THE POLITICAL LIFE
OF JAMES MACARTHUR

by
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This thesis is my own work.

Alan Atkinson

Alan Atkinson
Note the signet ring on his right hand, referred to in his letter to his wife, 25 July 1850, describing a dinner party in Sydney:

'I did not dance as you may guess, but played at forfeits, and had to make a speech as member for Camden to regain my ring which had been deposited under the custody of Miss Donaldson, who was far from obdurate and soon returned it to me amidst loud cheers all round the room.'
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ABSTRACT

This thesis covers the whole life of James Macarthur (1798-1867), but it concentrates on his political career, from 1831 to 1859. The argument focuses on his motives and ideals, and it depends on a view of his personality which is to some extent new. He was in the first place a man of great imagination, although he was usually not fluent enough to make his ideas seem cogent or attractive to a general audience. Secondly, he was a man of consistent honesty. There were many occasions on which he told only part of the truth, or where his faulty memory allowed him the benefit of the doubt. But there is no record of his telling a deliberate lie. Therefore by far the best way of understanding his motives is to examine his own speeches and letters. These are fundamental to the argument of the thesis.

Thirdly, he had a buoyant personality and was capable of taking a detached, intellectualised view of local politics. This detachment made it hard for his contemporaries to understand him, and to pin him down on any issue. But it is the key to the whole method and tone of his political life. A faith in cool discussion is evident at every stage of his career, and a willingness, even an eagerness, to compromise, in the belief that all would be right in the end. Even in cases where he was forced to give up his own side of the question completely he can usually be seen afterwards looking for signs that the effects he feared would be minimal.
The first part of the thesis, chapters 1 to 5, cover his life up to the age of 40, beginning with an account of his intellectual and social background. Chapters 3 and 4 deal with his attitude to land settlement and constitutional and church reform. The main point of reference at this stage - and for most of the thesis - is the idea of the moral citizen. This idea was at the root of Macarthur's ambitions for a strong centralised government, planned settlement, assisted immigration and schools, and the equal establishment of all the main Christian religions.

Macarthur was a member of the nominated legislative council from 1840 until its dissolution in 1843. He was afterwards a candidate for the first elected council, but was not returned until the general election of 1848. He was also a member of the first parliament, until 1859. The second part of the thesis is meant to show how his moral and 'radical' conservatism was brought to bear on the work of these successive legislatures. The discussion concentrates partly on law-making, and partly on Macarthur's work as a day-to-day politician anxious to make the habits of the house conform with his own ideals.
Acknowledgements

By far my greatest debt is to Allan Martin, who has thought about nearly every comma and connotation in the thesis. I also owe a great deal to Oliver MacDonagh, who has read each chapter, and suggested new aspects to the argument. Others who have read sections of the work, large or small, and helped with comments, are Chris Connolly, Susan Eade, Peter Loveday, Barry Smith, Sandy Gordon, Ged Martin, Deryck Schreuder and Gwynyth Atkinson. I am also very grateful to Lois Simms and Janice Aldridge, who typed some of the intermediate drafts, and to Elizabeth Smith and Diane Shepherd, who have worked hard to finish the final copy.

The following have kindly given me access to papers: Lord Derby, Lord Blake, Mrs. H. Coatalen, Mr. Quentin Macarthur-Stanham, the president and committee of the Australian Club, Mr. Scott of Gala and Mr. F.H. Gordon. I am also grateful to the staff in various libraries and record offices in Australia and the British Isles, but particularly to those in the Mitchell Library, the National Library, the Sydney University Archives Office, the Clwyd and the Northumberland County Record Offices and the Kent Archives Office.
Note on Footnotes

All references to members of the Macarthur family in the footnotes are explicit, except for the following:

'Mrs. Macarthur' refers to Mrs. John Macarthur (1766-1850), James Macarthur's mother;

'Elizabeth Macarthur' before 1842 refers to John Macarthur's eldest daughter (1792-1842), James Macarthur's sister;

'Elizabeth Macarthur' after 1842 refers to James Macarthur's daughter (1840-1911), afterwards Mrs. Macarthur-Onslow;

and all references simply to 'Macarthur' refer to James.

Note also the following abbreviations:

JRAHS : Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society
SMH : Sydney Morning Herald
V&P : Votes and Proceedings of the N.S.W. legislative council.
PD : British parliamentary debates.
ADB : Australian Dictionary of Biography (note also that the citing of ADB and Dictionary of National Biography without page numbers implies a reference to a complete biographical article).
ML : Mitchell Library, Sydney.
NL : National Library, Canberra

Note also that in citations of Macarthur's book, New South Wales; its Present State and Future Prospects, reference to the first part, the 'statement', are given with simple page numbers, while references to the second part include page numbers preceded by 'appendices'.
'... in more distant periods, it may be some gratification to those who come after us to look at our doings and quote our sayings as a credit to them.'

James Macarthur,
10 December 1840.

'Mr. James Macarthur ... has a most happy knack of seizing upon every possible opportunity of injuring his own character as a politician.'

Sydney Morning Herald,
8 October 1844.
Introduction

There is more evidence about the life of James Macarthur than there is for any other man of his time, his time being that troubled period which stretches from Macquarie to Denison. His memory is buried in a great maze of manuscripts, press reports, pamphlets and contemporary books. The chief source, his family papers, now in the Mitchell Library, range from the letters of his mother, written as a bride leaving England, to the estate records of his daughter, comprehending a hundred years, 30 boxes and 296 large volumes.1

All this adds up to many lines of writing. There are almost as many spaces between the lines, providing evidence which is more elusive, but valuable in its place. What we can glean from these suggests a reason for the preservation of the papers themselves, namely the family's strong sense of history.2 All the Macarthers shared a secure faith in the grandeur of their own ambitions, and with it a belief that such virtue as theirs must someday receive a stamp of approval which would be binding for all time. This was to be an earthly dispensation, for no Macarthur was profoundly religious. It all followed naturally from the family axiom that - as James Macarthur put it - 'with the spread of enlightenment and intelligence ... the truth would ultimately

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1 See the list in the Catalogue of Manuscripts of Australia and the Pacific in the Mitchell Library, Sydney series A, Sydney 1967, pp. 13-16. The collection includes papers dating to 1946, but the majority date from before the death of Mrs. Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow, James Macarthur's daughter, in 1911. The main period covered is 1810 to 1890.

2 See, for example, William Macarthur's reference to his father, 'that revered parent ... whose wise and beneficent plans we have been but the humble instruments of endeavouring to carry into effect' (W. Macarthur to Edw. Macarthur, 5 Oct. 1841, ML A2935).
prevail'.

Behind their proud and secretive manner was an ambition one day to publish all, and so to win crowns of glory from an all-knowing prosterity.

Most of the family had considerable intelligence, and a rather histrionic cast of mind. They therefore tended to believe that any warts in the final picture would only add to its dramatic effect, and its truth, so ensuring its power to last. The family letters were kept with a perfect confidence that no Macarthur had anything to hide, at least from the future.

None of the family made much effort to account for his own career and opinions, which perhaps shows how confident they were. Passing events were left to speak for themselves, so that the Macarthur papers are completely lacking in detailed autobiography. John Macarthur alone was inclined to the type of introspection which feeds on moral and social insecurity. He also wrote vividly, but never at length. William Macarthur was capable of rambling over many pages, but his mind dwelt mainly on business matters, botany, servants and dependents.

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3 Macarthur's speech in the legislative council 7 July 1853, SMH, 8 July 1853.

4 This partly explains the publication of Some Early Records of the Macarthurs of Camden, Sydney 1914, which had been first planned by James Macarthur (ibid., dedication page), and was edited by his grand-daughter, Sibella Macarthur-Onslow.

5 Compare Macarthur's early condemnation of Wentworth's excesses (mentioned below, passim) with his speech, 19 Dec. 1853, SMH, 20 December 1853, which implied that such excesses help to define great historical figures. For his interest in the theatre, see below, and particularly Chapters 1 and 2.

6 William Macarthur also seems to have been a cheerful and compulsive talker (James Macarthur to his wife, [24 June 1854], ML A4343).
James's youngest sister, was the only member of the family who really confided in her biographer: sad notes survive from her old age in England, a widow cut off from all her kin, 'alone and helpless in a strange country'.

James Macarthur was perhaps the least explicit of all. He sent daily notes to his wife when away from home, but he was a poor correspondent with all his friends. He once explained that 'I have not the gift of writing rapidly or graphically'. His style was usually smooth and competent, but it was never quite effortless. Few of the Macarthur papers, and certainly none of his letters, spring from any creative love for pen and ink. Most owe their origin to the fact that the family was closely knit but often scattered, in different hemispheres and in different parts of New South Wales.

The same character shows in Macarthur's public behaviour. As a politician he always felt obliged to perform, as if on a stage, but it was never easy for him. He liked to be popular, to carry his audience with him, but his attempts were never entirely brilliant. The light of his ideas had to struggle through a self-conscious and deliberate manner, often fortified by a real desire not to be 'conspicuous'. He always

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7 Lady Parker's notes on her bereavement, [1881-8], ML A2959.
8 See, for example, Emmeline Parker to Edw. Macarthur, 9 Sept. 1844, ibid., complaining about the 'secrecy and mystery in all his proceedings'.
9 Macarthur's letters to his wife, Emily, a very valuable source, cover most of the period between 1838 and 1865, ML A4341, A4342 and A4343.
10 James Macarthur to Sir W. Macarthur, 25-6 July 1860, ML A2932.
disliked costume balls, common in his time, because any unusual dress made him feel absurd. He froze in front of cameras, although in the last years of his life they were thoroughly understood in his house. Even the acting involved in common politeness could leave him slightly at a loss, though few men attempted it more often. He was not a clubbable man, and was at ease only with his family, where he felt secure from 'all the chilling sameness and heartlessness of society in general'.

Macarthur tended to be lazy and awkward in his own defence. But he knew very well that in day-to-day political life good motives must be carefully explained to be of any use. He developed a style of oratory which had the great advantage of being distinct and sober, though sometimes too deliberate. In 1831, when he made his first public speech, it was noticed that his enunciation was 'remarkably clear' and his language 'fastidiously correct'. In 1842 his style still showed some 'stiffness and diffidence' but, according to the Sydney Herald, it seemed to contain 'the raw material of genuine eloquence'.

By this time Macarthur was 43, and it is not surprising that the material remained ever after in a raw state. The last verdict, from

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11 Macarthur to his wife [31 Oct. 1851], ML A4343. The only record of his going to such a ball dates from 1835, and he dressed as a 'Greek', no doubt the most dull and dignified costume available (Sydney Herald, 16 March 1835).
12 Emily Macarthur to Sir W. Macarthur, 26 Oct. 1861, ML A4344. Both his brother William and his daughter were keen photographers, developing the film themselves.
13 Macarthur to his wife, 12 Aug. 1857, ML A4343.
14 Macarthur to his wife [1857?], ibid., pp. 495-9. See also Emily Macarthur to Sir W. Macarthur, 19 Feb. 1861, ML A4344: 'People have too many friends here [in England]'.
15 Australian, 2 Dec. 1831
16 Sydney Herald, 2 March 1842.
the Empire in 1856, was simply that

Mr. Macarthur speaks with clearness, and with some pretensions to oratory. His language is uniformly good, and his manner is frequently characterised by strong feeling. 17

The strong feeling - which was sincere though stylised - seems to have shown not only in his voice but also in the earnest movement of arms and body. 18

Macarthur's success as a political figure depended very much on these performances. But his concern for enunciation made it important that his audience be quiet and attentive. Even the 'theatrical member for Camden, 19 found such audiences rare, and he therefore went to unusual lengths to correct and publish the reports of his speeches. 20

In this way he hoped to lay his arguments before a quiet and rational host, a mass of well-intentioned men sitting by their firesides away from the shouts of the mob. During the election of 1843, for example, he and his ally Roger Therry published their speeches in a pamphlet, copies of which were distributed to 'almost every cabin and barked hut' in the county of Camden. 21

17 Empire, 5 May 1856.
18 Sydney Herald, 2 Mar. 1842; J. Lamb's speech in the legislative council, 1 Oct. 1850, SMH, 7 Oct. 1850, referring to Macarthur's recent 'display of eloquence and gesticulation'.
19 People's Advocate, 5 Oct. 1850.
20 See, for example, his letters to C.H. Jenkins, 7 June 1836, ML Am 43/1/3, 15, 20, 27, 28 June 1836, ML A357, which led to the publication of the Report of the Proceedings of the General Meeting of the Supporters of the Petitions to His Majesty and the House of Commons, held at the committee rooms, May 30, 1836, Sydney 1836. Similar pamphlets were compiled in 1843 (with Therry), 1850 (with Wentworth) and 1856 (with H.M. Oxley), and there were numerous other publications not in pamphlet form. See also appendix 2 and bibliography, below.
21 Australian, 13 March 1843.
Efforts like these made a certain impression. But Macarthur's reasoning was often rather idiosyncratic. From the age of 14 he educated himself, developing his ideas within an uncritical family circle, so that even when his decisions were straightforward his method of reaching them might be baffling to anyone but his closest friends. His argument against having clergymen on the Sydney University senate, for example, seemed very strange at the time. One observer even suggested that its use by a person of so decided talent as Mr. James Macarthur might be adduced as proof of the incompleteness of any other than an University education.

Few doubted Macarthur's intelligence. It is also obvious that he put a good deal of thought and research into many of his speeches. But their main effect depended on more transparent things, and especially on what one newspaper called 'the influence which his personal character secures for him'.

This seems to be the clue to Macarthur's present reputation. For the first fifty years after his death the splendour of his name was enough at least to preserve him from that 'enormous condescension of posterity' which has warped the image of many other men of his time. It is no doubt equally important that two leading

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22 See, for example, the process of George Allen's thinking (recorded in his diary, 1, 5, 11 July 1843, ML uncat. MSS 477), as affected by Macarthur's speech at Parramatta, 6 July 1843, published, very likely in corrected form, in the *Australian*, 10 July 1943.


24 *Australian*, 21 Jan. 1848.

* See Macarthur's speech in the Legislative council, 4 Oct. 1849, *ibid.*, 5 Oct. 1849.
historians of the period, Roger Therry and G.W. Rusden, were old friends with access to the Macarthur papers, then at Camden Park. But this tradition was superseded by a generation of writers who were not interested in unravelling his ideas, and whose line of argument was often critical of everything his family represented. These scholars also worked in ignorance of the family records, except for a number of documents relating to John Macarthur which were published in 1914. The bulk of the Macarthur papers became available only after World War II, having been given to the Mitchell Library partly in 1940 and partly in 1957.

Macarthur's reputation suffered most in the period between the wars, when some of the classic accounts of Australian history first appeared. The books of Brian Fitzpatrick and A.C.V. Melbourne were particularly influential. Fitzpatrick described Macarthur's family as agents of British commercial imperialism in Australia. In one place he made the mass of the people curse them as members of a


26 Some Early Records of the Macarthur of Camden (op.cit.).

27 The first part of the collection was given by Major-Gen. James Macarthur-Onslow (grandson of James Macarthur) and his sister Miss Sibella Macarthur-Onslow, and the second part by his daughter, the late Lady Stanham of Camden Park. The second part is on restricted access.

28 British Imperialism and Australia 1783-1833, London 1939, p.294
reactionary class, proud men who

misused their authority delegated from government in England, and took their own advantage of the long wars, and brought government policy to shipwreck and debauched and expropriated the poor.29

Melbourne used much the same approach in his Early Constitutional Development in Australia, never allowing the family an original or an unselfish idea. Macarthur there appears, literally, as the enemy of all constitutional change, except when it would make him richer or more powerful.30

This interpretation has given way gradually under the impact of more careful and less doctrinaire scholarship, and the evidence of the family papers. The revisionary process began, in a tentative way, with the publication of M.H. Ellis's John Macarthur in 1955.31 Since then Michael Roe, in his Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia 1835-1851, has referred to James Macarthur in such a way as to suggest that his social attitude had 'an ethical basis' and his politics 'an intellectual edge'.32 Macarthur's ideal, says Roe, was 'comparatively disinterested leadership' and 'a more or less benevolent oligarchy'.33

29 The Australian People 1788 - 1945, Melbourne 1946, pp. 118, 145.
31 Ellis saw the first part of the papers in the Mitchell Library and some of the others at Camden Park (op. cit., pp. xiii, 533-4).
33 Ibid., pp. 45, 65.
The work of Manning Clark has put some life into this interpretation. There Macarthur appears as 'kind and gentle in his disposition with a manner which at once inspired confidence and respect'.\textsuperscript{34} He was, says Clark,

both blessed and cursed with the innocent man's unwillingness to believe that the imagination in the hearts of some men was evil from the start.\textsuperscript{35}

Yet fundamental to his character was 'his distaste for all vulgarians, all people, great and small, who threatened to dispute his and the divine sense of the natural fitness of things'.\textsuperscript{36}

These are fair comments, but they only touch the edges of the question. It is still normal practice to deny Macarthur and his family the benefit of the doubt in much of their work, even where proper research would show that no doubt need exist. Nor are they allowed any imagination, except in gathering wealth. Such bias can be seen even in the most authoritative modern source, the \textit{Australian Dictionary of Biography}. There Macarthur appears as a man who was well meaning in a superficial way, but whose influence on national events was misguided and almost totally negative: 'his remarkable political talents' says the \textit{Dictionary}, 'left nothing lasting behind them'.\textsuperscript{37}

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\textsuperscript{34} C.M.H. Clark, \textit{A History of Australia II}, Melbourne, 1968, p.182.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., p.236.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p.323.
\textsuperscript{37} ADB II, p.153. The \textit{Dictionary}'s account of Macarthur draws very heavily on the notes of the late V.R. de V. Voss (in the History Department, Sydney University), who saw only the first part of the Macarthur papers, when they were still largely unsorted in the Mitchell Library. See also ADB I, p. 299, and compare A.T. Atkinson, 'The Position of John Macarthur and His Family in New South Wales before 1842', M.A. thesis, University of Sydney 1971, pp.248, 249-50.
\end{flushleft}
The present thesis argues that this verdict is seriously wrong, and that it depends on a distorted view of the times.

* * *

One important problem in the thesis is the definition of Macarthur's politics. This is difficult, partly because of his complex way of thinking, and partly because his political life, from 1830 to 1860, saw a great revolution in ideas, when statesmen who worked in the European tradition were constantly adapting old labels and taking up new ones. Macarthur himself did not think a great deal about party politics, as such, and only once, in 1843, is he found labelling himself in any detail. He was then accused of tory-ism. His answer, apparently a well-considered one, was that

He did not call himself a Tory, but a moderate Conservative, in fact, his principles verged upon those of a Whig.38

At another time he met the same charge by pointing out that some of his ideas could even be called radical.39

His father's first political connections had been mainly with the Prince of Wales's party and the Foxite whigs.40 But this was simply because, as a perfect beginner, he had to take whatever offered, John

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38 Macarthur's speech at an election meeting, 6 Mar. 1843, Australian 8 March 1843.
39 Macarthur's speech, Report of the ... General Meeting ... May 30, 1836, p.17.
40 His closest contacts in parliament before 1817 were with Thomas William Plummer, his commercial agent, whig M.P. for Yarmouth 1806-7, and with James Brogden, a Northumberland House (and therefore a Carlton House) member, M.P. for Launceston 1796-1832. See also Atkinson, op. cit. pp.104-5, 107-9.
Macarthur being 'from natural inclination ... of the school of Pitt.'\textsuperscript{41} John Macarthur junior, the only one of the family to be much involved with British politics, worked in that tradition during the 1820s. He was one of the young admirers of Canning and Huskisson and he played an active part in the early successes of liberal toryism.\textsuperscript{42}

James Macarthur also tended to refer to Pitt, Canning and Peel as the best models for public men.\textsuperscript{43} It is therefore puzzling, at first, that he should have described his principles as verging upon those of a whig. This question will be dealt with before describing his conservatism.

The point of the remark seems to lie in Macarthur's circumstances, which were different from those of his father and brother. During most of his political career whiggism was very popular among men of his class in the colony, but compared with the current British model it was stunted and slightly out of date. The pattern for New South Wales whigs was that established in Great Britain between Amiens and Waterloo, a very articulate period when ancient whig prejudices were being justified and enriched with new thinking. The British whigs of that time have been called 'the party of high family and of general ideas'.\textsuperscript{44} They assumed that all good government must rest on the combination of two types of aristocracy, 'that of personal merit, and that of rank and

\textsuperscript{41} James Macarthur quoted (n.d.) in Some Early Records ..., p. 471. See also Macarthur's speech at an election meeting, 14 Jan. 1843, Australian, 16 Jan. 1843.

\textsuperscript{42} John Macarthur jr. to his mother, 12 Apr. - 27 May 1825, and to his father, 20 Nov. 1825, 18 July 1826, ML A2911.

\textsuperscript{43} See, for example, his speech at a public dinner, 19 July 1843, Australian, 21 July 1843; and his speech at an election meeting, 24 Mar. 1856, Empire, 27 Mar. 1856.

\textsuperscript{44} Sir Llewellyn Woodward, The Age of Reform 1815-1870, Oxford 1962, p.110. It was during this period, in 1802, that the Edinburgh Review, the famous whig journal, began publication.
hereditary wealth'. In order to make room for the first, avenues to power had to be broad and numerous. All final authority in the state should be vested in the house of commons where, ideally, the influence of the government, justly restrained, and that of the nobility would be combined with 'the proper representation of the people'.

The political aims of the whigs in the first years of the 19th century were straightforward. First and foremost, they bound themselves to fight against

The preponderating influence of the Crown, arising from the enormous extent of our establishments, and of the patronage consequently vested in the Sovereign.

One of the greatest enemies of whiggism gave a much less sympathetic, but broader account of this policy: 'opposition for its own sake, striving against the truth, because it happens to be commanded us; as if wisdom were less wise because it is powerful'.

According to the original ideal the strength of the party depended mainly on the energy and independence of the landed class. But after Waterloo it became clear, even to old-fashioned whigs, that they were 'no longer ... capable of making head against the Crown, without popular support.' This was obvious at the same time in New South Wales. It is suggested below that most of the great landowners of the colony, from about 1825 to 1850, thought of politics as a constant effort to

46 Ibid., p. 278.
limit the cost and the influence of the local government. This explains the activities of Jamison and Wentworth, and the Coxes, Blaxlands and Lawsons. But they were also careful, at every stage, to get popular backing for their efforts.  

Whiggism, suitably pinched and pruned, was ideal for New South Wales in Macarthur's time, at least until 1850. In the first place it allowed for the merging of wealth and intellect, and the colony had a certain type of both. Secondly, while it took the lasting authority of the crown for granted, it made it a matter of duty to challenge its exercise. Thus, when Macarthur said that his principles verged on those of a whig he meant to credit himself with a local patriotism which, however strong and xenophobic, did not affect his loyalty to the queen.

But Macarthur thought of himself much more often as a conservative. Conservatism at this point was a new and nebulous doctrine, in a state of rapid evolution. Moreover, its application to New South Wales politics was not nearly as straightforward as whiggism. Therefore it would be pointless to try to list here the fragments of British conservative thought which were thrown up in the colony. For the time being it is enough to quote Barrie Dyster's account of the local conservative ideal, which was to oppose 'rule by and for a faction or party, and rule by doctrinaires untied to the community and interests they troubled'.

The next few pages are only meant to sketch the attitude of mind which led Macarthur to adopt such a label. In fact is is fair to think

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50 See, in particular, chapter 2.
of conservatism partly as an attitude of mind, a method of approaching particular problems. It was an attitude which distrusted the idea of total improvement, of change which touched not only the circumstances but the relationships of men, and especially that which was meant to by-pass local and class differences. It was an attitude which justified privilege and the haphazard effect of sheer pragmatism. But it also allowed for individuality in a much more effective way than other political methods.

This was a period when many progressive and ideal schemes were worked out according to psychological theories with a general application to all mankind. The best known and most comprehensive were those of utilitarianism and classical economics, or laissez-faire. It was also a time when the mileage of railroads, the size of smoke-stacks and the population and wealth of a country tended to become ends in themselves. In 1835, Alexis de Tocqueville complained about this vast shift in ideas, with a conservative cry from the heart:

It would seem that sovereigns now only seek to do great things with men. I wish that they would try a little more to make men great, and that they should attach less importance to the work and more to the workman.

The Christian socialist F.D. Maurice saw the same problems, though he had different solutions:

And for that expression about 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number', I do not understand it. I have no measure for it. I cannot tell what happiness is, or how it is to be distributed among the greatest number, or how the greatest number is to be ascertained.

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52 Kitson Clark, op. cit., pp. 290-4.
53 J.P. Mayer and Max Lerner (eds) and George Lawrence (trans.), *Democracy in America*, Fontana 1968, II p. 911.
In the 1860s Matthew Arnold, in his *Culture and Anarchy*, likewise condemned the 'worship of machinery', meaning any standard of good which was applied in spite of individuality, and which had no reference to the 'internal condition' of men.\(^55\)

Through his father's old patron and friend, Sir Walter Farquhar, Macarthur was linked with this reaction, and especially with its religious side.\(^56\) Two of Farquhar's grandsons belonged to a group, educated mostly at Eton and Christ Church, who played a key part in the reformation of Anglican thought and practice, a movement which was partly meant to counter the 'worship of machinery'. Some of this group were contemporaries and friends of W.E. Gladstone, who was a student in both places.\(^57\) One of the grandsons was Walter Farquhar Hook, the celebrated vicar of Leeds, who devoted great energy and sympathy to winning the slums of his parish for the church, binding his people together, and setting 'a new standard of duty for every parish priest

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\(^{55}\) *Culture and Anarchy*, Cambridge 1966, pp.47, 50, 82.

\(^{56}\) For the original connection between the Macarths and the Farquhars, see Atkinson, op. cit., pp. 29, 32, 38; Charity Hamilton (formerly Farquhar) to W. Macarthur, 28 Sept. 1839, ML A2936.

who came after him'. Another was Walter Kerr Hamilton, bishop of Salisbury, one of the leaders of the Oxford movement. It will be seen below that Macarthur's aims did not focus in the same way on the Anglican church. But they too were based on a belief that the welfare of a community should be rooted in its co-operative spirit, which was to be seen in religious terms, and which Macarthur at least identified with Christian charity. There was no regular intellectual contact between the Farquhar descendants and the Macarths. But the argument of the thesis suggests that the similarity of outlook was due to a distinct ethical attitude, an interest in close relationships which pervaded the Macarthur family and their immediate circle.

The most potent piece of 'machinery' in New South Wales politics, according to Macarthur, was 'that fashionable ... system of modern colonisation' devised by Edward Gibbon Wakefield. It was a constant source of annoyance that, as he thought, the whole future of the colony should be 'offered up upon the shrine of ... [this] heartless utilitarian theory'. His most earnest speeches were directed against the spirit of cold arrogance which he saw behind Wakefieldism. 'It was this spirit', he said, 'which actuated the conqueror in his career of bloodshed'. But the conqueror at least might risk his own life:

59 Bishop Hamilton was a brother of Edward Hamilton, of Collaroy, N.S.W., for whom see chapter 8 below. For the lives of W.K. Hamilton and W.F. Hook, see the Dictionary of National Biography VIII and IX.
60 Macarthur's speech at a public meeting, 24 April 1844, SMH, 1 May 1844.
His was a far nobler impulse than that which led men seated at home in their comfortable arm-chairs to contemplate with indifference and even with satisfaction the ruin of thousands, rather than give up one jot or title of a hypothetical theory.  

Armchairs appear here in a bad light, as a breeding spot for theory. They might also, of course, be the one place where honest motives and kind thoughts rule supreme. In fact Macarthur's moral ideas always focused on the domestic man, the man in the armchair alone with his conscience.  

He took it for granted that the vagaries of a man's conscience—especially where mutual trust was involved—were linked directly with his worth as a politician. He maintained that all laws should aim at encouraging 'perfect charity ... the spirit which would do unto others as it would they should do unto it'. Such charity, he said, must guide 'communities, as well as individuals', and must therefore inform and mould the inmost thoughts of politicians.  

He once cited the absence of imprisonment for debt, of game laws, settlement laws and poor laws, 'which fettered the labouring classes in England and chained them down', as evidence that 'truly Christian principles' pervaded society in New South Wales. 

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61 Ibid. See also his speech in the legislative council, 10 Dec. 1840, Sydney Herald, 12 Dec. 1840; his speech at a public meeting 7 Jan. 1841, ibid., 8 Jan. 1841; R. Therry to Macarthur, [25 March 1862], ML A2930.  
62 Or perhaps seated on the river bank, 'inspired by the murmurings of the limpid stream that flows beside his homestead' (Macarthur's speech at a public meeting, 16 Jan. 1854, SMH, 19 Jan 1854).  
63 Macarthur's speech at an election meeting, 14 Jan. 1843, Australian, 16 Jan. 1843.  
64 Macarthur to the children of Camden national school, 16 Apr. 1855, SMH, 20 Apr. 1855.  
65 Macarthur's speech in the legislative council, 7 July 1855, ibid., 8 July 1855.
This was the essence of Macarthur's conservatism, braced with an
instinctive regard for settled legal power. It was this attitude which, for
example, always guided his thinking on constitutional change in the
colony. In the early period he was mainly influenced by his mistrust
for those ex-convicts who were not obviously reformed, and the men
they mixed with. The argument once used on their behalf, that

The private morals and the public morals of the different
individuals of a state are two distinctly different things, 66
went utterly against his thinking. For him an inveterate criminal
posed the same danger to the state as an arrogant Wakefieldian.
Both approached that type which a good community must always guard
against, the heartless, self-sufficient man, who cared nothing for the
settled way of life, the opinions, the aspirations and the varied
rights of others.

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