

## Response: I

H.L. ROGERS

The Dean says that most of my arguments 'about autonomy and tenure apply not so much specifically to the humanities as to academia in general and not so much to the problems possibly arising from new funding directives as to matters of internal management structures.' In any case, she thinks, there are more important things to worry about.

She may be right; but I make no apology for my choice of topic. First, the humanities (together with other areas of scholarly and scientific enquiry which lack immediate and obvious commercial application) are specially vulnerable to the forces now acting upon universities. Secondly, the 'new funding directives' by the Government obviously have consequences for 'internal management structures', and these in turn must affect the lives of those who teach and carry out research in universities.

Universities are now to be *managed*. Vice-Chancellors are to be like general *managers* of a large business or industrial concern. There was a recent manifestation of this kind of view in *The Australian Financial Review*, 27 January 1989. The front-page table of contents included a heading, 'Universities: Managers in, Scholars out.' Inside, in the 'Management Section', an article headed 'Universities face drastic changes' appeared.

It contained, among other things, the thoughts of Mr Frank Hambly, introduced as the 'executive director of the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee' (I think he used to rejoice in the title of Secretary) about the desirable qualifications of Vice-Chancellors, or Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) — including quite gratuitous advice to Sydney and La Trobe about their next Vice-Chancellors, whose selection is now under consideration.

The term CEO has an old meaning, and it is about to acquire a new one. It has long been used in university by-laws to mean one who gave effect to the policies of the governing body. It will now take on a somewhat different colour.

CEOs, Mr Hambly is quoted as saying, should be people 'who have worked in the private sector; people who are entrepreneurial and able to make tough decisions. That is the new order.' Apparently this New Order

is to be like that in some Foreign Services, including those of the United States and, I believe, increasingly, Australia, in which ambassadors are often not career professionals but political appointees; this is not known to encourage the recruitment and retention of able career diplomats. According to Mr Hambly, the appointment at a secondary level of managers *with* academic backgrounds under Chief Executive Officers *without them* will ensure that the academic integrity of institutions is maintained!

In this New Order, governing bodies (read 'The University of Sydney Senate') will reduce in size and power, and 'the kind of inertia we've seen will start to break down'. Vice-Chancellors will 'have a freer reign [sic] and be able to act as a *real chief executive*' (my italics). Down the line, no doubt, lesser members of the Administration will act as lesser, but no less real, executives too.

There can be no doubt that the status accorded university teaching staff has greatly declined in the last generation or so, both inside and outside the University; and it is likely that the kinds of changes just described will reinforce this trend (except, of course, for those academics who leap nimbly upon the bureaucratic and wagon). As already mentioned, teaching staff are now clearly employees; the relationship between the Senate and them is that of master-servant; the Vice-Chancellor possesses greater authority over them than he ever did before.

The idea now, apparently, is to bring staff and how they spend their time under ever closer and more direct control. I know of no convincing evidence or argument that this will do a damn thing to improve the standards of teaching, learning, and research in Australian universities.

Then there is the matter of salaries. As a Senior Lecturer in Sydney in 1958 I was much better off than Senior Lecturers are today. There were of course many fewer universities then, and no Colleges of Advanced Education. There were acknowledged relativities between academic salaries and those in other branches of the public service, notably those of judges. Such comparisons now are entirely to the disadvantage of academics. So much, admittedly, is general; it affects lecturers in Mathematics no less than those in English. But there is a new factor, which must profoundly affect all the non-professional, non-commercial university subjects and those who work in them.

It has recently become official university policy to pay higher salaries to staff in short supply, such as accountants, computer scientists, and

engineers. The practice of paying 'clinical loadings' to appointees in Medicine, and allowing them some rights of private practice, has existed for many years. In other professional areas, market forces were often allowed some influence, though in an under-the-counter way. Lecturers in (say) Law would be appointed at or near the top of the lecturers' salary scale, whereas lecturers in (say) English with equal or superior academic qualifications would count themselves fortunate to start at anything above the bottom. Lip service was paid to the notion that the same criteria for appointment and promotion should apply across the board, but everyone knew they didn't. But what we have now marks a new departure.

I don't object to it, though I know many are opposed in principle. I can accept some practical give-and-take. What I *do* object to is the implied assumption that external market value should now become the necessary and sole criterion of university salaries. Actually it's a silly assumption, because universities will never be able to offer the rewards available in industry and commerce. There are many other worthy vocations and professions which cannot be, and, in a just society, should not be valued only in terms of market price.

Inside the University, staff who teach Latin, or Classical Greek, or even Pure Mathematics do not have the same opportunities as engineers or computer scientists or accountants to seek profitable employment elsewhere, or to stay inside the University and pick up fat consultancies. For many scholars and scientists, a university career implies, even demands, a quite different kind of commitment, one that is total and for the duration of one's working life.

We may take some comfort in our Chancellor's comments: it is, he says, not the function of a university 'to turn out spick-and-span graduates who can spray paint on export products'. We may share his conviction that there are 'values, standards, traditions, and senses of responsibility' that must be maintained. But he is preaching to the converted, and it is evident now, as it was in Samson's day, that the philistines are more readily overcome by the jawbone of an ass than by the voice of sweet reason.

One last point. In her *Comment* the Dean takes up my use of the phrase 'treasonous clerks' and remarks that the 'content of certain ideas can completely reverse itself'. Perhaps this will puzzle other readers as much as it does me.

By 'clerk' I meant that modern French sense of *clerc*: 'intellectual', which has become established in English: see the latest Supplement to the *Oxford English Dictionary*: 'treason of the clerks' = *trahison des clercs*, 'title of Julien Benda's work *La Trahison des Clercs* (1927), used to denote a compromise of intellectual integrity'. As *The Oxford Companion to French Literature* puts it: 'Nowadays intellectuals have betrayed their own kind; they have descended into the arena and allowed their convictions to be swayed by national, social, and political passions.'

This is what I meant, and I hope the reader will allow me to make the point, despite the Dean's introduction of that turbulent priest and upstart clerk Thomas Becket, writs of *mandamus*, the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, and the concept of *auctoritas*.

## Response: II

DICK CHAMPION

I admire the Dean's courage in attempting, as she has sportingly put it, simultaneous comment on a football and a cricket match. I would go further and call the games rugby and cricket, where even the shape of the ball varies markedly. I also appreciate her concentration on the test match at the expense of the game on the village green; fundamental changes in university government must take priority over the mundane problems caused by psychology's lack of clear identity. It therefore follows, however, that I cannot respond with any fire but only brief comment.

I think my aim was somewhat the opposite of that seen by the Dean, for I was concerned with problems posed to faculty structure by the need to accommodate a heterogeneous or vaguely defined subject. I tried to let history speak for itself without making a case or apologia, let alone of the classical kind. To appeal to graduates and their employers for a definition of psychology that might give it a clear identity would invite even greater confusion. While not expecting to contribute much, I am happy to discuss the 'values inherent in an Arts degree' if we include the extent to which they can be promoted in the teaching of psychology.

At least I am confident that there are clear and explicit differences in theory between the concepts of a humanity and a science. If we could agree on these then perhaps we would all the better recognise that a fair