compensatory and remedial efforts which the government and schools have made, can be examined, to see how successful they may have been in overcoming the problems of access to good quality schools and schooling. The question of 'fit' comes in here too, with the interest being to see what schools have done to fit the students into their systems and what they have done to accommodate their systems to the child. This sets the scene for examining more closely the nature of the mis-match between some students and the school, and for raising the possibility that mis-match is endemic to the system and may even be its implicit intent.
Chapter 1. The study of education in contemporary sociology.

1. Education and politics.

Education has always been a political activity. It has evolved, as Branson and Miller claim (1979:51), 'through the constant interaction of ideals and practical interests.' It may not always have been recognized as being political, but nonetheless it always has been. Australian Aborigines seeking to gain access to valued traditional knowledge, knowledge which may have seemed to be theirs by right of heritance, still had to enter into political negotiation to win initiation into it (Hiatt, 1986:10). Among the ancient Greeks education was not for the ordinary people as much as for the ruling elites or the military class (Nahm, 1964:211), who sought education that was designed for the training of men for public life. Medieval education was for the clergy and the children of the nobility, the estates who would control power in Church and State (Barlow, 1951:25).

Even when access to education was opened generally to all classes of people in the 19th century, there were clear differences in the quality and range of educational offerings available to students from the working as opposed to the governing classes.

In early nineteenth-century England .... the provision of free elementary education was made by charitable and religious bodies whose aim was primarily moral, and whose conception of the amount of education necessary for this purpose was of a very limited kind. The children of the poor needed to be taught Christian principles and to be able to read their Bibles, but writing was suspect and even dangerous. Moreover, although ideas on what was necessary grew gradually more liberal, the anxiety that the poor would be over-educated and made unfit for their station in life, continued at least until the end of the century. Indeed, in spite of the reforms of the early twentieth century which widened the curriculum and postponed the school-leaving age, the elementary system remained in being until 1944, providing a cheaper and more limited schooling for the children of the poor (Banks, 1971:16-17).

Weber describes the nexus between education and politics in his analysis of bureaucracy. He says.

Behind all the present discussions of the foundations of the educational system, the struggle of the specialist type of
man against the older type of cultivated man is hidden at some decisive point. This fight is determined by the irresistibly expanding bureaucratization of all public and private relations of authority and by the ever-increasing importance of expert and specialized knowledge. (Gerth and Wright Mills 1948:243).

This struggle relates, in Bendix's study of Weber's sociology, to the leveling effect of modern bureaucracy on social and economic difference, particularly the replacing of 'unpaid, avocational administration by notables', (the cultivated man), 'with paid full-time administration by professionals, regardless of their social and economic position', (the 'specialist type of man'). He adds that 'connected with these leveling tendencies is a major change in the system of education. Administration by notables usually is administration by amateurs; bureaucracy usually is administration by experts. Equal eligibility for administrative appointments means in fact equal eligibility of all who meet the stipulated educational requirements. Educational diplomas have replaced privilege as the basis of administrative recruitment .... The expert, not the cultivated man, is the educational ideal of a bureaucratic age' (Bendix, 1966:429-430).

Education, then, has been reserved for those who successfully negotiated to receive it, for those elites who were the inheritors of political power, for professionals specialising in political administration or in the sciences and technology, and increasingly for those involved in economic management. For these education has given access to political power, and to status domination. Education has opened the way to politics, but politics has equally created the demand for education and determined the appropriate curriculum.

At the same time the politics of power determined who should not receive an education and, later, who should not receive an education that gave access to political power and to status.

In education, therefore, politics plays its part in determining educational outcomes, in curriculum decision-making, in the choices and methods of schooling, in credentialling, in streaming, in administration, indeed in every aspect of the enterprise.
This being so, it is impossible to view education as a socially neutral activity. Not that sociology does, although the actual process of education did not really come under sociological scrutiny until recently. Both Young (1971:1-2) and Banks (1971:2-3) make the point that the sociological study of education took place in isolation from the educational arena, with sociologists accepting the educational problems, that the educationists defined and described, as sociological 'givens'. As a consequence, according to Young, since the problems they take from the educationist rest on assumptions that have not been made explicit, 'there is no alternative but for the sociologist to make his own problems, among which may be to treat educators' problems as phenomena to be explained .... in this way, certain fundamental features of the educators' world which are taken for granted, such as what counts as educational knowledge, and how it is made available, become objects of enquiry' (1971:2).

Referring in particular to British sociology Banks says that 'research has tended to concentrate on the demographic aspects of education and in particular on its relationship to social class and social mobility. While this is clearly an important part of the subject it is not adequate on its own, and in particular it ignores the study of educational institutions themselves' (1971:3).

It is not surprising that the sociological study of education should have focussed more on the social function of education than on its institutions, processes and politics. The functioning and the interdependence of social structures was a central theme in sociological research from Durkheim through to Parsons and beyond. Lukes, in his analysis of Durkheim's sociology of education, refers to his clear perception of education as 'a collection of practices and institutions that have been organized slowly in the course of time, which are integrated with all the other social institutions and expresses them' (Lukes, 1973:129). Lukes interprets this as saying that 'Durkheim conceived education as intimately related to each society's structure, which it reflects and maintains, and can only partially change'. Durkheim also perceived that education was to
serve both society as a unit and the multiplicity of 'social milieu
that determine the ideal that education realises' (Lukes, 1973:130).
But he did not 'pursue the implications of seeing society as composed
of conflicting groups with differential degrees of power; nor,
therefore, did he allow that features of education might be seen as
one form of the exercise of such power' (Lukes, 1973:131-132).

Parsons' sociology focuses on developing a general theory of social
systems. As good a summary of Parsons' theory of social systems as is
needed for the purposes of this argument can be found in Lockwood
(1970:428-429). He says,

For Parsons the social system is a system of action. It is
made up of the interactions of individuals. Of special
concern to sociology is the fact that such interactions are
not random but mediated by common standards of evaluation.
Most important among these are moral standards which may be
called norms. Such norms 'structure' action. Because
individuals share the same 'definition of the situation' in
terms of such norms, their behaviour can be intermeshed to
produce a 'social structure'. The regularity, or
patterning, of interaction is made possible through the
existence of norms which control the behaviour of actors.
Indeed, a stabilized social system is one in which behaviour
is regulated in this way and, as such, is a major point of
reference for the sociological analysis of the dynamics of
social systems. It is necessary in sociology, as in
biology, to single out relatively stable points of
reference, or 'structural' aspects of the system under
consideration, and then to study the processeses whereby
such structures are maintained. This is the meaning of the
'structural functional' approach to social system analysis.
Since the social system is a system of action, and its
structural aspects are the relatively stable interactions of
individuals around common norms, the dynamic processes with
which the sociologist is concerned are those which function
to maintain social structures, or in other words, those
process whereby individuals come to be motivated to act in
conformity with normative standards.

Here Lockwood cites Parsons: 'The equilibrium of social systems is
maintained by a variety of processes and mechanisms, and their failure
precipitates varying degrees of disequilibrium (a disintegration). The
two main classes of mechanisms by which motivation is kept at the
level and in the direction necessary for the continuing operation of
the social system are the mechanisms of socialization and social
control'.
Lockwood goes on to explain these two mechanisms: 'The mechanism of socialization is the process by which individuals come to incorporate the normative standards of the society into their personalities; the process of social control is concerned with the regulation of the behaviour of adults who have undergone socialization and are yet motivated to nonconformity' (1970:429).

For Parsons, the school class is one such social system and he wrote a paper on its functions in American society (Parsons, 1959). As a social system the school class 'is a system of action and involves a process of interaction between actors, between teachers and pupils and between pupils and pupils' (Demaine, 1981:20). As an agency of socialization, the school class, according to Parsons, has a dual problem: 'first of how the school class functions to internalize in its pupils both the commitments and capacities for successful performance of their future adult roles, and second of how it functions to allocate these human resources within the role structure of the adult society' (cited in Demaine, 1981:20-21).

Education for Parsons, then, is the process of socializing the pupil into internalizing the value system and the norms of the society in which, as an adult, he/she will be expected to contribute and conform. The school class will also introduce the pupil to forms of social control in the forms of assessment, promotion and streaming, which serve to fit them to their roles in adult society.

One major complaint against Parsons is his insistence that sociology, as a science, should focus on those dynamic processes which function to maintain social structures and to motivate individuals to act in conformity with social norms and cultural values. Far from people acting in consensus and far from societies being in equilibrium, people in societies individually and in groups are in conflict over power, wealth, and status, and societies themselves are constantly in change. 'Steeped in the logic of consensus and role socialisation', says Giroux (1980:225), 'functional theory left unexamined questions concerning the relationship of schools to issues of power, class conflict, and social control'. 
In education it is not how the school class succeeds in learning to conform and in accepting its adult role that is the real sociological issue. Rather, as Young and others had begun to argue in the 60s and 70s, it is what constitutes an education, what it is for and who gets it, that becomes the issue. It is the choice of knowledge content in education, the awareness that there are different social and cultural knowledges, different ideologies, that are in conflict in the classroom, that offer the real arena for sociological investigation for these authors (Young 1971:1-17).

The New Sociology of Education.

Banks (1971:3) notes that sociological research in education in Britain tended to concentrate on 'the demographic aspects of education and in particular on its relationship to social class and social mobility'. Demaine echoes this view when he says (1981:30):

"We have seen that Parsons' account of the functions of education is derived from a level of analysis of the school class as a system of interaction. Now, to some extent the sociology of education in Britain abandoned this level of analysis in that it was concerned with differentials in educational opportunity and achievement between classes."

Three decades of the sociology of education in Britain he believes has been concerned with this research. The results reveal that 'since access to educational resources, like access to medical and legal resources is subject to financial criteria at the level of the individual person, many critics of the education system have argued, correctly, that the notion of equality of educational opportunity is a sham' (Demaine 1981:30). As a consequence 'now, much of the sociology of education is concerned with a critique of inequality of educational opportunity between the classes', and 'writers .... in their conclusions resort to some combination of differences in material resources and differences in culture in explanation of differences in educational achievement between social classes' (Demaine, 1981:40).

Educational policy in Britain, America and later Australia, was now directed at offering to all students access to educational opportunity through the provision to all schools of resources of more or less
equal quality, as well as encouraging innovative programmes in schools aimed at overcoming any deficiency in student performance that could be traced to class cultural difference. But, according to Young and Whitty (1977:4), despite twenty years of such policy, 'neither the American experience, nor our own, has so far suggested that any of these innovations have made much impact on the figures which relate school achievement to social class background'.

The failure of these efforts has opened to sociologists the need to develop a new analysis of the relationship between the processes and the content of education, the nature of the societies education serves and the inequality of outcomes that students gain from it. Young and Whitty, who were among the first to bring together and to evaluate the work of the early protagonists of this new sociology of education, suggest that the theories of liberals and social democrats proved inadequate .... because they could not comprehend that the education to which they sought to widen access might itself be involved in perpetuating the inequalities they were concerned to overcome' (1977:16). Like others, Demaine is highly critical of the work of Young and others in this new sociology, but his criticism is on internal grounds, on the inconsistencies and philosophical inadequacy of their analysis. He does not question the proposition that the processes and content of education are arenas for debate, nor that educational inequality may be endemic to the educational system. He says, for instance, 'we have suggested that the major problem with the radical notion of the means of affecting educational change is not its naivety but its vacuousness; its failure to provide serious leadership in the form of progressive ideas. It provides empty slogans rather than serious analysis and ideas as the basis for policy' (Demaine, 1981:128). Later he says, 'we have rejected Young's general theory that education is necessarily the imposition of meanings of a political character and Althusser's general theory of ideology. Nevertheless, it is clear that specific curricula must be debated by socialists and their limitations exposed and combatted' (1981:135).

A more recent critique of radical sociology has come from Giroux. 'In the last decade', he says, 'Karl Marx's concept of reproduction has been one of the major organising ideas informing socialist theories of
schooling. Radical educators have given this concept a central place in developing a critique of liberal views of schooling. Moreover they have used it as the theoretical foundation for developing a critical science of education. Thus far, the task has been only partially successful (1983:257). Giroux's main criticism is that 'the discourse of radical educational theory appears to be caught in a paradox whereby its attacks on the existing relations between schools and other more powerful institutions in the dominant society tend to end up strengthening those relations' (1981:3).

Radical Sociology of Education.

By examining schools against the landscape of capitalist social relations and economic life, [radical] theories have illuminated the deep structure and grammar of class domination and inequality that bear so heavily on the purpose and processes of day-to-day classroom experiences (Giroux, 1981:3).

In the main, radical sociology of education has focussed on theories of reproduction, of domination and of resistance. All three sets of theories are inter-related in that they trace the source of educational inequality to the ideology of capitalism and to its patterns of social relations between classes and of access to economic resources.

Theories of reproduction take as their starting point Karl Marx's concept of reproduction, that 'every social process of production is, at the same time, a process of reproduction ... Capitalist production, therefore ... produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value, but it also produces and reproduces the capitalist relation, on the one side the capitalist, on the other the wage-labourer' (cited in Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985:69). Schools play their part in this process. One way they do this, according to Bowles and Gintis (1976:131) is 'through a structural correspondence between its [the school's] social relations and those of production. The structure of social relations in education not only inures the student to the discipline of the work place, but develops the types of personal demeanor, modes of self-presentation, self-image and social-class
identification which are the crucial ingredients of job adequacy'. Giroux (1983:262) describes this as an economic model and notes that Althusser agrees with Bowles and Gintis in arguing 'that the school carries out two fundamental forms of reproduction: the reproduction of the skills and rules of labour power, and the reproduction of the relations of production' (1983:263). Althusser, however, goes on to argue 'that schools within advanced capitalist societies have become the dominant institutions in the ideological subjugation of the workforce ... for it is through the force of ideology that schooling functions as an agent of reproduction. Defined in part as the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence, ideology functions within schools both to constitute subjectivity and to socialize students into the dominant society' (Giroux, 1981:5).

Thus Althusser introduces the second of the theoretical frameworks explored by the radical sociologists of education, that of the role of the school in reproducing the dominant relationship of one part of society over all other parts. This theoretical stance is usually formulated in terms of the concept of hegemony as proposed in the writings of Antonio Gramsci. Giroux (1983:275) gives this summary of Gramsci's concept:

Hegemony .... signifies, first, a pedagogic and politically transformative process whereby the dominant class articulates the common elements embedded in the world views of allied groups. Second, hegemony refers to the dual use of force and ideology to reproduce societal relations between dominant classes and subordinate groups .... Hegemony in this account represents more than the exercise of coercion: it is a process of continuous creation and includes the constant structuring of consciousness as well as a battle for the control of consciousness.

The school will obviously play a significant role in structuring the consciousness and reproducing the hegemony, and a number of radical sociologists have explored the ways in which schools do this.

Bowles and Gintis, Althusser and the theorists exploring hegemonic domination concentrate mainly on the reproduction through education of the social relations that exist in advanced capitalist societies. Another group of theorists has turned to a study of the reproduction
of the culture of the capitalist societies. 'The forms of their concern regarding issues of social control centres on such questions as how school culture is produced and legitimated. In other words, the mediating role of culture in reproducing class societies is given priority over the study of related issues, such as the sources and consequences of economic equality' (Giroux, 1981:7-8). The two whose work is most commonly cited as exponents of this approach to the study of reproduction are Bourdieu and Bernstein.

Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction begins with the assumption that class-divided societies and the ideological and material configurations on which they rest are mediated and reproduced, in part, through what he calls symbolic violence - that is, class control is not simply the crude reflex of economic power imposing itself in the form of overt force and restraint; instead it is constituted through the more subtle exercise of symbolic power waged by a ruling class in order to impose a definition of the social world that is consistent with its interests' (Giroux, 1981:8). Bourdieu uses the concepts of 'cultural capital' and 'habitus' in his analysis of how cultural reproduction happens in schools. 'Cultural capital refers to those different sets of linguistic and cultural competencies that individuals inherit by way of the class-located boundaries of their family' (Giroux, 1981:8). 'The habitus refers to those subjective dispositions which reflect a class-based social grammar of taste, knowledge, and behaviour inscribed permanently in the body scheme and the schemes of thought' (Giroux, 1981:9). Students whose cultural capital is not highly valued by the school, or whose habitus does not establish competencies that the school can use, will find themselves at a distinct disadvantage and subject to the symbolic violence of the dominant culture of the school.

Bernstein, in his analysis of cultural reproduction uses the concept of cultural transmission. He believes that a major area of sociological interest should be 'how a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public', since this 'reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control'. It should especially focus on 'differences within, and change in, the organisation.
transmission and evaluation of educational knowledge' (1977:85). 'Bernstein's work', says Giroux (1981:11), 'is particularly useful in identifying how the principles of social control are coded in the structuring devices that shape the messages embedded in schools and other social institutions'.

The main complaint that has been levelled at the theories of reproduction, both social and cultural, and even more at the theories of hegemonic domination, is that they overemphasise how the structural determinants promote economic and cultural inequality whilst underemphasising how human agency, (teachers, students and others), accommodates, mediates and resists the logic of capital and its dominating social practices (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985:96). Such criticism, however, does not deny the reproductive activity that takes place in school, through both the overt and the covert pedagogy. It opens the way, though, for radical theorists to turn their attention directly on the school 'in order to illuminate the dynamics of accommodation and resistance as they work through countercultural groups both inside and outside schools' (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985:96).

The result has been the emergence of a new emphasis in reproductive theory on the ways in which groups resist the economic and cultural dominance that is sought through schooling. 'Resistance .... represents a significant critique of school as an institution and points to social activities and practices whose meanings are ultimately political and cultural' (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985:96).

Although themselves exponents of resistance theory in education, Aronowitz and Giroux seek to push the theory beyond the shortcomings they have identified in it. They assert that 'although studies of resistance point to those social sites and spaces in which the dominant culture is encountered and challenged by subordinate groups, they do not adequately conceptualize the historical development of the conditions that promote and reinforce contradictory modes of resistance and struggle ... not all oppositional behaviour has radical significance, nor is all oppositional behaviour a clear-cut response to domination' (1985:99-100). 'A second weakness is that they rarely take into account issues of gender and race' (1985:101). 'A third
weakness ... is that they have focused primarily on overt acts of rebellious student behaviour ... what [they] have failed to acknowledge is that some students are able to see through the lies and promises of the dominant school ideology but decide not to translate this insight into extreme forms of rebelliousness' (1985:102). 'A fourth weakness ... is that they have not given enough attention to the issue of how domination reaches into the structure of personality itself' (1985:103). These weaknesses being noted they still claim that 'resistance is a valuable theoretical and ideological construct that provides an important focus for analysing the relationship between school and the wider society ... [it] represents more than a new heuristic catchword in the language of radical pedagogy; it depicts a mode of discourse that rejects traditional explanations of school failure and oppositional behaviour from the theoretical terrains of functionalism and mainstream educational psychology to those of political science and sociology' (1985:104).

Contemporary Issues In the Sociology of Education.

Education remains a political activity, the more so as states become more involved in using their coercive powers to control the curriculum and to set educational targets directed particularly to the economic objectives of the state. What Aronowitz and Giroux had to say of the United States in 1985 is certainly equally valid of other advanced capitalist economies, not the least Australia.

'In the recent past', they say, 'discussion has centred on three issues: whether schools can be the central institutions for achieving racial and sexual equality; in higher education, whether the traditional liberal arts curricula are still 'relevant' to a changing labor market; and whether the authoritarian classroom stifles the creativity of young children or, conversely, how permissiveness has resulted in a general lowering of educational achievement. All of these issues are still with us, but they have been subsumed under a much larger question: how to make schools adequate to a changing economic, political and ideological environment?' (1985:1).

As evidence of the disquiet in Australian educational bureaucracies over the content of the curriculum and over the 'failure' of schools
to successfully prepare students to fill the roles in the new employment arenas created by the application of new technology in the secondary and service industry fields, one need look no further than to the recent statements of the Chief Education Officer in the Australian Capital Territory. On the 3rd December 1987 he was reported as announcing, at a national Education Industry Conference attended by 'employers, unions and community groups', that a work-oriented curriculum was about to be introduced into A.C.T. secondary colleges directed towards 'the greater cross section of students', staying on to the end of Year 12. In making this announcement he is reported as saying,

> the move towards work-oriented courses in schools showed that there was more communication between educationists - and their classic view of education as a way to empower people through developing skills and intellectual abilities - and the economists, whose view was that education provided skilled workers for the economy (Willmot, 1987:3).

Nothing could more aptly fit the comments of Aronowitz and Giroux that conservatives have seized the initiative in education by 'joining the radical critics in announcing that the schools have failed to educate ... and ... they have coupled their point with a clear analysis of the causes and a program for curing the affliction ... They have taken their cue from radical critics who claim that sociology is merely an adjunct to the labor market. But, unlike the left, conservatives criticize the schools for failing to fulfil this function' (1985:1). [Emphasis added].

Schools, it would seem, continue to be used to maintain and to reproduce the continuing forms of social relations, economic roles and unequal statuses that identify contemporary advanced capitalist societies. Now, if anything, the methods of reproduction are to be more overt than ever, with different curricula for different students aiming to achieve different outcomes. It will be interesting to see in the next decade whether resistance grows among students and teachers to these unequal curricula and to the attempts by the schooling authorities and the state to use the school so blatantly as a weapon for reproducing economic and political inequality.
As the remainder of this study will attempt to show, the objectives of schooling, the content of curriculum and the forms of pedagogy as in the past, remain arenas of political conflict in education in Australia.
Chapter 2. Providing access to education.

There were about 260,000 children enrolled in Year 1 classes in all schools throughout Australia in 1980. The evidence, as it stands at present, is that just under a half of these students made it through to Year 12 - about 110,000 of them. It is difficult to establish what proportion of these may go on to obtain a tertiary level diploma or degree, but a generous guess would be 50% - around one in four of the original enrolment (Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1987:57-61).

The Australian people have made an immense investment in education over the last 100 years. In the financial year 1984-85 alone a total, for all purposes, Australia wide, of $7,342.9 million is cited (Australia. Dept. of Employment, Education and Training, 1987:15). That investment is made in the belief that all children, regardless of their class, culture or gender, should have the opportunity to develop their natural abilities, through schooling, to the highest possible level. It is further believed that, given the opportunity, all social classes; all cultures and both genders should be equally represented at all the points of certification within the total education system.

The fact is that they are not, and this should be a matter of concern to all Australians. Why? Because it is hard to justify spending, as the Commonwealth alone did, in 1979-80, $31.7 million dollars on Aboriginal education, $23.5 million on migrant education, and millions more besides, all directed to programmes for making education work for groups of children for whom it obviously does not work at present, if the end result is to be continuing inequality of outcomes.

Australia could get the results it is currently getting from education without many of the expensive compensatory programmes it is now funding. Despite the complaints of the current crop of conservatives, industry and commerce are being supplied with an adequately skilled work force able to maintain its present production requirements. The service industries, too, have no trouble finding qualified personnel to meet their employment needs. There is a large, and growing, pool of unskilled and semi-skilled labour available for casual, part-time
or seasonal employment. The ranks of the professionals, administrators, and managers are more than filled from the annual contingents of tertiary graduates. What does it matter if one or other social class, ethnic group or gender is unequally represented at any of these levels of stratification? So long as the education system is effectively meeting the economic, cultural and social needs of our socially stratified, culturally plural, capitalist and democratic society, that is all that should be required of it, at least so says the popular educational wisdom.

That is true. But the reality is that the education system, no matter how effective it may be in these terms, is not meeting the basic need for which it was established. It was established to give all Australian children an equal opportunity to obtain an education. The report Schools in Australia says that 'equality has been interpreted as equal access to schools of roughly equal standards, and that opportunity has centred on the possibility of prolonged schooling culminating in entry to tertiary educational institutions with a claim on higher incomes' (Australia. Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, 1973:16-17). All students, then, should have unhindered access to schools, whose standard of material facilities and equipment and quality of staffing assures them of success in achieving the highest educational level they are capable of. To reach that level students need to be able to stick with schooling as long as necessary, and be able to go on to tertiary studies after. The objective is to open up to all students the possibility of gaining the very highest rewards an education is able to offer.

At the risk of being pedantic, it is important to make clear the difference between an education and an education system. An education is a product. It is what the student gets from a system and what the system tries to give him or her. An education system is both the structure and the process which produces an education.

When the Australian States began establishing their free, compulsory and secular education systems in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century, they were prompted by the growing spirit of egalitarian democracy which, according to Lacour-Gayet (1976:158), was already
23.

evidencing itself in the 1830s, and which speedily asserted itself with the granting to the Australian colonies of responsible government and manhood suffrage (Barcan, 1980:97). The supporters of egalitarian democracy, during the period of controversy over the establishment of free, compulsory, secular education, 'were trying to have the franchise extended so that a greater number or citizens could participate in the management of public affairs. Naturally this group included the trade unions' (Lacour-Gayet, 1976:194). They supported opening up educational opportunity to all children, so that the voters could be sufficiently literate and have sufficient understanding of citizenship as to be able to exercise their franchise intelligently.

The education system that was to be established was to be such that it would ensure all children of an education, regardless of whether or not they or their parents wanted it, that poverty would be no barrier to it, and that it would make education available to children everywhere. It should also attempt to separate education from religious indoctrination. Just what that education should be, for each child, was obviously dependent on a number of factors. Throughout the nineteenth century it 'consisted of providing a narrowly conceived elementary curriculum necessary for literacy, further self-education, and the protection of democratic government' (Lawry, 1972:1). For most students education finished at the end of primary schooling, which was where the States' contribution to free, compulsory and secular education also finished.

Today, the system in all states encompasses government and private schooling from pre-schools through to tertiary institutions. It offers as an education a broad curriculum, which not only seeks to develop full literacy and numeracy, but also includes a variety of courses in the sciences, commerce and humanities. The end-points for that education are now the tenth or the twelfth years of schooling, with education to the student's fifteenth year (sixteenth in Tasmania) being compulsory. Certification at Year 10 or Year 12 levels makes it possible for the student to proceed immediately to obtain a tertiary qualification at a College of Technical and Further Education, at a College of Advanced Education or at a University.
In theory, then, the education system, as it is now structured, provides every child with access to an education, such that any child with normal scholastic ability should be able to pursue that education through to the conclusion of a tertiary course.

As has already been stated, this does not happen. Anderson has combined in preparing two reports on research into social composition of students in Australian higher education (Anderson et al. 1980; Anderson and Vervoorn, 1983). His conclusion is that, despite all the social idealism attached to education, especially in the last decade, the hope that education would lead us to the threshold of a just society in which inequalities due to personal background and circumstances have been eliminated, higher education remains as much as ever the domain of those in least need of the greater personal opportunity and self-realisation it commonly brings (Anderson and Vervoorn, 1983:2)

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Awareness of inequality of access to education underlay the decision to establish a free, compulsory and universal public education system in the first place. Later perceptions of the need to give all students an opportunity to prolong their education to the culmination of entry to a tertiary educational institution, originated from the awareness in some circles, soon after Federation and the turn of the century, of the need to provide an efficient form of secondary education in order to build a technically proficient elite capable of taking the lead in developing Australia (Bessant, 1972:124).

Free, public secondary education in Australia was certainly established as a means of upgrading the levels of technical and scientific ability within the workforce. But it also assumed that this 'technically proficient elite' could be built by drawing on the scholastic ability of all children. The aim was to develop an efficient system of education through 'the organization of an educational hierarchy of schools, leading from the primary school to the technical college or university' (Bessant, 1972:125). The curriculum of the new secondary schools was 'to be largely vocationally oriented, closely geared to the requirements of industry,
commerce and agriculture... At the same time the schools were to emphasize the duties of citizenship and the obligations these duties involved' (Bessant, 1972:123).

With these aims went the acceptance of the principle that by means of scholarships and bursaries equal opportunities should be provided for the brightest of the working class students in primary schools to enter the secondary schools and thereby ascend the educational ladder to technical college or university (Bessant, 1972:125).

Secondary education was not compulsory then, and it still is not. Nor was access to it readily available to all children, despite its being free. There were very few working class students, no matter how bright they may have been, who were able to enter on a secondary education, even with the aid of a scholarship or bursary, let alone pursue it through to university. Nonetheless, by the 1920s, 'evidence had been accumulated in England from a variety of sources that a far greater number of students were capable of profiting from full time secondary education than was previously thought possible' (Bessant, 1972:131). This evidence lead to some innovations in secondary curriculum, in Australia especially to the vocational emphasis given to it in some post-primary and junior secondary schools. In general the aim was to offer 'a core of general subjects, rather than early specialization in commercial, rural, technical or domestic subjects' (Bessant, 1972:133). This made it possible for more schools to set the passing of public examinations as an educational goal and lead to an emphasis on the competitive academic curriculum. In effect this was to narrow the range of alternative outcomes available to students and to give to universities, which controlled the public examination system, an undue 'influence over secondary courses for students most of whom were not destined for university' (Bessant 1972:133). At least, though, it did establish the perception that a university education was not beyond the abilities of a range of children from varied social backgrounds, and it lead to some changes in the system which, it was thought, might open the way for a greater number of students to undertake full-time secondary education; (see Hansen, 1923, cited in Turney, 1975:337).

The real acceptance that all children should have full access both to secondary schooling and to a tertiary education came slowly after the Second World War. By 1957 the Wyndham Report could say,
The most significant feature of this changing conception of secondary education has manifestly been the emergence of the view that secondary education is the education not of a select minority, whatever the basis of selection, either social or intellectual, but of all adolescents, irrespective of their variety of interests, talents and prospects (Turney, 1975:347).

The Wyndham report dealt with the provision of secondary schooling in NSW. It was followed by a series of similar studies on education in each of the other States - the Ramsay Report in Victoria (1960), the Karmel Report in South Australia (1969-70) and the Radford Report in Queensland (1970). Each of these looked at the need to restructure secondary schooling, the secondary curriculum and the systems of assessment, so as to make secondary schooling more accessible to and more effective for all students.

As the Wyndham report goes on to say,

The education of all adolescents' implies a proper provision for all types and levels of ability and for the wide variety of interest and need to be found in any entire school generation. What is sometimes overlooked is that this very definition of secondary education makes it obligatory for the community to provide suitable education, not only for the 'average' adolescent, but also, and on the same social and moral grounds, for the adolescent of talent and for the adolescent who is poorly endowed. In particular, we feel, no community can afford, in making full provision for all its adolescents, to lose sight of the need for identifying and cultivating talent of every kind, wherever it may be found among its youth (Turney, 1975:347).

This report, as also the others, accepts that now all students will and should proceed on to a secondary education, which should cater for all types and levels of ability' and, clearly, should enable the student to develop that ability, through schooling, to its maximum.

The Wyndham, Ramsey, Karmel and Radford reports were prompted by a perception that education was in a crisis situation. Barcan (1980:324) believes that two great revolutions took place in education in the 1950s and 60s. One was a change in society's estimation of the value of education. He says, 'Australia changed...into a society in which education, or at least the qualifications conferred by extended schooling, became important for the majority as a means of access to vocational training at higher institutions and as a means of social advancement'. The other was 'the great shift in values which
developed in the 1960s', and the pressure that that shift placed on the curriculum and on the objectives and the processes of schooling. To these must be added the mushrooming of comprehensive secondary schools in all States, in response to the increasing pressure to provide places for the growing number of adolescents who were staying on at school, and demanding an education that opened access to vocational opportunity. Comprehensive high schools 'attempted to provide a wide range of subjects to match the abilities and interests' of students' (Barcan 1980:296). Their establishment 'reflected a new type of ideology, a resentment of arrangements which allocated some children to academic secondary schools, while others were offered a different, semi-vocational, curriculum in less prestigious junior technical, junior home science and other schools' (Barcan, 1980:296).

Taken together, all three, demand for places, demand for curriculum change and demand for access to vocational opportunity, forced re-evaluation on the educational systems of all the Australian States. A major realisation to come from that re-evaluation was that the provision of education, at all levels, was growing beyond the financial capabilities of the States. Crittenden (1981:23) estimates it at 2.1% of the GDP in 1956-57 but reaching 5.8% in 1976-77. The actual expenditure by all Public Authorities in 1974-75 was $3,713 million, but this had increased by $3,000 million in 1979-80 to $6,706.1 million (Cameron, 1982:265). The Commonwealth's share of that total expenditure rose from 2.6% in 1956-57 to 38.9% in 1979-80.

THE COMMONWEALTH AND EDUCATION

The Commonwealth had early showed great reluctance to become involved in education, which it saw as purely a State responsibility (Herman & Smart, 1982:1). During the depression, and then in the war years, it found itself having to intervene, in small ways, in helping the States to establish vocational training for unemployed youth, in establishing the Commonwealth Technical Training Scheme and in establishing a Universities Commission to administer a scheme of student grants and to advise the wartime Director-General of Manpower on the use of student manpower and on the role of the universities. In 1945 the
Commonwealth passed an Education Act 'to establish a Commonwealth Office of Education and a Universities Commission, to provide for the University Training of Discharged Members of the Forces, to provide for Financial Assistance to University Students and for other purposes' (Bowker, 1972:158). By 1945 the Commonwealth had come to accept the need for it to take some responsibility for education. For a start, with it having control during and after the war of the collection and distribution of Income Tax monies, it needed to know what were the States' needs for funding for education. Then, too, it needed a federal body able to establish links with international and overseas educational bodies. There was also the fact that it was already providing funding to the Universities to provide training under the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme. The practical results of this, according to Bowker (1972:159) were

a close Commonwealth interest and intervention to assist in the necessary growth and expansion of Australian universities. This concern has inevitably led the Commonwealth to increasing participation in the provision of all forms of education. On the other hand, there has been a less direct attempt to remedy, within the existing structures, some of the more critical weaknesses of the state education systems, particularly at the secondary school level.

A series of significant Commonwealth initiated enquiries into the needs and the future of tertiary education - Gill (1950), Murray (1957), Martin (1964) - and the setting up, firstly of the Australian Universities Commission (1959) and the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Advanced Education (1965), and then their merging into the Tertiary Education committee (1977) mark the states whereby tertiary education ceased to be a State responsibility and became a Commonwealth funding and policy-making responsibility.

Primary and secondary education have not, as yet, become so completely Commonwealth dominated. However, there has been a significant growth not only, as we have seen, in its expenditure on education, but also of its influence on educational policy and planning. By 1966 the Office of Education had become the Department of Education and Science and its subsequent expansion both in fields of previous Commonwealth interests and in the acquisition of new responsibilities indicates unequivocally the determination of the federal government to exercise a leading and growing function in the future of Australian education.
either through initiatives which lie beyond the capacity of the states or through the encouragement of acceptable tendencies shown by the states' (Bowker, 1972:163). Through the sixties, apart from taking over education in the ACT and in the NT (except for Aboriginal education on the missions and settlements), it gave some stimulus to pre-schooling and child-care, and it supported the establishment of science studies and resource-based research-oriented teaching and learning in secondary schools, with its Secondary Science Facilities Scheme of 1964, and its Secondary Schools Library Programme of 1969.

The Commonwealth moved, too, to stimulate curriculum development by undertaking to assist in producing materials which are proposed by the States and have the support of more than one State Minister of Education. Its involvement in Migrant education saw it already producing English language teaching materials, and it was to provide the major funding for both a Junior Secondary Science materials project and a Social Education materials project.

THE GOAL OF EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY

The election of the first Australian Labour Party government in almost 25 years, in 1972, saw a startling increase in Commonwealth activity in education. The new Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam, had stated in his policy speech that,

> Education should be the great instrument for the promotion of equality... The Labor party is determined that every child who embarks on secondary education in 1973 shall, irrespective of school or location, have as good an opportunity as any other child of completing his secondary education and continuing his education further (cited in Barcan 1980:387).

Other planks in his education policy were the abolition of fees at Universities and Colleges of Advanced Education, and pre-schooling for all children - all of this, still, on the principle of 'promoting equality and of overcoming social, economic and language inequalities' (Barcan, 1980:308).

The Whitlam government was to act swiftly on its promises.

> In less than two years the total outlay on education from Canberra almost trebled. Within this expansion, the federal government took over all expenditure on universities,
colleges of advanced education and teachers colleges. Technical education, though remaining with the states, also received a strong boost. But it was the area covering schools, pre-schools and child-care which gained the largest increase. Here the total allocation more than quadrupled between 1972 and 1974 (Fitzgerald, 1975:230).

The most significant early statement of the government's intent in education is to be found in the report Schools in Australia, released by the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission in May 1973. The Interim Committee had been appointed to examine the position of government and non-government primary and secondary schools throughout Australia and to make recommendations on the immediate financial needs of those schools, the priorities within those needs and the measures appropriate to assist in meeting them (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:iii).

This assessment of needs and of the measure needed to alleviate them was to be placed in the context of equality of opportunity. Whitlam's policy statement had indicated the school and 'location', as well as social status, economic condition and home language as being causes of inequality. But there were indications in his statement that equality of opportunity was to mean more than equality of access to all levels of education. He was looking, too, for equality of outcomes from education.

Barcan (1980:389) believes that the Interim Committee presented this new objective rather ambivalently and produced 'a statement which started by seeking to bring a higher proportion to advanced education [and] ended by seeking to bring all children up to a basic level of skills'. If it did, it did so because of its doubts whether the one criterion of educational excellence, mastery of the competitive academic curriculum, should be set as the goal for all students. This is a widely shared doubt. Unfortunately, the rewards of educational excellence are still attached to the academic curriculum, and if the gaining of these rewards is to be placed as the objective in promoting equality of opportunity, then doubts about the suitability of the dominant curriculum may have to be set aside.

The Australian Schools Commission makes no bones about the fact that its recommendations on needs and standards are based on the positions
it has taken on social and educational questions. These positions are in turn based on the values which have most influenced its thinking and, as it says, its 'commitment to equality of opportunity as one of the prime values for its assessment of the needs of schools means that it takes very seriously indeed the injunction in its Act to have regard for the need to provide ... increased and equal opportunities for education in government and non-government schools' (Australian Schools Commission, 1978:2).

It can safely be stated that a key debate that is still taking place in Australian education is whether equality of educational opportunity means only equality of access to all levels of education, (but not necessarily studying the same curriculum or attaining the same outcomes), or whether it means equality of access and equality of outcomes, including access to the high rewards promised for mastery of the competitive academic curriculum.

Despite the Schools Commission's disclaimer that it 'has never proposed that every individual should study the same curriculum or attain the same outcomes', nevertheless, in the same breath, it says 'we can be no more complacent that schooling fairly and invariably promotes the interests of all students equally than we could when concern for equal opportunities was popularised a decade ago'. And it goes on to make it clear that by promoting 'the interests of all students equally' it means giving them access to the rewards that are dependent on reaching the highest levels of educational certification:

'For, by and large', it says, 'the traditional distribution of life chances among groups differentiated on the basis of race, class, sex, urban and rural location, and so on, remains unchanged... While some individuals alter their position in minor shuffles, parental background continues to determine opportunities more than any other factor: generally the poor stay poor' (Australian Schools Commission, 1981:13).

On the evidence there can be no doubt that it is official government policy that every student should have the opportunity to both equality of access and equality of outcomes. Nationally, all governments are spending a great deal of money to make that policy work. At the level of access funding is provided to improve school buildings, to build new schools, and especially to provide facilities that meet the
requirements of contemporary teaching/learning strategies. Schools that are particularly disadvantaged by their location or because of the special needs of the students they serve, may call on special funds to help mount programmes or develop facilities to counter their particular form of disadvantage. Access means not only access to schools which provide facilities of the standard necessary to make a modern education possible, but it means, too, access to schooling of a quality liable to produce the maximum educational result for each student. Funding is, thus, provided to train teachers in carrying out their role effectively, through both preservice and inservice training, and funding goes, too, on the provision of up-to-date teaching resources and other support material and personnel to supplement the work of the teachers. For students whose personal circumstances - geographic, social or physical- may hinder access to schools and schooling, a variety of forms of funding supports special programmes, such as those providing distance education to students in isolated situations, and provides student assistance for travel, fees, equipment and living expenses.

At the level of outcomes, funding goes into national, state and local programmes, based on research and experimentation, all aimed at improving the standards of educational performance of the majority of school students, but especially of those who perform poorly in the system. These programmes may aim to overcome the effects on students of social disadvantage, or they may attempt to redesign parts of the system which are educationally inefficient, ineffective or outdated. Whatever their immediate objective, essentially the aim is to level out the proportion of students by class, gender and ethnicity, who succeed in gaining the rewards offered through the highest levels of educational certification.

The overriding perception of education in Australia today, then, is that it should offer to all students much more than a minimum core of 'those skills, experiences and understandings deemed essential for students to master and those essential educational experiences they must have had before they leave school' (N.T. Dept. of Education, 1981:39). No student, who has the ability and the ambition to proceed to the highest levels of education, should be hindered from doing so
by any factor external or internal to the education system. Especially, no student should be denied equality of access to the outcomes of an education solely because of factors other than the student's own interest, ability and ambition.

That is the base line. That is why most parents tie themselves to from ten to fifteen or more years of financial, emotional and intellectual support of their children's education. Of course, there is the perception that education is a 'good thing', that it is character-forming, that it is the shaping of the person, that it is preparation for life - and no doubt it is all of these. But ultimately, it is about life chances, it is about freeing opportunity from the accident of class, ethnicity and genders, it is about 'making unprecedented jumps in the development of human abilities' (Willmot, 1981:10), and knowing not only that those jumps can be made but that they will be recognised and rewarded. That is the purpose of parental sacrifice and of the escalation of government support and involvement.

It is the reason, too, for this study.

The evidence of continuing inequality, unaffected by the application of the remedies, calls for an evaluation of their effectiveness. It will be important to see if there is a match between perceptions of need and the provisions made to meet them. Particularly, one needs to know if making the system work for all students is merely a question of 'fine tuning' or of 'more of the same'. If not, then it becomes necessary to probe more deeply.

The responsibility for adapting to the needs of particular students, whether as individuals or as groups, has been laid more and more on the schools. The argument is that it is the school that is best able to identify specific needs and to adapt its programmes or adopt innovative measures to satisfy the need. The relationship between the child who experiences disadvantage, the school and the whole process of schooling also, therefore, needs careful examination and evaluation. Schools, teachers and children form definitions of each other, establish expectations, evaluate performance, initiate change and structure social interactions. In doing so they, collectively or
separately, may actually aggravate rather than alleviate disadvantage. So, what happens in schools, what schools try to do to, or for, the child at disadvantage becomes a point of focus.

The final focus needs to be the aims and objectives, indeed the definitions, of what education is in contemporary Australia, and that includes its structures and processes. The whole question of how certain knowledges become valued, of how modes for developing knowledge are legitimated, of how rewards are attached to the gaining and application of specific knowledges, of how individuals are selected to receive knowledge and of how certain processes for imparting knowledge are sanctioned, needs thorough examination. It may well be that this will show that inequality of educational opportunity is already determined by forces and decisions, endemic to the system, which have little at all to do with an individual's ability to be educated, but relate rather to political decisions on who should be educated. In short, we may well find that educational inequality persists because education only works for those it is meant to work for.
Chapter 3. Defining equality and perceiving inequality

The evidence of educational inequality had been mounting for some time before the Whitlam Government referred the question of raising the standards of schools and schooling throughout Australia to an interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission in late 1972. Not only was there evidence of individual failure in the system, but already groups of students identifiable by class, geographic location, physical or intellectual handicap, ethnicity and gender, were known to be at a disadvantage in education.

INEQUALITY PERCEIVED

Although egalitarian arguments were advanced to support the establishment of free, secular and compulsory education in the latter half of the nineteenth century, they related rather to the founding of egalitarian democracies in the newly self-governing colonies, than to educational egalitarianism. There was the assumption that schooling could develop the basic scholastic ability that all children shared, and that a proportion of students from all social levels and background would be found capable of advancing to the highest levels of education. It was not anticipated, however, that many would need to proceed to these levels, or that those who would would be any other than the sons (not daughters) of the wealthy, or the very few who, by means of scholarships and bursaries, profited from their own exceptional talents. Perceptions of equality of educational opportunity for all children were limited to an intention to teach all of them basic literacy in English and numeracy skills.

Once a child reached an established standard in these skills, as determined by an Inspector of Schools, or the child had passed a certain age, it would be free to leave school. The child who completed its education up to the required standard was to receive a certificate. Those displaying unusual ability may have been granted a scholarship or its equivalent, 'an exhibition', to enable them to continue studies at one or other of the post-elementary schools which then existed. (See The Victorian Education Act of 1872, cited in
Turney, 1975:60). In the early days of State education that was where State responsibility ended.

Even so, there were already complaints about two forms of educational inequality. One came from farmers who claimed that they were disadvantaged by not having ready access to schooling. Bessant and Spaull (1976:49) report that delegates to the annual conference of the NSW Farmers and Settlers Association, formed in 1893, frequently reminded the conference of the lack of school facilities in the country areas.

They spoke of children with no chance of an education living twenty or thirty miles from schools, and of whole families being brought up illiterate because they lived more than two miles from a school (Bessant and Spaull, 1976:39).

The lack of school facilities was put in terms of educational inequality. At a 1921 Farmers' and Settlers' conference, one of the speakers spoke of the frequent complaints at country meetings of the lack of facilities, of no schools at all in many areas, and the shortage of teachers. The conference declared that 'country children do not get equal chances with town children'. This theme of equality of opportunity for the country child with the city child was reiterated throughout the 1920s and the 1930s (Bessant and Spaull, 1976:50).

The farmers were a powerful and effective political lobby. They early formed their own political party and through their parliamentary representatives of all political persuasions were able to win support for their educational needs. So successful were they, in fact, that Bessant and Spaull (1979:46) report 'that in the first half of the century the country schools received greater attention and more finance in proportion to the numbers of children attending these schools [than did the urban schools]'. When it came to the provision of secondary education facilities, the powerful country school lobby had succeeded in swinging the pendulum the other way. Speaking in 1921, Frank Tate, Director of Education in Victoria, felt that 'a strong case could be made out in favour of giving the children of the metropolitan area equal opportunities for higher education with those of country and provincial districts'. As examples of the city
children's inequality by comparison with country children he reports that thirty-five out of the eighty available government scholarships went to children in small, mainly rural schools; there were only five high schools and one higher elementary school in Melbourne, serving half Victoria's population, while there were twenty-six high and thirty-seven higher elementary schools in the country (cited in Bessant and Spaull, 1976:48). This was the situation in all States and it was to remain so through to the 1950s and 1960s.

Thus inequality of access and inequality of comparative expenditure as between city and country children evidenced itself from the early days of the Government's attempts to provide all children with an opportunity to gain a basic education.

One other form of inequality had also begun to appear with the establishment of State run education systems, - inequality based on ethnicity. It was not to draw the same public attention or political response the farmers obtained, nonetheless it did come to official attention. Various attempts were made to provide schooling for Aborigines from 1811, with the establishment of Macquarie's Native Institution at Parramatta to the mission and government reserve schools, some of which continue to the present day (see Bridges, 1958:225-243). Macquarie's purpose in providing schooling was 'to effect the Civilization of the Aborigines of New South Wales, and to render their Habits more domesticated and industrious' (cited in Turney, 1975:39). There was little perception through to the 1960s that schooling for Aborigines should do any more than this. At best it was hoped that schooling might assist Aboriginal children in assimilating into white Australian society. It was scarcely intended that it should open to Aboriginal children equality, with other children, of educational opportunity. For instance, the policy of the Board of National Education, which provided public education in NSW from 1848-1866, was that 'it was impracticable to provide education for the children of the Blacks' (Harris, 1976:1). It would seem that providing education for Aborigines just was not an issue in the debates on establishing the State government education systems. This was a matter for the Aborigines Protection Boards and the missions rather than the Departments of Education.
On the other hand, there does not seem to have been a policy of exclusion of Aborigines from the new, Government run schools. Harris (1976:1) says that there were probably 'as many as 2090 Aboriginal children spread throughout NSW public schools', when the Department of Public Instruction was formed in NSW in 1880. An attempt to exclude 15 Aboriginal children from attending the Yass Public School in 1883 brought this response from the then Minister for Education:

... no child, whatever its creed or colour or circumstances ought to be excluded from a public school (cited in Harris, 1976:2).

Unfortunately, the Minister went on to concede that the child could be excluded on other grounds, viz. that its admission might be 'prejudicial to the whole school'. In time stated Departmental policy was to be that Aboriginal children should be integrated into normal public schools, 'provided they are habitually clean, decently clad, and that they conduct themselves with propriety, both in and out of school' (cited in Harris, 1976:2). That gave schools, and parents, considerable scope for complaint and action. Aborigines, as a consequence, were excluded from schools, though not everywhere. Eventually, the Government had to begin making alternative schooling arrangements for Aborigines who wanted schooling. By 1940 there were forty special schools solely for Aborigines in NSW, and exclusion of Aboriginal children from Public Schools at the request of the white community was virtually the Department of Education's policy (Harris, 1976:3).

On the evidence the story is not dissimilar in other states. Around 1880, the South Australian Council for Education 'ruled that it had no power to exclude Aboriginal children from a public school' (Anon. 1982:8). On the other hand no concerted attempt was made to provide education for Aborigines in Government Public Schools. Similarly, in Queensland, there were some cases of racial prejudice among parents but the Department's policy was always as stated in a letter to a complainant in 1934. 'It has always been part of the educational policy of this State that children who are otherwise eligible as pupils shall not be refused admission to any school on account of race of colour' (Holthouse, 1975:174). Most of Queensland's Aborigines, as also South Australia's, at the time were confined to Government
settlements or to missions, anyway, and that was where they got their education.

The fact that some Aboriginal children could be, and were, excluded from schools, even if the official justification was good order, cleanliness or propriety rather than 'race or creed', is evidence of unequal treatment in the educational system, certainly in gaining access to education. There was inequality, too, in the purposes of education, in that, for Aborigines, it aimed first of all to civilise and Christianise them, and then, later, to help them assimilate into white Australian society. There is further evidence of inequality in that in Aboriginal schools run by the Aborigines Protection Board and on settlements and missions throughout Australia, schooling was provided in substandard buildings by untrained staff through a restricted curriculum which produced no end certification.

Long before Australia's federation, then, inequalities in access and in the provision and purposes of education had begun to evidence themselves in the state systems.

BROADENING EDUCATIONAL CHOICE

In the ten year period from 1905 to 1915 'each State Department of Education took the decision to develop State wide systems of post-primary education' (Bessant, 1972:124). Arguing at the time the need for the Government to organise all grades of education, a NSW Commission in Primary, Secondary, Technical and other brands of education in 1904 explained 'the significance for a people of higher primary and secondary education' as being the need to prepare qualified people to 'direct human activity' in education, commerce, engineering, the military forces and so on. As the Commissioners' Report put it

In Europe it is recognised by all educational authorities that a national educational system cannot neglect the education of the few, on which the efficiency and wise direction of the effort of the many, and the proper instruction of the many, depend (cited in Turney, 1975:81).
The Commissioners had in mind the emergence, through an organised system of education covering post-primary as well as primary schooling, of an educated elite. Bessant (1972:124) refers, rather, to 'a technically proficient elite capable of taking the lead in developing Australia'. The Commissioners' reference to Europe's recognition of the need to develop such an elite is, it would seem, a reference to the emergence of Germany's growing economic, industrial and military power, 'a growth largely attributed to her emphasis on scientific and technical training at the secondary and tertiary levels' (Bessant, 1972:124).

The decision to develop State wide systems of post-primary education may have been a knee-jerk reaction by the administrators of the State Education Departments to Germany's expansionist policies, but its effect was to broaden the range of educational opportunity available to students. For, along with seeing the new, largely vocationally oriented, secondary schools as 'the training grounds for national defence and the nurseries of the nation's morality', where 'the duties of citizenship and the obligations these duties involved' would be emphasised, there went the acceptance of the principle that by means of scholarships and bursaries equal opportunities should be provided for the brightest of the working class students in primary schools to enter the secondary schools and thereby ascend the educational ladder to technical college or university (Bessant, 1972:125).

These moves of 1905 and 1915 did not signal the beginning of secondary education. Secondary schools of church or private foundations had existed from early in the 1800s. Government High Schools had begun to be established in the 1880s. They were not free, and they had to compete, not too successfully, with the existing private schools in trying to attract students.

The curriculum in the private grammar schools and in the State high schools was controlled by the universities, who ran the matriculation and the later junior and senior public examinations. The aim of these courses was to lead students to a university, or to provide entry to commerce, the public service or to other higher clerical employment. The secondary curriculum reflected these aims with its emphasis on the
university subjects of classical literature, mathematics, English, history and geography, and on a broader vocational subject range including modern languages, music, bookkeeping, drawing and shorthand. This pattern of secondary education had existed since the 1850s, and it had succeeded in establishing this particular form of academic curriculum, in the minds of parents and in the practice of teachers as the secondary education.

The importance of the establishment of this particular curriculum's domination of secondary education right from almost its beginning, and long before the emergence of government secondary schooling, cannot be too strongly emphasised. That domination continues through to the present and shows no sign of lessening. The ultimate goal of contemporary schooling is the university or the Academic College of Advanced Education. Even though the Universities have now surrendered their control over the public examination system, in so far as such systems or substitute forms of student assessment operate, they do so mainly to accredit students for tertiary entrance and are designed with tertiary education requirements in mind.

Over 130 years of educational tradition is not easy to break, especially when that tradition is linked to the granting of privilege and status in the community.

FROM VOCATIONAL TO COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLING

State high schools offering academic curricula leading to university or to careers as high level clerks were not exactly what the educational administrators had in mind when they set out in the early 1900s to develop a 'technically proficient elite'. In New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria the plan was to attempt to provide post-primary education for the large number of students who would normally leave school on the completion of their primary schooling and commence work. The object was to make sure that school-leavers had some skill and training, besides literacy, to carry into the marketplace (see P. Board, cited in Turney, 1975:316). Private and government academic secondary schools catered for those students who were seeking a professional career, and there were technical colleges
to provide training 'for the young man of from 18 to 20 years of age, who, having chosen an industrial career and worked at it for three or four years, finds the need for more complete instruction to make himself an efficient workman' (P. Board, cited in Turner, 1975:319). Nothing was being done, however, for the students who left school at fourteen or under to work in industry, but with no intention of taking up engineering careers, or doing further studies to advance their industrial careers. For the sake of the nation, if for no other reason, it was important to train workers who could bring intelligence and understanding to the practice of their craft.

All this concerns Australia greatly, said the Victorian Director of Education in 1908. So long as we share the undoubted benefits conferred by membership of the Empire, it is surely our duty to uphold it by developing at this end of the earth a sturdy, self-reliant race, able to work with brains and use to advantage the best results of the world's knowledge (F. Tate, cited in Turney, 1975:317).

The new junior technical schools, introduced with the primary object of building up a more efficient system of technical education, which came into existence from around 1910 on, would provide an education by which the young student at every stage shall learn not merely how to do things skilfully, but why he does them in a particular way, an education that will save the artisan from being himself a machine by enabling him to see the work of his hands in its relation to the whole scheme of which his work is a part, and that will at the same time give him some interests that lie outside the routine of his daily toil (P. Board, cited in Turney, 1975:320).

In Victoria, as also in the other States, the system of junior, secondary technical schools joined a growing range of government post-primary schooling options being offered to students. They included high schools, higher elementary schools, preparatory trade schools and evening continuation classes. This range made it possible, as the Chief Inspector of Technical Schools in Victoria explained in 1914, for those 'boys' who had gained the Qualifying Certificate at elementary (primary) school to go on to do a full (academic) secondary course leading to a professional or higher clerical career. For the high proportion of 'boys' who had no chance of gaining a Qualifying Certificate during their period of compulsory schooling, or the large number who obtained it but did not aspire to a professional or clerical career, their future lay in some industrial occupation and
'their training must be given in the State school, and their future training, if any, in the technical school' (D. Clark, cited in Turney, 1975:321).

What had already emerged in education, and was to continue through into the 1940s, was a two-tiered system directed towards students differentiated by intellectual ability and by career aspirations, which offered curricula and curriculum approaches suited to the needs and abilities of the students, and had as their outcomes different objectives and unequal consequences. The staunchest advocate of the junior technical school was adamant that this was the way to go, and that, more and more, post-primary education should aim at providing a variety of courses in a variety of forms. 'The time will come', he said, 'when almost the whole of our secondary schools will become vocational schools, and the courses will be adapted to the needs of the students instead of the student being squeezed into the mould designed by the schoolmaster' (D. Clark in 1915, cited in Turney, 1975:330).

Opposition to the purely vocational, technical curriculum was strong within educational administrative circles, mainly because it seemed to be raising false expectations in the minds of parents. 'A great deal of harm has been done in Victoria through parents and pupils thinking that a course of a year or two in a junior technical school was a technical course in itself and not, as it really is, a course preparatory to a genuine technical training', said F. Tate in 1928 (Turner, 1975:331). What was needed, according to these critics, was a course which would aim 'to continue general education of a humane and liberal character, to arouse and strengthen the practical interests of pupils to give them a measure of practical skill, to enable them to reveal vocational aptitudes' (F. Tate, cited in Turner, 1975:331). There was no opposition to the perception that the varying abilities and aptitudes of students called for a range of educational options offering a number of alternative outcomes. The opposition was to too early a specialization, and this opposition sprang from adherence to an educational theory which held that specialization should follow and be based on a broad, general education which aimed not only at developing the basic three Rs, but included general
intellectual and cultural development and the shaping of a social sense.

Mr P. Hanson, the Victorian Chief Inspector of Secondary Schools, used this theory in pleading, in 1923, for increased access to secondary education for all students:

We have far to go before we attain a universal system of secondary education for all normal children up to 16. Yet the achievement of this is essential, and the enrichment of opportunities for education beyond that stage is also essential. In the years between 12 and 16, the foundations for specialization should be laid by providing a sound general education, the encouragement either to specialize or to enter industry before 15 should not be given (Turney, 1975:337).

Apart from arguing for a common system of general education for all 'normal' students up to 16, Hansen also advocated removing the economic barriers which resulted in students having unequal access to secondary education. He identified the scholarship system and the charging of fees as a means by which 'the cream of intelligence' and the children of the 'well-to-do' were advantaged, whilst other students, who were capable of profiting from a complete secondary education, could not afford it.

Throughout the late 1920s and the 1930s the struggle for control between the general academic curriculum and the vocational curriculum was to continue. But the general academic curriculum was to maintain its position as the course providing a real education, one that required real scholastic ability in the student and the one that really opened to the student access to opportunity. The vocational curriculum and the schools which offered it were the lesser alternatives, open to the duller student or to those who could not afford a real education.

The pendulum was to swing, as it still does, between education for work and education for the university. All secondary schools now offer a general introductory programme in their first and second years, with a gradual identifying of the abilities and aptitudes of individual students. This leads to the selection of a course up to Year 10 which may emphasise academic subjects and offer the
possibility of further academic specialization in Years 11 and 12, or which may propose a mixture of academic and technical subjects, including arts and crafts, music, drama, agricultural science, home science and manual arts, which could still lead to specialization in Years 11 and 12, or could provide the basis for trade and other technical training on the completion of Year 10. It remains true that a full, secondary education is still seen to be one that takes a student through to Year 12 and on to entry into a degree or a diploma course at a university or college of advanced education.

This broadening of educational options, whilst attempting to offer a range of courses and schools to suit both the needs of students and the economic development of the country, could only be of use if students had access to them and if they were able to achieve their objectives. The problem of access was to continue until the late 1950s for many students, and for some it still does.

ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS

Although primary education in the public schools had been free to all students from around the 1880s, there was not the same readiness to make post-primary education available to all until after the Second World War. During the Depression years, particularly, there was an attempt to cut back on this availability. Thus, a Board of Inquiry into Education in Victoria in 1931 'agreed that the extension of secondary education had gone too far. It recommended higher entry standards and increased fees for Victorian Secondary Schools' (Bessant, 1972:138). In the next year the new NSW government was also under pressure to reimpose high school fees. Bessant (1972:138) summarises the reaction, saying:

These moves, together with the imposition of fees in secondary schools in South Australia and Tasmania, the curtailment of secondary school building, and the slow down and cessation in some States of the training of secondary school teachers, constituted a severe set back to the advance of popular secondary education in Australia from which it had not fully recovered at the outbreak of war in 1939.
Entry into secondary education then was to be limited to the availability of school places, by the process of selection, by what families could afford and by the number of qualified teachers being recruited and trained. Clearly, this was a long way from commitment to full equality of educational opportunity for all students.

A number of educational reforms were mooted, and some agreed on, in the years immediately before, during, and following the Second World War. In 1936, for instance, the directors of education, meeting in conference, agreed to raise the minimum school leaving age to 15. The decision was not implemented in most States until after the war, but it was to have the effect of increasing the demand for places in secondary school and the need for teachers. Reforms of the examination systems were under way in the States, too, with Tasmania leading the way in 1938 by replacing the University awarded Intermediate Certificate with a choice of one of two independent certificates, of government or independent school origin. These moves were in line with a long expressed concern that universities should have controlled the content of the academic secondary curriculum. They also reflected new theories on evaluation and assessment which had developed from psychological studies of childhood intelligence. When the High School Entrance Examination was finally abolished in NSW in 1943, it was replaced by a 'composite mark, based on the academic performance of the child and an intelligence test' (Barcan, 1980:279). The reforming of the examination system, and its refining, remain features of educational progress to the present day in all States. It, too, made for an increased demand for school places, for trained teachers, and for reevaluation of the secondary curriculum.

The move to make secondary schooling free to all students gathered strength. By 1947 secondary schooling was free to most students in all state secondary and technical schools. South Australia had abolished fees in 1943 and NSW rather earlier. In Queensland students proceeding on to secondary schooling after passing the end of primary public scholarship exam paid no fees. South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania were to make this reform somewhat later. (Barcan, 1980:280).
There is no doubt that these moves to open access to secondary education were inspired both by educationists influenced by reform movements in education in other countries, and by idealists inspired by the egalitarian philosophies which gained strength as the war progressed. The Victorian Education Reform Association expressed this deal in 1939, claiming that 'an increase in educational facilities is the best insurance not only for success in war, but for the solution of the intricate problems that will ensure peace. We are certain that education and democracy stand or fall together' (Quoted in Barcan, 1980:274).

Two other changes of the war years that were to make possible, eventually, the achievement of the final acceptance of the ideal of equality of educational opportunity for all students, and the provision of the means to make it possible, were the decisions to hand over to the Commonwealth government control of a centralised system of tax collection, and the Commonwealth's interventions in technical and university education.

EQUALITY THROUGH GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

Commonwealth involvement in education began slowly and reluctantly. Under the Federal Constitution, education remains, as it still does, a State responsibility. Some Commonwealth funding went early on into contracting for educational services for the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, and some, too, went into stimulating university research in the biological and physical sciences (Bowker, 1972:149-151). But even before the Second World War there was discussion of whether the Commonwealth should be subsidising States to help improve their educational efforts, and to equalise the quality and conditions of those efforts between States. There were also suggestions that it might, as part of its census activities, compile educational statistics and provide the States with other educational data. The Year Book of Education 1935 argues, very hesitantly, that the Commonwealth as 'the chief purse holder... cannot remain indifferent if its future citizens are not getting all that
they should be getting in the way of education', but it then hastened to add, 'the suggestion of the possibility of Federal aid for State education would at once arouse opposition in Australia' (quoted in Bowker, 1972:153). The question of States rights was as contentious, it would seem, in the 1930s as it is today.

The one area where Commonwealth support for schooling was sought was in the area of technical training. This was understandable, since it was commonly thought that it was mainly the unskilled and untrained, especially the young school leavers, who were unemployable in the Depression years. Provide vocational training for unemployed youth, went the argument, and the problem of youth unemployment would disappear. Eventually, in 1937-38, the Commonwealth bought this argument and began making short-term funding available for vocational training.

Slowly the principle was being established that the Commonwealth might provide funding to the States to support educational programmes which had significance nationally, that it might intervene in areas which touched on education but for other than educational reasons. The establishing in 1938, of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres in each of the six capital cities as pre-school demonstration centres, but under the Ministry of Health, and the founding of a Council for National Fitness to undertake health and fitness education, in 1939, are cited by Bowker (1972:154-155) as examples of the Commonwealth's 'modest interest in isolated, tangential fields of education'.

In 1941 the Commonwealth reached an agreement with the States on a uniform taxation proposal which left it to the Commonwealth to impose and collect common income taxes throughout Australia, on the understanding that it would distribute funds to the States according to an equitable formula. From this time on pressure began to grow apace to seek a greater Commonwealth investment in education. Bessant and Spaull (1976:98-138) document the orchestration of the moves to seek Federal assistance to schools, starting with moves by teachers' representatives to discuss financial assistance for schools with W.M. Hughes in 1921 and following through to the policies of the Whitlam governments of the early 1970s. They quote A. Grenfell-Price, writing
in 1943 on the significance for the future of Australian education of the uniform taxation agreement, as saying that the Federal government 'probably assumed the chief responsibility for future educational advice.' But supreme financial power brings with it... supreme responsibility and this responsibility the federal government must face' (1976:101). Further, they quote R.G. Menzies, in a policy speech in 1949, saying that while education remained a State responsibility, due to the taxation system the Australian Government would have 'to assist financially if education is to progress and to be justly available' (1976:102). This speech of Menzies is significant not only in that it acknowledges the Federal government's responsibilities arising from its control over funds based on personal income taxes, but also in acknowledging that need and justice in education were to be the justifying reasons for Commonwealth intervention. It was Menzies, in fact, who began to make education a Federal matter, and Bessant and Spaull (1976:102) have him openly promising Federal aid to education as early as 1945. When he eventually became Prime Minister in 1949, however, he made this aid contingent on the Government being asked for it by the State Premiers. In 1958 his position was still the same when he told a deputation from a conference on education 'that the states had never approached the government for a special grant to education' (Bessant and Spaull, 1976:106).

Education, as a national political issue, began to take more prominence from about this time on. The Teachers Federations, in particular, were active both in campaigning for public support for Federal funding for education and in urging the Premiers to seek funds. The Labor Party began to take notice of this campaign. In 1951 it had made Federal funding for assisting all forms of education part of its platform. In 1961 it established an Education Standing Committee and in that same year the ALP Federal Conference adopted an educational policy which placed an emphasis on 'assistance for physical and technical training and to overcome inadequate physical facilities in schools' (Bessant and Spaull, 1976:109).

Menzies went into an election in 1963 promising 'competitive scholarships for secondary and technical schooling, an annual grant of
5 million to the states for building and equipping technical schools, and a 5 million grant to provide for science laboratories in public and private schools' (Bessant and Spaull, 1976:112). The decision to enter directly into providing financial assistance to schools and schooling was probably motivated both by the need to counter the ALP's policy, and the fear that the Western countries were falling behind Russia in technical and scientific training and development. Much the same sort of reaction, in fact, as that which underlay the introduction of technical schooling in the face of German expansionism in the years before the 1914-18 war. Whatever the motivation and, indeed, whatever the political and educational repercussions of the policy, and they were considerable, the most important result of the decision was that the Federal government was finally committed to supporting and developing education in full - pre-school, primary, technical, secondary and university education.

This was not yet a commitment at Federal level to full equality of educational opportunity for all students, but Menzies' espousal of need and justice as the basis of Federal funding, the provision of financial aid (scholarships) to students and the decision to provide aid, limited though it be in form, to private schools, were all straws in the wind. The Liberal-Country party coalition was not to take this schools aid policy much further during the remainder of the 1960s. There was a gradual extension of aid at both Federal and State level to non-Government schools, with the Federal government moving into funding school libraries and State governments directly subsidising school fees. The main thrust in Liberal-Country party policy, however, was towards the extension of tertiary education, on the advice of the Martin Committee on the future of Tertiary Education in Australia (1964), and in pursuance of the growing involvement in tertiary and technical education the Commonwealth had committed itself to during and after the Second World War.

The Labor party, in the meantime, after some ideological dithering, took the pragmatic course and embraced first of all the principle of State aid for independent schooling and then a policy of aid to all schools on the basis of need. All through the fifties and sixties the need for Federal aid to schools had been argued on the inability of
State governments to meet the demands from schools for student places, for facilities, for trained teachers, for special provisions for students with particular learning needs and for reform of the curriculum. The Teachers' Federations and the State systems themselves had all identified, in a number of surveys, the shortcomings of the systems and where the demands were for change. It was from these representations that the 'needs policy' of the Labor Party took shape. It resulted in a decision, one of the first to be implemented by the Party when it came to office in 1972, to establish an interim committee for the Australian Schools Commission. It was to make recommendations, based on an examination of the position of all schools in all States and Territories, as to their financial needs, priorities in needs and ways to meet them. The object was to establish acceptable standards for those schools which fall short of standards of building, of provision for students with special needs, of curriculum relevant to students' needs and of specialised learning areas.

EQUALITY THROUGH THE COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM

The one factor which, more than anything else, placed pressure on Australian governments for a massive increase in educational spending in the years after the Second World War was the rapid increase in the number of students demanding secondary school places. Barcan (1972:202) attributes this demand to a revolution in attitudes, from a society which placed little value on schooling to one 'in which education, or at least qualifications obtained through schooling, was important for the majority as a means, not so much of vocational preparation as of access to vocational training at the tertiary level'. In other words, education through schooling in the post-depression, post-war years, was being viewed as a means to social advancement and security. Bessant and Spaull (1976:80) emphasise this saying that 'the recognition of the liberal tradition in education of personal development for its own sake' was the least of the motives for seeking a post-primary education. They go on,
The predominant attitude appeared to be that increased secondary schooling would return better employment opportunities in an expanding economy and in turn this would improve the material basis of personal life.

It was soon to become apparent, indeed it had long been apparent, that prolonging the period and raising the level of a child's education does not necessarily lead to 'better employment opportunities'. To do that the schooling would have to be effective in providing cohorts of students from varying social and ethnic backgrounds, of differing genders, with a wide range of interests and levels of ability with teaching/learning programmes designed to provide each student with what they would consider an education, what their teachers assess as an education and what the market-place values as an education. It continued to be evident throughout the fifties and sixties that having access to secondary schooling in itself was no guarantee of an improvement in one's life chances. Nonetheless 'there was a widespread acceptance of the relationship between schooling and social mobility, although this was not always clearly confirmed in practice' (Bessant and Spaull, 1976:80). So schools and teachers came under increasing pressure, not only to provide schooling for the adolescents staying on, but also to produce a schooling which gave students the educational result their parents expected. The demand was for schooling, but, more importantly, it was for schooling that got results.

The twin effects of this demand were a re-evaluation of schools and of curriculum. The Ramsay Report of 1960 on State Education in Victoria (Turney, 1975:349-351) summarises the schooling options that were available to students on the completion of their primary schooling, and warns of the implications of making a schooling choice:

The situation in metropolitan and provincial areas and some country towns at the present time is that a sixth-grade boy is faced with a choice between high and junior technical school and a girl with a choice between high, girls' and, in some areas, junior technical school. Once the choice is made, it is rarely altered. The child's future vocation is very closely related to the kind of school chosen.

The compilers of the report felt that students about to enter secondary education, at about the age of twelve, were too young to decide or to have their future careers decided for them. They thought
the choice should be delayed and that children should not be separated into different courses with different subjects or into different schools at this age, under normal circumstances. The ideal, they thought, would be for all children to be able to pass automatically from primary to a common form of secondary school, 'each providing a full range of the subjects and courses at present offered, although with a modified organisation which would provide opportunities for all children to explore and exploit their interests in the first two years, before any form of specialization were undertaken'. They designated this form of schooling 'comprehensive secondary' (Turney, 1975:351).

The recommendations of the Wyndham Report on Secondary Education in NSW, of 1957, had stressed that the view that secondary education is the education of all adolescents, irrespective of their variety of interests, talents and prospects, 'implies a proper provision for all types and levels of ability and for the wide variety of interest and need to be found in any entire school generation' (in Turney, 1972:347). This report, recommends that all primary students should proceed automatically ("without examination") to secondary education in comprehensive secondary schools, where students would be guided, on the completion of a first year common core of subjects, to select subjects to add to the core to be followed through to the end of their fourth secondary year. After examination they might end their schooling here with a School Certificate, or they might proceed on to a more specialised Higher School Certificate acceptable as a test for university entrance.

The Karmel Report of 1969-70 on Education in South Australia in turn plumped for comprehensive secondary schooling stating that 'the two separate school types (area and special rural schools) and the existence of sex-segregated secondary schools we regard as reflections of past social conditions without relevance to present needs' (in Turney, 1975:351).

The other States moved, in so far as they needed to do so, also to comprehensive secondary schooling, each providing, as the Karmel Report specified, 'a full range of courses and allowing a pupil to
progress in different subjects at different rates where appropriate' (Turney, 1972:352).

The decision to admit all children automatically into secondary schools after completing primary, and offering them a common comprehensive programme, meant, as the Wyndham Report pointed out, that the school would have to pay close attention to the needs of each student as judged from their ability and interests. It would not be sufficient to have each student following through, at the same rate, exactly the same course. There should be a choice of electives around a core, as the Wyndham Report saw it, or a range of courses with different subjects, as the Karmel Report recommended, all leaving possible a final selection of specialisation at Year 10 from the full range of career options.

Introducing this sort of 'catering for all tastes' curriculum was not easy. In most States the universities continued to control both the intermediate and the leaving certificate examinations, or their equivalents, into the 1970s, though the abolition of the qualifying examinations for the move from primary to secondary schooling had been completed by 1961. This meant that the academic curriculum continued to dominate the courses students were offered. It was the core all students were to follow through to year 10, even if only in a modified form, and it was the core that carried the most weight for university entrance. This was to continue to be the case even after State education departments moved, during the 1970s, to do away with external examinations and to replace them with systems of internal assessment.

The liberalisation of the secondary school curriculum... was not always easy, either because teachers were prisoners of their own academic schooling, and therefore reluctant to abandon their traditional approaches, or teacher training had not prepared teachers sufficiently for implementing curriculum change. Hence efforts towards reforming the curriculum have proceeded slowly and erratically throughout the post-war years (Bessant and Spaull 1976:85).

By 1972, then, the situation was that children in all states were no longer hindered by examination or cost from moving from primary to secondary education. The compulsory school leaving age of 15, in most
states, meant that adolescent students, bringing with them a range of values, attitudes, beliefs, interests and abilities, would be looking for spaces in secondary schools. The pressure was on schools and teachers primarily, and on the state systems, both government and non-government, to provide these students with an education which not only built on and developed their scholastic abilities, and matched their interests and personal developmental needs, but also enabled students to improve their employment opportunities and to broaden their life chances. Equality of educational opportunity was becoming no longer a matter of equal access to schooling. It was now also a matter of equal access to outcomes which opened up life options and opportunities.

OPPORTUNITY AS ACCESS OR OUTCOME

It becomes essential at this point to ask how broadly was this fuller perception of equality of educational opportunity accepted and how fully was it and its implications interpreted?

Fitzgerald (1975:231), says that, in the 1940s, 'both activists and the intellectuals argued the case for equality of opportunity in terms of improved resources of buildings, books and manpower for the schools' together with 'professional leadership from the top'. He does not see public and political debate progressing much beyond this at the time he was writing, and claims that any extension of the debate was due to the different interpretation given to 'equality of educational opportunity' by the Schools in Australia report (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee 1973).

Looking back on views he expressed in 1970, Bassett (1976:23) says that the main emphasis then 'in equalizing educational opportunity was in making education available to all, recognizing their equal right to education rather than their right to equal education', whereas, 'the concern of the period since could be fairly described as with equalizing the quality of education while at the same time making
opportunities more realistic by expanding and diversifying facilities, and by removing or reducing financial barriers for students'.

Both Fitzgerald and Bassett attribute this change in emphasis to the Interim Committee for the Schools Commission. It was not, apparently, politically motivated, since Fitzgerald (1975:231) says that the Labor Party platform in 1971 and the policy speech of the Party's leader in 1972 interpret the notion of equality of opportunity as one of uniformity of provision. It is Fitzgerald's view, and in this he supports Barcan (1972:202), that a considerable ideological shift occurred in the mid-1960s, in which the needs of the individual were emphasised above those of society. The consequence was a growing emphasis in schooling on individuals, and on accountability for individual performance. In other words, schools could no longer point to exam statistics as evidence of their success in education, and discount the students who failed exams as normal wastage. With all students being guaranteed equal opportunity of access to education right through to the highest levels, schools, as the Wyndham Report had emphasised, had 'to provide suitable education, not only for the 'average' adolescent, but also, and on the same social and moral grounds, for the adolescent of talent and for the adolescent who is poorly endowed' (in Turney, 1975:347).

The reality for the schools, for teachers and for the educational administrators in the 1970s, was that over a decade of experience of mass enrolment of students, with the wide discrepancies in abilities and interests, had revealed a great disparity in educational outcomes. With this went an increasing problem of what to do with those students who were not coping with school and were becoming a burden there to teachers, to school discipline, to their parents and to themselves. Schools had tried streaming - separating students by ability levels and grading the quality and choice of curriculum offerings to meet their interests, abilities and ambitions. This process, like the earlier practice of directing students straight from primary school into the vocational stream, had the effect of depriving a large number of students of an education which could later be the basis for a marketable specialisation in a higher level course. It was very quickly realised, in schools, that they were providing child-minding
services for a fairly large percentage of students, who were filling in time at school waiting until they reached the statutory school leaving age. According to the Australian Schools Commission (1979:58) in 1976-77 twelve per cent of that year's school leavers, about 30,000 students, left from years 7, 8 and 9 and a further 89,000 had left from Year 10. Since a proportion of those leaving at Year 10 would not have completed the requirements for a pass level in the Year 10 certificate, it follows that a large number of students leaving at the statutory age, or near to it, would not carry with them any educational qualifications which would entitle them to undertake further education at technical college level, or enable them to seek any employment which required such qualification. For the parents of these children it could scarcely be said that their investment in their children's education had produced even a 'suitable education' let alone one that improved their children's life possibilities. Nonetheless, their children did have access to education, and there was a school of thought which held that if they did not profit from the opportunity it was either their own fault, or else it was beyond their capabilities.

Individual failure in education can be, and is, attributed to a variety of causes, not all related to intellectual ability. Some students are seen to be medically irredeemable and educationally irretrievable. Others may achieve partial educational success, or even complete success when accompanied by extreme endeavour and ingenious innovation. One thinks, for instance, of the education of the deaf and blind Helen Mackellar. On the whole, though, it must be accepted that some students are not educable by the processes and in the forms normally identified with education. They may be, of course, and are educated under alternate programmes to achieve other educational goals, in line with their own educational needs and abilities.

Other examples of individual educational failure raise questions, serious questions, about the causes of failure. This is especially so when the individuals are seen to share a common socio-economic background, ethnic culture or gender, and thus constitute a large, cohesive grouping in the student body, which can be identified as a
group that is likely to experience educational failure. Examples of this also raise questions about the ways in which schools identify individuals as belonging to groups that fail, and about how schools and teachers react to that identification.

THE SCHOOLS COMMISSION AND THE EQUALITY DEBATE

By the time the Interim Committee for the Schools Commission was appointed in December 1972, the fact of inequality within the schooling system, and its causes, were being freely debated, at least among educationists and sociologists. Connell et al. (1982:219), see the Committee's report as an attempt to respond to this inequality debate.

The report, Schools in Australia, was directed to the terms of reference laid down for the Committee, when it was appointed, by the then Prime Minister, the Hon. E.G. Whitlam. The terms of reference were extremely narrow and had to do solely with determining what were the funding needs of all schools, priorities in them, and the ways of funding which would make it possible to establish 'acceptable standards for those schools, government and non-government alike, which fall short of those standards' (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:3). The narrowness of these terms made it difficult to consider, adequately, the full range of inequalities based on factors not related directly to the school facilities and resources. It also made it difficult for the Committee to formulate in full, though it tried to do so, 'a frame of reference in terms of educational values and standards so as to enable determination of deficiencies in the schools' (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:4).

In setting out, in its second chapter, its values and perspectives, the Interim Committee (1973:10) explains the difficulty this way:

The Committee was faced with the task of assessing the financial needs of schools in a period of considerable educational uncertainty and ferment. The very fabric of schooling - its patterns of control and organisation, as
well as the outcomes it should seek and the methods by which it should pursue them — is in question. In this situation the needs of the schools cannot be considered only in terms of 'more of the same': yet the Committee was required to make its recommendations in terms of structures which exist and which it has little direct power to modify.

The Committee freely admits that its recommendations must inevitably affect the future direction of schooling, of its development in response to the needs the Schools Commission funding is supposed to meet, and of its administration. So the Interim Committee's 'values and perspectives' are of great significance, both to the emphases that appear in its funding recommendations, and to the effect its recommendations have actually had on schools. They are set out in the report under the headings 'Devolution of Responsibility', 'Equality', 'Diversity', 'Public and Private Schooling', 'Community Involvement', 'Special Purposes of Schools', 'Recurrent Education'. They constitute a sort of educational 'Credo' for the 1980s and beyond, and they are certainly the framework in which the 'equality of education' debate has been carried on. As such they demand fuller explication and examination.

In stating its values and beliefs on equality the Committee takes the position that all children are entitled to a standard of schooling which does not depend on what their parents can afford. Indeed, unequal out-of-school situations should be compensated for through schooling, to the extent that the school should try to make sure that the child's schooling is in no way restricted by its family's circumstances. Beyond ensuring equal access, the Committee values the right of every child to get an education which prepares them equally 'for full participation in society'. This is not exactly 'equality of outcomes', and the Committee hesitates to support a policy which would switch resources towards helping 'equalise the advantages of all'. At most it feels that concentrating expenditure 'in favour of earlier stages of education to consolidate a more equal basic achievement between children is desirable' (Australian Schools Commission, Interim Committee, 1973:11).

The rest of their educational 'Credo' can be read as a statement of the ways in which equality of access, of equalising levels of basic
achievement in pre- and primary schooling, and of equalising the opportunity for all of full participation in society could be achieved. These include a 'grass-roots approach to the control of schools' which 'reflects a conviction that responsibility will be most effectively discharged where the people entrusted with making decisions are also the people responsible for carrying them out, with an obligation to justify them, and in a position to profit from their experience' (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:10). Diversity in the forms of schooling, with teachers and their community searching for teaching/learning approaches, and for re-definitions of the relationship between the teachers and the taught, is seen to be 'more appropriate to the social and individual needs of Australians at this point in time' (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:11). In particular 'the Committee advocates development of diversity in the organisational form of schools, in school-community relationships and in the timing of educational experience' (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:12). It therefore supports the provision of private as well as public schooling, with the two drawing closer together in sharing scarce resources, facilities and expertise, and with government schools gaining greater independence to match that of the private schools. Much greater community involvement in schooling is advocated, on the grounds that it will 'enable schools to forge closer links with other socialising agencies' thus improving 'the possibility of providing equal life chances for children from all types of social backgrounds' (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:13). It will also serve to broaden the basis of educational policy-decision making and to develop a better informed public debate about schooling.

The Committee's declaration of values and beliefs make two final statements which are central to understanding its views on educational equality. For, in one, it states what it believes schooling to be for, and in the other it takes the responsibility for achieving equality of educational outcomes to a great extent, out of the hands of the school.
The special purposes of schools are to lead students to 'the acquisition of skills and knowledge, initiation into the cultural heritage, the valuing of rationality and the broadening of opportunities to respond to and participate in artistic endeavours' (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:14). In addition the special functions of the school include developing the skills of 'confident self-initiated learning and of creative response', and 'giving to individual children the experience of being a member of a diverse group through which he may come to feel concern for others and to develop his own sense of identity' (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:14). These are, it would seem, the schooling outcomes which every child should have an equal opportunity to obtain and that may make it possible for all to participate fully in society. This is still not the equality of outcomes that parents, looking for an improvement in life chances for their children, may be expecting.

But this is not the major responsibility of the school. Their major responsibility is to perform the special functions the Committee prescribed for them. Of course, 'schools should offer a sufficiently relevant and attractive program to encourage students to stay to the end of secondary schooling, and to enable them confidently to enter a wide range of occupations', but they should also concentrate, in early schooling, on establishing high enough levels of basic skills so that early school leavers can return to schooling at a later stage when they know what they want to do. In the words of the report:

To the person whose childhood motivation was limited by family background and the horizons of his peer group, it would offer a chance to redress his position as a result of real work experience. It would thus represent an extended application of the notion of equality of opportunity' (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:145).

What the Committee is committing itself to, according to this 'Credo', appears to be a schooling process which is more responsive to community influence, more sensitive of its responsibilities to individual student needs and more accountable for its educational activity to the communities it serves. It is a schooling process which, in meeting certain standards of educational provision, aims
especially to give all students a level of basic cognitive, motor and affective skills which could be built on, immediately or at some future time, and open to all students the possibility of equality of opportunity based on the achieving of high level outcomes. However, the special outcomes schools are to try to have all students achieve are those which will enable them, on leaving school, whether it be early or late, to participate fully in society.

It is necessary to pause here to wonder why the Committee stopped so far short of declaring equality of relative outcomes as one of its basic values. It had already acknowledged that the narrowness of its reference confined it to achieving only comparable standards between schools, so that all students could get an education, even if it was not a full education. It had said, then, that it knew that it was only supposed to be concentrating on the equality of 'access to education of comparable standards' aspect of the 'equality of educational opportunity' ideal. Yet it had gone so far as to suggest how students, 'whose childhood motivation was limited by family background' (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:15), might be helped by the system to eventually get some equal return from it, and it had advocated diversity in schools and schooling which, in an oddly poetic phrase, would 'enable a hundred flowers to bloom rather than to wither' (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:12). It knew, too, that 'equality of educational opportunity' meant much more than equality of access. In fact, after setting out its values and perspectives, it devoted the next chapter of its report to an examination of the concepts 'equality of opportunity' and 'inequality of outcomes'.

This chapter begins with the bald statement,

Equality of opportunity has been an important social goal which, in Australia, schools have been given a major responsibility for achieving (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:16).

It proceeds to define the concept in this way,

Equality has been interpreted as equal access to schools of roughly equal standards, and ... opportunity has centred on the possibility of prolonged schooling culminating in entry to tertiary educational institutions with a consequent claim

Nothing could be clearer. Schools have been given a responsibility, presumably by both the government and the society it represents, to achieve the ideal of equality of educational opportunity, which includes equality of average outcomes as well as equality of access to schools of nearly equal standards.

Yet the Committee, having stated the responsibility, defined its parameters and identified, in some detail, from the available evidence, the known levels of inequality of outcomes and their contributing causes, backs off declaring their belief in it.

Why?

They give the answer

The Committee was required to make its recommendations in terms of structures which exist and which it has little direct power to modify (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:19),

and

The Committee is not responsible for the running of schools, and so it would be out of place for it to lay down detailed prescriptions about the functions of schools and the nature of curricula (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:10),

and

It is almost certainly the case that schools alone cannot effect the degree of environmental change necessary to enable all groups of children to reach an equal average level of educational attainment (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:22).

besides

such a position goes considerably beyond that envisaged in the attempt to make environmental influences more equal, an attempt which might still result in unequal outcomes between social groups (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:22).

So, the Committee was not asked to interfere in any way with the way the States ran their education systems. Its job was to improve what
was there, not revolutionise it. In particular it was not required to look at how schools operate, nor at curriculum, so it was not able really to do anything about outcomes. It did not believe, anyway, that schools, alone, could really effect the sort of social change they were being expected to make. Anyway, all the Committee had been asked to do was to make school environments more equal, and even though it knew that that was not going to significantly effect the inequality of outcomes between groups, that was what it was going to do.

The most that the Committee was prepared to commit itself to was a belief 'that schools should attempt to provide a more equal opportunity for all children to participate more fully in the society as valued and respected members of it', and a little further it adds that it 'sees no reason why schooling should not be regarded as a life enjoyable and satisfying in its own right rather than a credit note drawn on the future. The school does not exist to grade students for employers or for institutes of higher learning. Nor should it regard higher education as the only avenue to a life of dignity and worth' (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1978:23).

High ideals indeed! But do they reflect the values and the beliefs both of the education system and of its clients? Scarcely! Especially not when the Australian Schools Commission (1981:12) itself could report that

Public comment on primary and secondary schooling expresses dissatisfaction with the outcomes of the educational process and with the extent to which the needs of separate groups are being met. Concern is expressed about low achievement, about the adequacy of the school's preparation of young people for work and indeed about the efficacy of preparing the young for life generally.

There can be no doubt that the fact that students, identifiable by class, ethnicity and gender, achieve unequal outcomes from their education continues to draw the attention of researchers in a number of disciplines and remains a matter of concern to governments is, in itself, sufficient proof that equality of educational opportunity in the form of achieving average equality of outcomes between social groups, continues to be the important social goal today that the
Interim Committee for the Schools Commission claimed it to be over a decade ago.

On this, let the Schools Commission have the last word in this significant passage already quoted.

The significant role of schools in credentialling individuals for placement in society makes the monitoring of the way that role is discharged very important. For, by and large, the traditional distribution of life chances among groups differentiated on the basis of race, class, sex, urban and rural location, and so on, remains unchanged. The pattern is repeated from generation to generation. While some individuals alter their position in minor shuffles, parental background continues to determine opportunities more than any other factor: generally, the poor stay poor (Australian Schools Commission, 1981:13).
Chapter 4. Defining inequality and identifying who is unequal.

The facts of educational inequality are readily available. They range from the extensive studies reported by Anderson and Voorn (1983), cataloguing the patterns of participation in Australian post-secondary education, to Connell, Ashenden, Kessler and Dowsett's study of the difference between working class and upper class schools and schooling (Connell et al. 1982). Most of these studies have concentrated on the outcomes of education, and have attempted to determine who fares unequally from education and in the rewards it is thought to offer, and to measure the levels of inequality. Connell (1977: 152-189), provides an excellent review of the research undertaken through to the mid-1970s all of which, as Connell et al (1982:26) were later to say, provided a detailed map of inequalities, but really was not very helpful in explaining them.

In the meantime, as was documented in the previous chapter, governments had attempted to cope with another form of inequality, that of access to schools and to schooling of more or less equal standard. In 1972 the Australian government asked no more of a specially appointed committee of educational advisers than that they tell it what should be a basic standard of school accommodation, facilities and resources, sufficient to allow all students access to a satisfactory form of education. The appointed committee had its hesitations, especially about trying to remedy inequality of access to education, without also seeking to remedy inequality of access to educational opportunity. In fact it was to stress that the activity it had been assigned, in itself, would not much change the unequal results students were getting from their schooling (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:22).

Nevertheless, it proceeded to draw up a series of recommendations on how monies should be distributed to schools, in what order, to what amount and on what basis, so as to establish at least a minimum average environment in which effective teaching and learning could take place. In doing so, it had to make certain assumptions, on the evidence available, as to why particular students had unequal access
to education, and to all levels of education, so that it could plan remedying strategies.

UNEQUAL ACCESS

The Committee's first question, strangely enough, was not 'who does not get into school?', but, rather, 'Who gets through school?'. It quotes evidence which shows that students in four professional faculties in six Australian universities in 1965 and 1967, according to their fathers' occupations, are drawn overwhelmingly from professional and managerial groups. Their conclusion from this and other evidence is that, among tertiary students of all kinds, the children of manual workers are under-represented and those of high status families over-represented (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee 1973:18).

They next produce evidence that children belonging to certain social classes, determined by a socio-economic scale, survived longer at school than children from other social groups. Girls, too, left school earlier than boys, and non-government schools, especially non-Catholic non-government schools, had much higher retention rates than government schools. Country school students did not stay on or enrol in higher education to the same level as city students. The Committee accepted as a generalisation that the students who do best in school are the ones who stay longest, hence the importance of comparative retention rates. The evidence is that 'children from higher socio-economic groups are more likely to continue in school than are equally able ones from lower socio-economic groups' (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:20). Their final conclusion, from the evidence they examined, was that the higher status groups did better from schooling than the lower ones because they performed better academically. They performed better not so much because of the schooling but because 'of home factors associated with the occupation of the father, which reflects the educational level of parents and governs a whole way of life' (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:20). In other words, success in education depended
not so much on access to education, but on the qualities, based on home factors, that the student brought to schooling.

What did the Committee think those qualities might be? It suggested three possibilities: genetic differences between social groups; out-of-school experiences which have over-determined capacity and motivation for formal learning; factors in the culture of the school which favour some children but discriminate against others.

Their choice was the second, so their solution to educational inequality was to make the school more effective in its contribution to developed ability, which means making it more able to recognise and to build on the strengths individual students brought to their schooling.

These attempts include remedial services and supplementary grants to schools containing a high proportion of disadvantaged children. They also include experimentation with a variety of forms of schooling, of learning and of joint school-community projects in an attempt to bring the school into a more significant relationship with the out-of-school groups which exercise so important an influence on children's lives (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:22).

The principle the Committee (1973:22) was to follow was embodied in the dictum, 'More equal outcomes from schooling require unequal treatment of children'. It was a principle that many people, who were quite satisfied that they were getting what they required from education, would not agree with. Nor would those agree who believed that it is the system that has to fit the child, not the child to the system.

It is important to note, both in regard to this principle, as well as to the choice of pre-determining out-of-school experiences based on home factors as the sources of educational inequality, that the Committee proceeds to label as 'disadvantaged' children who come to schools lacking, to a degree, the levels of capacity and motivation for formal learning. The conclusion is that school failure is due to a quality inherent in the student, the result of a combination of genetic and environmental factors. The individual is to blame for the failure since the fault lies in the individual. The school remedy is
to change the individual, restoring capacity and motivation for formal learning, or else to change expectations about schooling outcomes as a preliminary to changing curriculum for students who are 'disadvantaged'.

There are other perceptions of educational inequality besides those presented by the report of the Interim Committee for the Schools Commission. They can best be identified by looking at the groups who experience inequality and at how they define their inequality.

The groups who are variously perceived to achieve least from schooling are the poor; children from working class families; Aborigines together with Pacific and Torres Strait Islanders; a number of non-English speaking migrant groups; students from rural communities, especially the more remote rural homesteads and communities; physically and mentally handicapped children; and girls.

THE POOR

The levels and form of educational inequality experienced by the poor were examined in detail in the Fifth Main Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, called Poverty and Education in Australia (1976). This will be referred to as the Poverty and Education report.

The second chapter of this report focuses on the unequal outcomes of schooling, identifying them on the basis of such objective and measurable factors as length of schooling, achievement, income and occupation (Australia, Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, 1976:12). Using the 1971 Census figures it found:

- almost a quarter of the population over 15 years of age had only had a primary education;
- a little more than half had commenced but not completed secondary education;
- less than a fifth attended up to Year 12;
- in all age groups women were less likely than men to have stayed on to Year 12;
- where people live affects their pattern of attainment at school;
the level of school attended is strongly influenced by ethnicity:

Aborigines have benefitted least from the schooling system;

social class is strongly linked to the nature and extent of the use of educational services;

children from lower status families are also less able to negotiate the school structures successfully;

there is a steady rise in median income which matches the amount and type of education which people have completed;

post-school qualifications play an important role in increasing learning power and in opening access to secure and satisfying jobs with a measure of status and worth;

people without qualifications and with inadequate schooling tend to be confined to unskilled and semi-skilled jobs characterised by low pay, insecurity and low satisfactions;

the less schooling people have the more likely they are to be poor;

(AUSTRALIA. Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, (1976:12-36)

Having thus identified a link between education and income, and further established that there is a link between social class and both the nature and the extent of schooling, the Poverty and Education report (1976:12) stresses that 'unequal outcomes are more complex subtle and persistent than these measurable factors demonstrate'. For a start the outcomes of schooling include access to life chances beyond just occupation and income. The report (1976:12) lists 'security, autonomy, challenge and variety, social support and a future that is both desirable and attainable', as well as control of one's own life, self esteem and a sense of competence. Education is as much about one's own personal development, in other words, as it is about the development of marketable skills and competence. Students who leave school knowing that their education is incomplete, and probably never to be completed, are as much psychologically as socially disadvantaged by that fact.

Take the poor, for instance. Many children from poor families are early school leavers, leaving before or as close as possible to the
compulsory age, or at least before completing the final year of schooling. Whether they leave because their family's financial situation demands it, or because the meaninglessness of their school experience makes continued schooling intolerable, the penalties they will face are extreme. This is especially so for those who have left too early to have reached a level of schooling and certification which would allow them to get post-school training. Not only are their employment opportunities generally limited to the lowest paid and most insecure of jobs, the rest of their life chances will be limited pretty well to a repetition of their own parents' lives. They are faced with defeat in life almost before it has begun. Yet, desirable as it may be for these students to stay on at school, at least until they have reached a level of competency which would enable them to undertake post-school training, for the poor continued schooling, even 'free' schooling, becomes an unaffordable luxury. And this, not just because they need the money the young adolescent might earn, but because they cannot afford the cost of school uniforms, text books, excursions and all the other hidden extras the system does not pay for. This is not, of course, an insurmountable form of inequality. But, so long as schooling and education, at any level, continues to cost, there will continue to be unequal access to it.

THE WORKING CLASS

Children who experience educational inequality on the basis of their social class are a different category to the poor, though the poor may also be disadvantaged by their class, their ethnicity and their gender. This is not the place for a lengthy excursus on the difference between concepts of social class and concepts of social stratification. It is sufficient here to note that they are different concepts. The one classifies people according to their relationship to and control over the capitalist modes of production, whilst the other ranks, 'stratifies', people according to varying sets of socio-economic status markers.

Most of the evidence of educational inequality that has been presented so far, has been based on statistics which had identified students by levels of socio-economic status (S.E.S.). Connell (1977), Abbey and
Ashenden (1978) and Connell et al. (1982) have sought to focus the 'inequality debate' on class divisions rather than on status groups, and this has enabled them to draw attention both to other dimensions of inequality as well as to other perceptions of its cause.

In summarising the evidence on the relationship between class and schooling, Connell (1977:152-163) begins by reporting on a series of interviews he had with some students, in which he asked what job they might get when they left school. Although they all showed that they knew what the 'good jobs' were and would like to try for them, working class children were already convinced that they would not be able to get these jobs. Upper class children, on the other hand, fully expected to get, if not the 'good jobs' of their choice, certainly one that was almost as good and as highly prized. As a guarantee of this they expected, on the basis of common experience, 'fairly smooth progress through school, fairly open access to whatever kinds of jobs they want and lots of personal encouragement to do well in school and beyond' (Connell, 1977:153). By examining the stratification based survey research results, Connell is able to show why the separate classes should hold the expectations of schooling that they do, even if, occasionally, the expectations are reversed. Since much of the results of this type of survey has already been touched on earlier, there is no need to review it again. The important point to note, though, is that Connell's emphasis is not on the disadvantages, the qualities based on home factors, that the student brought to schooling. Rather his emphasis is on the 'class-biased filtering that occurs in the education system' (Connell, 1977:163) and his concern is why it occurs. He believes it occurs through the application in schools of the examination system, which is supposed to locate the reason for students' success or failure in their own intellectual abilities. Since working class children are the ones who mostly experience school failure, and since there is 'a close link between general intelligence (as measured by conventional intelligence tests) and success in examinations', and further, since there is survey evidence 'that class background is correlated with intelligence' (Connell, 1977:166), he asked whether class differences in achievement may not be explained on the basis of class differences in basic ability. In other words, the presumption which underlay the original
egalitarian argument for equality of access to schooling, that all children, regardless of class, race or creed, were normally endowed with average intellectual ability, no longer holds.

Connell does not exactly think so. He suggests there may be other explanations. The ability to perform well, for instance, on the types of tests used to grade levels of intelligence may, in fact, be a learned ability related to home backgrounds in which reading, writing, problem solving, intellectual games and discussion of topical events are part of the daily family activity. There is also the possibility of communication failure, partial or complete, when working-class children with their restricted speech codes encounter the language of school instruction and testing.

If not class differences in basic ability, then what other explanation? One that is 'often given is that working-class children are "culturally deprived", or at least culturally different in ways that affect their schooling' (Connell, 1977:170). However Connell finds no evidence that children bring different values connected with education, nor different attitudes, to their schooling.

From the evidence all that he can safely conclude as to how, not really why, the class-biased filtering process occurs in education is that 'there are class differences in ... the expectations of [educational success], in the cognitive skills making for it, and in some of the equipment useful for it' (Connell, 1977:178), but that is as far as he is prepared to go.

He is prepared, however, to speculate, on the basis of theory, as to why there are these class-biased results in education. Positing that 'a class structure is created, and changes through historical time', and that 'to persist, it must in some way be reproduced from day to day and generation to generation' (Connell, 1977:183) he distinguishes two kinds of reproduction. The first distributes people to positions in the class structure and the second is reflected in the concepts of 'reproduction of the relations of production'. Both processes are affected by education. The first by the achieving of educational certification and post-school qualification which lead to the
attainment of improved employment opportunity and better quality of life chances, thus taking individuals into a different class, or into a different position within a class. The second by a process of schooling which, by its very structure, effectively turns off all but the most determined and gifted working-class students from proceeding through to university, and so to access to middle-class occupations, and thus ensures a continuity, through schooling, of the working-class as such.

Connell (1977:185) argues that schools do this by presenting a middle-class curriculum, competitive and academic, in a middle-class cultural environment. He cites such general and specific features of middle-class life as 'competitive individualism', 'respectable public behaviour', and a concentration in school on those higher level clerical practices of the administrator, the bureaucrat and the professional, such as literacy and numeracy paperwork, modes of regulating and evaluating work and production, and 'their regular and predictable system of promotion' and selection. It is possible to see a fit, in fact, between the process of schooling and the preferred forms of intellectual practice of a particular section of the middle-class which has, throughout the last hundred years of capitalistic industrialism, managed 'to have very close links with the higher-level operations' of the state 'and to the internally similar large-scale organisations that characterise mature capitalist production' (Connell, 1977:184).

He goes on to say:

There is a continuity of practice between the high school and a specific part of the occupational structure developed under capitalism and, it is notable that if we examine the fine detail of the patterns of educational inequality, within the privileged groups it is the children of administrators and professionals rather than the children of entrepreneurs who have the highest rates of 'educational success' at points such as entry to universities (Connell, 1976:185).

In a more recent study (Connell et al. 1982), the question of fit between class and school practices, and especially between the private and public secondary highs and the administrator, manager and professional occupation groups, was more strongly demonstrated. The
result of Connell's work has been to shift the focus of the inequality debate off the concept of disadvantage, with its emphasis on student or school difference or deficit, and to place it on the school and its processes, practices and beliefs.

So far, however, these theoretical perceptions and the research which supports them have not significantly affected school and government approaches to overcoming educational inequality.

ABORIGINALS AND ETHNICS

For two groups in particular the cause of inequality has been firmly traced to both difference and deficiency, and the remedying strategies have aimed at eliminating them. Aborigines and those more recent Australian settlers, the migrant ethnic communities, are identified, generally, as being among those who get least access to and least benefit from schooling. This is true of most Aborigines (and Torres Strait and Pacific Islanders), but it is true of only certain ethnic groups. Cultural difference is thought to be one of the main factors influencing inequality of both access and outcomes for Aborigines and migrants. 'Thought to be', because extensive studies of the range of Aboriginal socio-geographic variations of cultural styles (Willmot, 1981:13) and of how they affect school access and performance, and similar studies of migrant-Australian cultures, have yet to be done (Barlow and Hill, 1982:54-68).

The one certain inhibiting factor is language deficiency. Children from Aboriginal and migrant families where the home language is not English or is, at best, a dialect of English, usually come to schooling lacking the necessary skills needed for learning literacy in English and numeracy. These skills have to be learned before schooling in English can begin, that is, before these students can even begin to gain access to education. Taft and Cahill (1978:108) reporting on a study of the initial adjustment to schooling of children of recent South American immigrant families, over a two-year period, say that few of the children had caught up with the language demands of the school and that they were still academically below the
average standard of other children in their class, though they do not make a link between language ability and school performance. Adolescent students from this group were unable to gain a satisfactory secondary education, since their language deficiency could not be overcome in sufficient time for them to catch up to other students of their own age.

One remedy for both the real fact of inequality through the intervention of language deficiency, and the presumed inequality arising from cultural difference, has been the use of bilingual approaches to establishing English literacy and bicultural approaches to some of the studies in the curriculum. This is a more common approach in Aboriginal education than in the education of migrant students, since in remote Aboriginal communities, where the bilingual-bicultural approach to schooling is most commonly practised, the majority of students are Aborigines who either share a common language and culture or at least are fluent in the local language and versed in the local culture. Very few schools, anywhere else, would serve such culturally unified groups.

The bilingual-bicultural programmes in most Aboriginal schools are of the kind Horvath (1980:27) classes as 'transitional bilingualism', although most of the teachers and administrators claim that they come under her 'partial bilingualism' category. In transitional bilingualism the student's own language is used to establish initial literacy and oracy skills, with a switch being made to English as soon as possible.

The goal is not increased fluency and literacy in both languages but an increase in the level of school achievement for students of limited [second language] ability. The societal goal for such a program is language shift (Horvath, 1980:27).

Partial bilingualism', on the other hand, aims at fluency and literacy in both languages, but literacy in [the first language] is restricted to the subject of the ethnic group and its heritage... other school subjects like science and mathematics are taught exclusively in the [second language] (Horvath, 1980:27).

There is plenty of evidence to show that in most Aboriginal schools operating a bilingual-bicultural programme, the use of the local
language as a language of instruction in the classroom virtually disappears once the switch to English literacy has been accomplished. This is because the amount of cultural education that takes place in the classroom is minimal or even non-existent. Aboriginal teachers of traditional culture believe that their cultures are not part of the school curriculum and should be taught in the traditional place, at the traditional time and in the traditional way (Coombs et. al. 1983:159-170).

However, whether the programmes are classified as 'transitional' or 'partial', is not particularly relevant. The point is that they are designed to give students, whose language is different when they enter school, the opportunity to begin to learn through their own languages, with the aim that they will eventually be able to learn through the school's language alone, or through a combination of the school's and their own languages.

The underlying purpose is to overcome the students 'difference', linguistic (and thus cultural), by eliminating the difference as far as school is concerned. The realities are that far from achieving even equality of access, let alone equality of outcomes, bilingual-bicultural programmes in schools are seen by some Aborigines and some migrant communities (Kringas and Lewins, 1981:57) as being unlikely to succeed in teaching either their languages or their cultures adequately. Nor, in the case of Aborigines, do they see these programmes as meeting their criteria of what 'schooling' is and what it should do (see Coombs et al., 1983:172-175).

Cultural difference and English language deficiency in students inevitably lead to educational inequality both of access and in outcomes. In the case of Aborigines, Coombs et al. (1983:154) claim that 'our schools have been factories of failure... few Aboriginal students have emerged from the system with success'. They attribute this failure directly to the fact that school as an institution and schooling as an educational process have been imposed on Aborigines. They are not Aboriginal institutions and their purpose does not accord with Aboriginal perceptions of what an education is and what it is for.
... schools have been and are the primary agents in socialising Aboriginal people towards the goals and practices of 'white' society (Coombs et al., 1983:159).

The school as an institution is so completely alien to Aboriginal culture that it has rarely been accepted by them (Coombs et al., 1983:163).

Schools, it would seem, have little perception of how the home cultures of migrant children, too, might be effecting either their access to or their success in school. As the inquiry into Schools of High Migrant Density reported,

In most schools no attempts were being made to offer children with varying cultural backgrounds any point of identity or security within their own cultures (Australian Schools Commission. Dept. of Education, 1976:8).

Five years later the Schools commission (1981:114) was still advocating 'conscious attempts by schools to reflect accurately within the school curriculum the actualities of the differing lives of students and, in the organisation of the school, to devise ways which support student self-esteem and confidence' as one aspect of an effective multicultural education policy.

There is still a dearth of studies on ethnic groups and schooling, despite the pleas of the Commission of Inquiry into Poverty (1976:54). In their absence the conclusions of that Inquiry are presumed to stand. They were that 'migrants, on the whole, tend to have high aspirations for education and job futures', though 'there are clear differences in aspirations among the various ethnic groups, and often between boys and girls from the same ethnic groups' (Australia. Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, 1976:54). Many students from migrant families do achieve their high aspirations, but when ethnicity is combined with lower socio-economic status, as with many southern and northern Italians, Yugoslavs and Greeks (and South Americans and South-east Asians today), there is a tendency for students to drop-out of school as soon as they reach the statutory school-leaving age.

Established ability in English, amounting to a state of full cultural literacy (Willmot, 1981:15), probably plays a big part in determining who succeeds in achieving their educational aspirations, but there is also the question of the school's handling of the student's cultural
identity. The Poverty and Education Reports' conclusion on this is that,

Instead of accommodating these people by giving their languages and cultures respect and recognition, the official consensus which has operated in Australia is to ignore as much as possible the distinctiveness of minority groups... However unwittingly, we believe that this process has greatly affected migrant children in schools (Australia. Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, 1976:56).

Perhaps the best summation of the problem the culturally different child encounters with education, whether that child be of Aboriginal or any other non-Anglo-Australian descent, is that given by Jean Martin (1976:61).

...because the educational structures have inadequately responded either to the special needs of many of these children or to the needs which large numbers of them share with other children from low-income families, their school experience is unrewarding, if not an incomprehensible misery, and they emerge from it so lacking in competence that for the rest of their lives they will have open to them only the narrowest and most unrewarding options in jobs or further education.

There is little evidence that schools are doing any better today. Aborigines and migrants, with a few exceptions, despite the tremendous growth in expenditure on Aboriginal and Multicultural education, still form a disproportionate percentage among the uncertified, early-school-leavers.

THE GEOGRAPHICALLY, PHYSICALLY AND INTELLECTUALLY DISADVANTAGED

There would seem to be little that needs to be said about students who fall into these categories. Historically they have always been seen to be at a disadvantage in gaining access to education. The rural lobby, it was earlier noted, were very effective in pointing out their schooling needs and in having the government meet them. Nonetheless the Interim Committee for the Schools Commission identified country students as being still at a disadvantage by comparison with students in the cities. Their length of schooling and participation in higher education were conspicuously lower, and a lower proportion of those who stayed on was awarded either secondary or tertiary scholarships. The Interim Committee suggested a number of reasons why this should be so citing cost, especially travel and accommodation costs, inability
to sell higher educational qualifications on the local employment market and the irrelevance of the curriculum to rural values and aspirations (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:19). Those factors, or others, must still be operating in rural education since the Schools Commission (1981:446) was recommending that, in 1982, over $7 million dollars, out of a $40.5 million dollar budget, be spent on Country Area Programmes, and it saw this rising to almost $10 million in 1984. It based its recommendation on the continuing evidence (1981:164-171) that isolation and distance together with the realities of rural life in general (that is isolation from a range of social and cultural influences and from centres of supply, entertainment and employment) which can lead to limited aspirations and low motivation on the parts of country children... in addition, poverty, transience and frequently harsh climatic conditions can be concomitants of rural life which have a direct effect on the educational process (Australian Schools Commission, 1981:165).

Evidently students in country areas have continuing problems, both in gaining access to schools and in getting from their schooling the same equality of opportunity available to other students. Whether that inequality is basically a product of the rural environment, or whether country students are also inhibited by class or rural cultural factors is not made entirely clear in the Schools Commission's assessment. There is, however, an optimism that some of the initiatives it is prepared to support, and some of the technological developments at present taking place, may lessen the impact of isolation and distances for both teachers and students (Australian Schools Commission, 1981:170-171).

Of course, if inequality of educational opportunity should persist for country students, it may become necessary to posit other explanations for failure!

Among those particularly identified as disadvantaged by the Australian government in submitting its terms of reference to the Interim Committee for the Schools Commission (1973:3) were 'the handicapped, whether mental, physical or social, and of isolated children'.
Perceptions of levels and of the effects of various forms of physical and mental handicap have changed dramatically in the decade since. Physical impairment need not equate with intellectual impairment, whilst many forms of intellectual disability are remediable in part or totally.

The Interim Committee's recommendation was to support a special education approach which it identified as covering, children attending special schools, those assigned to special classes or units in normal schools and those who, while spending the greater part of their time in normal classes, are withdrawn from them for limited periods of each day or for a period of intensive assistance by special staff (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:109).

Besides children with physical and intellectual disabilities, special education also covered children whose disabilities were emotional or social in nature, or who had special learning difficulties. Any child, in fact, whose schooling needs required specialised skills in their teachers.

The aim of the special education programmes, according to the Schools Commission (1981:173), is to provide handicapped students with the same opportunity as non-handicapped students have of moving 'towards maximum levels of personal and social development'. It rejects the view that limited development and achievement is normally to be expected of the handicapped, and believes that this view is giving way to recognition of a potential for personal development, social integration and community participation, even in the most severely handicapped students (Australian Schools Commission, 1981:173).

It should be noted that this is not necessarily a statement that students who are physically or intellectually disabled should expect full equality of educational opportunity with those who normally do well from schooling.

The Schools Commission has not provided figures on the retention rate for handicapped students, nor on their relative levels of success in schooling, so it is difficult to assess whether the special education policies and approaches that are being used with them are having an
effect. There are problems, apparently, 'in collecting and organising statistics on students with special needs', and these are likely to increase as policies aimed at integrating handicapped students into the normal classrooms are pursued (Australian Schools Commission 1979:189). It would seem reasonable to presume, given the effort that still goes into 'the training of special education teachers, provision of support personnel, attention to the educational environment, extension of the age range for the education of handicapped young people, early intervention, transition programs, integration into regular schools, provision for isolated handicapped students, and educational services for severely handicapped children who are homebound or who live long-term in residential institutions' (Australian Schools Commission, 1981:187), that equality of access to an education of quality is the major concern underlying government policy, with the object being the 'preparation of handicapped children for life in the community' (Australian Schools Commission, 1981:187). If that preparation should be effective in helping some individuals to achieve full equality of outcomes with other non-handicapped students, that would be a satisfying result, but equality of outcomes with non-handicapped students is not necessarily the object of special education programmes as such.

GIRLS

'Women (or girls) leave formal education earlier than do males... the proportions of girls staying at school or going onto tertiary education have not altered in the last ten years. Even when girls do enter tertiary education they are unlikely to enter courses which eventually provide the highest incomes' (Roper, 1970:51).

In 1979 the Australian Schools Commission (1979:66) found that 'marginally more girls than boys now stay to the final year, although they still take a more restricted range of subjects'. The apparent comparative retention rates for males and females from all States, in 1982, are given as 32.9% and 39.9% respectively (Australia. Dept of Education and Youth Affairs, 1983). The same period has seen an increase in the proportion of women students at universities and colleges of advanced education, although 'there is still a
considerable way to go before there are as many women as men at university, particularly at higher levels' (Anderson and Vervoorn, 1983:48). The figure given for 1981 is 42.7% of the total enrolment of 160,035 students.

On this and more recent evidence it would seem that access to education, and to its highest levels, is not now a problem for girls, even if it might have been in the past. This is not to say, however, that girls experience full educational equality. There has been an accumulation of evidence that girls experience inequality both in the expectation of outcomes from schooling, from both their parents and the school, and from their experience of schooling. Nicholson (1980:16) gives a very personal view of how parents, teachers and school materials shaped her own approach to her schooling and concludes, 'in theory, then, there would appear to be a great deal of equality in education [for girls]. In fact, this is not so.'

The present moves by the Australian government to prevent job discrimination and access to promotion on the basis of sexual difference, will inevitably increase both the demand for and participation in all forms and levels of education by women. Legislation of this kind has to be supported by community attitudes, which require both a changing view of the sex-based divisions of work and a change in many traditional sex-based discriminatory practices. Schools, in particular, will need to constantly monitor sex bias in both their overt and their covert curriculum. As a report to the Schools Commission (1975:157) noted,

...to the extent that schools operate on unexamined assumptions about differences between the sexes or fail to confront with analysis sex stereotypes conveyed through mass media and their own curricula and organisation, they limit the options of both boys and girls and assist the processes through which messages of inferiority and dependence are passed to girls because they are female.

Optimistic as are these conclusions on the figure of female participation in education, and of changing attitudes among women themselves, schools and society in general to that participation, it must be remembered that when gender is added to either or both
ethnicity and class, women are among those who fare very poorly from education. As regards higher education, the social background of female higher education students is as unrepresentative of the female population as that of all students is unrepresentative of the population as a whole...higher education students tend disproportionately to come from the city rather than the country, to have attended a private rather than a public school, and to be of high socio-economic background. The same is true of female students as a group (Anderson and Veroorn, 1983:59).

A teacher, writing of her experiences in a High School serving a Sydney North Shore middle-class suburb, contrasts her students with those reported on from a working class High School near Newcastle: Linley Samuel states that 'working class kids leave their quite different schools with a working class future often an inevitability' and the same seems to apply to these middle class kids...Although the girls at my school do not sneer at the idea of 'marriage and family', many of them regard it as incidental to a career. They are as career conscious as the boys and display a confidence in their future apparently not evident in their working class counterparts (Jaenneret, 1983:26).

This teacher reinforces what Connell et al's research seems to establish, the significance of class as the determining factor in gaining ready and full access to the results of schooling.

It would appear, then, that if women are to continue the present trends towards equality with males of access to and outcomes from education, that equality will only be between the sons and daughters of those who have consistently controlled access to and use of the highest levels of education and life chances - the middle class professionals, administrators and bureaucrats.

REDEFINITIONS

In this examination of inequality, as it is seen to apply to each of the groups of 'children at risk', as the Poverty and Education report calls them (Australia. Commission of Inquiry into Poverty. 1976:37), it is evident that a variety of perceptions of what inequality is and where it stems from are operating. At one level inequality consists in students not having access to schools of at least basic material standard, and offering a quality of education sufficient to guarantee
the average student the opportunity to complete an education to a level of certification, or to a level of skill, which would enable them to undertake post-secondary study, or to return to complete secondary certification or undertake further education at some later stage in their life when they might be properly motivated to do so. At another level inequality consists in students not having access to schools which not only have basic material standards, but are specially equipped and staffed to overcome the particular disadvantages students may experience through isolation, distance, handicap of any kind and family and environmental influences. Then, again, inequality has been seen to consist in students having to undertake a schooling which is culturally alienating and which stresses values, skills and behaviours which do not relate to either the social class or the ethnic culture of the student.

Inequality is not being unable to matriculate to a tertiary institute of higher education with its promise of access to good jobs, status and highly improved life opportunities, according to one definition. Rather it consists in not having access to the same opportunity with other students for personal development, social integration and community participation.

A lot of this variation in definition stems from an unwillingness to accept the full political implications of a social policy of 'equality of educational opportunity', from hesitation at the magnitude of the task of full educational reconstruction that a genuine effort to implement an 'equality of educational opportunity' policy would entail, and from a reluctance to question the 'sacred cows' of Australian education and the myths about schooling and the curriculum it propogates.

Let it be clear that this study accepts that 'equality of educational opportunity' means simply that all students who enter school, regardless of age, gender, class or ethnicity have a right to expect a quality of education which guarantees them equal opportunity, with any other student, of reaching any level of skill or certification that they may choose, as giving them the access they require to the sorts of life chances they may aspire to, at any time during their lives.
At the same time they have a right to a form of schooling which enables them to come to school and to experience a process of education in which they at all times feel comfortable, reinforced, motivated and valued both as individuals and as members of the social class, ethnic and gender group from which they come. Finally, they have a right of full freedom of access to this form of schooling and to this quality of education for as long as it make take them to achieve the level of education they may require.

As a consequence, the study assumes that the evidence of equality will be the emergence at all the exit points from education of a complete cross-section, in comparatively equal proportions, of students representing all the social classes (and socio-economic groupings in those classes), the ethnic and racial groupings and the gender divisions within the Australian population.

Perceptions that have been reported of the sources of inequality have suffered from the same unwillingness to accept that inequality of outcomes, in the form of certification and marketable levels of skill, are the only real products most people look for from an education. This is not to say that the perceptions in themselves have been entirely irrelevant to the issue of educational equality, but the perceptions, as the next chapter will show, have focused on the wrong goals and in the end have only succeeded in reinforcing policies which perpetuate inequality and which widen the division between schools and all those who fare unequally from schooling.
Chapter 5. Remedies and compensations.

If, as Willmot (1978:18) claimed in an earlier quotation,

1. The education systems operating in state schools are seen by state educators to be suitable for Aboriginal children, if they are improved in certain ways.

and

2. desirable educational outcomes for Aborigines are seen to be the same as for non-Aborigines (1978:18).

it would seem to follow that state educators believe their systems to be suitable for all children, with only minor adjustments to be made to them. If that is so, if very little real change is to be made to the system, so little that no change in outcomes is to be anticipated, then what has to be done to make the system work for all those who achieve unequally from it?

Figures produced by Willmot (1978:18) show that in 1977-78 almost three-fifths of federal government funding for education was being spent on improving the existing schooling systems - buildings, equipment, staffing, resources and so on, and a further one-sixth on administration and support. The remainder went on compensatory education and on adaptations and innovations, with compensatory education getting least. Although, again, these figures refer to Aboriginal education, they sum up pretty well the thrust of government effort. That effort has been, 'the pursuit of equality in the sense of making, through schooling, the overall circumstances of children's education as nearly equal as possible', and to do this the government has used seven main programmes covering,

(a) general recurrent resources;
(b) general buildings;
(c) primary and secondary libraries;
(d) disadvantaged schools;
(e) special education;
(f) teacher development; and
(g) innovation. (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee 1973:139-140).

What has to be done to make the system work, as policy sees it, then, is to first of all, improve the material standards, concentrating on buildings and other facilities, equipment and educational resources with the aim of bringing all schools to a level of equivalence in
basic standards. Secondly, to raise the standards of teaching by increasing staff, training teachers for specialised teaching tasks, improving pre-service and in-service teacher education and establishing a range of support services for teachers including Teacher Resource Centres and teaching-assistants. Thirdly, to provide certain schools and individual teachers with the means to overcome the particular disadvantage of the school and its students. Finally, to meet the needs of students whose physical or mental deficiencies, or whose cultural or socio-economic differences are a handicap to their benefitting fully, in so far as they are capable of doing so, from the educational system, by establishing a range of special educational approaches suited to the measured or perceived form of deficiency or difference the teacher is required to overcome.

It is worth recalling here a distinction that was made early in this study, between an education as the product, and an education system as the structure and the process which produces an education. No change, be it noted, is to happen to the product. The outcomes are to be the same, for all students, as they have always been. The structures, too, are to be the same, though generally and significantly improved. The process is to be adapted, to compensate for deficiency, to overcome difference and to permit innovations aimed at greater educational efficiency. Even so, the adaptation is to be limited and to be within the stated aims and objectives of any given curriculum, in so far as it must continue to seek to achieve the core learnings and experiences intended in that curriculum.

Essentially, then, the remedy for educational inequality is more of the same for all, but with better packaging and in a bigger range of flavours to suit the plurality of socio-cultural 'tastes' the schools are trying to cater to.

This is not as oversimplified a description as it may seem to be. This chapter will attempt to demonstrate this by looking at the remedies, in general forms, that have been supported by the government.
STANDARDISING SCHOOLS

The disparity in the quality of material provision for schooling between schools was too evident in the early 1970s for anyone to doubt that a first step towards equalising educational opportunity would have to be a lessening of this great disparity. Policy could not put an upper limit to the quality of educational support schools, especially non-government schools, were able to provide for their students. It could, however, seek to establish basic standards, according to flexible formulas which would allow for necessary socio-cultural variations, and to identify those particular facilities which every school would require in order to offer an effective, modern education. Thus the Interim Committee for the Schools Commission (1973:49-52), put forward a 'needs and priorities' policy in its Schools in Australia report which has remained, more or less, the government's standards policy formula up to the present. A school's need is determined by a comparison of the resources used in it with a set of standards for resources. These include such things as adequate class-room space for the full school enrolment, student-teacher ratios, provision of support staff, equipment, general teaching/learning resources and so on. Priority criteria were needed since the government does not have unlimited funds to pour into education. The options, then, would seem to be to concentrate the funds available on schools with the greatest needs, to spread the funds over the whole range of need seeking small gains over time, to focus the available funds on overcoming specific forms of need or to allocate funding by a formula which would recognise the urgent needs of particular schools but still allow for the common and for specific needs. The formula chosen was that which offered a multi-programme approach, that outlined in the Schools in Australia report (1973:53).

Given that, in most instances, the quality of educational provision does affect the quality of education itself, it would be worth the effort to try to discover what have been the comparative levels of improvement in the quality of the one and of the other in individual schools. Such evidence, it seems, does not exist. Probably the best source for such research studies would have been the schools receiving special assistance under the Disadvantaged Schools Programme. This
programme, which has been operating now for over 8 years, aims to positively discriminate in favour of schools identified by specific criteria (Australian Schools Commission, 1981:470-481), where educationally disadvantaged children are congregated. However, it should be noted, disadvantage is not determined by some educational measure. It is determined according to a complex 'index of disadvantage', which uses census data, at the Collection District level, to calculate the socio-economic status of school communities. The variables used in this index of disadvantage are 'ethnicity, family structure, occupation, education, income and dwellings, and living conditions' (Australian Schools Commission, 1981:472). This index is used to identify schools 'serving poor neighbourhoods where a relatively low proportion of students participate in post-compulsory schooling and where educational opportunities and the average achievement of students fall well below the average of the total community' (Australian Schools Commission, 1981:365). Funding under the programme is directed to three main objectives, raising basic skill levels in reading, writing and calculation, and interpersonal and general social interactions, adopting curricula relevant to the experiences, needs and interests of the children, and encouraging closer and more effective community-school interactions.

These objectives should all be observable and measurable. Since the Disadvantaged Schools Programme is also intended to be long term, with schools staying in it, as 'declared' disadvantaged schools, until 'the benefits of the extra resources and the resultant educational processes and practices can become well established' (Australian Schools Commission, 1981:366), longitudinal studies of these schools should make it possible not only to calculate the cost-benefit effect of the programme, but also to identify the point at which the levels of educational improvement begin to fall off.

Again, it would seem, such studies have not been undertaken, or even commissioned, although there are any number of descriptions of the innovative strategies disadvantaged schools have adopted in seeking to achieve the programmes' objectives.
Remembering that the purpose of government policy is the equalising of educational opportunity, the ultimate measure of the effectiveness of those policies still must be the proportion of representation by class, ethnicity, handicap and gender among all school leavers at each point of exit. There is no evidence that the use of government funding to reduce the disparity in the quality of material provision between schools has in any way altered the levels of inequality of educational returns experienced by educationally disadvantaged students. This is not to say that the quality of educational provision and of student's schooling experience has not improved, nor does it say that levels of educational achievement remain unimproved in these schools. It simply says that all-round improvements in educational provision, resulting from both common and specific funding, effect the educationally advantaged as much as the disadvantaged, so that the levels of inequality between groups remain unchanged.

Still, government policy goes beyond improving buildings, expanding resources and raising teaching standards. In addition to improving the existing schooling systems, even if that is its major thrust, it does recognise the need to adapt the process, to a degree, so as to help students make up for their own educational deficiencies and overcome the educational effects of their own differences. How effective has government policy been here?

COMPENSATING FOR DEFICIT AND DIFFERENCE

Compensatory education uses two strategies. Both aim to fit the student to the essential system. One looks at the student, with the requisites of the system in mind, to see what has to be done to help the student fit in. The other looks at the system, with the differences of the student in mind, to see what modifications can be made to it so that the difference can be accommodated within the system without effecting the results.

Children usually begin the full schooling process after the completion of their fifth year. Prior to that many of them will have spent two
to three years in preschool where certain motor skills, oracy skills, interaction skills, pre-reading and pre-numeracy skills and personal identity markers would have been fostered and developed as a preparation for and a transition to formal schooling. Some students would also have begun to develop the use of such basic cognitive skills as collation, identification, comparison, selection and classification. Students coming from homes where these skills are valued and regularly and evidently practiced, would have this preschool learning reinforced in their home environment. The transition from home to school is made so much easier for the preschoolers, who have already begun to grow accustomed to the routines of the classroom, to the student/teacher roles and to the forms of classroom and playground interactions. Children whose preschooling takes place in the school they are about to attend do not even have to adjust to a new place.

Preschool, however, is not compulsory, nor is it always free. The consequence is that a proportion of children come to schooling direct from home, lacking many of the skills all schools take for granted in the students they enrol. In those States, particularly, where preschooling is not part of the normal educational services provided by the State Education Department, i.e. NSW, Victoria and SA (McConnochie and Russell, 1982), this proportion could be comparatively high.

There is no reason, of course, why schools can not push students who come to schooling with these skill disadvantages through special 'readiness-for-schooling' programmes prior to involving them in their initial schooling. It would mean delaying the commencement of their schooling for up to a year, but it would ensure a closer fit between student and system once full schooling begins. Schools, however, either cannot establish on entry a child's existing levels of readiness-for-school skills, or else they believe that they can be developed, if need be, in special withdrawal programmes or within the normal class programme after schooling is under way, because, with one exception, they do not require a preschool preparation for entry to schooling. The exception is the transition year provided in some Northern Territory schools for Aboriginal students prior to their
beginning their first year of schooling. Yet, this is probably an unfair judgement, as it is not certain that students who come to schooling without first being preschooled, necessarily lack the attitudes, abilities or skills which would make a full education possible. What they may lack is an orientation to and a taste for schooling in its preferred educational mode, as enshrined in our systems. Besides something more than simple skill deficiency must be operating, since schools seldom completely overcome in all educationally disadvantaged children the fullness of their educational disadvantage. This is why the Disadvantaged Schools Programme includes curriculum development and school-community involvement, along with the raising of skill levels, as its main objectives.

In Australia preschooling has not been generally used, as it was under the 'Headstart' programmes in the USA, as a deliberate compensatory strategy. (However, see de Lacey, 1981:279-281). Nonetheless government support has been readily available for preschool projects directed towards Aborigines, poor, ethnic and other groups, recognised as at risk of being educationally disadvantaged. Kelly and McConnachie (1981:195-208) warn of the unproven assumptions that may underlie this practice, especially when it is used to overcome what seem to be the cultural sources of minority group failure.

They suggest that using a 'cultural deficit/early intervention' model begs the question of the school's contribution to the failure of the student, and throws all the onus on the home environment. It should also be said that advocates of early childhood education do not see preschooling as, in any way, a compensatory educational activity. Rather it is a strategy aimed at providing the 3 - 5 year old child with a series of programmed activities and experiences, which are appropriate to the learning needs of the child at this time and which may not be available to most children in their home environment. At the same time, it must also be acknowledged that the range of activities and experiences designed for early childhood education have the basic school-type skills clearly in mind, so that the emphasis is on shaping the child to fit in to school. Children who come to schooling without preschool preparation, or an adequate home
preparation are going to need some help, then, in fitting into school and into the practice of schooling.

That help, will take the form of special withdrawal programmes, altered timetabling, a variety of special provisions, the use of special teaching materials and so on. The child who does not fit is soon set apart in the system, and will remain so. Even if its skill deficiencies and behavioural non-conformity are brought to a level of 'normality' such as to make it possible for the child to work approximately at the level of its peers in a normal classroom programme, its peers will have already advanced so far ahead of it in their schooling that the child must be tied in with a younger group or with other 'slow-learning' students. There is plenty of evidence to illustrate the fact that schools never fully succeed in remedying the deficiencies some students bring to their schooling, though they may succeed in establishing some very basic levels of skill. There is no evidence to show that schools have been able to compensate, in any way, for the educational disadvantages groups experience on the basis of their class or their ethnicity, even if they are able to alleviate to a degree the effects of skill deficiency in individual students.

The recognition of the failure of efforts to make the student fit the system underlies the growing emphasis at both system and school level on curriculum development. The argument is that there is now, especially in secondary schools, a very large proportion of students who find neither interest nor relevance in the curriculum. This may be because of the content of particular curriculum items or because of the items themselves. In this perception curriculum development involves choosing content that is familiar and interesting to students, or developing a range of curriculum alternatives that offer a choice to students.

We have seen that the programme of the comprehensive high school, which is what most contemporary State secondary schools are, seeks to arrive at a mean between the curriculum of the old vocational schools and that of the academic high schools. This has proved to be, at best, an uneasy compromise. Ideally it has all students undertaking common core curriculum through to Year 10, with students having the
option, after their first secondary year, of adding either more vocationally based or more academically based subjects to their basic curriculum. The range of subjects offered for selection will depend on the availability of staff qualified to teach the subjects which could be offered. Schools are usually free to propose new courses which, after evaluation, may be accredited and allowed to count towards middle school or higher school certification. Indeed, it is possible for a high school to enter into direct arrangement with a tertiary institution, to have a particular school-developed course accepted as counting towards a student's entry on one or other of the institution's diploma or degree courses (Barlow and Hill, 1982:31-35).

On the whole though, despite attempts to ensure that these courses match in intellectual rigour and educational value the 'hard' subjects in the curriculum, the alternative curriculum options are usually seen, by parents, students and school alike, as 'soft' options useful for holding and entertaining particular students, and offering some low-level interaction and vocational skills, of some use socially or recreationally, but not highly valued in the market-place. This is evident in the way schools and Education Departments 'rate' subjects for evaluation. In Western Australia in 1981 students had a choice of 61 subjects for their Year 12 Certificate of Secondary Education. Only 33 of these, however, were to be examined and were to count for Tertiary Admissions, making the other 28 subjects obviously of less 'value' to the student. Certainly students who sought entry to university or colleges of advanced education were not going to waste valuable study effort on Aeronautics, Dance, General Computing, Latin, Law, Media Studies or Photography, no matter how useful or interesting they may have seemed to be, if they were not to count towards tertiary admission.

The Achievement Certificate, available in this same State to students up to Year 10 reports the student's performance, by year of completion, in four core subjects – English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. The assessment given for these subjects is either credit or pass. The WA Board of Secondary Studies then list some 180 optional subjects, mostly school developed, which could be offered to students. These, too, may be assessed and the results recorded on the student's Achievement Certificate. Finally the Certificate may also
list other subjects taken by the student without recording any assessment of them. Clearly the core subjects here rank as the highest level subjects, with assessed and unassessed subjects ranking far below them. Among the 180 optional subjects, only 26 could be taken over six or more semester units. Probably one or two unit offerings like ballroom dancing, boating, cropping, floral art, grooming and deportment and so on, would receive but scant reference on the Certificate. In the circumstances it can scarcely be said to be a harsh evaluation to say that many 'alternative' curriculum offerings do not rate. Students who intended to go on to Year 12 and aimed at gaining tertiary admission, would neither want nor be encouraged to take up any of these 'alternative' courses which could not be pursued through Years 11-12 and did not count towards a tertiary admissions examination score.

The proliferation of alternative curriculum offerings, then, does nothing towards equalising educational opportunity for the students at disadvantage. Quite the contrary. Students who are persuaded or encouraged to take up these optional courses, especially those which are short term and cannot be counted towards high-level certification, are already being earmarked by the school for early leaving and for low-level, at best, certification. All that the school, and the system, intends for these students is some basic competency in the core of academic subjects and a smattering of experiential learning on some low-level social skills. The fact that the development of these curriculum options has been made necessary by the prolonged presence in the secondary school of students, who have no interest in or aptitude for the academic subjects, is a further indication that they are subjects made up for and intended, not as alternative means to achieving the same 'academic' outcomes, but as 'entertainments' aimed at producing 'personal development', 'socially useful', 'practical skill' type outcomes. They are inept attempts to accommodate the student in the system.

Not all the effort, of course, has gone into producing alternative curricula, though this has been the main focus of school-based curriculum development. At the systems level, particularly, much effort has gone into improving the standard 'core' curriculum -
English, Mathematics, Science, the Social Sciences and Language teaching. At the most basic level the aim has been to leave content selection to the teacher, to encourage the use by the teacher of a broad range of pedagogic styles and approaches, and to prescribe as outcomes only the establishment of certain principles, concepts and generalisations together with specific cognitive and affective skills.

These changes to the curriculum whilst they stem partly from a need to make it more relevant to the interests of particular students, are also prompted by a growing appreciation of the professionalism of the modern-day teacher with a specialisation in the subject, and by the changed emphasis in education on the skills of acquiring and processing data rather than on accumulating and storing data. A good example of such a system-developed curriculum is the K-10 Social Studies syllabus published by the Western Australian Education Department in 1981. It sets out aims under the headings of knowledge, skills and values. Knowledge is derived from the study, at each of the year levels of five basic themes - environment, resources, society and culture, change and decision-making. At each level concepts and generalisations relevant to these themes are to be developed, and the syllabus suggests the sort of subject matter which could be used to establish the generalisations. For instance, at Year 8 level, under the theme 'society and culture', to make the generalisation that 'past societies, like present societies, have provided economic, political and religious organisations to meet individual and communal needs', the recommended examples are Ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome (WA. Education Department, 1981:10). If, of course, a teacher preferred to study other ancient societies, where there might be evidence to support the generalisation, she/he would be free to do so. The syllabus is concerned, though, that the subjects studied should include areas of essential learning about Australia and particularly Western Australia. The skills to be developed are 'those intellectual skills and valuing approaches which meet [the students'] need to be involved in learning and social processes', whilst the values to be developed are those 'which lead to willing and responsible participation' in the students' society (WA. Education Department 1981:3). Thus the syllabus gives the teacher considerable freedom to select content, to illustrate the themes and to establish the
generalisations. Prescribed as outcomes are the generalisations and some particular understandings about the students' own society and its cultures, as well as affective and cognitive skills, including values relating to a sense of social obligation and commitment, which both relate to the techniques of the Social Sciences and are the skills which students would develop in cooperative learning situations. As to pedagogy, the syllabus urges teachers to organise purposeful learning activities in which:

- there is a balance among knowledge, skills and values objectives.
- there is a balance between teacher-directed and independent activities.
- there is a clear sequence of intake, organisation and demonstration activities (WA Education Department, 1981:62).

This leaves the teacher considerable freedom to choose teacher-learning approaches and experiences which are best suited to the students.

Such a curriculum makes possible the development, by both the classroom teacher and the school as a whole, of student-relevant content and of teaching-learning approaches suited to the preferred learning style of the students. Three things may hinder these developments. One could be the teacher's own limited knowledge of alternative content, another could be a dearth of supporting resources and a third could be the unwillingness of the community to have the school use content that is familiar to them. The effect of these three hindrances is evident particularly in the areas of multicultural and Aboriginal education. Schools, as for instance in New South Wales, are coming under increasing pressure to introduce perspectives on and studies of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Island and Australian migrant cultures into and across the whole school curriculum (NSW Dept of Education, 1982 and 1983). In no teacher education programme anywhere in Australia are preservice teachers required to undertake full units of study in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island anthropology or history (Barlow, 1983). Similarly, no preservice teacher is required to undertake studies of Australian migrant cultures - not that many such studies have been made anyway. Much of what teachers know about these non-Anglo-Australian cultures they have gained through the
popular media or through their own general reading. This is true even of teachers who may themselves come from one or other of these cultures, but whose knowledge is limited to their own personal experiences of their home and local community culture or to such knowledge as they have 'picked up' through their own reading. There are, then, very few teachers able to introduce studies of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Island or Australian migrant cultures as alternative subject content in their teaching. Although it is improving, the resource situation for teaching these culture studies, leaves the teacher in the average school scratching for material with relevant content and at a level suited to student ability (Hill and Barlow, 1978 and 1985). Some teachers have come up against opposition from the local community when they have tried to introduce studies of these other Australian cultures. Some Aboriginal communities, for instance, have claimed that schools are not the proper places to teach their cultures. Others have objected that the Aboriginal cultures the schools have taught are not their local cultures, and therefore should not be taught. Some schools have been told by their communities not to teach about other cultures, but to teach just the one Australian culture. Teachers may find it hard too, to resist the pressure of the standard text book approach to teaching these core curriculum subjects. Centrally developed curricula, with their suggested content attract the text-book writers, who hasten to place in the hands of teachers the 'complete' text-book with all the subjects adequately covered, student activities listed and teaching-learning strategies so worked out that the text-book becomes the teacher's daily work book, the student's study text and the subject's basis for evaluation.

All this being said, it must further be stated that although these new curricula may make it possible for teachers and schools to adapt them to fit student needs, this adaptation is very limited in scope and purpose and is to be such as to produce, the same outcomes as specified in the curriculum aims. Those outcomes, although they may appear to be educationally desirable to the curriculum developers, may not appear to be so obviously desirable to the students for whom the curriculum is designed. Teachers and schools who propose to adapt curriculum, content and pedagogic strategies to suit the needs and interests of their students need to know a great deal about their
students' home cultures, including home language, preferred styles and modes of communications, conventions of interaction, personal and community values and so on. There is no evidence that schools are equipped or teachers trained to develop this sort of knowledge about their students and the communities the schools serve. A survey of the contribution the anthropological sciences were making and could make to education in Australia (Barlow and Hill, 1982:54-61) revealed that in no Australian education department were schools making use of these sciences to develop socio-cultural 'maps' of their local communities. Any adaptations that schools may have been making to curriculum, then, were certainly not based on a precise knowledge of the learning needs of the students as they related to their socio-cultural preferences. Adapting curriculum to accommodate student difference is an impossible task, anyway, unless the 'difference' is common to all the students in a particular school or class group.

The reality is, of course, that curriculum adaptation, when it occurs, is inspired more by teacher preference and the availability of special resources, than by any real perception of students' interests and learning needs. Very few teachers or schools consciously adapt curriculum with a view to maximising for particular groups of students equality of educational opportunity.

For students who are obviously culturally different from the Australian norm, the most evident mark of cultural difference is the student's home language. If this is not English or a standard dialect of English, it may be necessary to provide an initial schooling for the child in its own language, whilst, at the same time, it begins to learn English as a second language or dialect. Since language and culture are now known to be inextricably linked, all language teaching also involves cultural learning, so that teaching programmes which aim to develop full literacy or oracy competence in two languages (bilingual) must also aim to develop full cultural competence in the two cultures (bicultural). On the evidence there are no real bilingual-bicultural programmes operating in Australian schools (Horvath, 1980:3 and 27-29). All programmes aim at moving to English as the language of instruction in the school as soon as sufficient competency has been established. The child's home language is then no
longer used in the school, except in relation to studies of the home culture.

Students, then, who come to schooling deficient in the basic skills and abilities which are deemed essential if they are to enter smoothly into the schooling process, or carrying evident cultural differences which preclude their participating in the normal classroom schooling process, will be treated in one of two ways. The school will attempt to remedy their deficiency or it will try to accommodate to their difference. Unless the school can clearly establish that the deficiency or difference is a group characteristic, the remedial action or the effort at accommodation will be directed to the individual rather than to the group. Schools are not really able to accommodate to the differences of individuals, so they tend either to delete the student's difference as rapidly as possible or to shuffle the student off to another school equipped to accommodate the student's particular difference. On the whole schools prefer to try to change students to fit the system rather than try to accommodate the system to the student.

Whatever strategies teachers and schools adopt in dealing with individuals or groups of students who, because of their deficiencies or differences, are considered to be educationally disadvantaged, those strategies in no way affect the long term consequences of their disadvantage. They continue to achieve unequally in education as a group, even if the occasional individual may succeed in making it through to matriculation. Such hopes as may be held out for compensatory education (De Lacey, 1981:279), are based in a belief that such programmes can fit the student to the school. Thus De Lacey (1981:280) considers 'that, despite the many shortcomings of the middle-class, dominant sub-culture in Western countries, it calls the tune, and determines the skills to be mastered - the hoops to be jumped through - to achieve success at school, and, in the case of disadvantaged minorities, to break out of the poverty in which they have been encapsulated'. For him compensatory education means teaching working class, impoverished, ethnic children how to jump through the right hoops.
It is true that such efforts as have been made up to the present in Australian schools to compensate for disadvantage have been spasmodic, short-term, experimental and ill-conceived. Reporting on a disadvantaged schools programme in a 'City Girls' School' Hill (1977:72-93) says $26,000 was spent on 'bilingual' programmes, on cross-age tutoring and on establishing a creche as a community service. There were twenty-three different nationalities at the school with children of recent migrants making up 83% of the enrolment. All the students were girls. It was estimated that prior to the commencement of the disadvantaged schools programme here, a third of the students had pronounced behaviour problems, at least 7% persistently played truant and at least half the first and second year students were either illiterate or only semi-literate. Few students stayed on after they reached fifteen and no pupil from the school had ever reached university.

The programme introduced to the school, and engineered not through the school's or its community's own resources but by a Task Force from a near-by university, seems to have been effective in that the school is attracting and keeping qualified staff, some improvement has been made to buildings and facilities, students are beginning to stay on a little longer, the school is thought to be a good one for migrant girls to attend, some success has been achieved in involving parents in school policy decisions and the special programmes have had some impact on language skills and mathematics. Despite this, the likelihood of this school being able to overcome the basic disadvantage its students experience are remote. The students are all girls and most of them are from working-class migrant family homes, where cultural perceptions of the role of women preclude their undertaking prolonged schooling directed towards university studies and careers in the professions or in commerce.

What, obviously, was not perceived right from the start with 'City Girls' School' was that its disadvantage did not just consist in the combination of a badly run-down, neglected and out-of-date school, poorly staffed, and the working-class, migrant population it served. Basic to its disadvantage was that it was a school for girls, and
mainly girls from working-class migrant homes where English was not the home language. As Hill (1977:76) himself put it:

Before they get to school in other words, and before you start thinking about the extra pressures Southern Europeans place upon their daughters, the girls are in for hard times - which the school heralds as soon as you step into it.

The point should not have to be laboured.

Students who are denied equality of educational opportunity, who have consistently been denied it and who continue to be denied it, will not suddenly begin to achieve equality because of something the school does to help them start jumping through the right educational hoops.

Compensatory strategies and experiments in accommodation are designed for the individual, not for groups.

As such, they can only hope to develop, in individual students, the latent qualities and the skills capacities students need to be able to participate to some effect in the schooling process. At 'City Girls' School' this meant, first of all, a concentration on developing English literacy and oracy skills, with some social science teaching being in one of the other community languages - Greek, Italian or Arabic - to give some of the students an opportunity to learn about their family cultures in their family language. As a result of this, and the 'cross-tutoring' programme, the vocabulary and comprehension of students in nearly all the language groups improved (Hill, 1977:87). In other words there was evidence of some development in the students of the qualities and skills needed for schooling. Was this development, in itself, sufficient to suggest that real equality of educational opportunity was being opened up to the 89% teen-age daughters of these new migrant families in the school? On Hill's own evidence the answer has to be no. A study of an average first-year group of 120 girls saw, after four years or more's effort in overcoming disadvantage, some few, very few, planning to stay on to Year 12. 'Some may then go on to become teachers or nurses. But most will work in semi-skilled jobs, a bank perhaps, for a few years, then get married and have children. Whether their parents were born in this country or southern Europe most of them will become what daughters are expected to become: wives and mothers' (Hill, 1977:84).
The school, then, can only do so much. It can do, within limits, something to make the experience of schooling more satisfying and productive for those students who come ill-equipped for school. There is little it can do to equip students with the right qualities and abilities for schooling, however, if the qualities and abilities that are valued and cultivated in their homes are not those required for schooling, or, at least, not those the school believes are required for schooling under the present system. That being so, it now becomes important to ask, what are the schools' perceptions of the qualities and abilities students need for schooling?

SCHOOLING NEEDS AND SCHOOLING ALTERNATIVES

For the child entering on primary schooling probably the best indicator of the qualities and abilities it needs to fit it to schooling would be the objectives set for a preschooling programme in Queensland, which gives as two of its aims:

to provide a bridge by which the young child can be assisted to make a smooth transition from home to school; [and] to develop those abilities, skills and attitudes which will aid the educational progress of the young child (McConnochie and Russell, 1982:72).

A senior Preschool adviser with the Department is quoted by McConnochie and Russell (1982:72-73) as setting the following objectives in preschooling:

a) to assist the child to develop a positive self-image and to accept others;
b) to encourage the child to become self-reliant in learning and to exercise choice;
c) to promote learning based on the child's level of development and range of experiences of importance to [its] future education in the areas of language use and its associated skills, concept formation, perceptual activity, and problem solving;
d) to assist the child to develop a range of appropriate social and physical skills;
e) to foster the child's ability to think imaginatively and to express [itself] creatively through music, movement and various art media;
f) to promote the physical and mental health of the young child.
For this teacher the qualities the child needed to cultivate were those related to an affirmative self-identity and confidence and friendliness in interpersonal relations, together with a degree of self-reliance. The skills required were the cognitive ability to make choices, to form concepts, to perceive spatial, shape, colour and temporal relationships and to solve problems, and the affective ability to think imaginatively, to express itself creatively and to behave according to acceptable social values. Language use and its associated skills are extremely important for its future education, as also are the development of motor and other physical skills which will be essential later for reading and writing. No doubt this curriculum is influenced as much by Piagetian or similar theory of intellectual development in the young child as it is by the perception of the skills needed to ensure the child fits comfortably into school. Nonetheless its purpose is to achieve the main aims of preschooling, helping to make a smooth transition from home to school and developing the abilities, skills and attitudes the child needs to succeed in school.

As was noted earlier, it would be possible for a child to develop these qualities and abilities in a home environment which already valued and encouraged them. But, very few of the homes from which the 'disadvantaged' students come place a high value on all these particular qualities and abilities. Self-reliance in learning is not necessarily encouraged in all homes. In some Aboriginal communities children may be considerably indulged in a very extended family, where responsibility for a child's instruction in social relationships and obligations, in language use, in social arts and in the economic skills of resource management and use are variously distributed among persons with particular responsibilities for the child. These are the ones who will teach the child, and who will decide where and at what time particular knowledge will be given. To this extent the child is not encouraged to be self-reliant in learning, but to wait on others to decide the place, the time, the form and the content of its learning. As to its identity, in tradition-based communities, still, the child has to wait for its identity to be revealed to it, through the rites which initiate it into adulthood and to the responsibilities it inherits with its 'tribal' identity.
For other children there may be other culturally based behaviours, skills and qualities which are deliberately cultivated in them from their earliest days. Some may be encouraged to learn by observation and experiment rather than by questioning and verbal instruction. Some may be restrained from making choices, being encouraged to accept without question what is offered and told to them. Many will not be brought up in homes where the skills of oracy and literacy are in evidence and encouraged, though these homes may encourage and use more extensively other communication modes, especially elaborated forms of body language and of visual media. However, these are not the skills on which the contemporary process of schooling is based, and which the schools expect children to have developed prior to their entering on a schooling programme. This raises the question whether the qualities and abilities the school looks for in a child are so essential to schooling and its product as schools and teachers claim them to be. They are of course, given that the dominant, academic curriculum in the school demands them, and that mastery of the academic curriculum, with all the advantages that offers, depends on them. There is the possibility, though, of using the special qualities and abilities students from the ethnocentrically labelled 'disadvantaged' groups bring to their schooling. This would have the effect of raising the positive self-image students should have, of basing their schooling on qualities and abilities valued in their homes and community and familiar to them and, perhaps, of encouraging primary schools to shift their emphasis in curriculum from the traditional reading, writing and arithmetic, to the more contemporarily acceptable communication arts, commerce and community. The suggestion that we should begin teaching to the difference was made in one study of cross-cultural education (Francis, 1981:1-6). The conception is sound, even though the author's focus is on cultural rather than class or gender minorities. It does require, however, that schools are able to recognise the qualities and abilities students bring to their schooling, and that they are able to build an education on them which opens full equality of educational opportunity to the student.

But what of the secondary school student? It would seem, from the studies Meade made of the educational experience of Sydney High School
students that there is 'institutional ideology' determines who are the students most likely to succeed. As Meade (1983:180) explains it:

The institutional ideology identifies the education system as, above all, a reality-defining and confirming institution. In schools the institutional ideology is linked with accreditation of students for tertiary study or jobs and is based on teacher definitions of student competence. The school system which accredits children utilises measures of 'brightness' which span an extremely limited range of cognitive abilities and excludes other cognitive and non-cognitive capacities that are highly valued in diverse contexts in society. In short, the secondary school fulfills varying functions for youth according to how bright it defines them to be. Thus, 'bright' children are given every opportunity to study and learn, are encouraged to have confidence in their ability and are motivated to aspire high and work hard. Concurrently, the school tries to ensure that 'less bright' children reach a minimum level of competence in literacy and numeracy and steers them away from unrealistic educational and occupational goals.

The measures of 'brightness' used to define students and to confirm the real educational and occupational goals they should aspire to, are a barrage of IQ tests which students undergo on the completion of their primary schooling and prior to their entry to secondary schooling. There is evidence that these tests are used not only to stream students into ability groups in high school, but also to select students' schools for them. 'City Girls' School', according to Hill (1977:77), 'was the dumping ground for the poorest students from local primary schools', whilst at 'Royal High School' the Principal attributed part of the school's great academic success to the selectivity factor, 'in as much as students compete for positions in our feeder schools in hope of gaining entry to Royal High School' (Hill 1977:95).

Much could be, and has been said about IQ tests as a measure of real intelligence. Their proponents, according to a recent unsigned feature article in The Weekend Australian Magazine (Jan. 14-15, 1984:4), claim:

First, like it or not, societies are addicted to selection. Schoolrooms are streamed. Special classes are set up for the retarded and for the gifted; employers must choose between job applicants, whether looking for a competent typist (easily testable) or for executive material.

Second, many of the selection criteria traditionally used are loaded. Personal recommendations put a premium on
belonging to the right old-boy network, and scholastic achievement tests reward the hardworking and those lucky enough to get the relevant education. Third, because they try to measure a pot-pourri of cognitive skills instead of specific, acquired knowledge, intelligence tests are more objective. They are by no means infallible. Nor should they be used in isolation. But they can be a useful supplement, and corrective, to traditional selection criteria.

Reporting elsewhere in this same paper Peake (1984:4) describes the tests and how they are used in NSW:

Two types of tests are administered... in the speed test, the candidate attempts to complete as many problems as possible in a given time; the candidate sitting for a power test is given progressively more difficult problems and has to complete as many as possible. A typical IQ test consists of problems to test language and numerical skills and the ability to handle spatial concepts. The NSW tests are administered by school counsellors to students in Years 4 and 6... The results are used to provide a rough indicator of whether the child is working to his or her potential, where the student will fit into the streaming process, and to rank primary school students, to determine how many can go to selective high schools or agricultural schools.

The debate over the use of these tests is a heated one in NSW with teachers recently voting to ban mass testing of Year 6 students. Teachers say that it is unfair to measure scholastic achievement using these tests of scholastic ability since there is no real correlation between the two. Besides they can lead to a lowering of expectation in both the teacher and the students, who rapidly sense their relegation to lower levels of capability. 'The teacher is making a judgement on a child - which is likely to remain with the student all through the school years - based on the debatable results from a controversial test' (Peake, 1984:4).

More seriously, there is very real doubt as to whether or not IQ tests really measure intelligence. If intelligence is to be seen as some innate ability to think 'rationally' and to develop the intellectual processes to high levels of performance, then intelligence measurement should not rely on tests which require a grounding in the culture from which the skills are derived and a fairly high level of literacy and numeracy skill development. One author claims to be able to instruct parents in how to raise the levels of their children's IQ (Lewis, 1981)! Surely this is further evidence that whatever it is that IQ
tests are supposed to measure, it is not an innate quality, and it
certainly is not a quality which is confined to any one socio-economic
status group, or to any one class, gender or racial group in our
society. If there are differences in people's ability to learn, those
differences lie between individuals regardless of class, race or
gender. Whilst the debate still continues over the relative
importance for individuals of nature and nurture (genes and
environment) in determining their ability to learn, the weight of
evidence is that neither significantly affects the levels of basic
intelligence and of educability between groups. If 'brightness',
then, is to be the main quality that fits students for and into a
secondary schooling process, one would expect two things, that all
students labelled as 'bright' would proceed through to tertiary
entrance from Year 12, and that only 'bright' students would make it
through to this level. Neither is true, according to Meade's study.
He found (1983:190) that although about half of the educational
outcomes, from the 3043 Grade 9 students with whom he began his
longitudinal study in 1974, conformed to the institutional ideology
and followed the secondary school careers their IQs had predicted for
them, 'there were Greek, Yugoslav and Italian origin students and
their parents...who rejected the notion that 'only bright children
gain access to the H.S.C.' Meade (1983:188) classified the students
into six groups according to their IQs, aspirations and accreditation
levels, with the following results:

Group 1 - Aspired to and gained H.S.C.;
aspiration consistent with IQ.

Group 2 - Aspired to and gained H.S.C.;
aspiration not consistent with IQ.

Group 3 - Aspired to H.S.C.; did not gain it;
aspiration consistent with IQ.

Group 4 - Aspired to H.S.C.; did not gain it;
aspiration not consistent with IQ.

Group 5 - Did not aspire to or gain H.S.C.;
aspiration not consistent with IQ.
Group 6 - Did not aspire to or gain H.S.C.;
aspiration consistent with IQ.

Only those in Groups 1 and 6 conformed to the institutional ideology. All the others, half the students, deviated from the predicted pattern, even if their aspirations did not match up to their performance in some cases. 'Brightness', it seems, is not the sole determinant for success in secondary schooling, nor is it, on its own, a guarantee of success - a point, incidentally, which Willis (1977:60-62) brilliantly illustrates in his ethnography of working-class students in a comprehensive high school in a middle England factory town. There students who, through their first three years of secondary schooling give evidence of average or above-average ability, and follow the schooling pattern predicted for them through the institutional ideology, are liable suddenly to change their whole attitude and response to schooling.

In the second to fourth years some individuals break from this pattern. From the point of view of the student this break is the outstanding landmark of his school life, and is remembered with clarity and zest. 'Coming out' as a 'lad' is a personal accomplishment (Willis, 1977:60).

Factors affecting deviation from the pattern predicted by the institutional ideology in Sydney schools are probably not so dramatic as those Willis analyses. Nonetheless, other factors beside 'brightness' are operating, that break down the presumed 'connection between "brightness", educational opportunity, aspirations and motivation' (Meade, 1983:180). At the very least schools may now have to revise their preconceptions of which students best fit into secondary schooling. Perhaps, too, they may now look more positively on student difference as a base for developing alternative paths and processes leading, however, to the same high level outcomes. As Meade (1983:191) sums it up:

it is necessary to break the dominance of the institutional ideology and encourage the education system to serve the needs of all children and, in particular, those of lower IQ, and lower S.E.S. [standard English speakers], whom it now does its best to throw off. Teachers need to encourage children in the light of their real potential to learn (and not tune encouragement to culturally biased IQ measured which penalise lower S.E.S. children and those with N.E.S. [non-English-speaking] migrant origins).
Perceptions about the need for alternative schooling approaches and course offerings in education are not new. One educator claims that 'the modern arguments about de-schooling, free schooling and alternative schooling date from these original parliamentary acts', that is from the legislation making elementary education free and compulsory in each of the Australian States. He goes on to say that 'the seeds of the same assertions now put forward by modern radical thinkers like Paulo Friere and Ivan Illich found expression in the debates in parliament which preceded the passing of the acts' (Middleton, 1982:1-2).

Schools are prepared to innovate, to try alternatives to the normal. Schoenheimer was able to list 28 of what he called Good Australian Schools across Australia, back in 1973, while Trone (1977) lists some 26 innovatory programmes in Queensland high schools alone. Middleton (1982:178-196) provides a directory of Australian alternative schools, some 76 of them, though he notes that the list is necessarily incomplete. He also adds that 'within the state school systems, there are many interesting attempts to develop alternative structures such as mini-schools and outreach programmes' (1982:178).

'But', as he further points out, 'because staff in such schools are part of a larger system and are often moved from place to place, the security of such innovations is often tenuous'. In fact, on his own evidence (Middleton, 1982:178) and on that of the Schools Commission's (1981:426) own evaluation of its innovations programme, much innovation and attempts to develop alternative schooling structures, processes and programmes, are highly ephemeral and subject to funding shortage and staff loss. It is also a reality that most innovations of this kind are highly experimental, and rarely stand up to rigorous evaluation.

Beyond the question of the effectiveness of alternatives to and innovative experiments in schooling structures, processes and programmes, lies the problem of the entrenched educational bureaucracies, of the system-based blocks which support and maintain the dominance of the academic curriculum the weighting of evaluative procedures towards the established subjects in the curriculum and the
persistance of traditional teaching styles, patterns of teacher-
student interaction and methods of student selection and
encouragement. 'Organisations that were originally shaped by social
and political expediencies and by accidents of history', Middleton
(1982:6) observes, 'are increasingly maintained by the needs of their
own internal dynamics. Eventually they become stubbornly immune to
new social demands and insensitive to their own shortcomings'.

Supposing, though, that the system was open to change, eager to
experiment and sensitive to the strengths students who are apparently
'disadvantaged' bring to education, would it really be possible then
to provide all students, regardless of what they bring to school, be
it class, ethnicity or gender based, with a fully effective and
totally productive education, which would see all the class, ethnicity
and gender groups equally represented at each of the points of
certification? Can we accommodate the system to the differences that
lie between the separate groups in education, or must the students who
are different constantly be disadvantaged through their lack of fit?

(Connell et al. 1982), refers to the major ongoing debate in
contemporary radical education circles:

Does one seek primarily to support working class children
with the tools of elite culture in the form of the standard
academic curriculum the 'hegemonic curriculum', or does one
attempt to create a new curriculum which is 'organic' to the
working class and responsive to its special needs?

This remains a key question in Australian education. In July 1983 the
Minister for Education and Youth Affairs in the first Hawke Government
issued policy and programme guidelines for the Government's new
participation and Equity programme for schools. The guidelines
stated:

The program will make funds available to the states and non-
government schools to stimulate broadly based changes in
secondary education including:

- catering at all stages more adequately for the needs of
  the full range of students;
- making changes to secondary schools organisation to
  accommodate more adequately the social, economic and
cultural diversity of students, and to promote self-confidence, independence and a sense of autonomy in all students;
- reforming and diversifying the curriculum;
- reviewing credentialing and assessment arrangements, including provision for accreditation of work experience;
- changing and developing teacher attitude and skills;
- improving the relationship between schools and the community, and community attitudes to education (Australian Schools Commission, 1983:1).

Once again, it seemed, the government was to renew its efforts to reduce 'significantly the numbers of students leaving full-time education prematurely', and to foster 'equal educational outcomes' (Australian Schools Commission, 1983:1). And once again, it seemed, it was going to be left to the schools to do it, along the broad lines that had been advocated for the last decade — improving facilities, accommodating the schooling structures, procedures and programmes directed to student diversity, finding better methods of accreditation, developing new skills in teachers and better ways to manipulate support in schools' communities. More of the same, and yet more of the same. And not only was there to be a renewed effort at accommodating the system to difference, but there was to be, still, efforts to make over students to fit in:

To achieve the objectives set out above, special measures will be necessary to overcome the barriers to full and equal participation by girls, students from disadvantaged socio-economic groups, Aborigines, students from non-English speaking backgrounds and others for whom secondary provision has been inequitable. Cooperative efforts will be needed to explore further the nature of the disadvantages such students are facing; to increase awareness of how these can be overcome; and to provide the support and resources necessary for remedial action (Australian Schools Commission, 1983:19).

So, it was back to spotting the disadvantage, and overcoming it by remedial action on the students who were already labelled for failure. And, at the end of this new round of effort, this new '5-year plan', did the government or the Schools Commission or the State Education Departments really believe that there was going to be a significant change in the levels of equality of educational outcomes. The main objective of this new programme was to keep more students in secondary schooling for a longer time. This was not supposed to be a ploy to disguise youth unemployment figures, rather it was a recognition that the labour market no longer had a demand for the unskilled labour of
15-18 year olds. Whatever the reason, even the pious belief that 'full secondary education, or an appropriate equivalent, is intrinsically valuable' and so good for the student (Australian Schools Commission 1983:18) the fact was that schools were being required again to try to cope with having to provide an educational service to an increased number of students, over a longer period, many of whom had already been classed as misfits in the system. If these misfits were now to be pushed through to Year 12 level at school, what sort of outcomes were they expected to achieve from that? Already these students had been guided, from the early years of their secondary schooling, into alternative streams of study and into optional courses which were seen to be and were rated as lower quality courses. Were we to see in the future, then, separate middle-class 'academic', working-class 'vocational', gender oriented, Aboriginal and other ethnic community special curricula, each with their own outcomes? Curricula, in other words, that achieve the secondary schooling objectives the Schools Commission first espoused in 1973 (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:24) and which it repeated in 1983 saying 'that secondary schooling should provide students with a sound and broad preparation for participation in adult society and that schooling should be enjoyable and satisfying in its own right' (Australian Schools Commission, 1983:1). It might be desirable for equality of opportunity to be seen by schools and the community as 'an equal valueing of people based on their common humanity', with education being focused on developing in every child 'a variety of socially desirable attributes which might both afford it personal satisfaction and contribute to an improved quality of community and cultural life' (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:24). But that sort of education is not going to satisfy the employers and the 'back-to-basics' lobby, who have no doubt that schooling is all about getting jobs, nor will it satisfy parents, who sacrifice a great deal in the hope that their children will do well in schools and get good jobs. Finally, it won't fit the system's own ideology of itself as a defining and confirming institution.

No. Anything less than an educational system which not only gives access to, but actually succeeds in achieving equality of educational
outcomes for all the separate class, ethnicity and gender groups, at all the points of certification with the accompanying promise of access for all to high school level employment and all the advantages that accompany it, is not in anyone’s book real equality of educational opportunity.

And now we come down to the base-line. Is achieving full equality of educational opportunity really a possibility, or is it a pipe-dream? Do we really know what we are asking of the education system when we ask it to revolutionise a society whose class, ethnicity and gender divisions it has been designed to reproduce? Is equality of educational opportunity something we want to achieve anyway, or is it another educational carrot used to distract the disadvantaged groups in our society from the real causes of their basic levels of inequality?

1. Whilst there may be no reason why schools cannot do so, there is much discussion, and has been ever since the introduction of the Headstart and Follow Through programmes in the United States, as to the effectiveness and the acceptability of such early intervention programmes. (See de Lacey, 1981 and Kelly and McConnochie, 1981).

2. The Quality of Education Review Committee reported on a number of reviews and studies of special educational provisions for disadvantaged groups. Whilst acknowledging that some individuals benefitted from special programmes targeted on them, the Committee agreed that 'beyond intellectual ability and individual personality' other 'characteristics known to be associated with low educational attainment are group characteristics - low socio-economic status, ethnicity and geographic isolation'. (Australia, Quality of Education Review committee, 1985:162). In the case of individuals, then, schools may remedy in particular instances some of the personal deficiencies students bring to their schooling. So far, however, they have been conspicuously unsuccessful at remedying the effect of the group characteristics which contribute to individuals' low educational attainments.
Chapter 6. Educational equality and social inequality

It is time, with the help of Snook (1976:17-29), to attempt to clarify the concept 'equality of educational opportunity'.

It can mean getting the best possible kind of academic education, with the ideal being that every child would go as far as it could in education, dropping out only because of the limitations of its own ability. Equality thus, means simply an equal chance with everyone else for an excellent education to the highest possible level.

It can also mean giving every individual the same opportunity to achieve the best that they are capable of, according to an ideal of individual fulfilment. The focus here is on the individual child, and there will be as many educations as there are children. The aim is to develop the particular powers and talents of each child, with no one set of qualities, skills or abilities being favoured over any others. This is the sort of educational equality that is favoured in the free-school philosophy. Equality, here, is seen to be achieved when, for all students, there is congruence between promise shown and promise achieved. It is presumed that such people will live contented and fulfilled, and will be effective and valued members in their society.

These two models are often confused, as many of the references so far cited clearly show. Talk of all school students having an equal chance to complete secondary schooling and to enter university reflects the first model. Proposals to design special programmes for students who do not fit well into the system reflect the second. Often, too, both models are conflated. A typical example would be this description by the Australian Schools Commission (1983:13).

The principle of equity requires that schools and systems will treat all children fairly and...as far as practicable, will avoid policies and practices which advantage some social groups and disadvantage others.

Treating all children 'fairly' could be interpreted to mean concentrating on individual fulfilment, whilst avoiding policies and practices which advantage some and disadvantage others should mean that all must have an equal chance.
Does it matter that the two separate models of educational equality are confused and conflated in this way?

It does indeed.

Schools cannot and do not exist in a vacuum, cut off and isolated from the societies they serve. Evidently our society does take account of a person's schooling in assigning roles - jobs, status and pay - to each of them. Schools and policy makers deceive themselves if they believe that they can concentrate solely on getting the best out of every child, with the best for some being the very highest level tertiary entrance score, while for others it is low level development of practical and recreational skills. The nexus between length of schooling, level of schooling, content and quality of schooling and a person's job, status and pay is too well established to be ignored. Schools are expected to provide every child with the best possible academic education, and to make every effort to see both that their own practices do not hinder any child from achieving the highest level of schooling it is capable of, and that no child is barred from access to the highest levels of education through decisions the school may make about the child's ability to be schooled. If, over and above this, schools want to concern themselves with enabling students to achieve self-fulfilment, positive identity, satisfaction of their talents and creative abilities and all the other individual fulfilment goals they may set, well and good, provided that these are not offered as a substitute for, or as a form of equality of educational opportunity, and provided that the goal of giving every child an equal chance to better itself socially remains paramount. As Snook says (1976:25),

Since society rewards only a narrow range of talents, the fostering of varied individual talents will operate against social equality. However desirable it may be in theory to foster all talents, given the way society is, this approach must discriminate against the less advantaged.

Which all, of course, only makes it just that much more difficult for the educational system as a whole, and schools in particular, for they are being asked to engineer a social revolution they are not geared to undertake and have not the power to achieve.
Social inequality is to be found in every world society. It may not take the same form in every society or arise from the same conditions, but it is a characteristic of all nations. It is a characteristic of Australian society. As Western (1983:5) notes: While there may be an ethos of egalitarianism in Australian society, characterised either by the notion of equal availability of valued resources or the belief that all persons are fundamentally equal, no matter who they are, the facts unequivocally suggest the existence of pervasive and structurally-based patterns of social inequality.

Dahrendorf (1969:19) makes a distinction between inequalities of natural ability and social inequality. He says, 'inequalities derived from one's social position are inequalities based on wealth, reputation, caste, ethnic origin and so on. These are clearly not inequalities which are biologically determined but inequalities which are socially assigned'. However, it may be better to say that people experience inequality in access to, the use of and control over valued resources, specifically wealth, power, status, prestige, and general quality of personal life. Those who experience this inequality may be identified by such markers as class, ethnicity and gender.

The egalitarian ideal is that no one should be hindered from gaining access to the means for improving their opportunity to obtain a more equal share of the valued resources. Some egalitarian ideologies would have everyone sharing the resources quite equally.

In Australia the prevailing ideal seems to be to lessen the gap between those who gain an abundant share of the valued resources (the advantaged) and those who gain little of them (the disadvantaged). Depending on which political party has the government, a variety of measures are used to try to control the levels of inequality and to narrow the gap between the extremes of advantage and disadvantage. Just how effective these measures are in lessening the degrees of social inequality is not of particular relevance here. Of relevance is the fact that the evidence for class as a major allocating mechanism for scarce and valued resources is overwhelming. In the fields of education, housing, consumer affairs, the law, politics,
health and welfare, class makes a difference. The "higher up" the hierarchy one is, or the greater the "control" over the reproductive processes of the society one can exercise, the greater one's access to scarce and valued resources (Western, 1983:129).

Western goes on to conclude that gender, Aboriginality, ethnicity and age are all variables 'largely independent of class, which also contribute to the social inequality that is a feature of Australian society' (Western, 1983:194). It is evident, then, that to lessen the degree of social inequality in Australian society not only must the government legislate to limit the gap between the extremes of inequality, it must also find ways to give those who share least in scarce and valued resources access to the means whereby they may gain a greater share. That means helping the working class, women, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, members of particular ethnic communities, the disadvantaged young and the ageing, and those disadvantaged by physical or mental handicap, achieve equality of opportunity with those who already gain a disproportionate share of the available and desired resources because of their class, their gender, their ethnicity and their age.

The trick is, of course, how to do this.

One suggestion is that 'there should be economic equality within a society, regardless of a person's status or position' (Snook, 1976:26). Socio-economic status would be completely eliminated. Every person in society would receive the same payment, possibly in the form of units of economic credits, regardless of who they were, what they owned or what they did. In itself this would not guarantee complete social equality to everyone, since social status and prestige are not entirely dependent on income. It would certainly do away, though, with one of the more evident sources of inequality, access to, the use of and control over wealth. It takes but a little reflection, however, to realise that this is a revolutionary change which would be strongly resisted, even violently resisted, if it were pursued in this country, for it would require the complete overthrow of the capitalist ideology which shapes our present 'Australian way of life'. Any attempt, in fact, to alter the relative standing and levels of income attached to the various types of work in the Australian economy, has
been consistently opposed, as much by the various trade unions themselves as by the associations of professionals. The maintaining of relativity of wages and benefits between various occupations is one of the bases for wage and salary claims frequently made to the Arbitration Commission.

There is nothing to indicate that Australia is about to take drastic measures to do away with the economic source of inequality. The structurally based patterns of social inequality will remain, in that the established systems for sharing out wealth, power, status, privilege and so on will remain.

The only hope for those on the lower levels of the socio-economic scale is to be able to rise higher on that scale, to get better jobs, even, if possible, to get the very best jobs. And the only way we know to do that is to get the education and training that these jobs require.

So we are back to the school and to the expectation Australian society holds for it. Let us be precise about that expectation. Schools are not asked to overthrow capitalism, to reject the capitalist ideology nor to undermine the 'Australian way of life'. They are not asked to interfere in any way with established levels of socio-economic status in our society. What they are asked to do is to make sure that everyone who comes to school has the same chance to make it through successfully to each of the levels of educational certification, whether they are wealthy or poor, working class or middle class, male or female, black or white, English speaking or non-English speaking, newly arrived migrant or fifth-generation Australian or whatever.

That is the social revolution they are being asked to engineer - to open the competition for privilege to all members of Australian society and, in doing so, to challenge the right of any one section of that society to claim or to maintain a monopoly of privilege.

Can the school do it?
On the evidence, apparently not. The very latest figures on comparative retention rates for government, Catholic and other non-government schools throughout Australia show government schools, where the majority of the working-class and other 'disadvantaged' students would be attending, running at 42.3% of first to final year intake, Catholic schools at 57.4% and the privileged non-government schools at 91.2% (Australia, Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1987). The precise proportion of working-class to middle-class, ethnic to native-born and so on is not indicated in these figures, but one can confidently state that the great majority of these students staying on to Year 12 and matriculating to a tertiary institution, in all schools, would come from middle-class, white, English-speaking homes. There is no evidence at all that the remedies and accommodations the educational system uses to try to improve the performance of disadvantaged groups, as such, work, although they may help particular individuals from these groups to improve their own performance. Apparent retention rates at schools are, of course, no indicator of the quality and standard of education achieved by these students.

The fact that schools are not succeeding in effectively opening up competition for privilege to all students does not necessarily mean that it cannot be done. It suggests, however, that there are other variables, beyond the power of the school to alter, which intervene either to make the schooling process ineffective for certain students, or to make it impossible for these students to gain full access to the expected outcomes of schooling. If this is so, then it would seem that any expectation we may hold for schools acting as change agents are doomed to frustration, at least so long as schools remain essentially what they are now, and so long as the educational systems of which schools are a part, remain what they are.

THE INTERVENING VARIABLES

In attempting to establish how class, gender, race ethnicity and age effect the levels of social inequality Western (1983) examined the effect of each of them on the quality and quantity of education a person received, on access to health and welfare services, on the
experience and use of law and the legal system and on involvement in politics and public affairs. Whenever it was applicable, or where there was useful evidence, he also looked at their effect on employment and social mobility and, on housing and consumer affairs. In each instance he was able to demonstrate that 'access to scarce and valued resources is conditioned by seven structural factors...class, status, party, gender, race, ethnic origin and age' (Western, 1983:230). He adds that there may 'be other structural bases of inequality'. It should also be said that when two or more of these structural factors combine, the levels of inequality are bound to increase.

We have to ask, therefore, is there something in these structural factors that make it inevitable that they should condition access to scarce and valued resources? Or, on the other hand, is there something about the scarce and valued resources which determines who should have access to them?

Where education is concerned, then, do class, gender, race, ethnicity, age, and any similar structural factors in Australian society, actually condition one's access to, use of and control over education? If they do, then in what way do they condition it, and to what extent? If not, then there must be something, surely, in education itself which determines that only those of a certain class, gender, race, ethnic and age group should be able to gain fully and satisfyingly from it.

Government policy, at present, is unable to resolve the dilemma. Through its social welfare policies, especially in health, employment and law, it seeks to lessen the effects of these structural factors on equality. Through its educational programmes it hopes to open up educational opportunity to all students. In particular, it hopes that the combination of both efforts will succeed in breaking the patterned inevitability of inequality. What it has not been able to do has been to succeed in altering the pattern. To a certain extent, in so far as recent policies urged a renewed effort by schools to achieve greater participation and equity for all students (Australian Schools commission, 1983:1), it would seem that failure was being blamed on
the schools. According to Western (1983:340) this is scarcely fair, since success in school is already determined, in so far as structural factors have conditioned access to this very scarce and highly valued resource.

What is there about these structural factors, then, that causes this conditioning?

No one really knows. There are plenty of theories, most of which we have already examined, but which remain unverified. The evidence, for instance, of difference in performance between social, class and ethnic groups on standard tests for I.Q., even if it does indicate a difference between the groups in whatever it is that these tests measure, does not, as some have gone on to argue, necessarily indicate a generically based difference. Kelly and McConnochie (1981:201) support this view saying,

\[\text{it seems that, particularly with regard to Australian Aborigines, one cannot argue strongly for an account of failure in schools and in the workforce in genetic terms when there is a suggestion that a caste-like system may be operating', but they add, 'however, the question is still an open one, and non-evidence of genetic causation does not necessarily mean evidence for environmental causation.}\]

There is no evidence, then, to support a belief that we must posit environment as the cause of inequality of access, especially if by environment we mean cultural deficiency.

Environment does play a part in so far as poverty, geographic location, home facilities and so on may make access to and the pursuit of full term education difficult for a number of children. These are not insuperable difficulties and, more importantly, they are not necessary features of the structural factors Western (1983:340) says conditioned access and caused inequality. Gender and age, for instance, as structural factors, are found in wealthy, urban homes as well.

The theory that there are cultural and sub-cultural differences between classes, genders, racial and ethnic, as well as age groups is easy to establish in some instances, though more difficult in others.
Where age groups are concerned, for instance, whether the 'generation gap' is caused by real cultural differences or ineffective communication could be argued. Similarly, are the apparent differences between male and female values and behaviours really culturally rather than biologically based? Given, however, that there are discernable cultural differences, especially between racial and ethnic groups in the community, do these differences condition peoples access to scarce and valued resources? Many people, not least teachers themselves, seem to think they do. That is where the theory of cultural deficit comes in. Not only, in fact, do people believe that the culture of Aborigines, the poor and of many of the ethnic groups conditions their access to education, employment, health, law, housing and the rest, but many act as though they believed that these cultural traits are genetically embedded and thus naturally acquired rather than learned. One definition of culture says that it is learned behaviour. Things that are learned are not naturally acquired, though one may have a natural propensity to learn certain things more readily than others. Being culturally different, then, does not in itself hinder one from learning, and certainly does not determine one's natural ability to learn. What it may do, though, is to develop in the very young child preferred modes of cognitive and affective response together with particular motor skills, which may be culturally reinforced at later stages of the child's development. As a consequence children who come from a clearly different and strongly maintained culture may bring to their schooling, employment and so on a full range of developed skills which would fit them for an education within their own culture, but which are not the skills the Australian schooling system values and on which it bases its schooling process. In which case, it would not and could not be the children's natural or even cultural ability that would be in doubt. Instead there would be a clear case of mis-match between the culture of the school and the child's home culture - a matter of cultural difference, not deficit.

The problem here is that this sort of mis-match is difficult to establish in the case of class, generation and gender sub-groups, since, as has been pointed out, their 'difference' may not be cultural. None the less, that these groups, as such, are different to
the students for whom the schooling process has been designed is evident, and to that extent they do not fit into school.

Difference, then, whether it be culturally or in some instances naturally based, does seem to be a common trait among the groups. It could also be said this difference does condition access to scarce and valued resources, and especially to education. Certainly when there is an evident mismatch between the culture of the school and the child's home culture, or when a child is seen not to fit the model of the educable child, the possibility of that child gaining equal access to educational opportunity with children who match the school and fit the model is very slight.

Yet, even so, there is no reason why difference should condition access and cause inequality. Difference does not constitute inability, especially not cultural difference. If difference conditions access, it does so because of the inflexibility of systems and processes of education, health, politics, law, employment and the other forms of scarce and valued resources, in dealing with the group or the person who is different. The problem is with the system itself, then, rather than with the groups who seek access to it. The intervening variables operate simply because they are allowed to operate, made to operate by systems which cannot or will not accept difference.

This intransigence on the part of the system may not be as blind as it may seem. There is a theory that access to privilege is carefully guarded and controlled by those who are privileged. According to one version of the theory, in class societies like Australia, a ruling elite maintains a political, but also a more general predominance over other social classes 'which includes as one of its key features a particular way of seeing the world and human nature and relationships' (Williams, 1983:145). The ruling elite is able to hold this predominance 'not only on its expression of the interest of a ruling class but also on its acceptance as 'normal reality' or 'commonsense' by those in practice subordinated to it' (Williams, 1983:145). When this situation develops in a society, the ruling class is said to have hegemony over the other social classes and the other ways of seeing
the world, human nature and relationships. It maintains that hegemony through a range of control mechanisms which may include 'intimidation, persuasion through education or the mass media [and] bribery' (Connell and Irving, 1980:23).

HEGEMONY AND EDUCATION

The word 'hegemony', which Williams (1983:144) says comes from a Greek word meaning a leading or ruling State, was used in the nineteenth century to mean a state which held political predominance over another. The Italian Marxist, Gramsci, took over the term and used it to describe a relationship between social classes, which has developed in particular countries at particular stages in their history, whereby one class exercises both a political as well as a form of socio-cultural/ideological predominance over the other classes, to such a degree that through a process of persuasion, consent and consolidation a state of social equilibrium is established and maintained (Williams, 1960:591).

The development of the concept from Gramsci's writings has proven to be a complex activity, since the full ramifications of it both for Marxism and for society itself are presented obliquely throughout his work, rather than being developed in a specific treatise. As clear a formulation of the concept as any is that given by Williams (1960:587), which says:

By 'hegemony' Gramsci seems to mean a socio-political situation, in his terminology a 'moment', in which the philosophy and practice of a society fuse or are in equilibrium; an order in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant, in which one concept of reality is diffused throughout society in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing with its spirit all taste, morality, customs, religious and political principles, and all social relations, particularly in their intellectual and moral connotations. An element of direction and control, not necessarily conscious, he implied.

Gramsci sees such a 'moment' in the history of class relationships within states as organic, and he sees the proletariat in gaining political dominance over the bourgeoisie, indeed in the earliest stages of preparing to gain political dominance, also preparing to assert its own full hegemony. 'Hegemony in this scheme...becomes an
instrument of cultural renovation... The complement to the victory of
the workers, indeed its historical realization, is the achievement of
an integrated culture' (Williams, 1960:593).

The other thing to note about Gramsci's 'hegemony' is that it is
maintained through forces, 'not necessarily conscious', which give it
direction and control. It is the intellectuals of the ruling class
who are assigned the task of direction and control for 'every social
group, coming into existence on the original basis of an essential
function in the world of economic production, creates simultaneously,
organically, one or more intellectual groups which give it homogeneity
and awareness of its proper function not only in the economic, but in
the social and political field as well' (Gramsci, quoted in Williams,
1960:592).

Connell (1977:218-222), in analysing the patterns of hegemony in
Australia in the post war years, speculates that 'hegemony...must be
produced by processes that are identifiable in history', and takes up
Gramsci's suggestion 'that the identification may revolve on specific
groups of people, notably the intellectuals'. Having identified the
clergy, teachers, journalists, social workers and university staff and
students as the specific group of 'intellectuals', he asks, 'can these
groups be seen as active agents in the creation of a hegemonic
situation?' (1977:218). He could, as well, have asked whether they
can also be seen as active agents in maintaining a hegemony, for the
evidence he presents shows that they are active, if not necessarily
conscious agents, both effectively using direct persuasion, as well as
other kinds of influence, to support the hegemony of the ruling class
and its socio-cultural ideology. "With teachers', he says, 'the
influence may have more to do with the concepts in which people think
about the social world than with their attitudes' (Connell, 1977:219),
though, of course, it is precisely the teacher's task both to teach
people what to think about their social world and what are the
appropriate attitudes to adopt towards it, as well as to develop the
concepts on which these generalisations are to be based.

Before the question of the part intellectuals may play in establishing
and maintaining class hegemony can be taken up, we need to ask whether
there is a hegemonic situation existing in Australia and, if there is, what are the nature and the dimensions of that hegemony? Connell and Irving (1980:21-24) undertook to answer these questions. For a hegemony of a social class to exist there has to be a class society. Classes are a feature of capitalist societies. 'The owners of mere labour power,' says Marx (quoted in Western 1983:14) 'the owners of capital and the landowners whose respective sources of income are wage, profit and rent, constitute the three great classes of modern society, based on a capitalist mode of production.' The concept of production is basic here and the elements of class are formed in it as well as, as Dahrendorf (quoted in Western, 1983:15) points out, in the power relations determined by it. But although relationship to production is what determines class situation, 'classes come into existence when, and only when, those in particular economic situations, identify their real interests, produce some form of community association and political organisation and actively direct their attention to the attainment of these interests' (Western, 1983:15).

Marx did not have a monopoly on the term 'class' which was already widely in use, and used in distinct ways, to describe people's position in society. Thus, as Williams (1983:69) notes, the basic range of uses, in nineteenth and twentieth century Britain, was for a group, whether in a social or economic category, in the form of 'productive classes' or 'privileged classes'; for rank, showing relative social position either by birth or mobility, such as 'upper, middle and lower classes', or 'salaried and wage-earning classes'; or for the formation into a class for itself with perceived economic relationships and with social, political and cultural organisation, such as Marx's bourgeoisie and proletariat. For our purpose, though, it is necessary to establish that classes as Marx describes them exist in Australia, since Gramsci's model of hegemony rests on Marx's definition of class.

By mid-nineteenth century classes, in Marx's sense, had begun to emerge in Australian society, which was then just beginning to develop as an industrial, capitalist society. Connell and Irving (1980:25) cite an editorial in the 1844 Herald which says:
To instil into then minds of what are called the working men a feeling of class separation, or of class independency, or of class antagonism and rivalry, towards the classes from which alone they can obtain employment, and with whose welfare their own is necessarily interwoven, is...a cruel wrong to society at all times.

Although classes in themselves, that is as groups situated in relation to the capitalist mode of production had scarcely begun to emerge in what was still mainly a pastoral society, still there must have been some movement towards establishing classes for themselves, the second requisite for the formation of classes, for the editorial to come out so strongly against the mobilisation of the 1844 working classes.

By the late nineteenth century the classes - wage earners, capitalists and land-owners - were already established as classes in themselves and for themselves with the beginning of their own associations, educational programmes through their own press and the formation of their own political parties. Throughout this present century class identity and solidarity has continued to strengthen, and with it the struggle for political power.

Social classes, in Marx's terms, are to be found in Australia. There may be some doubt as to how the classes should be designated, though that doubt springs, as Williams (1983:69) has shown, from a confusion of usage between social rank, economic role and a consciously and perceptively formed economic grouping. In Australia the two designations commonly used are 'working class' and 'middle class'. These two are adequate for our purposes here. They constitute the fundamental classes according to their relationships to the capitalist mode of production.

Given that Australia is a class society, we must next ask whether one of those classes has a hegemony over the other and, if it has, what form does that hegemony take?

It is again Connell and Irving that we turn to as the main protagonists of this theory in relation to class relations in Australia. Working from this description:

hegemony can be seen as a situation where the subordinate class lives its daily life in forms created by, or
consistent with the interests of the dominant class, and through this daily life acquires beliefs, motives and ways of thinking that serve to perpetuate the class structure.

Connell and Irving (1980:22-23), in attempting to establish that a hegemonic situation exists here, look for evidence of a highly mobilised dominant class confronting a subordinate class with very little mobilisation. As they see it:

The formation and maintenance of hegemony may thus be regarded as a process whereby the holders of power — whether by conscious policy or standing institutional arrangements — resist the process of class formation in the part of the labour force, and especially resist the development of a heightened class consciousness. Anything that serves to disorganise the working class, to disrupt class solidarity, or to contain or deflect the action of working-class groups, will then be a mechanism of hegemony.

But one must look for more than this, for hegemony is not just political predominance, as Gramsci has made very clear. It involves also a socio-cultural/ideological form of predominance over the subordinate culture. We must look to see how effectively this aspect of hegemony is maintained, too, and we will find that, even though the political arm of the working class, the Australian Labor Party has succeeded, on occasions, in winning both state and national government, thus gaining a political predominance, this political success has never been accompanied by a socio-cultural/ideological predominance of the working class.

The return of the conservative parties to government in 1949, and their virtual continuation in office through to 1983 enabled the middle class to reassert its political and to continue its socio-cultural/ideological dominance. This is Connell and Irving’s assessment of the effect of that political victory:

From the point of view of the working class, reestablishment of bourgeois hegemony is a process of demobilisation, of some withdrawal from a state of class distinctiveness, class consciousness, and organisation for struggle. A defeat is not necessarily equivalent to a demobilisation, as is shown by many industrial and electoral losses after which the labour movement has sprung back. But the political defeats around 1950 were followed by a demobilisation, and the reasons plainly extend far beyond politics and changes in domestic life, new patterns of division in the working class, and changes in the role of the state as well as the cultural ascendancy of the industrial bourgeoisie (Connell and Irving, 1980:298).
The changes in domestic life they refer to were of two kinds, a move towards encouraging home-ownership by the working-class and towards home-centred social life. The former tied the working class into new economic dependence on banks and finance companies, and this dependence necessarily committed it to stability and continuity of work. As a result, 'unions found their members increasingly reluctant to enter long disputes, and many shifted tactics towards short demonstration strikes' (Connell and Irving, 1980:298). Home-centred social life, in its turn, meant that 'the neighbourhood networks of the older working-class suburbs were mostly lost [in the new working class suburbs], and with it much of the municipal strength of Labor politics...it is undoubtedly true that the sense of class distinctiveness was eroded in the new environment' (Connell and Irving, 1980:300).

Division in the working class hindered its ability to organise for struggle. Resentment towards and prejudice against working-class migrants, together with the migrant families' need to work to enable them to establish themselves in their new country, meant an initial reluctance on their part to join working-class organisations. White-collar workers unionised and their unions expanded, but they mostly did not join in association with the blue-collar workers in industrial action nor in working-class organisations like the Australian Council of Trade Unions. 'Privileged groups in the workforce, too, were determined to maintain their distance and extent their privileges over other employees' (Connell and Irving, 1980:301). These divisions were engineered by, and were attributable to traditional pressures and defensive actions embedded in working-class value systems, but they were certainly encouraged and promoted by hegemonic actions by the ruling class.

These actions are evident in changes in the role of the state which took place during the 1950s and 1960s. Not least of these was the growing intervention of the state in education and in social welfare. In the latter case this lead, along with the demand for administrative services, to an increase in the Public Service which saw a notable change in the pattern of employment of the working class, particularly in the growth of the 'white-collar' element. In its turn this lead to
'the elaboration of grades in administrative services, both public and private, the revival of margins in arbitration awards, the development of selective higher education as a means of controlled access to well-paid jobs, even the creation of status grades in suburban developments built by public authorities', and, as a consequence, 'the working class was coming increasingly to live in an environment of planned inequalities rather than inequalities produced directly by the labour market' (Connell and Irving, 1980:303).

We have seen how, very early in the development of free, compulsory and secular education, there were attempts to develop a working-class curriculum for rural labour, for industrial labour and for domestic labour. This was countered by those who wanted the schools to give predominance in the curriculum to the clerical skills of reading, writing and numbering as part of an academic curriculum. This led, according to Connell and Irving (1980:310) to the rise of a new labour aristocracy, 'not on the basis of traditional manual skill, but of professional knowledge certified by specialised higher education', and this, too, was a socially divisive development, especially in the way it promoted 'the ideology of professionalism which was assiduously spread among new mass occupations such as engineering and teaching' (Connell and Irving, 1980:301). At the same time as education was being used to make divisions within the working class, it was being used to legitimate these divisions. 'The doctrine of higher knowledge validating higher privilege was reinforced in the schools', is Connell and Irving's (1980:301) claim, 'where it was spread to the mass of working-class children, who under no circumstances could become professionals; and this helped confirm them in a new sense of their inferiority in the technological age and undercut the sense of dignity and equality'.

Connell and Irving (1980:326-356) support with a selection of original documents their analysis of the re-establishment of a full middle class hegemony through the process they called 'demolition of the working class', which involved, in this instance, changes in domestic life, new patterns of division in the working class and changes in the role of the state. The documents strongly reinforce their argument and provide clear evidence that there is a struggle for political
dominance, that the struggle is class-based, that it is consciously a struggle between classes and that it is concerned with the power relations between capital and labour within the capitalist modes of production. In this way Connell and Irving establish that a political hegemony exists, but political predominance is not real hegemony in Gramsci's terms. There must also be the successful diffusion throughout the society 'in all its institutional and private manifestations of the dominant class's concept of reality' (Williams, 1960:587). Connell and Irving (1980:22) themselves stress this in saying of hegemony that it 'can be seen as a situation where the subordinate class lives its daily life in forms created by, or consistent with the interests of, the dominant class, and through this daily life acquires beliefs, motives and ways of thinking that serve to perpetuate the class structure'. This final phase, 'to perpetuate the class structure', is surely not intended. Hegemony is not so much about perpetuating the class structure, as perpetuating the pattern of class domination and subordination that exists at a particular 'moment' in a society's history, 'a "moment" in which the philosophy and practice of a society are in equilibrium' (Williams, 1960:587).

Whilst Connell and Irving do not document so carefully the nature and extent of this socio-cultural/ideological form of class predominance, they provide sufficient evidence of it in their references to those public and private monuments to big business, the multi-storey company office blocks so carefully architectured and decorated with works of art; the patronage of the arts and artists by international companies and by notable entrepreneurs, capitalists, professionals and intellectuals; the support that is given to the preferred forms of 'high culture' as opposed to the exploitation of forms of 'low culture' and so on. Most of all, of course, the hegemony of the middle class is seen in its success in shaping consumer habits and behaviours among the working class; in imposing social values such as respect for 'law and order' and for those responsible for administrating it, and a preference for 'social consensus' rather than 'social conflict': in its use of the media and its control of the content of media offerings; in its ability to control the definitions, the structures and the modes of education, health and welfare; and in its being able to lock the working class into a form
of economic activity and industrial negotiations which ensure the maintenance of the current levels of socio-economic status inequality. So successful has the middle class been in imposing its socio-cultural/ideological predominance over the working class, that this predominance is likely to continue even when the working class succeeds in regaining political predominance. There is no sign, for instance, despite its recent successes in national, and in several state elections, of the working class establishing a real hegemony over the middle class.

In the terms Gramsci has laid down, as his interpreters translate them, then, it seems that a hegemonic situation existed in Australia from 1950 through to 1980, with the middle class having hegemony over the working class, and exercising an almost unbroken political dominance and a virtually unbroken socio-cultural/ideological dominance. This latter form of domination still persists although the political dominance of the middle class is, at present, broken.

Within Gramsci's formulation of hegemony this is quite possible. It depends on how effective the ruling class has been in articulating the interests of other social groups to its own. Establishing socio-cultural/ideological predominance does not mean, for Gramsci, imposing the ruling class's ideology on society. 'It does not consist in making a clean sweep of the existing world-view and in replacing it with a completely new and already formulated one. Rather it consists in a process of transformation (aimed at producing a new form) and of rearticulation of existing ideological elements' (Mouffe, 1979:191-192). The more effective a ruling class is in incorporating into its own world-view those ideological elements from varying sources and social groups, and in presenting this transformation of the existing hegemonic ideology as a national and a popular ideology, the more likely it is to win and to maintain its own hegemony.

A class that seeks to become both politically and ideologically predominant must first win what Gramsci called 'the war of position'.

In effect the war of position is the process of ideological struggle by means of which the two fundamental classes try to appropriate the non-class ideological elements in order
to integrate them within the ideological system which articulates itself around their respective hegemonic principles (Mouffe, 1979:198).

This means that the first step for a fundamental class, towards gaining a position of hegemony, is to identify popular-national elements in all ideologies, that are not elements which necessarily stem from a class, and to integrate these with its own 'hegemonic principle', its own world view and value system, so as to form a unified ideological system which will gain and hold the support from other social groups that it will need. Once it has won its 'war of position', then the class has effectually won a position of hegemony, and will maintain its hegemony so long as it can maintain its socio-cultural/ideological predominance. It follows, of course, that a class which succeeds in gaining political predominance, if it has not first won the 'war of position', must move quickly to establish an ideological predominance as well, if it is to maintain itself as a ruling class. Here, obviously is where the role of the intellectual begins, as active agents in directing and controlling the mechanisms of hegemony.
Chapter 7. A mechanism of hegemony

A hegemony of the middle class over the working class has existed and, at the socio-cultural/ideological level, persists here in Australia. It must also be said that this hegemony exists in a democracy where, it is believed, the majority of the people acquiesce in that hegemony, and accept the right of the ruling class to exercise its political and ideological predominance through the state and through its structures. In this way it is possible for the state to be seen as exercising hegemony, and its structures to be seen as being mechanisms of that hegemony, rather than for the ruling class as such to be seen as having the hegemony. Gramsci, himself, said:

It is true that the State is seen as the organ of one particular group, destined to create favourable conditions for the latter's maximum expansion. But the development and expansion of the particular group; are conceived of, and presented, as being the motor force of a universal expansion, of a development of all the 'national' energies. In other words the dominant group is coordinated concretely with the general interests of the subordinate groups, and the life of the State is conceived of as a continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable equilibria (on the judicial plane) between the interests of the fundamental group and those of the subordinate groups - equilibria in which the interests of the dominant group prevail, but only up to a certain point, i.e. stopping short of narrowly corporate economic interest (Gramsci quoted in Mouffe, 1979:181).

This being so, since the education system is one of these state structures, and since education has already been identified by Connell (1977:218) as one of the areas in which teachers as intellectuals operate as active agents in the creation of a hegemonic situation, it may fairly be asked whether, as a mechanism of hegemony, the education systems are used by the ruling class to maintain its socio-cultural and ideological predominance.

We have already seen that middle class children from English-speaking homes are the ones who do best from schooling. Is there a link between their success in schooling and the hegemony their class has effectively maintained for so long in Australian society? And is the failure of all attempts to equalise educational opportunity for all students due to the hegemony of the middle class? If it is, how is
education controlled and directed, as it would have to be, so as to maintain class inequality in educational outcomes and to assure the maintenance of middle class privilege? And, finally, how does the education system succeed in winning the acquiescence of all to the continuation of inequality of educational opportunity.

Before attempting to answer these questions it is important to stress that though an element of direction and control is always implied in the use of the mechanisms of hegemony, these are not necessarily conscious. Especially when that mechanism is a state structure, like the education system, the hegemonic activity carried out by the intellectuals - teachers, administrators, advisors, planners and the rest - will but rarely be seen by them as such. Its hegemonic effect will be real, but its hegemonic intent will not be seen. Indeed, if the maintaining of social inequality by the accretion of advantage and privilege to the dominant class and its allied groups are the objectives of hegemony, then how can schools be said to be contributing to this hegemony when, throughout the history of schooling in this country, as we have seen, the whole philosophy of education has focussed on the educability of all students and on the need to provide them with equality of opportunity through and to education?

The answer to this question is that no matter what the education systems believe they are trying to do, and no matter what governments may say they want them to do, the fact is that so far schools have not succeeded in providing equality of educational opportunity for all the class and other social groups, despite all their attempts at educational reform, innovations in curriculum and pedagogy and other experiments and strategies for change. Not only have they not succeeded in providing real equality of educational opportunity to all students, they have not succeeded in any way, have not even attempted in any way, to challenge the socio-cultural/ideological dominance of the ruling class. On the contrary, the practices of schooling, the values schools hold and extol, the skills they inculcate and promote as essential for advancement, the world view they teach, all these and more, reflect and reinforce the dominance in Australian society of a middle-class socio-cultural ideology.
According to Connell and Irving (1980:23), 'anything that serves to disorganise the working class, to disrupt class solidarity, or to contain or deflect the action of working class groups, will then be a mechanism of hegemony'. Speaking of education in the United States of America, Bowles and Gintis (1977:204) say that 'analysis of the process of educational reform must consider the shifting arena of class conflict and the mechanisms that the capitalist class had developed to mediate and deflect class conflict'. For them, then, education can be an arena of class conflict, and it can be used to deflect, in Connell and Irving's terms, 'the action of working class groups'. Areas in which one might look for evidence, in education, of these mechanisms of hegemony are 'the bureaucratization and professionalization of education, the role of the major private foundations and quasi-public institutions, the composition of major public decision-making bodies, the crucial process of educational finance and resource allocation, the impact of parental and student opinion, and the role of teachers' associations' (Bowles and Gintis, 1977:204). Whilst we note again that Bowles and Gintis are referring to the education systems in the United States, the areas they have identified have their counterparts in Australian education, and Connell and Irving (1980:301), for instance, have shown how professionalisation effectively disrupted class solidarity in the 1950s and 1960s in Australia. As another example, Connell and Irving refer to the effects of the expansion of tertiary education opportunity in the early 1970s, claiming that, 'to the extent that working class youth entered the new mass universities and colleges (which remained, nevertheless, mainly the preserve of the affluent), they were cut off from their age-mates and induced into a new form of hegemonised class consciousness' (Connell and Irving 1980:301). This expansion of tertiary educational opportunity, with the apparent intention that it would contribute to equalising opportunity for 'working class youth', was a typical hegemonic act in that it represented an articulating of the interests of other social groups to the interests of the hegemonic class, but ultimately to the benefit of that class.
So the education system, in so far as it is an arena used by a ruling class to mediate and deflect class conflict, and in so far as it reflects and reinforces the dominant ruling class socio-cultural ideology, is undoubtedly a mechanism of hegemony. The philosophy of equality of educational opportunity says it is not supposed to be. Is it possible to pinpoint what the systems do, what schools do, that is hegemonic, that maintains class and general social inequality? And if this can be done, is it then possible to free the systems from these hegemonic mechanisms, so that they may become the means of social reform that government and the Australian society seem to expect them to be?

At the systems level in education it is possible to identify a large number of hegemonic mechanisms. The system manages educational finances from both Federal and State sources. Governments may make allocations of particular amounts of funding for specific purposes, such as transitional education, special multicultural and Aboriginal education, disadvantaged areas programmes and so on, but it is the systems which decide funding priorities within these areas. The system formulates educational policy. Governments, of course, have their party policy platforms, and these policies enter into the policy proposals and systems put up to government through their ministers. The system also interprets policy, determines what are the barriers to its achievement and what is achievable, draws up strategies for its implementation, and establishes priorities and the timetable for carrying out policy. The system controls both the process of education and the educational product. Controlling the process involves such things as establishing, expanding, designing and equipping schools; appointing school principals and staff, and determining staff-student ratios; setting the criteria for selection of teachers for employment; monitoring the efficiency of school performance; allocating levels of support and special staff to schools; collecting and preserving school records and statistics; and drawing up enforceable codes of procedures, behaviours and responsibilities for teachers and all staff. Controlling the product involves setting educational goals; formulating the curriculum in specific or general terms; approving the procedures of assessment for certification; recommending desirable methods of pedagogy;
monitoring the content of curriculum and of the resources used to present that content; ratifying schools' curriculum decisions', ensuring that the product is responsive to the changing needs of both the market-place and the community; and establishing structures to obtain feed-back about the product both from within and from outside the system.

The education system here means the state education systems. Catholic systemic and both Catholic and non-Catholic independent schools will conform with the state systems in setting their educational product and in their educational processes, and they will be guided by, though not bound to government educational policy. Since they are now allocated supplementary funding by both Federal and State governments, they will be bound by the funding formulas and by the conditions of special purpose grants. These schools are not so obviously or so readily made to serve as mechanisms of hegemony, however, since they are not directly controlled by the hegemonic class. That they can and do act so is not to be disputed since the independent schools, in particular, were mostly established to serve the privileged and to maintain their privilege, whilst the other schools, through their conformity to state systems, have the same hegemonic effect as the state schools.

That hegemonic effect also results from the practices schools follow in seeking to implement the schooling process with their students, and in attempting to provide them with an educational product that is acceptable to the student, to its family and to the society it seeks a place in. Schools have a multitude of practices most of them overt, but many also covert, which can serve as hegemonic mechanisms. They include methods for defining difference and deficiency in students and processes for dealing with and determining the levels of mismatch between students and the school; assessment procedures for selecting out students for promotion, for directing down divergent educational paths and for individualised programmes; the setting of social values, behavioural models, roles expectations and ethical principles that are based on a particular world view; espousing and promoting a 'consensus' model of society; upholding the structures of our capitalist democracy and especially our systems of law and order;
giving precedence at the teaching/learning level to those skills and procedures which are favoured in middle class cultures; giving preeminent status in the curriculum to the study of 'high culture' as preferred by representatives of the English-speaking middle class; and cementing the nexus between school achievement, the dominant academic curriculum and employment expectations.

We have pinpointed not all, but a great many of the activities at the system and at the school level which could have a hegemonic effect if they were used as mechanisms of hegemony. Are they used this way? If they are, they are not necessarily being used consciously, nor may they be being used so much to impose dominance, as to win acquiescence to an existing dominance. Still, no matter how innocently and how subtly they are used, the effect is hegemonic.

HEGEMONY THROUGH THE SYSTEM

Research into the areas of education where one might look for evidence of hegemonic activity is, at best, rudimentary, according to Bowles and Gintis (1977:204). If that is true of the United States, it is no less true of Australia. One of the recent analyses of the hegemonic effect of schooling on working class children is described by a reviewer as 'amongst the few really good books there are about schools in Australia, because it throws significant light on the Australian upper class and the construction and reconstruction of its hegemony' (Lever-Tracey, 1983:565). Connell, who co-authored this book (Connell et al, 1982) is one of the few whose research effort has focussed on the evidence of hegemony in education, but even he has not been able to explore cohesively all the mechanisms of hegemony that exist at both the systems and the schooling level.

If, in fact, the existence of such a hegemonic situation, as we have defined, in Australia, depends so heavily on the use of education as a mechanism of hegemony, then the study of how hegemony is maintained through education would seem to be an important and immediate area for research. Important, at least for those whose concern is the failure of education to provide equality of educational opportunity to all students, but also for those in the subordinate class and groups in
our society who seek more than the occasional political victory over
the hegemonic class.

Lacking the evidence such research might establish, the most we can
attempt here is to identify, from various sources, those policies,
processes and procedures at the system and the school level which can
be shown to have a hegemonic effect.

We have already identified, at the systems level, those activities
which could serve as hegemonic mechanisms. They fall within the
budgeting, policy, and implementation areas of systems responsibility.
These are broad, general areas, and they are not autonomous of each
other. To illustrate how these areas combine in a typical hegemonic
society, here is a case study.

TRANSITIONAL EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY IN HEGEMONY

Late in the 1970s youth unemployment, especially among young school
leavers, grew to such an extent that it began to be seen as a serious
social problem and one that was becoming an embarrassment to the
conservative government of the day. In a fifteen year period, from
1966 to 1981, the proportion of young people (15-19 years) in full
time work fell from 59.2% to 40.0%. In numbers this meant that in
1981 some 760,500 fifteen to nineteen year olds were not employed
(Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, 1982:21). A number of
these would still be full-time students, but an estimate of 150,000
unemployed young people in this age group in 1981 would be close to
the mark.

It was not just the numbers of young people who were unemployed that
was causing concern, though. It was also that particular groups were
notably effected – the early school leavers, girls, country school
leavers, young people from particular ethnic groups, Aborigines (whose
unemployment rate was five to six times the average), and young people
from low socio-economic families (Australian Schools Commission,
Unemployment had been growing, world-wide, throughout the seventies as inflation and recession took their toll of world economies. But this growth of unemployment for young people was out of all proportion by comparison with the unemployment rate for other age groups.

Analyses of the labour market show that considerable changes took place in the 1970s, not only in the rate of employment, but also in the patterns of employment. In particular, there was an increase of around 92.6% in professional white-collar employment accompanied by an overall reduction in blue-collar employment, both skilled and unskilled, a trend which continues to the present. There has been, as well, a growth, though somewhat slower, in other skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled white-collar employment. As a consequence, 'for the first time white collar work now ranks equally with blue collar work as a source of full-time employment opportunities for Australians. Moreover, the growth in white collar employment has been associated principally with those occupations of high skill content' (Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, 1982:26). This change in employment pattern provides part of the explanation of why young people are not being taken up by the labour market as readily as they were in the past. So significant has been this structural shift in the labour market, that the Australian Schools Commission (1983:18) speculated that 'a return to high demand for the labour of 15-18 year olds now seems most unlikely'. It is, thus, the Schools Commission's belief that young people have to give serious thought to the sort of learning and the amount of learning they now need, to cope with rapidly changing technology and its wide-spread social effects. Among the most significant of these social effects are the changes taking place in the modes of capitalist production and in the class relations based on those modes.

Whilst there may be recognition at the educational systems level of the significance for education of the technological changes in industry, (witness, for instance, the growing enthusiasm for computer education and for the study of computer technology in schools), there is very little reference to the fact that this technological revolution, for such it is, has been engineered and directed by the capitalist class to maximise its share of profits by replacing
expensive and intractable human labour with docile and far cheaper automatic machines. The rhetoric of the revolution is 'competibility', 'rationalisation', 'technological development', 'profitability' and so on, and this is the language the media and the educationists use in articulating all Australian society to the dominant, hegemonic world-view of Australia's capitalist class.

Of course a by-product of this technological revolution is youth unemployment. The young unemployed are a visible sign of the effects of recession and of this revolution. They are, too, victims and evidence of the inequality that subordinate groups experience in a hegemonic situation. As such they are an embarrassment both to the government and to the hegemonic class. It is important for the government and the hegemonic class that efforts be made to hide the unemployed youth and to deflect any reaction from the working class and its allied social groups. Two strategies are used, the first is to blame unemployed youth for not making the effort to seek work, and so to accuse them of being willing to live at the public expense as 'dole-bludgers'. Strict application of the regulations for unemployment benefits aims at discouraging dole-bludging, whilst introducing new rules on how soon after leaving school a person may apply for these benefits aims at either encouraging early school leavers to stay on at school, or at forcing them to be more active in seeking employment. The second strategy is to categorise the young unemployed as unemployable. There is always a number of 'experts' around to accuse the education system of not doing its job properly. 'It is often claimed', says the Schools Commission (1981:80-81) 'particularly by employers, that young school leavers lack the personal qualities and basic skills which confer employability and that if only schools would do their part in correcting these deficiencies the problem of youth unemployment would diminish'. The Schools Commission, rightly rejects this argument. There are two reasons why the young are not being employed. The first is that the jobs they could do are not available. The second is that the jobs that are available call for levels of skill they could only get from post-secondary training or on the job experience.
Nonetheless, so effective was the hegemonic effort to win acquiescence in this view of the cause of youth employment, that, in November 1979, the then Minister for Education announced in Parliament that the Commonwealth would make grants, to the State education systems, of special funding to run Transition from School to Work programmes.

Schools had long been aware of the need to prepare students for entry to the work force. Vocational guidance was normally offered to all students who were approaching the time to leave school. Vocational officers were employed by State departments to work with schools and students to prepare them for choosing, applying, job interviewing and work place behaviours. Some schools ran work-out experience programmes and others arranged link courses with local Colleges of Technical and Further Education. It could scarcely be said that the education systems, and schools, were unaware of the need to prepare students for the move from school to work.

The sudden arrival of special funding for transitional education, then, meant initially the expansion of existing preparation for work programmes, a lot of planning of new programmes and some experimentation.

At the systems level the three areas responsible to respond to this hegemonic programme have been the budgeting, policy and implementation sections referred to earlier.

Policy, in general terms, was decided at Federal level, no doubt 'in consultation' with the States. Specific policy now had to be developed by the States, and that policy had to be linked both to the amount of funding offered by the Federal government -$150 million dollars initially over a five year period - and to the programmes that were already in place. Writing in 1981 the Schools Commission says that there was considerable emphasis on remediation in the programmes then being funded under the Transition to Work scheme, and it adds, trenchently,

The assumption appears to have been made that last-minute remedial emphasis can overcome the cumulative effect of 10 or 11 years of school failure (Australian Schools Commission, 1981:97).
The effectiveness of the Transition to Work Programmes the various state systems may establish, and their effect on schools and schooling, are not matters that need concern us here. What does matter is that first of all the education systems and then the schools accepted the government's and the hegemonic class' explanation of what was the main cause for youth unemployment and, by setting up in their systems Transition to Work sections to coordinate the programme, to advise on budgeting allocations and priorities and to assist schools to expand existing programmes or to establish new ones, they undertook to persuade students and parents to accept it too. Of course, since the actual changes made to schools' existing programmes have, apparently, been minimal (see Australian Schools Commission, 1981:97), it could be argued that both the state systems and the schools have cynically taken the Commonwealth government's money to pay for the programmes they were already operating, and to help them expand their programmes, without, in any way, accepting the government's explanation of youth unemployment. That may be so, but it does not alter the fact that the education systems and the schools have accepted and are carrying out the hegemonic role they were given, when it was decided to lay the blame for youth unemployment on unemployed youth rather than on changes in the workplace.

THE CURRICULUM: A SECOND CASE STUDY IN HEGEMONY

It can safely be said that no matter how free schools may be to develop their own curriculum, and no matter how much they are encouraged to do so, the overall curriculum, both primary and secondary, shows little variation from school to school. This is not surprising, since all schools have the responsibility of preparing children to live in and to take their place in Australian society. Most schools, and teachers, are fairly confident that they know what students need to know, and hence what they need to be taught to do that. So with Australian society, especially its workplaces, in focus the schools proceed to offer the students a learning package, a curriculum, which looks pretty much the same everywhere.

One of the chief reasons why it is so similar in all schools is that the curriculum is the main mechanism of socio-cultural/ideological
hegemony operating in the educational system. If, as Connell and Irving (1980:22) state 'hegemony can be seen as a situation where the subordinate class lives its daily life in forms created by, or consistent with the interests of, the dominant class, and through this daily life acquires beliefs, motives and ways of thinking that serve to perpetuate the class structure', schooling and the whole educational system certainly represents one of those forms, and through them the beliefs, motives and ways of thinking of Australia's ruling, capitalist, middle class are passed on to all students.

Three studies will serve to illustrate ways in which the curriculum is used as a mechanism of hegemony.

STUDY 1.

Social studies in primary education and social science in secondary are now common to the curriculum in all schools. In five of the eight separate Australian education systems, (ACT, NSW, Vic, Tas, SA, WA, NT and Qld), the subject curriculum, or syllabus, has been prepared centrally by the systems' curriculum branch. In the other three systems schools either draw up their own syllabus, usually based on some existing syllabus or centrally produced set of syllabus guidelines, or else they adapt an existing syllabus to suit the schools particular requirements. In any case, all schools will cover pretty much the same ground in attempting to achieve the common aims and objectives they will all set for their social science or social studies programmes.

An analysis of a current, system-produced, primary social science curriculum (Queensland. Department of Education, 1970-72) was done for this study. The content samples suggested for this syllabus could be expected to be out-of-date by now. That is not important. The content here, as in all such syllabi, is not prescriptive. As this syllabus says,

Content examples are facts or groups of facts. Their chief function is to explain and to illustrate the content selected, and to allow for the development of main ideas. They become obsolete more rapidly than do main ideas and are not significant in themselves (Queensland Department of Education, 1972:14).
What is prescribed in this syllabus is the development of six key concepts and their concept clusters (i.e. those concepts which may be developed in association with a key concept), and of the main generalisations about societies and social behaviours which the syllabus aims to establish.

Those aims are worth quoting since, as has been noted they are more or less the same as those set in most social science syllabi (see, for instance, Western Australia. Education Department, Curriculum Branch, 1981:2-3).

The syllabus focuses, it says, 'on human relationships and is concerned with the transmission of culture and the formation of attitudes and values. It aims to develop:

- understandings of human relationships between individuals and groups in society;
- understandings of the various patterns of interdependence in society, particularly as they apply to our own way of life; and
- the social and academic skills, understandings and attitudes that will enable the individual to evaluate his own social growth in a changing society and to accept the responsibility of active participation in the life of the community (Queensland, Department of Education, 1972:7).

In themselves these aims are fairly innocuous, until we begin looking at the model of Australian society the syllabus sets out to establish.

This model is built up through the concepts and the generalisations about human societies, and Australian society in particular, which form the prescriptive element, the main learning, the students are to get from their study. The six key concepts that the teacher has to present, illustrate and develop throughout the syllabus, over seven years, are groups, needs, resources, change, rules and culture. Sixty-seven associated concepts form the clusters of concepts related to each of the key concepts. Some of the associated concepts may be found in any cluster, e.g. change, continuity, adaptation, interdependence, difference and similarity. Others, like 'family', 'technology', 'government', belong to specific clusters. None of these concepts is defined in the syllabus. The teachers' task is to name the concept and to illustrate it through examples. Over time, as
students return again and again, through different and more advanced examples, they are expected to have abstracted for themselves the essential meaning of the concept. There are, of course, many other concepts, which are implicit in the text, which will emerge in any ordinary teaching programmes and which the teacher is expected to develop. However, those which have been explicitly identified in the syllabus are those the teacher is required to develop.

In establishing both these explicit and implicit concepts one wonders what sort of a stereotype of, for instance 'family' or 'technology', teachers might actually develop in their students. Part of the argument over the use of a set of social studies teaching materials in Queensland called SEMP (see Smith, 1981:97-103), concerned a section on the family, which offered homosexual, single parent and other non-nuclear family groupings as alternative models to the nuclear family. As a result of the controversy over this, and other social studies materials being used in Queensland schools, a Queensland Parliamentary Select Committee on 'Education in Queensland' produced a set of six basic principles to guide teachers and schools on how to handle controversial social issues in school. The first of these stated:

Schools are neutral grounds for rational discourse and objective study and should not become areas for opposing political or other ideologies (Queensland Select Committee on Education in Queensland, 1979:9).

This would seem to mean in the context in which it was formulated, that schools in Queensland are not to teach any political or other ideologies which seem to oppose those that are established. The hegemony, therefore, is not to be challenged. If the school is not to be an arena for opposing political or other ideologies to each other, then it must be that any concept which lends itself to alternative models, and which can only be fully abstracted as a concept when these alternative models have been studied, will remain but a stereotype since only the one model is to be presented.

One also wonders whether teachers are prepared to develop implicit concepts which may lead to a different perception of our society to that which the syllabus develops. Do they, for instance, oppose a conflict to a consensus model of our society? Do they talk about our
society as a changing society, as the aims of the syllabus describe it, only in terms of our changing mixture of cultures, or also in terms of political change, changes in power structures, in social values, in public behaviours and in forms of social inequality? And in doing so, if they do, do they develop the concepts that belong to these models of Australian society?

One thinks not. Especially when one goes on to examine the generalisations which are to be established and which, along with the key concepts and their clusters, form the core content of the syllabus. It is these, particularly, which establish what model of contemporary Australian society it present. They are, incidentally, not only prescriptive, they are also not debateable. They do not allow for the presentation of an alternative view, for teachers are not to use examples which do not support the generalisation. They are also normative, in that they build up for the student an ideal model of our society, such that any non-conforming reality the student may encounter or experience will be seen as a deviation from the norm. In this sense they are clearly hegemonic in that they intend to lead the students to acquiesce in the maintenance of the existing class relations and class inequality in this country.

The examination of all the generalisations to be made through this syllabus, although necessary for building up a detailed picture of the model of Australian society it proposes, constitutes a separate study in itself. To give a picture of the sort of model that the generalisations develop, let us take one and follow its development through the first four year levels. As a broad generalisation the syllabus states that there is a need for rules to govern and control our behaviours. This is how that broad generalisation is then particularised:

Grade 1. Unit 3. Schools must have rules - many relating to safety.

Unit 4. Control of wants and desires is necessary in an ordered community.

Unit 5. The conduct of groups is regulated by rules: rules are necessary in families;
rules are necessary in schools:

rules are necessary in the community:

many rules are related to safety and routine.

Grade 2. Unit 1. Families require rules relating to cooperation.

Unit 2. Rules are necessary for the satisfactory conduct of a school.

Unit 4. Rules are for our protection: some special people protect us.

Unit 5. The conduct of groups is regulated by rules: the teaching of accepted behaviour begins in the home:

rules of cooperation are necessary in the home, the school and the neighbourhood:

many community laws relate to safety.

Grade 3. Unit 1. Rules and laws are necessary in every society.

Unit 3. Rules and laws are necessary in every society, but the actual rules and laws may vary from society to society.

Grade 4. Unit 3. Every society has rules and laws. Laws may differ from one society to another, and they may change within a society.

People who move into new environments must adapt to the changed conditions.

Unit 6. Our way of life is still very much influenced by British traditions and culture.

People from other cultures face problems of adaptation when they move into a different culture.

(Queensland Department of Education. 1970a and 1970b)

The things to note in this evolving model of Australia, as a society operating on consensus, with laws and rules of public behaviours which we all agree to, is the normative, almost dogmatic manner of their presentation. Not all of these generalisations are open to contradiction, but all need qualification and moderation of their absolute quality. 'Rules are for our protection: some special people
protect us', could be modified, for instance, to read some rules are for the protection of the wealth and property of particular people in our society; they have special people to see that they are protected!

These types of generalisations are building to a picture of an Australian society governed by a set of social prescriptions which offer little or not scope either for structural or cultural variation, let alone change. More than this the whole syllabus, as part of a total school curriculum, is clearly serving a hegemonic role. Just in these generalisations alone it is building up, conditioning, students to an acceptance of the status quo in politics, in class relationships and in social inequality. It is effectively a condition of social, including judicial, equilibrium in which the interests of the dominant group not only prevail, but are made to seem to be unchallengeable and unchangeable.

STUDY 2.

The second illustration relates to the development and formulation of a core curriculum for Northern Territory schools.

One of the problems faced by the various committees (Wyndham, Karmel, Radcliffe, Scott), set up to advise state education departments on educating the adolescents who were seeking post-primary education, in the 1960s and 1970s following on the extension of the school-leaving age, was that of determining an appropriate curriculum to meet the range of needs of these students. The solution, as we have seen, was a compromise between an academic and a vocational secondary level curriculum, with all students having to take a number of common subjects through to Year 10, but also being able to add to these from a number of optional vocational or academic subjects.

This is a kind of common framework of general education which, according to Crittenden (1982:3), reflects 'the view that everyone in a society should have access to an adequate general (or liberal) education'. This is the sort of education, in fact, that the Schools Commission seems to advocate all students having equality of access to (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:24).
In 1980 the Curriculum Development Centre published a paper called *Core curriculum for Australian schools*. It was intended as a discussion paper, but the need for the paper, they say (1980:2), arose from the increased autonomy of schools in the curriculum area. With responsibility for many curriculum decisions being passed to schools and teachers, there was a growing concern that 'that part of the whole or total curriculum which all students are required to study' (Curriculum Development Centre, 1980:2) may not be taught in all schools. The belief that there is a core of learnings which must be mastered as an essential requirement for an education has long persisted. Just what such a core should be, though, has depended as much on the reigning ideology in education as it has on some universal concept of what constitutes an education (Crittenden, 1982:2).

Nonetheless, the Schools Commission probably summed up the nature of what most people might consider a core curriculum to be when it claimed that 'there is a common core of expectations about the skills, knowledge and understanding which children and young people should gain from schooling' (Australian Schools Commission, 1978:6).

Yet, whilst there may be this 'common core of expectations', there is certainly some disagreement on where the emphasis should be placed on those in the curriculum. For instance, Crittenden (1982:1-2) says that, arguing from the sharp rise in unemployment among the 15 to 19 year olds in recent years, some place the emphasis in a core curriculum on 'identifying the basic skills, information and attitudes that the conditions of work in our economy are thought to require of everyone'. Those who argue the need of a core curriculum because of schools' autonomy in curriculum planning, or because of the impact of cultural diversity in schools with a pronounced multicultural student body, look for a curriculum which offers as its core a common set 'of beliefs, values and skills on which the cohesion of the society as a whole is thought to depend'.

The Northern Territory introduced core curricula in its primary schools at all year levels in 1981, followed the next year by core curricula for secondary schools, starting at Year 8. It gave as its reason for doing this the mobility of students in its schools.
Apparently some 10% of Northern Territory school students change schools within the Territory each year, and around 20% move into or out of the area each year. The Education Department's aim, it says, is to 'alleviate adjustment problems by ensuring that there is an appropriate degree of curriculum uniformity throughout N.T. schools [and] by ensuring that the content of N.T. curricula is nationally compatible' (NT Department of Education, 1983:17). Elsewhere the Department also admits that its problems with school-based curriculum development contributed to the introduction of its core curricula. As they say, 'the core curriculum approach gives all schools more guidance and direction than was provided under the school-based system and allows teachers to plan more effectively' (NT Department of Education, 1983:36).

The sort of core, then, judging by these stated purposes, should be of that second kind, identified by Crittenden (1982:2) as consisting of a common set 'of beliefs, values and skills on which the cohesion of the society as a whole is thought to depend'. But the definition and the description of the core provided by the Department seems to suggest rather the first kind of core, which concentrates on the skills, information and attitudes needed by the conditions of work in our economy. The definition says 'the core curriculum consists of those essential skills and understandings in which all students are expected to gain competence and the educational experiences which they should have during their primary and junior secondary years' (NT Department of Education, 1983:33). We should note that this definition makes a clear distinction between skills and understandings that all students are to gain competence in, and which are measurable, and those educational experiences which are aimed more at personal development and which are not measurable. The Department notes that whilst school Principals, at the primary level, have the responsibility for assessing student achievement, a Territory-wide assessment programme is to be introduced to measure student performance at Years 5 and 7, with the aim, first of all, of assessing 'student achievement in the essential skills and understandings in the core curricula in English and Mathematics' (NT Department of Education, 1983:38).
Even more indicative of the real type and intent of the core curriculum approach in the Northern Territory are the six key areas of study at primary level and the further two at secondary, where core curricula are to operate. They are

At primary level, English/Language, Mathematics, Science, Social and Cultural Education, Health and Physical Education and The Arts (Dance, Drama, Music and Art/Craft)... at junior secondary level is added the seventh, Life and Work skills, which includes the subjects Home Economics, Technical Studies, Commercial Studies and Career Education.

to which the Department then adds.

In view of the pervasive impact of recent developments in data processing and information systems on the school, the work place, personal life and recreation, the Government has included an eighth area - computer education (NT Department of Education, 1983:32).

One could continue on to examine in detail the sets of core learnings which have been specified for each of these key areas in the various curricula documents. The accumulation of evidence would eventually affirm that this is a curriculum which is more about the conditions of work in our economy, and one which focusses, consequently, on the skills and understandings needed to meet those conditions. In a most revealing statement the NT Government makes clear that this is precisely what it thinks schooling is about, and that this is precisely what it means its core curriculum to do. It says.

The Government is particularly looking to young Territorians to gain the skills necessary to take the Territory in to the 21st century and to progressively diminish reliance on imported skills. Because our people now are relatively few in number, the Government places great store on developing the potential of each individual. Territorians have to be self reliant. Hence the Government expects schools to develop in the students a sense of self-discipline, and independence of outlook and positive attitudes to life and work.

The Government expects schools to look to the needs of the future and to provide students with access to the information systems and technology of tomorrow (NT Department of Education, 1983:15).

A curriculum whose focus is on educating for work is not thereby necessarily a mechanism of hegemony, except, of course, if a hegemony of a dominant class is operating, and if that curriculum serves to maintain that hegemony. A core curriculum whose sole aim is to ensure
that every school leaver from NT schools has gained competence in the essential skills and understandings, especially in English and mathematics, that are demanded in the job market, is a curriculum which, of its very nature, seeks to maintain the class relations within the capitalist mode of production that exist in the society the curriculum aims to reproduce. There is no suggestion in any of the official NT statements on its school curriculum, that education is concerned with providing all students with equality of educational opportunity, or that it seeks to equalise the outcomes of education. The core, whilst it constitutes only the minimum a student needs to master, for many students, especially for Aboriginal students in remote townships, may be all that they take from education. It may be sufficient to place them in the work force, but it is not going to place them, as individuals, as a subordinate group or as a subordinate class, in a position where they could challenge, or even want to challenge the hegemony of the dominant class in the Northern Territory.

STUDY 3

The final illustration of how the curriculum operates as a tool of hegemony, within education systems, is provided by two recent educational policy decisions in NSW.

Two groups who, because of their cultural difference, gain least from education in all Australian education systems are Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, and a number of identifiable ethnic groups. Most persons in these groups identify as working class or ally themselves with the working class. They are certainly subordinate groups in the hegemony, especially the socio-cultural/ideological hegemony, that we have identified as operating in Australia.

In 1982 and then in 1983 the NSW Government announced two major policy decisions, the first on Aboriginal education and the second on Multicultural education.

The decisions were, first of all, 'that the advancement of Aboriginal communities and better appreciation of Aboriginal culture and society
by other Australians both be given urgent attention' (NSW Department of Education. Directorate of Special Program, 1982:3). These two aims were to be the focus of Aboriginal Education in NSW schools. Secondly, 'the New South Wales government is committed to fostering and promoting multiculturalism within the context of a cohesive democratic society' (NSW Department of Education. Directorate of Special Programs. 1983: Introduction). This policy, too, is to evidence itself in schools and to be a part of the school curriculum.

It is often the fashion of government, not least of Australian governments, to formulate policy in the form of a principle and then to leave it to the responsible government department to carry it out. In this case, it was to be the education system, through programmes of Aboriginal and Multicultural education, which was to take the lead in implementing policy. Once again the onus was being put on the education system, and especially on its schools and teachers, to bring about a considerable social change for Aborigines and some ethnic groups as well as for the whole of society in the State of New South Wales. The social change required,

1. the advancement of Aboriginal communities,
2. better appreciation of Aboriginal culture and society by other Australians,
3. fostering and promoting multiculturalism, and
4. maintaining a cohesive democratic society.

To understand how these well-intentioned policies and long-needed social changes could possibly be interpreted as having a basic hegemonic intent, we need to probe for the reasons why Australian governments, both State and Federal, are focusing especially on the forms and levels of inequality of these two groups in society, and why it is the education system which is being required to take the lead in lessening that inequality.

There are a number of reasons why, from the 1960s onwards, the forms and levels of social inequality being experienced by Aborigines and some of the newly established migrant groups began to come to the attention of Australian people and their governments. One was certainly international pressure for member nations of the United
Nations Organisation to tackle racial inequality at home, before they
tried to tackle it abroad. There was a mounting effort at this time,
too, to make public the evidence of prejudice and discrimination
against both Aborigines and migrants. Martin (1978:27) gives a
summary, for instance, of the findings James Jupp released in his 1966
Arrivals and departures:

He found migrants in general inarticulate and politically
impotent, their views neither known nor heeded. Migrant
communities were not integrated into the decision-making
process. There was a high rate of economic achievement, but
also much invisible frustration and suffering.

More detailed studies of the plight of migrants in Australian society
in the post-war years continued to be accumulated throughout the 1960s
and 1970s, and they led eventually to the Federal Government's
commissioning of a review of post-arrival programmes and services for
from university academics for the most part, were beginning to be
supplemented by a growing migrant voice, to be heard through the
migrant press and through migrant community committees and ethnic
councils.

Up to this time migrants, in the public view, and according to the
definition promoted by the government, were supposed to be grateful to
Australia and Australians for giving them a new home, an opportunity
to experience a much better standard of living and general social
conditions than they could ever have had in their own countries, and a
share in a prosperous and developing economy. In return they were to
assimilate into Australian society, mainly by their own effort, as
soon as possible, by learning to speak proper English and by
confirming to the Australian way of life. Implicit in these
expectations was acceptance of the forms of dominance and sub-
ordination between classes and social groups that existed in
Australian society.

By the late 1960s, however, it was apparent that migrants neither
considered themselves obligated to gratitude nor felt obliged to
surrender their separate cultural identity. According to Martin
(1978:33):
schools, hospitals, welfare services and government bureaucracies of all kinds had been able to continue their established practices without disruption or change due to the migrant presence. To say that this became more difficult in the mid-sixties means two things: first, that experience was showing that predictions about migrant assimilability were often not borne out in reality; second, that the staff of a number of organisations were finding non-English speakers a disturbing obstacle to the adequate performance of their jobs.

These three factors, then, namely - academic studies, migrant protest and pressure on established institutions - allied to the influence of international movements, led the Australian government and people to begin a re-definition of who migrants were and what was their status in Australian society.

A similar set of factors was forcing a review of our definitions of Aborigines and of their status as Australians. From the beginning of what, from an Aboriginal point of view, could only be labelled an invasion, in 1788, Aborigines had fought to maintain control over their own lives and affairs, to hold on to their languages and cultures and to be accorded honour, respect and dignity in their own land. When they could no longer do this by force of arms, or by patiently and determinedly sitting down, even at the risk of being labelled 'parasites' (Elkin, 1967:66-67), on or near to their own homelands, they resorted to the politics of the dominant, white, Australian society, formed their own political organisations and took what steps were necessary to bring their extreme conditions of social disadvantage to the attention of the Australian people and to claim a right to have their views heard. At all times they refused to be assimilated into white Australian life and culture. 1967 was thought to be a turning point in this struggle, when a national referendum brought overwhelming support for a change in the Australian Constitution to allow Aborigines to be counted as, and to be accorded the rights of, full Australian citizens, and for their welfare to become the responsibility of the Federal Government. In fact, this was but the beginning of a long process of social change which, as the NSW Government's policy statement shows, still has a long way to go.
For migrants and Aborigines, then, the aim is to persuade, force, cajole the Australian people and their governments into accepting their own definition of who they are and of where they stand as Australians and in Australian society. To do this they have to steadily resist the pressure from governments, government institutions and 'common knowledge' to accept other definitions than their own and other statuses then those they want to choose. As Martin has said, 'knowledge about migrants and their place in Australian society has been affirmed and constructed, denied and destroyed, over the past thirty years' (1978:21). For Aborigines this process of constructing and confirming social knowledge about them has been going on for much more than thirty years, and for both groups it is still going on. The invitation by the NSW Government to its education system to take up and to implement its policy statements on Aborigines and migrants, is no less than an invitation to the system to develop its own definitions of Aborigines and migrants and where they stand in Australian society.

As the policy documents previously cited illustrate, the N.S.W. education system does not waste time in doing just that. 'An Aborigine', we are told, 'is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island descent, who identifies and is accepted as such by the community with which he or she is associated' (NSW Department of Education, Directorate of Special Programs, 1982:6). This is a new definition. The Federal Government's definition is similar, but it suggests acceptance by other Aborigines rather than by the community the person claiming Aboriginality is associated with (Australia. Parliament, 1976:8).

Migrants are defined in terms of Australia's newly discovered multiculturalism. The policy statement tells us that 'multiculturalism is a social value, which accepts the demographic fact that Australian society is composed of many cultures, sees this as a positive feature of our society and aims at fostering such pluralism within the framework of a democratic society' (NSW Department of Education. Directorate of Special Programs, 1983:1).
In both definitions there are to be found elements which throw considerable light on unconscious, but real, hegemonic activities that are operating. In the definition of who is an Aborigine, the responsibility of identifying an Aborigine lies with particular communities. It is easy to imagine the frictions that may and will arise within those communities, if individuals who are associated with them, but do not trace their origins to them, are refused recognition. Here we should recall Connell and Irving's (1980:23) definition of 'mechanisms of hegemony' which covers actions aimed at containing or deflecting the action of working-class groups. In so far as Aborigines are members of the working-class or are allied to them, actions which divide them as a group, or which set them apart from their class, are very likely to increase their subordinate status and strengthen the dominance of the ruling class. The same may be said of a definition which requires that a migrant must be obviously culturally different, and be prepared to stay that way, so as to qualify to be a migrant, a member of an ethnic group and, thus, somewhat different from, but to be accepted as part of, albeit a subordinate part of, the mainstream Australian society. There is a proviso to this acceptance, in that cultural pluralism is to be tolerated only in so far as it does not threaten the cohesiveness of our democratic society. Presumably if this were to happen the demographic fact of cultural variety could be ignored and a return made to monoculturalism!

Much more could be said here on what Aboriginal education and Multicultural education programmes, such as those proposed in NSW and similar programmes in other States, aim to do, and on how effective they are in doing them. That again, however, is necessarily the subject for another study. In so far, however, as these aims seek considerable and quite dramatic change, and in so far as that change, if it were to be achieved, may have a significant effect on the dominant socio-cultural ideology which currently holds sway, this much at least needs to be said: both forms of education share the same two essential aims. One is to raise the levels of educational performance of Aboriginal and certain ethnic group children, mainly by making them competent in English and number, by providing them with the social skills and strategies they need to operate competently and
competitively in mainstream Australian society, and by using in their schooling as much of their own culture as possible by introducing perspectives on other Australian cultures into the curriculum. The other aim is to develop in all students an awareness of, a respect for and competence in living in an Australia which is made up of a variety of cultures.

The dramatic changes these programmes seek are, first of all, full equality of educational opportunity, including equality of outcomes, for those students who are most obviously culturally different; secondly, the maintenance of full cultural difference throughout this experience of a curriculum which is designed to reproduce the dominant Australian socio-cultural ideology; thirdly, a complete reversal of Australian social values from an emphasis on, a pride in and pre-eminence to Anglo-Australian and Northern-European-Australian English speaking cultures, to an equal valuing of all Australian cultures including African, Asian, Melanesian, South American and Australian indigenous cultures.

There is little likelihood, as things stand at present, that any of these aims will be achieved. If they are it will certainly not be through schooling, and it will certainly not be through the Aboriginal education and Multicultural education programmes set out in the NSW policy documents. It will not be through them, not only because of a lack of determination on the part of the education system, as Linda Burney suggests (The Sydney Morning Herald, 7 February, 1984:11 - 'Aboriginal policy words on paper'), but because there is a hegemony operating to ensure that the present dominance of a particular Australian class and its socio-cultural ideology is maintained. More than that, it is maintained through education programmes such as these. By their very design they are effective in winning over the Aborigines and migrant groups to the 'beliefs, motives and ways of thinking' of the dominant class, and persuading them to live out their daily lives 'in forms created by, or consistent with the interests of, the dominant class' (Connell and Irving, 1980:22).
HEGEMONY THROUGH THE SCHOOL

Earlier the question was asked, are the activities that operate at both the system as well as the school level, which could have a hegemonic effect, actually used as mechanisms of hegemony? The examples given in the previous section attempted to show how specific programmes at the systems level operated as mechanisms of hegemony. Here we shall offer some examples of school practices which effectively operate, also, as such mechanisms. The aim is not to offer an extensive and in-depth study of school practices, but simply to illustrate that these practices can be and are used to maintain the socio-cultural and ideological dominance of Australia's ruling class.

The 'hidden curriculum' which, it is now recognised, operates in all schools, is that set of covert, and sometimes overt, behaviours through which teachers, school principals and the school itself convey to the students their own preferred social values, codes of moral and social behaviours and expectations for student and community attitudes and role performance. In this sense, and in so far as this 'hidden curriculum' reflects the world views of a dominant class, it is clearly a mechanism of hegemony.

In a study of educational inputs to the Aboriginal communities in the Alligator Rivers Region of the Northern Territory (Barlow, 1983), made not for this study but as part of a Social Impact Project on the effects of uranium mining on Aborigines in the region, the following examples of the hegemonic effect of the 'hidden curriculum' were observed.

Oenpelli, a former Anglican mission settlement, is now a small Aboriginal township of some 48 Aboriginal dwellings housing from 350 to 440 people. There are also about 20 houses for the 60 or so non-Aborigines living in the town - nurses, teachers, police, council employees and so on. Originally the mission staff lived in a section of the town, on the shores of the scenic Oenpelli Lagoon, which formed a private mission enclave. These houses still belong to the church or to former mission staff and are occupied solely by non-Aborigines. The enclave is rarely visited by town Aborigines. This example, of an
historically established and still effective physical separation between Aborigines and non-Aborigines in Oenpelli, is significant for what follows. A published report of the Uranium Impact Project Steering Committee (1983: Report No. 7/1982:37-50), contains a section showing how Aborigines in the region are constantly being required to take on roles, to measure up to bureaucratic expectations and to assume rights and responsibilities that either have no counterpart in their own culture or have no basis in their actual standing in their own communities.

This process of negotiation between two distinct cultures contains a number of elements which clearly indicate the comparative status of the two groups in the negotiations, and which, consequently, effectively define for Aborigines their subordinate as opposed to the dominant place of white Australians. The location and exclusiveness of the white population's housing in Oenpelli, the forms and content of negotiations between Aborigines and 'outside' bureaucracies, and the ways in which these bureaucracies initiate these negotiations, are each, in their own ways, not only means for establishing relative statuses between Aborigines and whites, but they are also hegemonic actions in that one process establishes and wins acceptance of a position of privilege for a particular group of people, whilst the other leads Aborigines to live out their daily lives in forms that benefit the white bureaucracies.

The school in Oenpelli contributes, too, to this hegemonic process of defining the relative status of 'white fellas' as opposed to 'black fellas' ways, and of persuading the local community to conform to the world view, the socio-cultural ideology of Australia's 'white' ruling class.

The Principal of Oenpelli school, herself formerly a member of the town's mission staff, called a meeting of parents to be held at the school one late afternoon at the beginning of the second semester in 1982 (Barlow, 1983: 15-17). The main purpose of the meeting was to tell parents about special activities and excursions being planned for the students in the new semester, and to invite the parents to express
their views on a swimming costume for girl students to wear at interschool swimming carnivals, on plans to dress all students in a school uniform and on the selection of an appropriate motto and logo for the school. Notices of the meeting were sent home or posted in public gathering places. These notices did not contain an agenda. Just an announcement of meeting, the promise of a film to attract parents to attend, and an offer of the school bus to collect people at the town store to drive them the half a kilometre through the township to the school.

Already, here, a number of definitional factors are evident. Schools, invariably, initiate school-parent meetings, as the school does in Oenpelli. Schools determine the form the meeting should take and what is to be dealt with at the meeting. The school makes various assumptions about parents and about their likely response to the invitation to a meeting, and usually it will try to schedule the meeting for a time both teachers and parents might find convenient, and it may, as the Oenpelli school did, try to incorporate into the meeting arrangements and content features which parents may find attractive. As an observation, based solely on personal experience, schools which serve subordinate classes and group communities are more likely to need to make an extra effort to attract parents to attend meetings with the school staff than are schools which serve ruling class communities. Connell et al (1983:52-55) offer some evidence to support this and suggest, at least for High Schools, that 'working class parents normally are not very familiar with the way the high school works, and are not very confident about approaching it or laying demands on it. Nor does the school as an institution do much to overcome their reservations' (1982:55). The comment is entirely pertinent where Oenpelli school and its parents are concerned. Most of the adult Aborigines there were schooled during the mission days, and that experience did nothing to encourage them to expect or to want to have a say in what the school did. Besides, as was earlier noted, schooling as a process was never part of Aboriginal traditional culture. It is entirely 'white fellas' business, and as such it is the school's business to get on with it.
Schools, however, are not simply in the business of teaching students to read and write. Enculturation and socialisation are at least rated as highly, if not more highly, than the development of saleable skills, and a quick look at the main items on the parents' meeting agenda at Oenpelli reveals that the hidden agenda for that meeting was the school's hidden enculturative and socialising curriculum.

The excursions planned for that semester included school exchange visits, class excursions to Darwin and inter-school sporting contests. These excursions were all planned as 'cultural experience' for the Oenpelli students - experience, of course, of that 'other' culture. Parents, incidentally, were not told about the educational purposes of these excursions, nor were they invited to discuss the proposals, to suggest alternatives or to raise any doubts they might have had about them. The school was simply telling the parents what it was going to do.

The other major items on the agenda were matters very dear to the heart of the school, or, at least, to the heart of the Principal of the school. The new mining township of Jabiru boasts the very latest and a most elaborately equipped NT school, and it also has an excellent swimming pool. The Principal was keen to have her students experience a close relationship with Jabiru school, and others in the region, and saw competitive inter-school sport as one means of promoting this. Her school had been invited to compete in a school swimming carnival, but pool regulations specified that swimming costumes should be worn, not the shorts and T-shirt Oenpelli students wore for swimming in their local lagoon. The item on the agenda about swimming costumes for girls, then, was really about the Principal's views of the value of competitive sport and of varieties of student-to-student interactions, rather than respect for the rights of other people to hold their own values and to make rules to protect them.

Similarly, the items dealing with dressing students in a school uniform and pinning on it a school logo with surrounding motto, were obviously related to a set of sub-cultural values, which have little at all to do with the teaching of the formal school curriculum, but have a lot to do with the school's attempt to extend its moral and
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psychological control over its students and their families. School badges and uniforms not only link students and student identity with particular schools, but they are used by schools to regulate student behaviour outside the school. More, a whole mythology of school 'tradition' relating to academic success, sporting prowess, public regard and making it in business, public service, the professions and as charismatic achievers, can and is built around the school's colours, its badge and its uniform. As such they are most commonly associated with the independent Greater Public Schools (GPS), with religious run schools and with schools which serve middle class communities. There are few working class schools which, even if they have a school uniform, make much of it.

There were many other school level activities observed in the course of this survey, not all of them operating at Oenpelli school, which similarly reflected attempts to move Aborigines, in overt ways, towards the acceptance of a world view, which was not only at odds with their own cultural values and beliefs, but which reflected the beliefs, motives and ways of thinking of Australia's dominant socio-cultural ideology. This should be stressed. The examples given, of school practices which serve as mechanisms of hegemony, at one level, as was earlier noted, demonstrate both a racial and a social hegemony imposed and maintained by mainly white-Anglo-Australians on an Aboriginal minority. But the socio-cultural ideology which is inculcated through those school practices is that of the dominant class in Australian society, for in so far as those practices seek to articulate Aborigines to the mainstream Australian society and culture, they seek to articulate them to the dominant society and culture.

Further evidence, if it is needed, of school practices as mechanisms of hegemony, is to be found in Connell, Ashenden, Kessler and Dowsett's contrasting study of 'ruling class' and working class schools (Connell et al. 1982). Phil Meade's three volume report on The Educational experience of Sydney High School students (1981 and 1983) is a comparative study of the schooling experience of migrant students of non-English-speaking origin and students whose parents were born in an English-speaking country, and provides many examples
of school practices, stemming as the report terms it from the 'Institutional ideology' (1983:3-6), whose hegemonic effect is well described, if not so identified. One other reference, among the many that could be cited, is D'Urso and Smith's anthology of articles under the title Changes, issues and prospects in Australian education, which is now in its second edition. Parts 2 and 3 of this anthology, Curriculum and society and Life in schools, in particular, offer many examples of what can be shown to be hegemonic practices.

This much can be said, then. Education systems and schools do undertake activities which can be shown to have the effect of promoting and maintaining the dominance of a particular socio-cultural ideology, here in Australia, which represents the world-view of a significant part of Australian society, and which benefits that part of that society which can best be described as a ruling-class and which consists mainly of middle class people in high status and well paid occupations. Whether or not this can be said to be a hegemony of a capitalist class in Gramscian terms remains to be seen. For the moment what matters is that it can be shown that the practices of education systems and schools in Australia have a hegemonic effect such that, so long as those and similar practices are maintained, will effectively negate all efforts to give equality of educational opportunity to all students.
Chapter 8. Hegemony or not hegemony?

Throughout this study various explanations of why students continue to experience inequality, both in access to and in the outcomes of education, have been canvassed. Here these explanations will be reviewed in an effort to evaluate them as explanations and to assess their implications for future educational policy. The explanations fall into four categories: those which question the nature and purpose of an education; those which see a mis-match between certain students and the schooling process; those which focus on the 'institutional ideology', as it effects the constructing, communicating and affirming of knowledge, and the 'reality defining and confirming' role of the institution itself; and those which place educational inequality in the wider social context of inequality and explain it in terms of class struggle for both political and socio-cultural/ideological domination.

EDUCATION FOR EQUALITY OF INDIVIDUAL FULFILMENT

From its very first report in 1973 the Schools Commission has sought to locate equality of outcomes as a goal within the context of an education that attempts 'to provide a more equal opportunity for all children to participate more fully in the society as valued and respected members of it' (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:23). Other quotations from this section of the 1973 report, many of which have already been cited in this study, make clear that the Schools Commission is talking about an education which offers every individual the opportunity to achieve the best that is in him or her. The sort of education, as Snook (1976:21) notes, that is left very fluid and in which there is no constant content, aim or standard, and in which there are a great number of types of 'educational excellence' a student could aim for. Determining equality of outcomes would be almost impossible under such a system, for none but the broadest and least measurable of criteria could apply — personal satisfaction, contentment, fulfilment, social regard, social cohesion and similar subjective qualities.
Yet, in seeking virtually to avoid the real problem of inequality of educational opportunity, stemming from inequality of educational outcomes, the Schools Commission fully recognises that it is the failure of particular groups to achieve the same levels of educational certification as those who do best out of education, and consequently, their inability to gain access to the knowledge and skills which draw high income, enhance the quality of individual lives and enable them to contribute to a more humane, rational, just and creative society, which constitutes real educational inequality in those groups' view. Thus the Schools Commission Interim Committee (1973:24) admits 'equality of opportunity as it has been interpreted in Australia has emphasised methods of selecting educational elites in ways presumed to be objective and fair'. There is little point then in the Commission (1973:24) bemoaning the fact that 'the wider value of activity of the mind as a perspective in living' does not rate in modern, capitalist, industrial societies, where 'highly disciplined and abstract specialisation requires high education and commands high income'. These societies, Australia included, are not about to suddenly revolutionise the whole capitalist system and enter into 'an equal valuing of people based on their common humanity' (Australian Schools Commission. Interim Committee, 1973:24) in such a way that people's share in the profits emanating from capitalist production is going to be based on such a system of valuing. In other words, the problem of educational inequality is not going to go away by pretending and claiming that the nature and purpose of an education in our society is something other than what it really is.

What has to be recognised in all this, is that in pursuing this false educational objective in its policy recommendations, the Schools Commission both confuses itself, the government, the State education systems and their schools, and prolongs the very inequalities in education that can and have been shown to exist. It confuses everybody, including itself, by, on the one hand, recommending programmes aimed at increasing both participation in education and its effectiveness, especially for those groups who benefit least from education, whilst at the same time presenting equality of educational opportunity in terms of turning out socially competent, psychologically adjusted and individually fulfilled students. This
confusion is very evident in its policy document, *Participation and equity in Australian schools* (1983), in which it leans over backwards to say that the Federal government policy of 'reducing significantly the numbers of students leaving full-time education prematurely; and of fostering equal educational outcomes' (Australian Schools Commission, 1983:1) is not prompted by the significant number of 15-19 year olds, mostly Aborigines, girls, migrants and working-class, unemployed in the work market, so much as by the fact 'that a full secondary education, or an appropriate equivalent, is intrinsically valuable' (Australian Schools Commission, 1983:18). In the same breath, however, it can insist that the new programme must accept that 'the development of a skilled, productive and cohesive work-force is necessary for Australia's economic well-being' (Australian Schools Commission, 1983:18). Which means on the one hand that we want students to stay on and complete a secondary education because it is good for them, but at the same time we want them to stay on to develop skills and acquire knowledge which will improve their contribution to the work force and Australia's economic performance. And, since the programme wants 'changes to secondary schools organisation to accommodate more adequately the social, economic and cultural diversity of students' (Australian Schools Commission, 1983:1) there can be no doubt that what the government is looking for is exactly the equality of access to education and to equality of educational outcomes for all students by class, gender and ethnicity that the whole principle of equality of educational opportunity is about.

Whilst the Schools Commission (1983:18-19), directs the government towards funding 'the development of broad, general school curriculum which goes beyond the narrowly 'academic' or 'vocational' in its provision for all students', and encourages an expansion of a number of other 'identified major areas for action' which, on inspection, reveal themselves to be the same areas as it has always supported, and whose development in the past has done nothing to alter significantly the levels of inequality of education between groups, its recommendations can only serve to prolong, and even to foster, the inequality it hesitates to confront.
Inequality of educational opportunity between groups, in both access to and outcomes from education, cannot be avoided or ignored simply by shifting the definition of equality of educational opportunity from economic to social equality grounds. Especially not when the link between economic advantage and educational success is so firmly established.

If the Federal government is really determined to achieve equality of educational opportunity, it will have to accept that it will not do it through programmes which offer Aborigines, girls, ethnic groups and the working class in general something less in the way of an education, and something other in the form of educational outcomes than will enable them to compete for educational excellence and the very best of jobs.

Attempts by educational authorities to shift the definition of equality of educational opportunity can only be read as a refusal to accept equality of educational achievement for all groups in society as a valid educational goal, or as an admission that the education systems in Australia are unable to achieve such a goal. If it is the former, then the role of education in the maintenance of a hegemony is beyond question; if the latter, then how the education systems go about the business of educating is in question. It is this latter we must now explore.

THE MISMATCH OF STUDENTS AND SCHOOL

Education systems accept mismatch between certain students and the schooling system as being the main explanation for certain students and for certain groups of students failing to achieve well in the system. Educationists attribute mismatch mainly to the effect on children of social and cultural factors in the home and in the local social environment. The effect is to develop in children sets of beliefs, values, knowledge and skills which are different to those the school expects in a child and on which the schooling system is based. From another point of view, the effect is to fail to develop in the young child those beliefs, values, knowledge and skills which would
put the child in tune with the school, and enable it to enter smoothly into the schooling process.

Whether the perception is of difference or deficiency, however, is only marginally important to the educational decisions that the systems make about educating these children. Recognising mismatch, the strategy is to lessen its effect by trying to bring the student more into tune with what goes on in schools, and by trying to adapt what goes on in school to the student. If the perception is of difference, the system recommends that schools attempt to accommodate the student by teaching what is normally taught, but by teaching it, to a certain extent, through the knowledge and skills the student brings to the schooling process. That knowledge and the skills, of course, must be such as can be used. Oracy skills in a first language that is not English, can be used as a basis for developing literacy in that first language, and then for transferring these skills to English. Other skills that may be culturally valued, elaborated forms of body and sign language, for instance, and other audio-visual forms of communication skills, may not be skills the schooling system values, even recognises, and, hence, is able to accommodate itself to. Deficiency, on the other hand, calls more for remedial and other interventionist strategies, which place the emphasis on changing the child to fit it to the schooling system. Little attempt, if any, is made to accommodate the system to these children. The process of schooling may be slowed for them, and, occasionally, especially in the context of 'special education', the curriculum may be reduced. Generally, however, it is accepted that the intervention will be sufficient to fit the child to the system, at least enough for it to gain proficiency in, and even some mastery of, what the school system normally offers.

The acceptance by the education systems that there is a mismatch between certain individuals and groups of students and the schooling system, argues that the education systems acknowledge that the schooling system is designed to fit a particular group of students, and that it aims to produce a particular result for them. The degree of mismatch becomes most evident at secondary schooling level, although it is evident enough from the beginnings of primary
schooling. It is at the secondary schooling level, however, that mismatch has prompted greater concern.

The possibility of providing two basic types of secondary education was being mooted in Australia, as we have seen, in the late 19th Century. One strong advocate of this dual secondary curriculum, C.H. Pearson, whilst advocating, in 1878, the establishment of government secondary schools in Victoria argued 'that the new schools the State proposes to found ought to give an education different in kind from the English classical model' (Turney, 1975:314). The English classical curriculum was the model followed in the church run secondary schools that were the only schools, in that State, offering a secondary education. Pearson wanted to see a 'modern' curriculum in the State schools, which would be more suited to the education of the children of farmers and merchants, and would prepare them to work in commerce, rather than a curriculum designed to take upper class students into university and on to the professions. By the period 1905-1915, when most of the States were establishing their own secondary schools and post-primary schools, educationists were envisaging a system of secondary schooling 'designated to meet the anticipated vocational needs of the selected entrants by providing academic courses for those going on to the higher clerical and professional positions, industrial courses for the technicians, commercial courses for the lower clerical positions, domestic training courses for the girls, and agricultural courses for the prospective farmers' (Turney, 1975:296-297). At various times this whole range of vocational courses have been available in the State education systems. Students were streamed into them from primary school. They were established on a class basis, and on a perception of the educational needs of members of the various classes. They were also established on the basis of a sexual division of labour. Class, for the most part, was the criterion used in streaming students into their secondary curriculum.

There is no need to review again, here, the struggle for dominance between the academic and the vocational curriculum in schools. Suffice it to note that each student in secondary schooling, nowadays, is required to take a basic, compulsory, set of academic subjects and
may then select a set of optional courses which may be academic (in the sense that they are directed towards matriculation to a university or college of advanced education) or vocational (leading to admission to apprenticeship, to technical and further education or to a college of advanced education). The most valued curriculum, and that which has most prestige in schools, among teachers and with students, is that which leads to university entrance and admission to the professions and managerial status. It is the curriculum that those seeking the very highest outcomes from their education must take. It is also the curriculum which is preferred and most heavily patronised by children from middle class professional, semi-professional, managerial and higher clerical families - the ones who consistently do best from education.

Although the present day curriculum in secondary schools is not supposed to be directed towards or based on a recognition of class in students, it is still working class students who choose, who are advised to choose or who are directed to choose vocationally weighted courses. Middle class students will predominate in the academically weighted courses. Schools are powerless to do anything about this. They must advise students to select the courses they seem best able to handle, and which are seen to be of most use to them. The fact that working class children, as well as Aborigines, some ethnic groups and girls, mainly land in vocational courses, is simply the reality. These are the students whose levels of ability and skill are not sufficient for an academic course, who are most likely to enter working class jobs on leaving school, and who will find a vocational curriculum of most benefit when they leave school. Why push them into studying subjects which are irrelevant to their needs, beyond their abilities and outside their interests? If the school is to do the best it can for these students, what else can it do but encourage them to take the best course it has to offer them, even if the rewards for the course are somewhat less than those for the academic curriculum, and even if it means locking them in to an educational stream that they will have difficulty escaping at any future time?

But does the school have no other option?
An alternative to an academic curriculum for all, or a smorgasbord of curriculum choices, is now beginning to emerge in Australian education, according to Connell et al. 'It proposes', they say (1982:199), 'that working-class kids get access to formal knowledge via learning which begins with their own experience and the circumstances which shape it, but does not stop there'. The formal knowledge component of this proposal seems to be vastly different to the formal knowledge that is the object of an academic curriculum. 'This approach', they go on to say, 'draws on existing school knowledge and on what working-class people already know, and organizes this selection of information around problems such as economic survival and collective action, handling the disruptions of households by unemployment, responding to the impact of new technology, managing problems of personal identity and association, understanding how schools work and why' (Connell et al. 1982:199-200). Under this proposal the academic curriculum would still be taught in State schools, and it would still be available to working class students. What Connell (1982:204) and the others want to suggest, however, is that there should be the alternative of a truly working-class curriculum. If there were, then 'the place of the two kinds of curriculum in the school, the allocation of resources, prestige and energy to them, and the relations between them including the easy movement by students from one to the other - these should be the central questions for every working-class school' (1982:201).

The fact that the education system has, for so long, tried to develop a secondary curriculum that would meet, what would seem to be, the different educational requirements of whole groups of students, who seemed either unable or unwilling to accept and to progress through the standard academic curriculum; the further fact that Marxist critics of the education system, like Connell, can now argue for a dual curriculum which recognises that working-class students need their own class-based curriculum; together these argue both that a standard schooling system, designed around a standard curriculum offering which aims at a standard outcome, can satisfy only a perceived 'standard' group of students who fit the system and the designed offering and who seek the proposed outcome, and that all
efforts to provide an alternative for non-standard students are an acknowledgement that the present system only works for those it fits.

The proposal for a working-class curriculum, then, as it stands is no solution to the problem of inequality of educational outcomes. To be that, it would have to make it possible for students, on completing this alternative curriculum to emerge with the sort of knowledge, and the cognitive and affective skills other students acquire through the academic curriculum, so that they could compete on a basis of equality for higher level education and for the best paid jobs. It is not inconceivable to envision an academic style curriculum, which sets out to develop the same types of academic knowledge and skills the normal academic curriculum aims to do, but which bases itself in working-class culture, experience, values and interests, just as it is possible to envision American, German, Japanese, Chilean and Aboriginal academic, but culturally based, curricula. It is hard to imagine, however, our society offering equal standing and equality of rewards to a curriculum which offers anything less, or even anything different in the way of outcomes to our standard academic secondary curriculum. Working class parents and children are well aware of this. In reviewing Connell and others Making the difference Samuel (1983:19) reminds them 'that working class parents and children have their own requirements of the school system, and for them the conventional academic curriculum has high priority, because they are aware how important success in terms of that curriculum is for the job market'. Samuel (1983:19) is correct, too, in her conclusion that 'a real transformation of working class education would involve more than a new curriculum; it would also require a new structural context for the educational process'.

What we must remember, though, is that the education system's solution to the problem of mismatch is to try to change the student to fit the schooling system, or to try to adapt the schooling system, without changing its essential processes, content and outcomes, so as to accommodate those individual students or groups of students who are at all different. The implication is that, so far as the system is concerned, there is really only one education for all Australians, and the system has to do the best it can to help all students get the most
they can from it. There is nothing to indicate that the system is about to become a truly multicultural education system, for instance, even if it ever did see multiculturalism as anything more than a demographic reality (Kringas and Lewins, 1981:9). To do that would require real structural changes to the education system aimed at making schools more receptive to other cultural definitions of what an education is and at developing a range of structures and processes which gave the fullest of educational outcomes through a diversity of curriculum offerings.

That one education that schools offer is aptly described as the 'hegemonic curriculum' by Connell and others (1982:195). It is the education of white, middle class Anglo-Australians. It was designed by them and for them, and its purpose was to prepare their children to take over or to improve on the positions of status, power and wealth they themselves held. If working class children were to be given an education, it was only to help them to work more efficiently, to help them to understand better their responsibilities to the State and in society, to distract them from conflict over working conditions and to accustom them to accept the levels of inequality structured into modern capitalist, industrial societies. The few working class children who might make it through the system all the way into the best of jobs, would do so because they had completely absorbed and accepted the values, the beliefs, the full middle class ideology. Others would come to accept that success at schooling was evidence of a superior intelligence, and that middle class students did best at school because, as a class, they are more intelligent than the working class — thus the hegemonic effect of the one education, the essential curriculum.

At the present time there is pressure on students to remain at school beyond the statutory school leaving age, and to take their schooling through to the final secondary year. A funding programme had been announced, and guidelines for it drawn up (Australian Schools Commission, 1983:1) under the title Participation and Equity. Much was said about this programme in the previous section. Here it is sufficient to note that it envisaged an increase of up to 100,000 or more students, if the programme was successful, staying on through
Years 11 and 12. The obvious question is what does one do with these students, especially with those who are only staying on at school reluctantly until they are old enough to leave. The guidelines talked about reforming and diversifying the curriculum, and making changes to schools' organisation to handle the diversity of students they could expect at this level. Obviously these students were not going to switch, at this late stage in their studies, to an academic curriculum, though the Schools Commission (1983:2) seemed to expect there might be an increase in the demand for places in tertiary education, eventually. The proposal seemed to be for a greater accent on vocational subjects at the Years 11 and 12 level, with the emphasis on preparation for the technological revolution in the work-place.

Once again, this policy could be seen to be an acknowledgement of the inability of our education systems to deal with student mismatch, or to offer students who do not fit the system anything that compares with what the students who fit get.

Breaking the hegemony of the white, middle class, Anglo-Australian academic curriculum requires revolutionary change not only in the structures of schooling and of the education system, but also in the Australian processes of constructing, communicating and affirming knowledge. The problem of gaining real equality of educational opportunity for all students is one which cannot be solved solely in the school, nor solely within the education systems. Policy decisions and the programmes designed to carry them out, which aim at 'equity' for all students, and which genuinely set equality of educational opportunity as their objectives, are bound to fail so long as they overlook the real nature of the hegemony that is held by the dominant curriculum.

INSTITUTIONAL IDEOLOGY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE

A curriculum may be defined as that set of learnings, forms of learning and learning structures a socio-cultural group selects as the medium for formally enculturating each new generation into the group. This set of formal learnings is always supported by a less structured set of informal learnings.
According to one description, 'the curriculum is a selection from a socio-cultural group's stock of valued traditional and current public knowledge, conceptions and experiences, usually purposefully organised, in programatic sequence, by such educational agencies as schools, and made available to pupils sequentially through syllabuses and units' (Bullivant, 1979:255). This is a reasonable description of formal education as it operates today in most societies, though schooling is not a necessary learning structure and formal education has taken place without it.

As we have just seen, one particular curriculum is dominant in Australian education. It has been characterised as a white, middle class, Anglo-Australian, academic curriculum. 'Male' could fairly be added to those characteristics. The implication is that Australian education systems act to enculturate all students, through the formal curriculum, into the particular socio-cultural group this curriculum belongs to. For those who do not come from this group the curriculum has an assimilative rather than an enculturative effect - they tend to become like to rather than to become part of the curriculum's group. If the curriculum is well taught, those from outside the curriculum's group may come to think of themselves as belonging to it, and may even act as though they do belong to it, but sooner or later they will experience rejection as the group draws the line between those who are like it and those who belong to it.

Lest there be any doubt that there is a national curriculum, and that that curriculum is that of a particular Australian socio-cultural group, the following statement of the aims of schooling in contemporary Australia, to which, its authors (Curriculum Development Centre, 1980:10-11) claim, 'there appears to be wide assent', is worth quoting in full:

Australia is a parliamentary democracy subscribing to basic human rights, the rule of law, full and active participation in civic and social life, and fundamental democratic values. Schools have an obligation to teach democratic values and promote an active democratic way of life, including participation in the parliamentary system.

Australian society sustains and promotes a way of life which values, inter alia:
a sense of personal, group and national identity and unity in all its people

free communication amongst and between individuals and groups

responsible participation in community and civic affairs

tolerance and concern for the rights and beliefs of others

equality of access to and enjoyment of education, health, welfare and other community services

self-reliance, initiative and enterprise

personal and social achievement

rights to the ownership and use of property including property in the form of personal labour

productive and socially responsible work

conservation and development of a shared and dynamic heritage

a sense of individual and group identity

membership of the international community.

The school, therefore, should encourage students to understand, reflect upon and subscribe to these and other basic values of the culture.

Participation in our society requires the exercise of a responsible economic role. Just as society needs productive work from its citizens, all people are entitled to work and to economic satisfaction. The schools need to educate all students for effective and satisfying participation in the economy. Paid work is the most visible and obvious, but not the only means of ensuring this participation.

All individuals, to be educated, need to strive for mastery of basic learning tools and resources. These include:

- communicating in spoken and written language
- number skills, mathematical reasoning and spatial relationships
- scientific processes and their applications
- logical inquiry and analysis
- creative, imaginative and intuitive ways of thinking and experiencing
the capacity to apply and use knowledge symbols, processes and skills

perception, expression and appreciation through the arts and crafts

manual and other physical skills

management of bodily and mental health

the personal articulation of experience and thinking into value and belief systems.

Schools, therefore, should sponsor and foster these basic learning tools and resources, not in isolation but in close working relationship with other social institutions and groups.

Although this statement is described as; 'the aims of schooling', and although it does not list the subjects, i.e. the curriculum content, through which these aims are to be achieved, and in which the basic learning tools and resources are to be mastered, nonetheless it may properly be called a general curriculum for all Australian schools. It is interesting to note that the NT Government describes these 'aims of schooling' as the underlying assumptions on which it has formulated the objectives and goals for its schools and their curriculum (NT Department of Education, 1983:13-14; 29-30). At the same time a comparison of aims, priorities and expectations for South Australian schools, which represent the most important matters for curriculum planning, show little essential difference between them and the Curriculum Development Centre's 'aims for schooling in Australia' (SA Department of Education, 1981:10-11). It seems, then that this is a representative statement of an Australian school curriculum, and there is sufficient in it to show that it is also a particular socio-cultural group's curriculum. This is not to say that other Australian groups would not select many of the listed aims and other learnings as being part of their own 'stock of valued traditional and current public knowledge'. But there are enough aims and objectives which clearly reflect the socio-cultural ideology of white, male, middle class Anglo-Australians to justify the claim that this is their curriculum. Note, for instance, some of the values 'Australian society' as a whole is supposed to sustain and promote, 'self-reliance, initiative and enterprise', 'personal and social achievement', 'rights to ownership etc', 'productive and socially
responsible work', - these are surely recognised and recognisable as being typical middle class values. An attempt by Chamberlain (1983:12-15) to identify a set of ruling ideas, so that he could set up a research project aiming to establish whether or not ruling ideas do penetrate into working class consciousness, lead to an acknowledgement that there are problems in specifying ruling ideas. Nonetheless he was able to 'sketch some of the major strands in ruling ideas'. With respect to the present economic order he found (Chamberlain, 1983:15) that 'at the very basis of the thinking of the dominant class and its allies in contemporary Australia is the belief that the maintenance of the present economic order is both sensible and desirable'. With respect to the present political order he found 'Capitalism is also assumed to be highly desirable because it is supposedly synonymous with liberal-democratic political arrangements' (Chamberlain, 1983:19). He also found that 'it is clear ... that there is an important cluster of themes in ruling ideas which revolves around the merits of the present political system, and the desirability of maintaining present arrangements' (Chamberlain, 1983:20). With respect to trade unions he found among a rather mixed set of ruling ideas, one that 'celebrates the fact that unions have the right to exist and that workers have the right to strike in a 'democratic' society such as Australia' (Chamberlain, 1983:24).

These ruling ideas are certainly represented in the aims for the Australian schools curriculum, and a more detailed examination of ruling ideas in other areas of the dominant socio-cultural ideology would show them equally represented in the curriculum. It is for this reason that in this section we try to establish how it is that this identification of a dominant group's curriculum as a national curriculum has come about, and how it is that it manages to persist as the Australian school curriculum.

The enculturative aim of the Australian curriculum, and its assimilative effect on working class, female, Aboriginal and other cultural group children are well enough known. The curriculum is persisted with, though, and it continues its dominance, obviously because it has succeeded in gaining recognition as an Australian rather than a particular socio-cultural group's curriculum. Tracing how this particular curriculum has succeeded in making this transfer
from a group to a national curriculum is not difficult to do. After all, when the policy of mass primary education was adopted in the 1870s and then later expanded into secondary education, the white, male, middle class, Anglo-Australian academic curriculum was already established in secondary schooling and was controlled by the universities. Primary schooling, too, had for its model the curriculum offered in the small, privately run, schools of the early to mid-nineteenth century. The public schools, mainly for the children of blue-collar and white-collar working class families, took up these models of curriculum with some modifications, and they became THE curriculum from then on. Changes to the curriculum since then have not altered this fact. The addition of 'modern' subjects like history, geography, modern languages and the sciences to the 'classical studies' of the older style secondary academic curriculum, was only a recognition of these as now being part of the valued, current public knowledge of the middle class, and therefore suitable for selection as part of the group's curriculum. As a corollary to this we note that changes to the curriculum, which are made so as to make it more 'relevant' to working class and other socio-cultural groups in the school, are rarely taken up by middle class students and their schools, and they are never given the same status in the curriculum as those which form the dominant curriculum.

More difficult than tracing how a sectional curriculum has succeeded in becoming a national curriculum is finding how it maintains its dominance. Essentially, this requires that the socio-cultural group must retain control of the processes for selecting the curriculum, for legitimising knowledge, and for selecting and credentialling those who are to be admitted to the more valued of the group's knowledge.

The construction of knowledge, as Martin (1978:23) reminds us, is a social as well as a mental process. The mental process involves interpreting and re-interpreting experience, understanding that experience itself is socially defined in that what is knowledge-producing experience is socially determined. The effect of each new experience on knowledge is to confirm it or to question and change it. The social process then, besides defining the nature of experience and its validity, decides 'what will happen to new private knowledge or
new social knowledge that arises in a limited domain — whether it will be permitted to become public knowledge, and in what context, or whether it will be ignored or suppressed' (Martin, 1978:23).

The fact that a particular set of knowledge so effectively dominates the Australian curriculum argues the capacity of the socio-cultural group, whose knowledge this is, 'to define interests and identities, to monopolise access to knowledge and its construction and to assert that certain knowledge is valid' (Martin, 1978:22).

This does not have to be, and in the daily context it is not a consciously subversive process. When the socio-cultural ideology of a dominant group becomes that of a nation, it then becomes the role of government to construct, communicate and confirm that knowledge. That the knowledge brokers — the educational administrators, the teachers at every educational level, the knowledge researchers, the other knowledge communicators — through whom the government carries out its knowledge construction and legitimation role, are all, without exception, members of the dominant group, or are effectively assimilated to it, is sufficient explanation of how this group successfully maintains its control of the curriculum.

The role of the knowledge brokers has become one of great significance in contemporary society. Knowledge has always been a precious commodity, able to confer power and wealth on those who could use it. Some knowledges were particularly valued, because of the closeness of their link with power and wealth. Others have gained value over time, as changes in social (and commercial) attitudes have given them significance. The sort of knowledge that put mankind in touch with spiritual beings and powers has always been important, as has the knowledge which enables mankind to control or to exploit the forces of nature. Perhaps the most valued knowledge was that which gave power over the life and death of one's fellow men and women. All peoples have placed value on, attached rewards to and attempted to set up controls over these kinds of knowledge. No less have we done in our own times — and with greater need.
The last two hundred years have seen an exponential growth in knowledge, and an almost equal growth in the levels of reward attached to its ownership and use. So massive has been the knowledge explosion, not only across the whole encyclopaedic range of knowledge, but within particular fields of knowledge, that no one person is capable of covering all the knowledge even in one discipline. We have entered the age of narrow specialisation in all knowledge areas, with the generalist being one who can recognise when it is time to call in the specialist.

Knowledge brokers are specialists. They are specialists in the science of knowledge, and they are specialists in particular knowledges. Whilst they may contribute to the mental process in the construction of knowledge, their main role is to control and to undertake the social process of selecting, communicating, validating and valuing knowledge. Thus, it is the medical knowledge brokers who decide whether a new medical procedure or remedy is a valid one, not only in terms of its efficacy but also in terms of medical ethics, procedural standards and so on. They will decide who, within the medical hierarchy, should control this procedure or apply the remedy, and what part each person involved should play. In itself this determination places value on the new knowledge and decides who is to have access to it.

Knowledge brokers act in a variety of ways to control access to and use of knowledge, both to preserve and to enhance its value. The process of educational certification is used to determine who will be allowed to study certain knowledges. The knowledge brokers may, in some disciplines, set their own entry requirements and will only accept as candidates to their knowledge those students who meet the educational requirements. Even educational certification is not sufficient, in itself, to authorise use of knowledge. Professional associations, craft guilds and trade unions may have the right to determine who can use their knowledge and in what circumstances. All knowledges, without exception, seek to conceal their 'mysteries' in forms of esoteric language that are only translated to the initiate.
Thus the knowledge broker's role in our times is both wide ranging and of great significance. This is most evident when we turn to that role in the whole educational process, and especially when we consider the effect of that role on the dominance of a particular curriculum in our education.

Those knowledge brokers whose responsibility it is to control and promote their own special knowledges, seek to influence the presentation, the status and the outcomes of their knowledge in the curriculum. One study, for instance, of the place of anthropology and related disciplines in the Australian school curriculum (Barlow and Hill, 1982:8-15), was undertaken because anthropologists and prehistorians were keen to have their disciplines accorded full subject status at the higher levels of the school curriculum, and not to have them used as adjuncts to social science or Australian history courses. It was hoped that this study might provide the disciplines with strategies for penetrating and influencing the curriculum decision-making machinery within the various State education systems, whilst also serving to bring the disciplines to the attention of these systems.

Though universities and other tertiary education institutions no longer control the schools' assessment procedures, they can and do set the standards for entry to their faculties and schools. One news report (Sydney Morning Herald, Feb 3, 1984:2), proclaims 'University tightens entry rules', and then summarises a decision by the Sydney University to take an average of a student's Higher School Certificate mark if that student had sat for the exam a second time, as an entry mark. One reason given for this was to limit admission to repeating students since the evidence was that they did not do too well at university. Another reason was the limit on places available in the university and a desire to reserve them for the very best students. Some faculties set a limit to the students they will admit and set a fairly high mark as the entry level. The University of New South Wales admitted imposing restrictions to admission for repeating students, but only in the Medical Faculty.
Martin and Meade (1979:3-6) use the term 'Institutional ideology' to designate the education system as a reality defining and confirming institution. This is knowledge brokering at the systems level. Participants in the system structure what goes on in schools according to their knowledge 'of the functions of schooling and the educational practices through which these functions are best fulfilled' (Martin and Meade, 1979:3). Their role as knowledge brokers is to control and promote knowledge of the education process. It includes 'assessment of how well existing practices are working, solutions to problems, and explanations of why things go wrong' (Martin and Meade, 1979:3). In this way it defines what is an education, how an education is given and who is educated. It also defines who may educate and who can be educated. These realities are determined by the institution rather than by individuals, and are thus to be labelled an 'Institutional ideology'.

Thus, at a number of levels and in a variety of ways, both within and without the educational system, the process of constructing and controlling knowledge effectively ensures inequality in the value placed on different knowledges, helps a particular set of knowledge hold eminence in the curriculum, reserves that knowledge for a select group of students and thus builds inequality of educational and social opportunity not only into education but into the whole knowledge business.

Deep structures, then, long embedded in our whole social system, and honoured in the forms and processes of those institutions engaged in the constructing, communicating, legitimating and valuing of knowledge, ensure that schools will continue to educate fully only a certain group of their students, namely that one whose selected set of learnings, forms of learning and preferred learning structure form the dominant curriculum in Australian education.

EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

The deep structures, just referred to, however, do not only operate in the knowledge business and in education. Australia is a modern, industrialised, capitalist society. As such it is structured into
classes. There also exist in all Capitalist societies status groups which are arranged, across the classes, in hierarchical order of honour or prestige, according to a variety of evaluative criteria which may include non-economic as well as economic factors. According to Wild (1978:20) 'the structuration of social classes and status groups, and the complex relations between the two, form the basic framework of inequality in western capitalist societies'.

Inequality in Australia, then, is a consequence and a concomitant of its social structure. It will be seen in access to and use of power, knowledge, property and wealth and in access to and use of the full range of scarce and highly-valued resources. In the circumstances it is not surprising that educational inequality persists. How could it not, since it, too, is effected by our social structure.

There is no sign, either, that Australia is about to drastically revise the relationship between classes or the hierarchical classification of status groups. On the contrary, the processes which normally maintain these relationships are being strengthened. It is Wild's (1978:176) view that

relations of coercion, authority and influence provide the connecting threads between class, status and party, and other such forms of inequality as race relations, the role and position of women, and the fate of the aged. Increasingly, coercion has been either supplemented or replaced by rational-legal authority and influence as the major bases of compliance. Modern capitalist society is an unstable network of interdependent and unequal groups in conflict over interests and values, and the particular configuration of class, status and party establishes the dominant pattern.

For the education systems, and for schools especially, the ideal of equality of educational opportunity seems a forlorn dream so long as it is expected to mean anything more than giving every student a chance, not even an equal chance, but at least a chance at making it through the system. The dominant pattern, as Wild put it, that is established by a particular configuration of class, status and party, 'class hegemony' as Gramsci labelled it, will ensure that any attempt to obtain real parity of educational outcomes between conflicting classes and even, to a degree, between competing status groups, will fail. Even when the attempt is apparently supported and funded by the
government it will fail. It will do so because it does not really lie within the power of schools to achieve this egalitarian ideal. Schools are not socially autonomous. Their responsibility may be to the communities they serve, but their accountability is to those who fund them, who tell them what an education is and what it is for. There is more than enough 'rational-legal authority and influence' here to ensure the schools' and the educational systems' compliance in the maintenance of the dominant pattern.

But having said that it does not lie within the power of schools, or the education systems, does that mean that it is an educationally impossible task to achieve parity of educational outcomes for students who are accustomed to and expect, on the basis of their knowledge and experience of Australian society, inequality in all aspects of their social experience?

No. Strangely enough, given the whole force of this study's argument it can be done. It cannot be done easily and it cannot be done simply, but it can be done. It can be done by recognising that to be educated today, that is to be educated to a level that gives access to the highest possible outcomes, requires that one master a set of basic skills and develop a number of abilities that are highly marketable in themselves and which form the basis for further learning in skills and other abilities. The Curriculum Development Centre said as much in the lengthy quotation which was earlier recorded:

All individuals, to be educated, need to strive for mastery of basic learning tools and resources (Curriculum Development Centre, 1980:11).

Then followed the Centre's own selection of the basic learning tools and resources to be mastered, without it being suggested that these were exclusive. Even here a degree of the influence of the hegemonic curriculum is apparent but, excluding that, the principle is sound. Education, in a broad sense, is the process of socialisation of the individual, and of enculturation into the individual's 'hearth' group. In our society, as in many world societies, this process is carried on through the informal (including the 'hidden') curriculum. It has also, unfortunately, been allowed to become a major component of the school's formal curriculum. Consequently, most statements of
Curriculum will contain injunctions like those in the Curriculum Development Centre's statement, about schools having 'an obligation to teach democratic values and promote an active democratic way of life', or having to 'encourage students to understand, reflect upon and subscribe to these and other basic values of the culture', with the 'these' referring to their list of values of the way of life 'Australian society sustains and promotes' (Curriculum Development Centre, 1980:10-11). This constitutes the 'cultural baggage', the 'socio-cultural ideology' element of the curriculum, whose aim is enculturation and socialisation. Free the curriculum of this baggage, identify not just the clerical type skills, but the whole range of developmental and marketable skills and resources that need to be mastered for access to the job market at any desired point, and immediately it becomes possible to offer an education to all students which makes equality of outcomes a possibility.

That does not mean that, as a consequence, social inequality will lessen. Schools cannot, and probably should not attempt to bring about a revolution in Australian society such as would alter the relations between class, status and party. It is almost certain they would not be allowed to try.

Whether the educational system, including schools, could become neutrals in the class conflict depends on how consciously and deliberately they are used to support the hegemony of Australia's ruling class and its ruling ideas. There can be no doubt that they are used to maintain the social dominance and the advantaged status of that class. It would be very instructive to see how that class would react to attempts to neutralise the whole schooling endeavour. There would almost certainly be a mass exodus from government schools to those refuges of privilege, the independent schools, and there would certainly be a great outcry from the knowledge brokers. One would expect a tightening of their systems of control over access to and use of their knowledges. Hegemony would not be surrendered easily, and the role of the educational system and schooling as mechanisms of hegemony would be maintained fiercely - though under the guise of retaining our national curriculum and systems.
Yet, despite all this, there remains the possibility that, educationally equality of educational opportunity is achievable.

A REAL CORE CURRICULUM

For such a possibility to become an actuality there would need to be a radical rethinking of the aims of education, of the structure and content of the total curriculum, of strategies for teaching and learning, of the student to teacher and school to community relationship, of the processes for selecting and preparing teachers, of methods of student assessment, and of the purposes and uses of the systems of accreditation.

It would not be easy to convince any Australian government or any educational authority of the need to free the basic curriculum, the real core of the curriculum, from the cultural learnings in which it is embedded. The aim of education, as they all affirm, is to prepare students to live and function in society, and not in any society but in Australian society. The cultural learnings are, for them, an essential element in the curriculum. The Curriculum Development Centre said as much in stating,

Defining the core curriculum requires us to make selections from contemporary culture and organise them into programs of school learnings

and they later emphasised and clarified this by adding,

In the last resort, we must deem certain kinds of learning to be basic and essential and bend our efforts towards them. Our membership of a unified Australian society and our commitment to common aims justifies us in doing this (Curriculum Development Centre, 1980:14).

There is, despite our recent discovery of the multicultural diversity of Australian society, a persistent belief that there are some common basic elements of culture that all Australians share, which justify us referring to 'our culture' and 'the Australian culture'. The reference in the foregoing quotation to the 'unified Australian society', if it is to mean anything more than a unity of geographic circumscription or of national identity, must be to some form of common Australian culture.
If there is such a common culture then, by all means, let it be taught to all Australians. What we presently teach, however, is not that common culture. It is, as all the evidence accumulated here has shown, a sectional culture, the socio-cultural ideology, in fact, of a ruling class in this Australian capitalist, democratic society. Even if there are values in that sectional culture, and valued knowledges, which the majority of Australian people may seem to share, are these really common cultural elements, or are they ruling class ideas which have successfully penetrated into and been taken up as a form of 'common sense' in the thinking of most Australian people? To establish the existence of an Australian culture which all Australians, without exception, shared, would be a very difficult task. It may also prove to be counterproductive in that, if Australia intends to recognise its cultural plurality as being anything more than a demographic fact, to impose on that cultural diversity a form of cultural unity can only serve to reinstate the monocultural mentality which still persists with many Australians, despite the evidence of multicultural reality.

It comes back to this, then, that if a curriculum must contain cultural learnings, radical rethinking must go into the choice of what those cultural learnings should be. The Curriculum Development Centre (1980:4) in giving its definition of a core curriculum talks about 'basic and essential learnings and experiences' that all students should have. 'Basic' and 'essential' here refer to two different sets of learnings and experience:

'Basic' learnings are defined as those which provide a base or foundation necessary for other study and learning, and for continuing personal development. 'Essential' learnings and experiences are defined as those which are required by all for effective cultural, economic, political, group, family and interpersonal life in society' (1980:4).

The basic learnings are at the very heart of the curriculum. The essential learnings and experiences are, at base, the cultural learnings in which they are imbedded. In many subject curricula the 'essential learnings and experiences' embody the 'basic learnings' and are the means by which these are taught. They are, thus, closely interwoven in the curriculum structure. Contemporary teaching and learning strategies rely on the use of such cultural learnings in the
process of developing, illustrating, practising and reinforcing the basic learnings; at the same time they call for the use of these basic learnings in teaching the essential learnings and experiences. It becomes very difficult to see how a curriculum could be designed to effectively teach just the core 'basic' learnings, without some sort of cultural content to relate it to and to which it can be applied.

'Basic' learnings are virtually the same in all contemporary industrial, capitalist, democratic societies. They are no longer just the clerical skills of reading, writing and numbering. 'Society requires more of its citizens by way of common, universal understandings and skills than reading, writing and arithmetic', says the Curriculum Development Centre (1980:4). Moreover effective participation in contemporary life, which is an entitlement and responsibility to all individuals, depends on a wide, complex and interrelated set of learnings and experiences, well beyond the popular view of the 'basics'. They are taught successfully in each of the separate societies, Japan, the United States, Germany, Italy, England and all the others, in their language and their culture. The 'basic' learnings, then, even if they cannot be taught in isolation, can be based in any set of cultural learnings and still be effectively taught.

That being so, the proposal Connell (1982:199) and the others referred to, 'that working-class kids get access to formal knowledge via learning which begins with their own experience and the circumstances which shape it, but does not stop there', may not require, as one reviewer has claimed, 'an openly class divided school system with radically different curricula' (Marceau, 1983:563). Not, that is, if the curricula are all basically the same, in that they offer as their real core the same set of 'basic' learnings, but clothe them in the socio-cultural form that is known, recognised and valued by the students own class, gender or ethnic group. But the curriculum does not stop there. It must prepare the students, who follow it, for effective participation in contemporary Australian life. It will therefore include an objective analysis and description of Australian society, especially of its social, economic and political structures, but if, in doing this, the school, through its curriculum, is required
to 'encourage students to understand, reflect upon and subscribe to'
any basic cultural values about Australian society and the way of life
it is supposed to sustain and promote (Curriculum Development Centre,
1980:10-11), they should be the group's own basic cultural values that
are taught. At the same time, of course, the school would need to
teach that the students class and group are one in an interlocking and
interacting mesh within Australian society, and that for this society
to continue as a cohesive entity 'two crucial conditions', as
Crittenden (1982:21) reminds us, 'must be satisfied: (1) there has to
be a sufficiently broad range of commonly held ideals, values and
procedures: (2) all the constituent groups must have regard for the
common good in the pursuit of their own objectives'.

Developing curricula for those socio-culturally autonomous groups who
may require them would not be easy. Some Australian groups have
already made tentative steps towards doing so, without fully
understanding what is required. Ethnic schools, for instance, came
into existence to transmit particular migrant groups' language and
cultural heritage to their children (Kringas and Lewins, 1981:4). In
Aboriginal education several developments of recent years, including
the development of culturally based subject curricula, have indicated
a move towards the development of a separate Aboriginal educational
curriculum (Barlow, 1983c:1.0-1.11). There seems to be an increasing
recognition that an education for girls, whilst it seeks the same
outcomes and spans the same subjects as an education for boys, may
need more than the omission of sexisms to make it really relate to
female culture and to feminine values (Sampson, 1981:52-53). Much
more study needs to be done, though, before these first beginnings
could lead anywhere. The degrees and forms of cultural diversity
among class, gender and ethnic groups in Australia have been guessed
at rather than recorded. The fact that popular estimation of cultural
diversity rests on the hearing of non-English languages in the street,
noting colour difference and other racial characteristics in the
passer-by, eating in 'ethnic' restaurants and observing festive
cultural performances, and that these are the markers of cultural
diversity mostly recorded by the mass media and referred to in
multicultural education, is evidence enough of the paucity of real
knowledge of the nature of cultural diversity here. This is certainly not enough to base a cultural curriculum on.

The cooperation of all classes and groups in Australian society will be needed, both by researchers and schools, not only to develop the knowledge of their cultures that is needed, but to select from that knowledge those items which could enter the curriculum, where and how they should be taught and evaluated, and by whom.

The mechanics of developing a range of culturally separate curricula, incorporating in each the common 'basic' learnings that should offer to each group parity of outcomes, is not an issue which needs further exploration here. The purpose of this discussion is simply to establish that it is educationally possible to develop curricula for Australian schools, which free students from the dominance of the white, male, middle class, Anglo-Australian academic curriculum, but which ensure to those students exactly the same outcomes, in terms of certification, access to further and higher education, and to choice at all levels of the job market. Such curricula, if they were to be developed, should at least be an option for those students who currently find themselves at a complete disadvantage in schooling, because of the mismatch between their own socio-cultural and ideological values and practices and those of the school and its dominant curriculum.

The educational possibility is no more than that. Social inequality is structured into contemporary Australian society. More than that, the educational system is used not only to reproduce and to serve that inequality, but to maintain the inequality of relations between groups. Nothing that the Australian government is fostering at the present time is going to alter that fact. Consequently, claims by government and educational authorities that they intend to bring about equality of educational opportunity for all students, must be understood as meaning something less than or something different from parity of employment opportunity and access to the best jobs from their schooling for all students, regardless of class, gender and ethnicity.
Studies and reviews which focus primarily on the problem of stratification run the risk of taking the curriculum for granted, as a 'given'. From this viewpoint the curriculum itself is not problematic, rather the concern is over differential appropriation of classroom knowledge (White, 1980:53-54).

White (1980:53) here is talking of studies in the sociology of education which see 'the relationship between social classes (or status groups) and school attainment as being of paramount importance'.

The curriculum is problematic. As this study has tried to argue, at the level of schooling it is at the heart of the problem of inequality in education. Especially when one remembers that the curriculum consists not only of what is taught, but also of how it is taught, by whom, where, when and why. But the curriculum, in this fullest sense is not just a product of or the responsibility of the schooling system. It is not even just a product of or the responsibility of the whole educational system, as such. Social forces, the very structure of the society in which it is based and which it aims to reproduce, are its ultimate shapers and determiners. In attempting, then, to analyse why it is that middle-class, white, male, English speaking students continue to gain most from education, including the best of jobs, this study has recognised that the explanation, whilst it relates to the total curriculum, including the preferred practices of schooling, is to be found in the wider context of political, economic and ideological power and control in Australian society. Such a conclusion is not original. It is not even new. Yet it is important enough to justify this particular analysis, which was prompted by a concern, heightened by years of classroom practice, experience in action research and in analysing and commenting on government policy in Aboriginal education, that the large investment by the Australian government, by State education departments and by many thoughtful, concerned and innovative teachers, educational administrators and other educationists, as much of time, effort and emotion as of funding should, in the end, have no effect at all on the real levels of
inequality of education the separate classes and groups of Australian people experience.

This analysis has taken as its starting point the policy decision of recent Australian governments, not only to invest increasingly large amounts of money in education, but to do so so that those students who fared worst from education might have the same opportunity of access to a good quality education, and to the outcomes such an education should provide, as those students who consistently did best from it. In the light of the most recent statistical evidence that group inequality persists, especially at the very highest levels of educational certification, scrutiny was focussed on the remedies recommended by the Federal government's major advisory body in education, the Australian Schools Commission, and subsequently funded federally and implemented within the State and private school systems. The remedies all saw educational inequality as stemming from the 'differential appropriation of classroom knowledge' (White, 1980:54), which was attributed to inequalities of access to good quality education, caused by the difference in material standards between schools and the quality of their schooling practices, and to a deficiency of ability or a difference in qualities that students brought to their schooling. The remedies that were subsequently applied aimed first of all at bringing all schools, and schooling practices, if not to a level of parity, at least to a standard which would enable all students to reach the highest educational levels, if they wanted to and were good enough; secondly, at overcoming the level of mismatch between students and schooling, by both attempting to make the students fit the system and by adapting the system to accommodate them. This was not, as was noted, an acknowledgement that there was any real problem with the full curriculum as such. The curriculum was seen to be an adequate, indeed the sole vehicle for achieving the educational aims which were generally supported throughout Australian society.

The very fact, though, that educational authorities were prepared to admit that there is a mismatch between some groups of students and the school, and that this mismatch lay with the need for students to bring to their schooling certain qualities and abilities which were
necessary for the type of education schools offered, raised the question of what there was about this education that suited it to certain children but not to others. Was it possible, even, that groups of students were fairing unequally from education because what schools did was meant for, designed for, a particular group of students, so that others who did not belong to that group could not hope to get from this education what the other students got? And, if this was the case, how did it come about that schools came to offer, and to persist in offering as an education such a sectional curriculum?

At this stage the study moved to an examination of what White calls the 'over-determined' approach to schooling and the curriculum. 'This approach', he says 'views curriculum', both the officially and explicitly recognised subject matter, and the unstated norms, values and beliefs that are transmitted, as being 'over-determined by class interests' (White, 1980:63). This lead to an exploration of the Gramscian theory of hegemony, and to an examination of its applicability to the Australian forms of social stratification. Following Connell and Irving (1980), mainly, and their particular interpretation of hegemony (Chamberlain, 1983:3-4), the conclusion reached was that a hegemony of middle-class, socio-cultural ideology certainly exists at this point of time in Australia, and that the educational system, schools, the curriculum and the actions of the knowledge-brokers in general all act as mechanisms of hegemony. It was further concluded that few of the people engaged in maintaining this hegemony would have been conscious of the hegemonic significance of their contribution.

Whilst acknowledging, then, that educational inequality is a concomitant to and a consequence of the capitalist, democratic form of Australian society, which necessarily fosters inequality and structures it into its systems, and therefore not something that is the responsibility of nor under the control of educationists and their education systems, it still seemed legitimate to ask whether achieving equality of educational opportunity in the form of parity of outcomes between groups of students was an educational possibility. The answer to that question lay in an examination of concepts about a 'core
curriculum' and of what an essential education to fit a person to live in a modern, technologically advanced, industrial, capitalist, democratic society might be. The conclusion was that it should be possible to isolate a set of core learnings which any individual or group could master, without cloaking them in some hegemonic socio-cultural ideology.

In reaching this conclusion the study goes beyond the dilemma in which most analyses of this kind eventually find themselves, that the only solution to the problem of inequality in education is to posit action which accentuates inequality and exacerbates social division. It does not, for a moment, pretend that those who exercise a hegemony in Australia are about to surrender their control over the hegemonic practices in education. Nor does it imply that education is about to break the nexus between our form of social stratification and its inbuilt inequality. It does, however, claim that it is educationally possible to develop an education for each of the separate socio-cultural groups in Australia - classes, genders, or ethnicities - which would be based on a common core but which would draw on each group's own valued knowledge and preferred learning practice, and which would also include those learnings which would enable them to understand and live in our pluralist society. Such curricula could, and must, produce parity of educational outcomes between groups. They should, at least, be an option to the present system, which guarantees inequality to those it does not fit.

It may take a long time for such curricula to be developed and to be put in place. In the meantime the Australian government is going to go on spending a great deal of money trying to give all groups within our society educational equity. It will claim that the equity it seeks is equity of outcomes as well as equity of access and equity in quality of education. It may intend that equity in this form should be the goal. It will always have to settle for far less than equity, though, so long as the white, male, middle class, capitalist, Anglo-Australian curriculum continues to be the dominant curriculum in Australian education.
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