Playing their Game: 
An Exploration of Academic Resistance in the Managerial University

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A thesis presented to the University of Western Sydney
in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2005
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
Acknowledgements

I owe intellectual and professional debts to members of my supervisory panel, Dr George Morgan, Dr David Rollison, and Dr Greg Noble. In particular Dr George Morgan – my principal supervisor – smoothed the way wherever possible, and was unfailingly supportive and encouraging. His integrity, honesty, and warmth were crucial for the completion of this thesis. In particular, his gentle but insistent suggestion that I take a semester off from teaching in order to write was a piece of advice for which I will always be grateful.

Other staff and students at the University of Western Sydney have offered me encouragement, advice and friendship since I began my undergraduate studies there in 1997. I would especially like to thank Associate Professor Douglas Newton, Associate Professor Dr Fran de Groen, Associate Professor Don Robertson, Associate Professor Raja Jayaraman, Dr Scott Poynting, and the Head of the School of Humanities, Associate Professor Carol Liston, for their generous support. They are each examples of the type of academic that I aspire to become. Fellow doctoral students who shared and brightened the journey include Dr Christine de Matos, Dr Karim Najjarine, Karen Entwistle and Melinda Jewell. They are all as mad as cut snakes, which is why they too aspire to become academics. I thank them for their friendship, company, and many happy memories of the Humanities Post-graduate room at the Campbelltown Campus.

I also thank Dr Sarah Gregson from the University of New South Wales for her detailed and thoughtful comments on a chapter of this thesis. Thanks also to Dr Linda Hort of the Australian National University, who helped to put me in contact with academics in Queensland. The final revisions of this thesis were completed as I took up a short-term appointment as an Associate Lecturer in the School of Behavioural and Community Health Sciences, at the University of Sydney. I thank my colleagues there for their interest and encouragement, and especially Ian Andrews for his on-going support for this project.

The study reported in this thesis would not, of course, have been possible without the co-operation of those who participated. One of the first things one realises when approaching the topic of managerialism in universities is that time is a precious and ever-diminishing resource. Despite that, the academics in this study graciously agreed to participate in interviews and were generous in allocating time to undertake them. Their candid and insightful comments were invaluable to this study. It is my sincere hope that I have done justice to their contributions.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, especially my children, for their belief that I would finish this thesis (especially at the times when I did not share their confidence). In this regard my final and most heart-felt thanks go to my partner, Dr Robert O’Neill. His unfailing support, encouragement, and faith in me made it possible to complete this work. His next task is to teach me what people do on weekends when they don’t have a thesis to write. This thesis is dedicated to him, with much love.
Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the phenomenon of academics’ resistance to managerialism in Australian universities. In common with many other public sector employees, academics have experienced significant changes in the management of their institutions over recent years. Many of these changes are associated with increasing ‘managerialism’ – the application of methods and approaches commonly associated with the private sector, to public sector organizations. While previous studies indicate that academics are broadly opposed to such changes, little Australian research has considered how they might be resisting managerialism, in their daily working lives.

The study reported in this thesis involved in-depth interviews with thirty academics from twenty-three disciplines. These academics were drawn from ten universities, in New South Wales, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory. Seeking to explore the ways in which academic opposition to managerialism translated into resistance, the interviews explored the academics’ experiences of managerial practices and techniques, and the ways in which they responded to them.

The conceptualisation of resistance employed within this thesis draws on insights generated within the fields of anthropology, cultural studies and labour process theory. Elements of these various approaches to resistance are blended, to allow a better understanding of the nature and forms of resistance to managerialism that are enacted by academics.

The study found that academics were resisting managerial practices, in a variety of ways. These included public acts of protest, refusal, and more ‘everyday’ forms of resistance, such as avoidance and strategic compliance. This resistance was underpinned by shared understandings, values and norms embedded within traditional academic culture, and reflected academics’ negative assessments of the consequences of managerial practices within their institutions.
INTRODUCTION

For many years, academics in universities were said to dwell in ivory towers. A more fitting analogy, in recent times, may be that they crouch, besieged, behind the ramparts. In common with many other public sector professionals, academics have experienced enormous changes since the mid 1980s. Many of these changes reflect the ascendency of ‘managerialism’ – the introduction of private sector styles of management to public sector institutions. In Australian universities, managerial change has involved: the adoption of a more muscular management style; an increased emphasis on particular forms of accountability; the development of a market-orientation; a focus on securing funding from non-government sources; and an increased concern with issues of efficiency, effectiveness and economy.

There is no shortage of studies indicating that Australian academics have found many of these managerial changes deeply troubling. Academics feel alienated and disempowered by the adoption of centralised decision-making processes that challenge their traditional role in university governance and administration (McInnis, 1995; Currie & Vidovich, 1998; Winter, Taylor & Sarros, 2000). Many academics perceive an increasing gap between themselves and those in management roles, and feel that university management has little understanding of the realities of their day-to-day experiences (Anderson, Johnson & Saha, 2002: 51-3). The demands associated with new forms of accountability have resulted in unsustainable workloads, as academics are forced to devote more and more time to non-core activities, reducing time available for their traditional tasks of teaching and research (McInnis, 1998a, 2000; Martin, 1999; NTEU, 2000). Academics are concerned that an increasingly commercial focus may compromise academic freedom and autonomy, and that pressure to secure external funding may result in undue emphasis on fee-paying courses of study and forms of research that are attractive to industry (Kayrooz, Kinnear & Preston, 2001). In short, managerial changes and their associated practices have been identified as one of the most significant causes of academics’ dissatisfaction, demoralization, and frustration.
Australian researchers have extrapolated the implications of this demoralization for the future well-being of the higher education sector, particularly in terms of the motivation and commitment of academic staff, and their continuing capacity to work productively under such conditions. They point to a need to rethink higher education policy in view of the impact that managerial practices are having on academic workloads and morale, and on the quality of research and teaching within universities, arguing that the current situation is unsustainable. This view, and the argument that current higher education policies require re-assessment, is not disputed here. However, in Australian research and scholarship, there is a related avenue of enquiry that is under-explored.

The studies cited above demonstrate that many academics are unhappy about managerial changes and that they are opposed to a number of managerial practices. However, few Australian studies have taken the next step in researching academic responses to managerialism. The research cited above has investigated what academics think about managerialism, but not what academics are doing about it. Existing research establishes academics' opposition to managerialism but does not ask how this opposition manifests itself and translates into tangible responses. It does not consider the ways in which academics are seeking to limit, ameliorate or neutralize the effects of managerial changes, and the practices that accompany them.

Such questions involve a consideration of issues of power and resistance. Research suggests that academics are profoundly aware of a power shift within Australian universities. Indeed, Currie & Vidovich (1998: 153) suggest that those who experience managerialism look upon it as a process of 'shifting the balance of power and autonomy away from academics.' As Foucault (1990: 95) tells us, 'where there is power there is resistance.' Resistance, therefore, should be recognised as a potential academic response to the exercise of managerial power.

1 Acknowledging this possibility, McInnis, Powles and Anwyl posited that academic cynicism about quality assurance mechanisms and other education reforms may translate into 'passive resistance [which] may pose serious challenges for academic leaders and policy makers' (McInnis, Powles and Anwyl, 1994: 1).
Indeed, a number of factors make resistance a *likely* – rather than simply a possible – academic response to the growth and exercise of managerial power. As Trowler notes, academics are ‘clever people’, who are well versed in ‘rebellion and innovation’ (Trowler, 1998: 55). They are trained in analytical thinking and habituated to engage in critique, and are unlikely, therefore, to respond passively to changes that they deem to be flawed or ill-conceived. The nature of their work means that many are skilled in assembling and disseminating reasoned and empirically supported arguments that present this analysis and critique. Academics are also known to be intrinsically motivated by the nature of academic work. They identify – often passionately – with the tasks and goals that comprise the academic endeavour. This means that they are likely to move to limit any erosion of valued aspects of their work and to resist changes that they regard as deleterious to the university, and their roles within it. As Trowler notes, ‘probably more than any other social groups academics are likely to reflect on their situation, form a view, and then take action to change it if they consider it necessary’ (Trowler, 1998: 138).

The study reported in this thesis is, therefore, underpinned by the expectation that academics in Australian universities are resisting managerialism. It rests on the assumption that, given convincing evidence of academics’ negative valuation of managerial practices, and the values that they reflect, they are unlikely to be passive recipients of such changes, and will take steps to limit the reach and effect of managerialism on the practice of academic work. This study also reflects a belief that the nature of academic work allows spaces and opportunities to undertake such resistance, and that the values associated with academic culture make it almost inevitable that such resistance will occur. It acknowledges that resistance may take a variety of forms, some much less obvious than others, and that this resistance can only be understood with reference to the understandings, motivations and intentions of those who resist.

The task, then, becomes one of exploring the extent, forms, and nature of academic resistance to managerialism. Conceptually, this requires a consideration of the
various approaches to the study of resistance. Resistance is a central concern for a number of disciplines, within which the concept is approached from very different perspectives. It is argued here that in order to properly understand academic resistance to managerialism, it is necessary to draw on different approaches to resistance, particularly those that alert us to the importance of local knowledge and local practices in shaping and conditioning resistance in particular ways. It is also important to appreciate the less obvious forms that resistance can take, and to consider the ‘everyday’, often unnoticed acts, which are resistant in their intent. Chapter One, therefore, undertakes an exploration of various approaches to the study of resistance with the intention of synthesising useful elements from them into an understanding of resistance best suited to the study of academic resistance to managerialism.

Chapter Two reviews the literature that has addressed, either directly or in passing, the issue of academic resistance to managerialism. Recent contributions to this research indicate that academic responses and resistance to managerialism are complex and often contradictory, reflecting the processes of subjugation and refusal, compliance and resistance, which are elicited by the exercise of managerial power. While this literature provides an invaluable background to the study presented in this thesis, much of it originates in the UK, pointing to an obvious gap in Australian research in this area.

Chapter Three discusses methodological issues and outlines the nature and parameters of the study that forms the empirical basis of this thesis. It is argued that resistance is a phenomenon that must be studied ‘close-up’ (Prichard & Trowler, 2003), and which can only be understood by drawing on the interpretations and representations of those who engage in resistant acts and behaviours. This study, therefore, involved lengthy interviews with academics in a number of Australian universities, contextualised and informed by insights gained in what I describe as an ‘accidental ethnography’. The research interviews focussed on academics’ experiences of, and responses to, specific and tangible managerial practices. This included an exploration of the ways in which they avoided, ‘got around’, or resisted these managerial requirements and mechanisms.
Chapter Four steps back from the focus on managerialism in the Australian university in order to consider the phenomenon of managerialism in the public sector more generally. This reflects an acknowledgement that the experiences of academics in Australian managerial universities echo those of other professionals working in what has been called the ‘managerial state’ (Clarke & Newman, 1997). Drawing upon literature that charts the nature, and rise of managerialism, this chapter explores the ideas and values that underpin this approach to the management of the public sector, along with the processes, structures and practices that implement the managerial agenda. These values, premises and practices are juxtaposed with those of professionalism, in order to illustrate the basic incompatibility of many of their tenets. This chapter also reviews some of the studies that illustrate the effects of managerialism on public sector professionals.

Chapter Five expands upon an important point identified in the initial exploration of approaches to resistance. Some approaches to resistance emphasise the importance of local forms of knowledge and local cultures in shaping the resistance that social actors will undertake. The understandings embedded in these cultures constitute important cultural and discursive resources, which are drawn upon, and reflected in, the resistance of subordinates to the encroachment of a dominating culture. It is argued throughout this thesis that the forms of resistance undertaken by academics reflect the values, norms and understandings embedded in academic culture and academic work. This chapter, therefore, undertakes a detailed exploration of the elements of ‘traditional’ academic culture. These elements are important factors that shape the subjectivities of academics, and ultimately have significance for the ways in which they articulate and mount resistance to managerialism. Although this chapter draws on literature that addresses the nature of academic identities and academic culture, the voices of the academics in this study are also heard here, as they identify and claim elements of this culture as important aspects of their own identities and subjectivities.

Chapter Six explores the rise of managerialism in universities and the ways in which this approach translates into specific practices and techniques. This chapter draws on literature that charts the rise of managerialism in universities, both in the UK and in
Australia, and explores the forms it takes in the university setting. The voices of the academics in this study again emerge, as they recount the ways in which they experience managerialism, often mounting a spirited critique of the practices they identify. They describe and analyse a number of managerial practices, assessing their utility and efficacy, and their effects on their own working lives. These critiques highlight the production of discursive resistance, as academics present alternate interpretations of the managerial discourse, and contest the ideas and values embedded in it.

Chapter Seven analyses the resistance to managerialism that emerged in this study. It maps this resistance, developing an understanding of the range and scope of resistance undertaken by those who participated in the research interviews. A number of categories are established, which, while not discrete, allow us to distinguish between the various forms which academic resistance to managerialism may take. This chapter also explores the responses of those in this study for whom resistance was not an issue because of their identification with, and support for, many aspects of the managerial agenda.

While this study explores the extent and forms of academic resistance, it also engages with the nature of this resistance. Indeed, some central questions addressed in this research concern the basis of academics' resistance. What is the essence of academic resistance to managerialism? What values underpin it? What beliefs motivate it? What standards and norms do academics see their resistance as promoting and upholding? What – to put it clumsily - is such resistance about? This thesis engages, therefore, with the origins, causes and, above all, the meanings associated with academic resistance to managerialism. Central to all of this is the desire to present an account of resistance that is faithful to, and consistent with, the understandings embedded in the accounts given by those who participated in this study. Indeed, this thesis argues that it is impossible to understand resistance without privileging the perspectives of those who resist.
Chapter One

STUDYING RESISTANCE

'Resistance is doubly a matter of value; the identification of the values which resistance upholds, and our identification with these values' (Barker, 2000: 346).

'Resistance refers to a neutral process; overcoming it is only desirable for some purposes and enhancing it may be the means to other objectives. If one values the current state, resistance to change is "good"; if the current state is viewed as negative, then resistance is "bad"' (Nord & Jermier, 1994: 398-9).

'There is another problem about the political definition of resistance. If one returns, not to the fictitious schema of the disciplined subject but to the question of what it is for real people to reject or refuse, or on the other hand to acquiesce in, or accept the subjection of themselves and others, it becomes apparent that the binary division between resistance and non-resistance is an unreal one' (Gordon, 1980: 257).

Diametrically Opposed Approaches to Resistance

The contrasting ways in which resistance is conceptualised, framed, and represented within various disciplinary discourses reflect not merely different theoretical and epistemological approaches and frameworks, but more profound divergences in the ideological assumptions that underpin them. These differing representations of resistance are laden with value judgements, and reflect deep-seated beliefs about the appropriate distribution of power between social actors, as well as normatively different ideas about the nature and role of control and agency. Important ideological understandings, embedded in various disciplinary approaches, are evident in the ways in which resistance is portrayed within particular disciplines. In conventional management texts, for example, worker resistance is understood as a threat to management's prerogative to manage, direct, and control. Resistance, therefore, is represented as a problem for management to overcome. Alternately, resistance may be understood as an emancipatory process to be
celebrated and valorised, as it is within much work in the field of cultural studies. The phenomenon of resistance, therefore, attracts normatively different evaluations, which reflect contrasting orientations towards the term with which it is most often paired – control.

The issue of control is a shared concern for management theory, and for more radical approaches to the labour process, but the orientation to control embedded in each is radically different (Gabriel, 1996: 1). Where control is seen to be desirable, as within functionalist approaches - primarily represented in conventional or ‘how-to’ management texts - resistance is regarded pejoratively. Within disciplines with a more critical or emancipatory focus and objective, such as critical management studies, critical approaches to organizations, labour process theories, industrial sociology, and cultural studies, resistance to power and control is conceptualised and portrayed positively. Within these disciplines, domination, or the exercise of power over another, is negatively valued and therefore resistance to domination is – to some extent – valorised.

Where the focus is on resistance in work settings, different normative orientations to the concept of resistance emerge most sharply. Within mainstream management discourses, the power to direct, to manage, to exert control over workers, over work practices, over the direction of change, and even over organizational culture, is seen to legitimately reside with management. Challenges to that authority, by workers, are construed as resistance to be overcome by management, so that the rightful distribution of power can be restored. Resistance is further understood as a phenomenon stemming from an individual’s faulty cognitive processes, from self-interest, and/or fear of change, all of which must be overcome in order to ensure organizational harmony, unity of purpose, and the smooth implementation of change.

By contrast, within labour process theories - derived from Marx’s analysis of the capitalist mode of production - this distribution of power, and the exercise of control by managers over workers is acknowledged, but is not legitimated or sanctioned. From the perspective of labour process theory, worker resistance is perceived as a natural
consequence of the unequal distribution of power between labour and capital. Such theoretical approaches recognise that ‘a pattern of control and resistance is a fundamental dynamic of organizational life’ (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999: 21). However, as Gabriel argues, critical approaches – including labour process theory – regard this control ‘not as an organizational desideratum but rather as the cause of oppression and alienation or as the occasion for subterfuge and deception’ (Gabriel, 1996: 1). The focus on control is retained, but is approached in a normatively different way. The pejorative associations that attach to resistance within conventional management approaches are absent. Such approaches do not, therefore, regard resistance as a problem to be overcome by management, but as a response to the contradictions implicit in the labour process itself. Resistance is seen as a predictable response to the exercise of power and control, and a phenomenon worthy of study in its own right. The imperative to understand resistance *in order to overcome it*, manifest in management approaches, is absent within such analyses.

A third approach to resistance is derived from the field of cultural studies, and particularly from studies of youth subcultures. The relevance of a subcultural approach to an understanding of resistance within an organizational setting may not be immediately apparent. However, the focus on the specific subculture of a group as a resource for framing and mounting resistance to a broader, hegemonic culture is one that has application in an academic setting. Chapter Five of this thesis explores elements of academic culture, with a view to considering the ways in which the shared values, meanings, norms, and practices which characterise academe can be resources which academics draw upon in framing and enacting resistance to managerialism. Therefore, cultural studies approaches to resistance may be usefully interrogated for elements that enhance an understanding of academic resistance, which, while it takes place in a workplace setting, also draws on well-developed subcultural understandings, norms, and values. Such resistance, therefore, transcends the normal boundaries of what we understand as specifically *worker* resistance. In addition, cultural studies offers a notion of resistance as an ‘everyday’ rejection of ideological incorporation. In this respect, it supplies a more apposite understanding of the phenomenon of academic resistance to
managerialism than those which represent resistance as simply a response to the structural conflict embedded in the labour process.

The following sections, therefore, explore the ways in which resistance is understood within anthropology, cultural studies, management literature, and labour process theories. Insights from these different disciplinary approaches to resistance are blended in order to develop a formulation and understanding of the term, which will allow a more nuanced understanding of academic resistance to managerialism. The intention is not to provide a comprehensive review or analysis of various disciplinary treatments of the concept of resistance. Instead, the aim is to identify elements of different approaches to resistance that may usefully contribute to the formulation of resistance employed within this thesis. It is argued here that an approach to resistance that blends elements from a variety of approaches enables a richer understanding of academic resistance to managerialism. Such resistance does not lend itself to analysis limited to the concepts offered by any one discipline.

Cultural studies Approaches to Resistance

Resistance is a central and enduring theme within the discipline of cultural studies (Bennett, 1998: 167). Cultural studies focuses on forms of resistance that take cultural, rather than overtly political or organizational forms, in opposing the hegemonic order. Early Cultural studies theorists emphasised the importance of culture ‘as a mode of ideological reproduction and hegemony’ shaping the ideas and behaviour of subordinated individuals and groups in society (Kellner http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/papers/CSETHIC.HTM). However, while this cultural domination is powerful, it is not uncontested. As Clarke, Hall, Jefferson & Roberts (1978: 12) put it:

The dominant culture represents itself as the culture. It tries to define and contain all other cultures within its inclusive range. Its views of the world, unless challenged, will stand as the most natural, all-embracing, universal culture. Other cultural configurations will not only be subordinate to this dominant order: they
will enter into struggle with it, seek to modify, negotiate, resist or even overthrow its reign – its hegemony.

Thus, cultural dominance is challenged by cultural resistance from marginalized groups. They contest dominant cultural meanings and norms, drawing on their own cultural understandings for alternate interpretations. Duncombe (2002: 5) uses the term cultural resistance to mean ‘culture that is used, consciously or unconsciously, effectively or not, to resist and/or change the dominant political, economic and or social structure’. Early accounts of resistance within a cultural studies perspective focussed largely on the ways in which subcultures, particularly youth subcultures, could be understood as representing resistance to the broader hegemonic society. Researchers from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham linked youth subcultures with resistance, in their work in the 1970s, interpreting youth subcultural activity as resistance to ‘mainstream hierarchies’ (Butcher & Thomas, 2003: 20), and as ‘symbolic forms of resistance’ to the hegemonic order (Hebdige, 1979: 80). In doing so, they offered an alternate interpretation of what had been previously approached as deviance and delinquency (Barker, 2000: 322; Butsch, 2000: 75).

Resistance was conceptualised by these theorists at the level of lived culture, expressed in the ‘style’ of the subculture. These subcultures were seen as emerging from the working class, and reflected both those experiences shared with the parent culture, and those specific to youth. They were, therefore, defined both in relation to and in distinction from the parent culture, and in opposition to broader society. Forms of resistance mounted by such working-class youth subcultures were largely symbolic, offering ‘magical’ or imaginary solutions rather than political contestation and resolution. As Hebdige put it, ‘the challenge to hegemony which subcultures represent is not issued directly by them. It is expressed obliquely, in style ... at the profoundly superficial level of appearances: that is, at the level of signs’ (Hebdige, 1979: 17). This expression of style involved the appropriation of objects and inversion of the meanings traditionally embedded within them, in a process of ‘subversive bricolage’ (Hebdige, 1979: 123). In this way Mods ‘undermined the conventional meaning of “collar, suit and tie” pushing neatness to the point of absurdity’ (Hebdige, 1979: 52), while Punk subculture offered a
‘revolting style’ comprised of unrelated objects, such as safety pins, garbage bags and chains (Hebdige, 1979: 106-7). Through adapting and transforming existing commodities, values, and attitudes into their own subcultural style, ‘certain sections of predominantly working-class youth were able to restate their opposition to dominant values and institutions’ (Hebdige, 1979: 116).

Thus, many of the early offerings from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural studies focussed on the enactment of resistance by ‘spectacular’ subcultures (Hall & Jefferson, 1976; Hebdige, 1979; Cohen, 1973). Youth subcultures were seen, within such analyses, as potential sources of ‘new forms of opposition and social change’ (Kellner http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/papers/CSETHIC.htm). Acts of resistance were valorised, in keeping with the emancipatory focus and ‘politics of representation’ inherent in the early British cultural studies project (Kellner http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/papers/CSETHIC.htm). This normative orientation to resistance reflects cultural studies’ ‘commitment to a cultural politics of insubordination and the politics of difference’ (Barker, 2000: 346).

However, a shift within cultural studies towards a focus on ‘the everyday’1 saw increased emphasis placed upon more ubiquitous forms of resistance. Early Marxist-influenced work on spectacular subcultural style as resistance – and the more ambitious project of social transformation – was replaced with a focus on the more mundane manifestations of resistance, those practices that ‘make daily life bearable’ (McNay, 1996: 64). Resistance was increasingly understood as reflective awareness and a rejection of hegemonic ideology – a lived, everyday, potentially mundane form of resistance enacted by everyman (and everywoman). This formulation superseded a focus on the spectacular activities of subcultural members. This development reflected understandings of the pervasiveness and ubiquity of power identified in Foucault’s work, which necessitated a corresponding enlargement of the view of resistance. As power was seen as

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1 This shift in emphasis from the ‘grand’ to the ‘everyday’, and its implications for a consideration of more routine forms of resistance is paralleled by similar developments in the fields of anthropology and labour process theory. The work of Foucault in this regard has been influential across a range of disciplines.
a more omnipresent phenomenon, so too was resistance. The ‘everyday’ approach to resistance reflected a response to Foucault’s emphasis on the mechanisms by which ‘human beings are made subjects’ in modern societies (Foucault, 2002: 326): the creation of ‘docile bodies’ within disciplinary institutions such as prisons, hospitals, barracks, schools and factories. As the routine practices and mechanisms that promote this disciplined subject are internalised, the subject monitors and corrects his or her own behaviour without the need for external surveillance, and ‘becomes the principle of his own subjection’ (Foucault, 1991: 203). In response to such notions of power, the question becomes one of considering to what extent subjects resist or mediate this broader process of subjectification and subjugation. As understandings and definitions of power broaden to include the everyday exercise of power, so too do understandings and definitions of resistance.

The work of de Certeau (1984) has also been central to this broader formulation of resistance within the field of cultural studies and beyond it. His notions of ‘strategies’ and ‘tactics’ have been influential in contributing to an understanding of the ways in which social actors carve out a space of their own within hegemonic society. De Certeau uses the term ‘strategies’ to describe the practices of power (which he says may be exercised by ‘a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution’), which mark out a space of its own from which to manage and respond to external threats (‘customers or competitors, enemies, the countries surrounding the city, the objects and objectives of research’) (de Certeau, 1984: 36). This establishment of ‘place’ allows the exercise of panoptic practices, which enable the transformation of ‘foreign forces into objects’ that can be observed and measured. It also enables the creation of knowledge (which is rendered possible by power, while its content is determined by power), and serves as a bastion from which advantages may be consolidated and future expansions planned. Strategies are thus the manipulations of power relationships by the strong (de Certeau, 1984: 35). By contrast, a ‘tactic’ is ‘an art of the weak’, an enactment of resistance to the exercise of power. It is, no less than a strategy, a calculated action, but its limits are determined by the absence of an autonomous space or ‘proper locus’. It ‘plays on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power’. Like guerrilla
tactics in a war, it reflects the inability to view the enemy as a whole, and 'operates in isolated actions, blow by blow'. Bereft of autonomous space and strategic advantage, those who formulate such tactics must 'vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers' (de Certeau, 1984: 37).

The examples de Certeau cites – businesses, armies, scientific institutions – readily conjure images of power and resistance in the realm of production. This focus on production is also explicit in his description of 'la perruque' – a form of worker resistance that involves using an employer's time or resources in order to create something for the worker's personal use (de Certeau, 1984: 25). However, his primary focus is on everyday resistance enacted in practices of consumption. Various theorists have used his term 'making do' to describe practices that may be seen as oppositional but fall short of resistance, activities that attempt to carve out a space of cultural autonomy despite the subject's location 'in a world of advertising and mass produced products' (Butsch, 2001: 76). Consumers are seen to actively engage with such commodities, and in the process create their own – often oppositional – meanings. Subjects are seen to 'creatively read and appropriate cultural products ... in such a way as to resist ideological domination' (Best, 1998: 19). Within this formulation, Certeau's term 'tactics' describes the 'multitude of minor moments and points of resistance that are practiced by everyday people in the contexts of their everyday lives' (Farmer, 2003: 41). By these means, people in their everyday lives 'routinely resist incorporation into dominant norms' (McNay, 1996: 62). Such everyday forms of resistance 'render the space of the other habitable in affording a means of escaping it without leaving it' (Bennett, 1998: 168).

This less spectacular formulation of resistance shares the emancipatory orientation of earlier cultural studies approaches but both reduces and enlarges the scope of the concept. Resistance may be understood as less significant and ambitious in nature. It involves individuals carving out space to 'escape' within a hegemonic culture, rather than challenging ideologically dominant forces through subversive and confronting forms of style. However, just as power is seen as more ubiquitous, so too is resistance – and thus, in a sense, more activities qualify as resistance. We could say that, conceptually,
there is *more* resistance, but less is expected or intended by it. Within these more inclusive, all-encompassing – and correspondingly less ambitious – notions of resistance, people’s everyday lives are seen to involve ‘creative and reflexive action’ rather than ‘passive submission to dominant norms’ (McNay, 1996: 62). The everyday is thus seen as an important site of resistance to incorporation, enacted in the daily, routine practices and reflexivities of individuals in society.

Approaches to resistance derived from de Certeau’s insights have been influential, but also contentious. Critics suggest that such broad and undifferentiated notions of resistance ultimately lead to ‘a banality in cultural studies’ (Morris in Barker, 2000: 346), where resistance is found at every turn and all forms of popular culture are interpreted in these terms (Barker, 2000: 346). It is claimed that the ‘single, undifferentiated’ concept of the term resistance has resulted in its use to describe ‘relatively trivial and self-indulgent behaviour’ (Butsch, 2001: 76). Indeed, it has been suggested that if ‘listening to a Walkman can be constructed as “transgressive” if not overtly “resistant” of hegemonic culture, maybe it’s time to reconsider what we mean by resistance’ (Jackson, 2002: 329). Such a bland formulation of resistance is also seen as signalling the abandonment of the ‘political radicalism and critical thrust’ of the earlier cultural studies project, and a decline ‘into a postmodern cultural populism’ (Kellner http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/papers/CSETHIC.htm). Critics suggest that the concept of resistance would have more value if attempts were made to differentiate between different kinds and levels of resistance. Butsch suggests that ‘a range of terms for different levels of refusal would help greatly to clarify analysis and reduce criticism’, and argues for the development of a more nuanced vocabulary with which to discriminate between different types of resistance (Butsch, 2001: 76). In a similar vein, Bennett suggests that ‘we need a fuller and richer cartography of the spaces between total compliance and resistance’ (Bennett, 1998: 169), in order to adequately address the forms of resistance that arise in different circumstances and settings.
The Relevance of Cultural Studies Approaches to Resistance to this Study

At first examination, notions of resistance within cultural studies approaches, and particularly within the early work of the Birmingham School, seem to have little to offer a study of academic resistance to managerialism. The academic community is not readily conjured through a reading of these studies of spectacular youth subcultures. In terms of structural location, access to power, and even expressions of style, academics appear to have little in common with the Teds, Rockers, Mods, and Punks that are the focus of such texts. Indeed, it seems doubtful that the term subculture can, in any legitimate sense, be applied to the academic community. Academics have not – at least traditionally – lacked access to power and resources, as is the case with those subcultures that form in response to the relatively powerless and marginalized position of their members. Academe is neither ‘subordinate, subaltern [n]or subterranean’, as subcultures have been understood within subcultural theory (Thornton, 1997: 4). Moreover the culture of academe did not arise in ‘response to collectively experienced problems resulting from contradictions in the social structure’ (Brake. 1980: vii); it is a subculture with an ancient pedigree, quite unlike the spectacular youth subcultures that were studied by subcultural theorists. Despite analyses tracing the loss of status and power of academics, and the proletarianisation of academic labour (Wilson, 1991; Halsey, 1992; Dearlove, 1997), academe is not a subculture entirely without residual influence and cultural power in society. The academic community, therefore, does not appear to lend itself to subcultural analysis.

However, academic culture may be seen as distinct from, and often constructed in opposition to, broader society. In popular discourse the intellectually elite, sheltered, cloud-dwelling, ‘other-worldly’ community of academics is often contrasted to the hegemonic, rational, commonsense, ‘real world’. This culturally distinct group is understood to embody different values and privilege different priorities to those outside the academy. Moreover, those elements, which within subcultural theory might be termed the style of academe – their beliefs, values, norms, and practices – are increasingly constructed problematically by broader society. While values such as the disinterested
search for ‘truth’ (however constructed) without the requirement for economic return, the right to academic freedom, and practices such as tenure, were traditionally seen as indispensable and crucial to the academic endeavour, they have, in recent decades, come under sustained attack. Such values and practices may be contrasted with dominant economic rationalist, neo-liberal values, with reference to which they are constructed as wasteful, indulgent, elitist, and generally indefensible. In this sense, academic culture may be understood as subcultural, in so far as the values it embodies are understood in opposition and subordination to broader hegemonic values. The culture of academe, understood in this way, may be seen as marginalized, and increasingly constructed as ‘other’, within a society that espouses different values. To some extent then, academe shares ‘the defining attribute’ of subcultures – the ways in which:

the accent is put on the distinction between a particular cultural/social group and the larger culture/society. The emphasis is on variance from the larger collectivity who are invariably defined as normal, average, and dominant. Subcultures, in other words, are condemned to and/or enjoy a consciousness of ‘otherness’ or difference (Thornton, 1997: 5).

Subcultural theory also alerts us to the ways in which academic values may form the basis of the resistance mounted by individual academics to managerialism. The beliefs, values, norms, and practices of the academic culture inform academic resistance, providing important cultural and discursive resources, which academics draw upon in articulating and enacting resistance to the newly dominant ideology of managerialism. Elements of academic culture – the capacity and habituation to critique and dissent, primary loyalty to one’s discipline rather than to one’s institution, commitment to autonomy and academic freedom, the privileging of expert knowledge, and even the generally individual nature of the academic endeavour – shape and influence the forms of resistance employed. Just as importantly, the values that have traditionally prevailed within academic culture mean that academic resistance to managerialism reflects ideological opposition to the (new) hegemonic order.

Anthropological accounts of resistance also emphasise the importance of culture, focussing on the imposition of dominant, foreign cultures. While there are differences in emphasis and subject matter, cultural studies and anthropological accounts of resistance
share many assumptions, concerns and influences. Anthropological approaches to resistance also share some commonalities with post-structuralist labour process analyses of worker resistance – notably a focus on the concept of subjectivity (see Ortner, 1995). This chapter, therefore, turns to a brief examination of the treatment of resistance within the field of anthropology.

**Anthropology and Resistance**

Within the field of anthropology, resistance has traditionally been paired with, and counterposed to, the term ‘domination’. As Ortner notes, in early accounts, ‘domination was a relatively fixed and institutionalised form of power; resistance was essentially organized opposition to power institutionalised in this way’ (Ortner, 1995: 174). Anthropological and historical treatments traditionally focussed on organised, collective forms of resistance enacted by subordinated people, to the cultural, economic, and political forms of domination they experienced through the processes of conquest and colonisation. Such resistance included revolts, rebellions, and other obvious struggles against colonial power. However, more recent developments within the field, informed by post-structuralist accounts of less overt, more ubiquitous forms and exercises of power, have resulted in a focus on subterranean manifestations of resistance (Ortner, 1995: 175). Such anthropological accounts explore the more routine forms of resistance employed by relatively powerless groups (including women, the poor, and marginalized indigenous groups) to the regular exercise of power and control. Kerkvliet defines everyday resistance as ‘what people do short of organised confrontation that reveals disgust, anger, indignation, or opposition to what they regard as unjust or unfair actions by others more wealthy or powerful than they’ (Kerkvliet, 1986). The anthropological and historical works of Scott (1985, 1990; Scott & Kerkvliet, 1986) are perhaps the best known explorations of the routine, everyday forms of resistance employed by the powerless.
Scott (1985, 1986) uses the term ‘weapons of the weak’ to describe the routine forms of resistance enacted by peasants in a form of class war, in a Malay village he calls Sedaka. Arguing that it is important to consider everyday forms of peasant resistance, rather than focussing solely on rebellions and uprising, Scott identifies the ‘ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups: footdragging, dissimulation, false-compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage’ (Scott, 1986: 6), ‘gossip, rejecting imposed categories, [and] the withdrawal of deference’ (Scott, 1986: 22). Scott (1986: 8) argues that the ‘quiet evasion’ associated with such everyday forms of resistance is more widespread, and has often proved more effective, than direct and confrontational modes. He thus alerts us to the existence of subtle forms of resistance, to which subordinated social actors may have recourse, when ‘frontal assaults are precluded by the realities of power’ (Scott, 1990: 192).

Scott also notes the limited intentions associated with much peasant resistance. He argues that, ‘most subordinate classes are, after all, far less interested in changing the larger structures of the state and the law than in what Hobsbawm has appropriately called “working the system ... to their minimum disadvantage”’ (Scott, 1985: xv). In addition to the limited aims of everyday resistance, forms of resistance by subordinate groups will often be disguised, and will avoid open displays of insubordination and open confrontation with authorities, in order to avoid retribution and punishment (Scott, 1990: 86). Using similar insights, Butz & Ripmeester (1999) use the term ‘off-kilter’ resistance to describe ‘those often ambiguous practices that productively circumvent power, rather than actively opposing it’. They suggest that these practices ‘manage to disrupt or subvert local conditions of domination or oppression, without aligning themselves in opposition to those practices’ (Butz & Ripmeester, 1999: 1, 3). These unobtrusive, ‘off-kilter’ acts of resistance are modest in ambition, aiming not to overthrow or even to antagonise domains of power, but to struggle in order to fight another day.

Scott also develops the concept of the ‘hidden transcript’ – the discourse of a subordinated group ‘that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant’ (Scott, 1990: xii). This is contrasted with the ‘public transcript’ – the open
interaction between the dominant and subordinated (Scott, 1990: 2). Scott argues that this ‘off-stage discourse of the powerless’ (Scott, 1990: 184) should not be seen as merely hollow posing that diverts energy from ‘real’ resistance, nor as a ‘safety valve’ that provides an outlet and thereby reduces the potential for more overt resistance. Rather than being limited to ‘behind-the-scenes griping and grumbling’, the hidden transcript is enacted in the ‘low-profile stratagems’ that comprise the weapons of the weak (Scott, 1990: 184-8). Scott applies the term ‘infrapolitics’ to the unobtrusive forms of political struggle enacted by subordinates, and argues that symbolic and material resistance – discursive practices and ‘actual’ acts of resistance – need to be seen as ‘mutually sustaining practices’ (Scott, 1990: 183-91). ‘Infrapolitics’ is ‘resistance that avoids any open declaration of its intentions’ (Scott, 1990: 220). It refers to the ‘unobtrusive realm of political struggle’, engaged in by subordinated groups, and involves the use of tactics, ‘born of a prudent awareness of the balance of power’ (Scott, 1990: 183). The hidden transcript should, therefore, be seen as ‘a condition of practical resistance rather than a substitute for it’ (Scott, 1990: 191). The notion of the hidden transcript may be seen as broadening a conceptualisation of resistance to incorporate discursive elements, which operate in tandem with ‘real’ enacted resistance.

While many of the everyday forms of resistance he recounts are enacted around material forms of domination, Scott (1985: 297) also highlights the ‘struggle over values – the ideological struggle’, which underpins such resistance. He explores peasants’ attempts to ‘mitigate or deny claims’ for taxes, rents, grain and so on (Scott, 1985: 290), and notes that, ‘to resist a claim or an appropriation is to resist, as well, the justification and rationale behind that particular claim’ (Scott, 1985: 297). Claims are resisted when they are judged to lack a moral basis, fairness or justice according to local values and norms. Scott’s analysis thus emphasises the ‘social experiences of indignities, control, submission, humiliation, forced deference, and punishment’, rather than simply focusing on the material basis of exploitation and resistance (Scott, 1990: 111). Scott alerts us to the moral or ideological basis of resistance, rather than merely its material terms. He suggests that even when resistance is ostensibly directed at material practices of
domination and exploitation, it is the ‘insults and slights to human dignity’, implicit in such practices, that register in the hidden transcript of such events (Scott, 1990: 7).

**Applying Anthropological Understandings of Resistance to this Study**

Anthropological approaches highlight forms of resistance employed by those who are significantly disempowered - groups whose resistance must find subtle, inconspicuous forms of expression in order to safeguard themselves against retaliation from the powerful. This focus on powerless groups may initially appear to limit the usefulness, to this study, of anthropological understandings of resistance. However, the more inclusive formulations and understandings of resistance that typify recent cultural studies and anthropological accounts of the everyday resistances enacted by powerless groups have great utility for a consideration of academic resistance. They sensitise us to the existence of resistance that is embedded in routine, everyday activities, highlighting the resistant meanings and potential in activities that lack an overtly resistant aspect. Awareness of such a formulation of resistance means that a researcher will be more attuned to the less spectacular, more mundane forms that resistance may assume.

De Certeau, Scott, and others also remind us that the goals or objectives associated with resistance are often limited. Resistance is not always intended to directly challenge regimes of power. As Scott notes of peasant resistance, the goal is not usually to ‘overthrow or transform a system of domination but rather to survive – today, this week, this season – within it’ (Scott, 1986: 30). Similarly, referring to Nietzsche’s concept of ‘agonism’, Butz & Ripmeester suggest:

Often the realistic objective of struggle is not some final freedom or liberty, but merely (and yet, significantly) the continued ability to struggle itself, to reproduce the conditions – the space – that make struggle possible. The concept of agonal struggle concedes that there is no potential for complete removal from a field of power relations, but there is the realistic hope of creative and partial liberation from particular, local strategies of power recognised as especially constraining’ (Butz & Ripmeester, 1999: 3).
Resistance, therefore, may have much more modest and achievable objectives than the overthrow of a regime of power. When conceived of in these terms, the tactics employed by resisters can be understood not as lacking in ambition and scope, but as highly appropriate for the smaller, more limited, and immediate tasks at hand.

The approaches to resistance outlined above share a number of commonalities. In particular, the normative orientation to resistance embedded in both cultural studies and anthropological accounts have an emancipatory focus. The accounts presented within these disciplines attempt to understand and represent the meanings associated with resistance from the perspective of those resisting. Resistance is understood as a response to, and a consequence of, unequal relations of power. It is the result of a group occupying a position of subordinacy or marginalisation within a society, at a given point in time. Resistance is not considered as deviance, nor as a ‘problem’ to be solved, but as a feature of social life that reflects the existence of inequality, and the efforts of disempowered groups to secure agency, dignity (see especially Scott, 1990), and a degree of autonomy. The understandings of resistance presented in the following section reflect very different evaluations of the concept of resistance.

Understandings of Resistance in Mainstream Management Literature

Early management texts saw resistance in terms of opposition to management control, and, in particular, focused on resistance to the management goal of extracting maximum labour power from workers. The workers' response to this management imperative was termed ‘soldiering’ – limiting output by working slowly – by Taylor (1947). This resistance was viewed as a problem to be overcome by scientific forms of management, which included matching workers to appropriate jobs and designing the 'one best way' of performing each job (Rose, 1978: 33-8; Kanigel, 1997). Taylor saw soldiering as a natural, rational, worker response and a consequence of inefficient management, rather than as a reaction to the unequal distribution of power inherent in the labour process (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999: 15). The Taylorian prescription for resistance included
intensified and direct management control over the work process, (including a strict division of labour separating conceptualisation of the task from the performance of the task), and the development of a rational co-operation between management and workers, which emphasised the benefit to all of efficient and ‘scientific’ forms of job design.

The contemporary organizational behaviour strand of management literature regards resistance as *resistance to change*. Indeed, chapters or sections in organizational behaviour texts\(^2\), which address change management and the role of the change agent, often include a smaller section subtitled ‘Resistance to Change’ or ‘Overcoming Resistance to Change’. The essence and format of these sections is generally very similar. Frequently, in such texts, the first sentence warns managers and students of management that it is a fact of life that *people resist change*. The reader is informed that ‘resistance to change is a basic human characteristic’ (Kreitner & Knicki, 2001: 670), that ‘people fear and resist change at almost every turn’ (Jellison, 1993: 17). The would-be manager is then advised that, because resistance disrupts the smooth implementation of change, it is necessary to understand this phenomenon in order to overcome it, or to reduce its effects. They are further informed that this objective *can* be achieved – that ‘such resistance can be overcome’ (Greenberg & Baron, 2000: 585). To that end, most texts go on to provide a list identifying sources or causes of resistance. While some texts identify *organizational* sources of resistance to change (Moorhead & Griffin, 1995: 484-5), the emphasis is generally on *individual* sources of resistance. The lists which follow are substantially similar, and include: habit; fear of the unknown; threats to skills, status, job security or social relations; lack of awareness (of the facts about the change, or of the need for change) (Moorhead & Griffin, 1995: 486; Greenberg & Baron, 2000: 599); fear of failure; peer pressure; disruption of cultural traditions; personality conflicts; individual predisposition toward change (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2001: 671-2); lack of trust; self-interest; differing perceptions about the need and nature of change (Aldag & Kuzuhara,

\(^2\) The summary of the organizational behaviour literature that follows is necessarily limited. It draws on standard undergraduate texts, all of which have sections pertaining to resistance to change, along with a number of texts that specifically address the management of change. While it does not purport to be a thorough-going or systematic review of this branch of management literature, all of the texts are relatively recent and the very randomness of choice underscores the uniformity with which this topic is covered in such literature.

Having identified the sources and causes of resistance, and, importantly, having located them primarily within the individual, such texts generally proceed to a set of prescriptions for avoiding or overcoming resistance. Suggestions include ‘education and communication’, ‘participation and involvement’, ‘facilitation and support’, ‘negotiation and agreement’, ‘manipulation and co-optation’, and ‘coercion’ (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979 cited in Aldag & Kuzuhara, 2002: 484; Kreitner & Kinicki, 2001: 676). Potts and LaMarsh (2003: 25-6) suggest that resistance to change can be minimised by the dissemination of accurate information, the development of a learning plan for affected staff, and the provision of encouragement and support. Tobin’s (1999) ‘framework’ for overcoming resistance to change similarly includes providing employees with a detailed explanation of how the change will affect them, and seeking immediate feedback from them about potential problems and possible solutions. The objective, of course, is to overcome worker resistance so that change may proceed as advocated by the change agent and by management. There is limited acknowledgement that resistance may indicate that the proposed changes do not promote the common good, and may therefore function as useful signals to management (Paton & McCalman, 2000: 49, Moorhead & Griffin, 1995: 483). However, this aspect of resistance is given relatively scant consideration within most of the ‘how-to’ management texts. The primary focus is on addressing, avoiding, limiting, and overcoming resistance to change.

Within conventional management texts, change is represented as ubiquitous, inevitable, and necessary for organizational survival. Resistance to change is portrayed as resulting from an individual’s faulty cognitive functioning, and as a weakness or pathology, which may be overcome by allowing workers to participate in the change process, and by providing more accurate information, support, counselling and therapy. Less benign antidotes to resistance include explicit and implicit coercion (Kotter and Schlesinger, 1979 in Paton & McCalman, 2000: 49, Aldag & Kuzuhara, 2002: 484, Kreitner & Kinicki, 2001: 676). Indeed, the manager-to-be is told specifically:
If consensus [regarding change] fails then one has little alternative but to move on to explicit and implicit coercion. Somewhere in between the two extremes management may attempt to manipulate events in an effort to sidestep sources of resistance. For example, they may play interested parties off against each other, or create a galvanizing crisis to divert attention (Paton & McCalman, 2000: 50).

Such advice starkly illustrates the orientation to control and resistance implicit in the management project. Within conventional management discourses, change and the change agent are valorised, and the manager’s right – and superior ability – to direct and implement such change are unquestioned. At the same time, resistance is individualised, psychologised, pathologised and even demonised. It is attributed to employees’ failure to recognise and appreciate the need for change, and/or their failure to meet this challenge.

Within such discourses, the nature, content, or direction of the change is indeterminate; there is no discussion of the specifics of the change. This is unavoidable, given the general nature of the texts. However, this omission results in a significant limitation to the examination of the nature and causes of resistance to change. This is because change, as it is experienced by real social actors, is never content-free, and therefore cannot be reasonably approached or understood in a value-neutral way. Change is always experienced as change from something and to something else (Taylor, 1999b: 1). Workers, faced with change, will assess the nature of the change before making a decision to resist. While management texts often assert that workers resist change per se, it is certainly more reasonable to claim that workers (and people generally), will resist change that they judge to be ill advised, negative, or harmful.

Lussier and Poulos (1998), drawing on the work of Hultman (1979), suggest that there are three main sources of resistance to change – facts, beliefs, and values. They suggest that when employees have access to correct facts about the proposed change, when their perception of the nature of change leads them to believe that the proposed change is a correct or good one, and where the change is perceived to be of value to them, then they are less likely to resist such change. Their understanding of the term ‘value’ is, however, rather distinctive. They suggest that:
Values are what people believe are worth pursuing or doing. What we value is important to us. Our values meet our needs and affect our behaviour. Because change often requires learning new ways to do things, people view change as an inconvenience and place a low value on it. People analyse the facts presented from all sources and determine if they believe the change is of value to them (Lussier & Poulos, 1998: 420, emphasis added).

This particular formulation of the concept of values, which emphasises personal convenience rather than personal conviction, illustrates the focus on self-interest, which is seen, within such texts, to be such an important source of resistance to change. Piderit, however, introduces a more altruistic or moral element to a consideration of why people resist, suggesting that what might appear to be 'unfounded opposition' may in fact be motivated by the 'ethical principles' of the individuals involved, and, even by their desire to protect the best interests of their organization (Piderit, 2000: 785).

Kegan and Lahey (2001) argue that the notion of 'competing commitments' offers the best explanation for resistance to change. They suggest that employees who genuinely wish to change in some way are often prevented from doing so by competing commitments, which reflect the 'big assumptions' they hold. These competing commitments undermine employees' attempts to implement change. Kegan & Lahey see these commitments as deep-seated and unconscious fears, conflicting loyalties, and limitations, which the employee can be helped to overcome by undertaking 'intense self-examination in a workshop', facilitated by managers who accept that their role includes playing psychologist at times (Kegan & Lahey, 2001: 86). However, the authors' analysis of these conflicting values is under-developed and the conception of values they employ essentially revolves around matters of self-interest, echoing Lussier & Poulos (1998). A more complex approach to the issue of values and commitments, which would deepen our understanding of deep-seated and enduring resistance, is absent from much of the mainstream management literature.

Other analytical strands within management or organizational behaviour approaches to resistance suggest that workers will assess the nature and effects of the proposed change, and that this assessment will influence their decision to mount resistance. Hay and Hartel (2000a, 2000b) note that it is useful to apply a political
metaphor to the management of change in organizations, rather than employing the more traditional notion of the organization as an organism. The political approach challenges the assumption that there is unity of opinion and values within the organization, recognising instead a diverse range of often opposing interests, and suggests that resistance will arise on the basis of these differences. Importantly, they suggest that such a view involves thinking of organizations ‘as political arenas in which political behaviour is not necessarily deviant’ (Hay and Hartel, 2000a: 3). However, although the authors refer (albeit fleetingly) to labour process accounts of resistance, their analysis, along with other work that incorporates elements of critical analysis and postmodern approaches (Ford, Ford & McNamara, 2002; Trader-Leigh, 2002) is still rooted within a management framework. The overarching purpose of such work is to identify factors that contribute to resistance in order to ‘reduce negative resistance to change initiatives’ (Hartel & Hay, 2000b, 7). Resistance, therefore, is still regarded as undesirable, even if it is not labelled as deviant. Moreover, the legitimate locus of control is seen to reside with management and change agents. The prerogative to determine and implement change is regarded as rightfully theirs, and efforts by workers to resist change must be overcome or countered.

Other analysts suggest that resistance should be recognised as potentially positive for the organization and for the implementation of change. They argue that while resistance has traditionally been portrayed as the enemy of change, and regarded as counter-productive behaviour, it can also be beneficial, and should not be seen as a problem to be avoided or overcome, as classic management literature advocates (Maurer, 1996; Waddell & Sohal, 1998: 2-3; de Jager, 2001: 25). Waddell & Sohal cite a body of literature that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, informed by the disciplines of sociology, anthropology and psychology, which argued that resistance was a more complex phenomenon than previously understood. In this literature, resistance was understood as resulting from: rational factors (such as a different assessment of the nature and outcome of change than that offered by management); non-rational factors (such as uncertainty and attachment to old ways of working); political factors (such as a consideration of who is initiating the change); and factors relating to mismanagement (where poor management styles contribute to resistance) (Waddell & Sohal, 1998: 3). Such literature suggests that resistance can be advantageous to an organization, promoting stability and acting as a
balance to constant internal and external demands for change. The existence of resistance also 'points out that it is a fallacy to consider change itself to be inherently good', contributing to a greater awareness of potentially negative outcomes of proposed change (Waddell & Sohal, 1998: 4). This can result in more appropriate solutions being sought, rather than in the apathetic or resigned acceptance of inappropriate forms of change (Waddell & Sohal, 1998: 4-5). The authors argue, however, that the insights generated by this body of literature have been largely ignored, and that the adversarial approach to resistance remains dominant in much management thinking. While they challenge the dominant view within management literature that resistance is a problem to be overcome, Waddell and Sohal ultimately call for a reformulation of the concept of resistance which acknowledges its utility, *in order to* develop more 'solid resistance management techniques' (Waddell & Sohal, 1998: 6). The 'desideratum' of control within management texts is resilient and enduring, even within many of those contributions that seek to incorporate more critical insights.

Similarly, Coghlan (1993) notes that resistance is 'typically presented as a position on change from the perspective of those who are actively promoting the change' (Coghlan, 1993:11, emphasis added). Instead, he suggests, resistance should be regarded as a natural phenomenon that provides additional information and understandings about the change process (Coghlan, 1993: 11, 13). However, his 'person-centred approach to dealing with resistance to change' includes suggestions that a consultant should provide a form of therapy or counselling for the resistant 'client', which may uncover 'cognitive distortions' about the nature of the change. The 'client' is then supported in making an autonomous – rather than reactive – decision about their resistance. While Coghlan claims that such an approach eschews any attempt to manipulate the client into accepting change they do not want, the suggestion of such remedies underscores the focus on the reason for resistance *as located in the individual*, rather than in the change itself or the implementation of the change.

Providing a counterpoint to such dominant understandings, Dent and Goldberg (1999a, 1999b) take issue with the ways in which standard management texts represent resistance to change as a psychological concept, a form in which it has become 'received
truth’ (Dent & Goldberg, 1999a: 39). They note that Lewin (1947) introduced the concept ‘resistance to change’ to indicate ‘a systems concept, a force affecting managers and employees equally’ (Dent & Goldberg, 1999a: 25). They note that, over time, the term has been personalised and psychologised, so that resistance is now understood as a problem located within the employee. Drawing on a range of empirical studies, they further suggest that such research does *not* support the proposition that people resist change *per se*, and that the whole concept of resistance to change is not a useful one. Arguing that people *do* resist change that they regard as harmful or negative, they suggest that what is currently represented as resistance to change can be better understood as resistance to loss (Dent & Goldberg, 1999b: 47). They posit that treatments of resistance to change in management literature might just as easily be termed ‘Overcoming Perfectly Natural Reactions to Poor Management’ or ‘Common Management Mistakes in Implementing Change’ (Dent & Goldberg, 1999a: 38). Their contribution has novelty, within a management perspective, in its suggestion that one might seek the source of resistance in the nature of the change, or the change implementation, rather than psychologising resistance and locating its source in the individual. They challenge the proposition implicit in standard undergraduate management texts that ‘the reader [the potential change agent or manager] is trying to do the right thing, and everyone else, more or less, is “screwing up”’, along with the notion that ‘subordinate resistance is always inappropriate’ (Dent & Goldberg, 1999a: 29, 37). Their analysis provoked Krantz to argue that their ‘psychological agenda’ of ‘redeeming maligned workers’, and their desire to ‘redress the injury caused by the misuse of social science’ had led them to shift the blame for resistance from employee to management (Krantz, 1999: 43, 45). The ideological aspect of the issue of control and resistance is rarely addressed as directly in management texts as it is in this exchange.

**The Utility of Management Approaches to Resistance**

Management approaches to resistance alert us to the ways in which the formulation of particular concepts reflect the ideological assumptions of different disciplines. Within
mainstream or conventional management texts, resistance is viewed as a problem to be overcome, and analyses of the phenomenon and causes of resistance are undertaken with that goal in mind. Such understandings reflect the control imperative embedded in the management project. In this thesis, therefore, management understandings of resistance are useful primarily insofar as they provide a formulation of resistance against which to form a concept of resistance that privileges the understandings of those who resist. In other words, conventional management understandings of resistance are useful for what they don't say as much as for what they do.

To summarise, while there are certainly attempts within mainstream management literature to apply critical insights, resistance is primarily characterised within this discourse as explicable with reference to the flawed cognitive or emotional processes of the workers. Resistance is regarded as 'the worker's problem, typically as a "symptom" of personal dissatisfaction or unfulfilled needs'. The dominant group – management – defines such activities as 'aberrant and pathological', as 'inherently irrational' (Ball, 1990: 158). While change is valorised and equated with dynamism and progress, as a force which is inevitable and irresistible (Arnold, 1999: 89), worker resistance is seen as a natural, but ultimately unproductive human reaction, a 'defensive or irrational response' (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999: 9) to what is portrayed as the most pervasive feature of contemporary corporate life – change. Resistance is attributed to the 'psychological pathology or inadequacy of the members' of an organization (Salaman, 1979: 145), rather than being regarded as the consequence of conflicting interests and value judgements, or as a response to domination and control. It is seen as a harmful response to be anticipated and overcome. Within such discourses resistance is 'transformed into pathology or irrationality' (Fournier, 1998: 72), and the resistor cast as 'social deviant' to be 'normalized through coercive or therapeutic procedures' (Ball, 1991: 158). Indeed, Nord and Jermier (1994: 398) have claimed that the pejorative view of resistance, embedded in managerialist texts, derives from Freudian psychoanalytic theory, in which resistance was 'seen as a process that keeps neurotic individuals distant from reality and from the suggestions of their therapists'. Where consideration is given to the reasons for employee resistance to change, such reasons are generally represented as reluctance to move toward the unknown, as a desire to preserve the status quo, or as reflecting a misunderstanding of
the nature of, or necessity for, the change. Furthermore, the proposed change is generally represented in a value-neutral way – little consideration is given to the nature of the particular change. Rarely are the values embedded in the change discussed, nor are the values informing the decision to resist. The authority to determine the direction of change is seen to legitimately reside with management, whose duty it is to overcome resistance where it arises.

A Different Perspective on Workplace Resistance

Piderit notes that management researchers have practical concerns about the term ‘resistance to change’ as it oversimplifies a complex phenomenon. However, critical theorists object to the concept on a more philosophical basis, as, implicit in its formulation is a privileging of management’s interests over those of workers (Piderit, 2000: 783). While the literature presented in the previous section considers organizational change from the perspective of the change agent or management, critical contributions to the debate privilege the perspective of those subject to change, control, and management practices. In this regard, their orientation is similar to cultural studies and anthropological approaches to resistance. Unlike cultural approaches, however, they focus on resistance within the employment relationship. While more analytical approaches to resistance within management-oriented scholarship straddle the conventional/critical divide, most retain the normative emphasis on management’s right to manage. They seek to understand resistance in order to overcome it.

A profound paradigm shift is encountered, therefore, when one moves to an examination of the concept of resistance within the field of critical management studies. Critical management studies has emerged primarily over the last two decades, challenging the ‘received wisdom’ of mainstream management theory and practice (Alvesson & Willmott, 2003: 1), which critical management scholars have come to regard as ‘limited and oppressive’ (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992: 5). As Ackroyd and Thompson (1999) note, the standard organizational behaviour texts identify resistance
within ‘the psychology of fear rather than the sociology of opposing interests’ (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999: 9). In marked contrast, the ‘sociology of opposing interests’ is foundational to the concept of resistance within critical management studies. Critical management studies approaches to resistance, like those of cultural studies, have an avowed ‘emancipatory impulse’, reflecting, in part, the significant influence that Frankfurt School critical theory has had in informing this relatively new discipline (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992: 2). Scholars within the field of critical management studies utilise a range of disciplinary insights and theoretical perspectives, including Marxism, critical theory, labour process theory, and, more recently, post-structuralism and feminist theory (see especially Alvesson & Willmott, 1992; Alvesson & Willmott, 2003).

Labour Process Theory and Workplace Resistance

The strand of critical management studies that offers the most elaborated theoretical and empirical exploration of resistance – and understandings most immediately and obviously relevant to an examination of academic resistance to managerialism – is labour process theory. This approach to resistance deals specifically with resistance enacted by workers – as workers – in work settings, tracing its origins to Marx’s analysis of the labour process. Within labour process approaches, resistance is conceived as workplace resistance to forms of control enacted by capital and management, which are aimed at extracting maximum labour power from workers. There is broad agreement amongst labour process theorists that worker resistance was inadequately recognised and theorised in early labour process accounts (Knights & Vurdubakis, 1994: 168; Hodson, 1995: 82). This early neglect has been abundantly addressed in more recent years. There now exists a rich, detailed, and diverse body of work examining forms of worker resistance in a variety of workplace settings. These contributions have been enlivened in recent years by the ‘Foucauldian turn’, involving the injection of post-structuralist ideas, and an increased emphasis on the role of subjectivity. This development has occasioned heated debate and not a little acrimony within the field of labour process theory, but has resulted in an enriched understanding of the phenomenon of resistance. As the labour process
theory approach to resistance has been so productive, and as its recent emphasis on the
importance of subjectivity in conditioning resistance is particularly relevant for the
approach taken in this thesis, this body of work is examined in some detail here.

Marx identified the inevitability of antagonism and conflict inherent in the social
relations of capitalism, based on the incompatibility of the respective interests of labour
and capital. Resistance, therefore, is as much a feature of capitalist production as is
control. Marx understood worker resistance as a consequence of the development of
class-consciousness and as part of the struggle against the exploitation embedded in the
capitalist system of production. He did not, therefore, address the phenomenon of more
everyday forms of resistance under capitalist relations of production (Jermier et al, 1994:
2-4). Later contributors in the labour process tradition utilised Marx’s framework to
explore the forms of control employed within capitalist enterprises to extract maximum
labour power and compliance from workers. Various commentators have accused
Braverman (1998), whose work focused on the effects of Taylorian scientific
management and the process of de-skilling, with having under-emphasised the
importance of worker resistance\(^3\), worker agency, and subjectivity (Thompson, 1989:
153, 166; Thompson, 1990: 96; Knights & Vurdubakis, 1994: 168; Knights & McCabe,
established a control-resistance paradigm, the elaboration and examination of which
became a central feature of labour process theory (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999: 47).

Edwards (1979) explored resistance in his account of direct, technical and
bureaucratic control, but focussed on more obvious forms of collective worker resistance
such as sit-downs, sabotage, strikes, working to rule, and rates of work informally agreed
between workers (Edwards, 1979: 14, 57-8, 145-5). Other early accounts of control and
resistance also conceived of worker resistance in terms of ‘class-based politics whereby

\(^3\) Jermier, Knights and Nord (1994: 4-5) suggest that Braverman’s neglect of resistance was not as complete
as is often suggested, and argue that Braverman would have suggested that researchers ‘check the crawl-
spaces of work settings to highlight specific examples of resistance’. They quote Braverman’s suggestion
that, ‘the hostility of workers to the degenerated forms of work which are forced upon them continues as a
subterranean stream that makes its way to the surface when employment conditions permit, or when the
capitalist drive for a greater intensity of labor oversteps the bounds of physical and mental capacity’.
opposition is openly organised and explicitly directed towards radically overturning capitalist relations of production' (Fleming & Sewell, 2002: 862). The resistance highlighted in labour process accounts of the 1970s and 1980s was, therefore, framed predominantly in terms of class struggle, reflective of a Marxist analysis of power (Jaros, 2000: 25). It is, of course, hardly surprising that those working within an orthodox Marxist framework tend to under-emphasise routine, everyday forms of worker resistance. Such analyses naturally focus on collective, formalized forms of resistance, which might be seen to embody revolutionary potential and the development of class-consciousness. As the source of domination was seen to reside in the exploitative capitalist process itself, effective forms of resistance would need to address this basic structural fact⁴. However, such limited notions of resistance are problematic, in that they imply a false opposition between ‘real’ resistance (which derives from class consciousness) and ‘everyday’ forms of resistance (Jermier et al, 1994: 2, 5). As discussed below, more recent contributions to labour process theory accounts of resistance have begun to explore more routine, everyday forms of resistance.

Critics of early labour process analysis called for a greater focus on issues of resistance, subjectivity⁵ and agency in examinations of the labour process (O’Doherty & Willmott, 2001, 457). While such theoretical lacunae were identified as early as the first responses to Braverman’s work (Knights & Vurdubakis, 1994: 168), the debate over how best to address them continues.⁶ While a pivotal and influential edited publication by Knights and Willmott (1990; see also Knights & Willmott, 1989) called for a reinvigoration of labour process theory, the contributors were undecided about how that renewal should be undertaken. To some extent, the solutions offered about how best to

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⁴ For example, Edwards argues that ‘individual or small-group opposition cannot seriously challenge employer control. Such opposition has existed throughout the history of capitalism without posing a real problem; only the collective power of workers can effectively threaten the organized power of capitalist. (Edwards, 1979: 155).

⁵ Burawoy addressed the issue of subjectivity in his account of game-playing and ‘making-out’ in his study of shopfloor workers. However, he tended to focus on the ways in which such game-playing acted to elicit the workers’ consent, rather than promoting resistance (Jermier, Knights & Nord, 1994: 7).

address the deficiencies embedded in orthodox Marxist approaches to the labour process pulled in opposite directions. Thompson (1990) argued that it was necessary to determine the core concerns and delineate the boundaries of labour process theory, while Knights suggested that Foucauldian insights into the effects of power on subjectivity could do more to illuminate areas of the labour process than existing perspectives within labour process theory (Knights, 1990: 328). However, there was widespread agreement that an urgent priority was to address the problem of 'the missing subject' – to develop an understanding of the importance of subjectivity within the labour process.

Thompson suggested that 'the construction of a full theory of the missing subject is probably the greatest task facing labour process theory' while acknowledging that such an omission could not be rectified from within labour process theory itself (Thompson, 1990: 114). Elsewhere, Smith and Thompson note that, after Braverman's deliberately objectivist account of the labour process, early labour process theorists such as Friedman and Burawoy had re-introduced the notion of the subject in three main ways. The subject was a 'source of opposition to capital', a source of creative labour, and 'a source of consent'. They argue that what was inserted at this point was 'labour as active agency'. Thompson's argument was that, given the nature of the labour process, it was more important to 'recover the missing self-active subject than to develop a full account of subjectivity or identity' (Smith & Thompson, 1998: 560, 562, emphasis added).

However, others called for a new and different formulation of subjectivity, which incorporated post-structuralist understandings. In particular, Knights and Willmott sought a formulation of the subject that transcended essentialist notions of subjectivity constructed purely in terms of agency, self-awareness and voluntarism. Instead they embraced a Foucauldian conception of subjectivity as constituted through relations of power. Subjectivity, within such a view, is seen as, 'a complex, contradictory, shifting experience ... transformed or reproduced through the social practices within which ... power is exercised' (Knights & Willmott, 1989: 541). Emphasising the disciplinary aspect of subjectivity encountered in Foucault's formulation of power, they sought to explore the ways in which subjectivity serves to reproduce conditions of oppression in
workplace settings, and how social identities are 'sustained through our positioning in practices which reflect and reproduce prevailing power-knowledge relations' (Knights & Willmott, 1989: 550). Such a rendering of subjectivity was seen by Knights and Willmott to act as a corrective to notions of subjectivity as 'that creative autonomy or personal space not yet captured by political economy' (Knights & Willmott, 1989: 549). Signalling an important move away from orthodox Marxist approaches to the labour process, they argued that 'forms of power are exercised through subjecting individuals to their own identity or subjectivity, and are not therefore mechanisms directly derived from the forces of production, class struggle or ideological structures' (Knights & Willmott, 1989: 553). Foucauldian insights are also seen as useful in focussing attention on 'more localised forms of subjectivity and resistance', in place of the limited view of resistance as class struggle embedded in orthodox Marxist approaches (Jermier, Knights & Nord, 1994: 8).

The different formulations of subjectivity that emerged in response to calls for the development of the 'missing subject' are central to the debate over resistance that surfaced during the 1990s. One of the central (and enduring) challenges and aspirations within labour process treatments of resistance – and labour process debates more generally – has been to overcome the dualism of agency versus structure. This dualism is reflected in Braverman’s deliberately objective account of the labour process, and the subsequent calls for greater attention to the subjective experience of labour. In particular, when developing an examination of the role of subjectivity, contributors have sought to transcend the binary opposition of an autonomous, knowing, reflective individual on the one hand, and the individual understood as subject to constraining, even determining, objective structural features, on the other. However, the concept of subjectivity has been represented in such different ways within this debate that it almost seems to warrant the use of different terms to more clearly distinguish between the different meanings that are intended by its use. While subjectivity can be understood as 'synonymous with

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7 Prichard suggests that 'conceptual discussion which takes up the term 'identity', has a tendency to assume an agentic subject. Discussion which draws on the term 'subjectivity' tends to understand the subject as inscribed by historical and political processes' (Prichard, 1999: 9). Unfortunately such clarity of terms is not always apparent in some labour process debates on the issue of subjectivity. Indeed, in a glossary of
autonomy, creativity or being in control” (Knights, 1990: 307) it is also used in a Foucauldian sense which problematises such a view. Knights & Willmott (1989: 543) quote Foucault’s (uncharacteristically clear) definition of the term ‘subject’:

There are two meanings of the word subject … subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to.

The implications of such a definition of ‘the subject’ for a theory of subjectivity are readily apparent. Such a subject will be equipped with a subjectivity that is far removed from that of the autonomous, reflexive agent which other more agentic, essentialist formulations of the term ‘subject’ imply. Naturally, the ways in which subjectivity is understood are vitally important in any examination of resistance. An exaggerated view of Foucauldian renderings of subjectivity implies that resistance is highly unlikely. Consequently, researchers may be insufficiently attuned to recognising it. Conversely, a highly agentic view of the subject may overlook the ways in which subjectivity is shaped by one’s positioning within relations of power, and the fact that such positioning may contribute to eliciting compliance as much as promoting resistance. A less dualistic understanding of agency and structure in the formation of subjectivity avoids other related binary oppositions - between resistance and control, and between resistance and compliance. As Thompson notes, when examining workplace behaviour, ‘recognition of the complex interplay of antagonism and co-operation provides a definite advance on the control versus resistance model which tended to see each acting on the other, rather than each containing contradictory elements’ (Thompson, 1989: 245). Striking a balance between such polarities is an essential conceptual tool in developing an understanding of the realities of resistance, and a number of labour process contributors have since addressed themselves to this task (see especially Knights, 1990; Willmott, 1994).

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8 Knights was arguing against a dualistic understanding of subjectivity, not supporting such a definition of the concept.
In particular, a collection of essays edited by Jermier, Knights & Nord (1994) represents an important response to calls for the development of a ‘theorisation of the connectedness of power and subjectivity’ (Knights & Willmott, 1989: 535). This book explores the connections between power, knowledge, subjectivity and resistance, and reflects the ways in which Foucauldian insights have been brought to bear on the interplay between these elements, in the interval since Knights and Willmott’s initial article highlighting the limitations of existing labour theory approaches. Clegg notes the relationship between these elements, suggesting that the two chief concerns addressed in the book are ‘how power relations constitute the subject’ and ‘what are the specific types of consciousness through which resistance occurs in specific organizational settings?’ (Clegg, 1994: 288). Thus, as the editors note in their introduction, the contributors avoid a mechanistic opposition between control and resistance, ‘primarily by identifying models of subjective consciousness that mediate interpretations of, and responses to, situations of domination’ (Jermier et al, 1994: 10). The notion of subjectivity is thus utilised to mediate the false opposition between resistance and consent to power. The authors, ‘break with Marxist orthodoxy in refusing to theorize resistance as simply a reflection of the deep-seated structural contradictions of capitalism’, adopting a view of employees as active agents, yet mindful that such agents are ‘negotiating social realities only partially of their own making’ (Jermier et al, 1994: 10, emphasis added). The formation of the self is seen to involve a tension between subjectivity and identity, subjugation and resistance, and this process of self-formation is seen as vitally important in understanding contemporary forms of resistance (Jermier et al, 1994: 8). The central themes of the book are the interplay between power, subjectivity and resistance, and the ways in which different forms of knowledge and various notions of self-identity condition resistance. These themes remain prominent in subsequent contributions to labour process treatments of resistance.

The essays also reflect a broadening of the work settings in which resistance is studied. Many previous empirical studies of resistance considered ‘the actions of seemingly homogenous group[s] of male blue-collar factory workers fighting an
assumed, common identifiable cause' (Jermier et al, 1994: 9). This volume broadens the focus to include heterogeneous forms of resistance, and a variety of workplace settings. An examination of resistance is no longer confined to a consideration of the factory floor, but includes accounts of resistance enacted by managers (LaNeuz & Jermier, 1994), by workers in the insurance industry (Collinson, 1994), in the finance industry (Austrin, 1994), and by clerical workers (Gottfried, 1994; O'Connell Davidson, 1994). This volume also emphasises the significance of local settings in shaping the forms of self-identity, subjectivity and resistance that arise within them. These forms of identity and their attendant forms of knowledge constitute important resources in the enactment of resistance (see especially Collinson, 1994). Resistance, like power, is thus best understood when considered in its historically and socially specific situation, rather than being approached in any global sense (Knights & Vurdubakis, 1994: 175).

The Foucauldian influence in this volume is pervasive and profound – although not uncontested (see Austrin, 1994) – and this publication can be seen as a point of confirmation in the decisive 'Foucauldian turn' in labour process theory. For advocates, a Foucauldian notion of subjectivity is useful in overcoming the 'all or nothing' account of resistance, embedded within some Marxist approaches. A concept of the subject as neither 'class-conscious revolutionaries, nor passive, docile automatons' is made possible by Foucauldian notions of the ways in which the subject is shaped by the interplay between of 'subjection, subjugation and resistance' to power (Jermier et al, 1994: 8-9). This more complex rendering of the notion of the subject was seen to offer a better understanding of the range of responses between consent and resistance, thus avoiding a false distinction between active, resistant agent and falsely-conscious, passive dupe.

By contrast, critics argue that the Foucauldian turn has resulted in a 'disappearing resistance trick' (Thompson & Ackroyd, 1995: 622) within post-structuralist labour process accounts. Prominent critics of this trend suggest that the understanding of subjectivity employed by Knights, Willmott, and others constitutes, 'a narrow and partial view' of the concept (Thompson & Smith, 2000: 53). They argue that a Foucauldian rendering of power, and a related formulation of the subject, has resulted in a loss of any
sense of agency, presenting a picture of employees as docile, self-disciplined workers who do not resist. Critics contend that identifying resistance essentially goes against the grain of the Foucauldian conceptual structure and epistemology (Thompson & Ackroyd, 1995: 628), in which management control is seen to be highly effective due to the self-discipline and self-subordination practiced by employees. While acknowledging that, in theory, resistance itself is not problematic within a Foucauldian framework, they argue that, in practice, this conceptual framework means that researchers fail adequately to recognise and examine workplace resistance (Thompson & Ackroyd, 1995: 624). For such critics, a Foucauldian rendering of the subject has meant that the notion of active agency has been neglected, in the rush to pronounce ‘the death of the subject’ (Thompson & Smith, 2000: 61). While Thompson was a prominent voice calling for the development of a theory of the subject, he clearly had in mind a particular formulation of ‘the subject’, one not compatible with the Foucauldian version adopted by theorists such as Knights & Willmott.

Additionally, the application of Foucauldian disciplinary practices to an examination of the workplace is said to under-emphasise the specifics of workplace relations in capitalist systems, and overlook the primary function of capitalist control in sustaining exploitation (Thompson & Ackroyd, 1995: 625). The labour process is thus reduced to a mere backdrop for broader struggles involving power and identity, and the particulars of the employment relationship are neglected. Social actors are understood to engage in resistance as ‘subjects of modernity’ rather than specifically as employees (Thompson & Ackroyd, 1995: 627-8). The solution advocated is to ‘put labour back in’, in terms of theory and research practice, in order to better enable recognition of workplace resistance (Thompson & Ackroyd, 1995: 629). Within this critique, any account of the subject to be developed must be one that recognises the specific nature of the relationships embedded in the labour process. The subject is a worker within a capitalist system, and any account of subjectivity should be framed in those terms (Smith & Thompson, 1998: 562-3).
Others argue that such criticisms present a tendentious or limited reading of Foucault and his effects on labour process theory (Fleming & Sewell, 2002: 858). However, the ‘trench warfare’ (Jaros, 2001: 27) that has raged around the issue of subjectivity indicates the significance attached to this concept within research into resistance, and within the labour process debate more broadly. It has been suggested that, given recent wide recognition that resistance and subjectivity are concepts that are intertwined, new directions for studies into resistance will reflect debates between labour process theorists regarding how the subject is constituted within capitalist society (Jermier et al, 1994: 6). Subsequent contributions indicate that there is little prospect of a synthesis of ideas in this area. As Kitay notes, the injection of Foucauldian ideas into labour process theory has resulted less in a debate, than in a ‘gaping chasm across which dismissive polemics are occasionally hurled’ (Kitay, 1996: 5).

While critics claim that Foucauldian notions of subjectivity have caused the ‘disappearance’ of resistance in labour process studies, Fleming (2001: 193) argues that such claims overlook a wealth of post-structuralist-influenced accounts of resistance, noting the important contribution made in this regard by Jermier, Knights & Nord. Fleming and Sewell offer an alternative explanation for the apparent neglect of resistance within recent studies of organizations. They suggest that an incomplete understanding or definition of resistance is still often employed. This definition disqualifies many acts of opposition that are ‘more inconspicuous, subjective, subtle and unorganised’ (Fleming & Sewell, 2002: 859). Where resistance is conceptualised in terms of unionism, strikes and other organised action, researchers may overlook other forms of resistance that are less easily recognised. Effectively then, they are ‘looking in the ‘wrong’ places’ (Fleming & Sewell, 2002: 861):

Rather than looking for patently grandiose and global strategies of insurrection we may instead find [resistance] in the commonplace cracks

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9 This critique is not explored here. However, a more optimistic rendering of Foucault's treatment of power and resistance is presented in Chapter Three.

10 For examples of such exchanges see especially Parker, 1999; Thompson, Smith & Ackroyd, 2000; Thompson & Smith, 2000).
and crevices of intersubjective relations and other quiet subterranean realms of organisational life (Fleming & Sewell, 2002: 863).

Similarly, Nord & Jermier refer to the ‘grand visions’ of researchers who envisage resistance as involving ‘radically transformed social and organizational forms’, rather than recognizing the more limited goals of those they research. Indeed, they suggest that the everyday forms of resistance identified by Scott (1986) ‘are not what many of the critical writers value’ (Nord & Jermier, 1994: 401, 402), and have therefore been overlooked, to a great extent, in their analyses of resistance. It has also been suggested that researchers may be using the ‘wrong’ tools to uncover contemporary resistance. Gabriel (1999: 192) suggests that it is likely that new forms of control result in new forms of resistance, and that the ‘observational and conceptual resources’ that are needed to appropriately study these are different from those employed by earlier researchers.

Failure on the part of some researchers to recognise such responses as resistance may be compounded by an accompanying practical limitation that has plagued some research – much resistance is not visible from a distance. Nord & Jermier (1994: 402) argue that close contact with those engaged in resistance is indispensable for an understanding of the meanings attached to certain resistant acts, and suggest that some existing research has failed to take this into account. Indeed Thompson & Ackroyd suggest that the research component in some studies is limited to interviews with managers, ‘a quick chat’ with a union representative, and a tour of the factory (Thompson & Ackroyd, 1995: 629). Others also note the difficulties inherent in accessing and deciphering resistance, suggesting that because many resistant practices are covert, informal, and culturally-specific, interpreting them may be difficult for ‘outsiders’ who have little opportunity to develop the trust of those they are researching (Edwards, Collinson & Della Rocca, 1995: 287).

Despite such pessimistic prognoses, there has been a recent resurgence of interest in studying and theorising resistance (see especially Fleming, 2002; Fleming & Sewell 2002; Fleming & Spicer, 2003; Thomas, Mills & Helms Mills, 2004; Thomas & Davies, forthcoming). Paralleling developments in other approaches to resistance, these recent
contributions employ an expanded definition of resistance, which incorporates more routine understandings of the term. In this regard, the work of Foucault and de Certeau has been especially influential. As Fleming points out, while earlier neglect of resistance may have been due to ‘a particular reading of Foucault’,

it has also been the evocation of Foucauldian motifs that has allowed us to think about resistance in new and broader ways ... This Foucauldian sensibility seems to have shifted our attention away from class politics to those subtle micro-practices that do not necessarily aim for ‘revolution’ but nevertheless allow subordinates to construct counter-spheres within forms of domination, change the trajectory of controls and quietly challenge power relations without leaving them (Fleming, 2002: 194).11

Earlier understandings of resistance as ‘organized, collective opposition’ have thus been expanded to incorporate ‘a multitude of less visible and often unplanned oppositional practices in the everyday world of organizations’ (Prasad & Prasad, 1998: 226, 227). Recent contributions employ broader understandings of resistance to include ‘more routinized, informal and often inconspicuous forms of resistance in everyday practice’ (Thomas & Davies, forthcoming: 7).

Indeed, a recent important contribution to studies of resistance affirms that ‘resistance is “alive and kicking”, albeit not necessarily revolutionary in effect’ (Thomas et al, 2004: 2). This edited volume focuses on the intersection between gender and resistance, drawing heavily on postmodern insights, and further develops the emphasis on subjectivity that has enriched resistance studies in recent years. These authors argue that definitions of resistance within such analyses must be broadened ‘to appreciate those micro-political practices often overlooked in earlier critical inspired studies of workplace opposition’ (Thomas et al, 2004: 2). Such micro-political resistance is understood at the level of the individual, involving ‘small scale, subtle and often hidden challenges’ (Thomas et al, 2004: 7). Importantly, micro-political resistance involves a process of reflectivity, the questioning of positions of subjectivity within dominant discourses, and the ‘discursive production of resistance’ (Thomas & Davies, forthcoming: 8; Thomas et

11 Fleming argues that such an approach to resistance ‘does not begin nor end with Foucault’ (2002: 194), and suggests that it is important to trace the antecedents of Foucault’s analysis of resistance. To that end he explores the contributions of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Bataille, Deleuze and Guattari.
al, 2004: 6-8). Emphasis is placed on the non-essentialist nature of identity, constituted through ‘the complex interplay of subjectivity’ (Chandler, Barry & Berg, 2004: 136), and the ways in which subjects can draw upon a range of discursive positions in framing their resistance (Thomas & Davies, forthcoming; Thomas et al 2004; Chandler et al, 2004). The analyses offered in this volume consider resistance in terms of the motivations and meanings subjects associate with it, and importantly, focus on the level of identity, rather than simply the ‘acts and behaviours’ which constitute resistance (Thomas et al, 2004: 2). The picture of resistance that emerges is complex, often fragmented and deeply personal (see especially Brewis, 2004), reflecting the ambiguities and contradictions inherent in the constitution of the subject in modern organizations.

Towards A Working Concept of Resistance

This chapter has considered the ways in which resistance is treated within a range of disciplines, attempting to extract those insights that may contribute to an understanding of academic resistance to managerialism. Attention has already been drawn to elements of various approaches to resistance that inform, or are problematic for, this task. The following section articulates a synthesis of those useful elements, blending them into a workable concept of resistance that has resonance and utility for this study. The concept is further developed and refined in Chapter Three, where the implications for research design are also explored.

Management and Resistance

Essentially, the understandings of resistance presented in conventional management approaches are antithetical to those employed in this thesis. Such understandings reflect the ideological underpinnings of the management endeavour, highlighting one of its central tenets – the ‘manager’s right to manage’. The quotes that begin this chapter alert us to the value-laden nature of the study of resistance. Barker (2000: 346) reminds us:
‘Resistance is doubly a matter of value; the identification of the values which resistance upholds, and our identification with these values’. Similarly, it was argued above that the various approaches to resistance highlight ideological positions and orientations towards power and control within specific disciplines. Mindful that social research is never value-free, this is an appropriate point to acknowledge my own ideological position regarding the issues of managerial control and academic resistance, which this study explores.

Without wishing to pre-empt the findings of this study regarding the values that motivate and inform such resistance, I acknowledge that, in most instances, I identify with the values that underpin academic resistance to managerialism. I do not, generally, support the managerial agenda, and therefore my approach to academic resistance explored in this thesis is shaped by my valuation of both the ‘current state’ and the proposed changes (Nord & Jermier, 1994: 398-9). Further, in approaching the concept of resistance more generally, I am influenced by the ideology or worldview of my own disciplinary background – critical sociology\textsuperscript{12} – which seeks to understand structures of power and domination with a view to transforming them, rather than justifying them (Sargent, 1994: 1-18). In broader terms, this orientation effectively precludes the conventional management approach to resistance as deviance, or as individual pathology.

However, more critical insights from within a management framework can be usefully applied to this study. For example, Hay and Hartel’s claim, that resistance is best understood as occurring within a political organization, is useful and highly applicable to the study of academic resistance to managerialism. Understandings of the political nature of universities are well developed within higher education literature. Baldridge’s (1971) formulation of a political model of the university pointed to the divergent values and interest groups that comprise such institutions. He argued that neither collegium nor bureaucratic models adequately captured the ‘power plays, conflict, and the rough and tumble politics’ of the university (Baldridge, 1971: 14). This political model has been

\textsuperscript{12} Interestingly, many of the contributors to labour process debates utilise sociological insights but are – institutionally - housed within schools of management or business. This apparent anomaly is attributed to sociologists seeking work within these schools in the wake of declining employment opportunities in Sociology departments (Kitay, 1996: 6; Hassard, Hogan & Rowlinson, 2001: 349). These scholars continue to apply sociologically-informed critical insights to the study of work, organizations and management.
influential in developing understandings of the exercise of power within universities, and, as Walford (1987: 137) has noted, is particularly useful in analysing the activities of a university in times of crisis. An examination of resistance within universities necessitates a consideration of the conflicting interests and exercises of power between management and academics.

Labour Process Theory and Resistance

At its most basic level, a labour process approach to resistance is useful because it highlights an important and basic fact that is often under-emphasised\(^\text{13}\) in analyses of academic work – academics are *workers*. The labour process may be different in universities, but it is a labour process nonetheless. Academic labour power is purchased, and management control is exerted over the potential of that labour power in order to maximise productivity. The labour process approach is, therefore, important because it recognises that academics are – however much many of them might find the notion uncomfortable – labourers, who are subject to some level of managerial control, and seeks to understand their resistance as *workers*.

Labour process theorists argue that resistance is best analysed in its specific historical and social context, and with reference to the specific types of knowledge which inform such resistance. The forms of resistance, and, most importantly, the meanings attached to such resistance, are context-specific, and depend significantly on the resources, access to power, subjectivities, and sense-of-self of those resisting. Academics’ self-identity and subjectivity are significantly different to those of the factory floor workers who have so often been the subjects of labour process examinations of resistance. Conceptualising academic resistance in labour process terms allows us to consider the extent to which the particular features of professional and academic working life result in forms of resistance that are peculiar to academe.

\(^{13}\) Some notable exceptions include Wilson (1991); Miller (1995a, 1995b); Smyth (1995); Dearlove (1997); and Martin (1998).
Labour process approaches are also useful in establishing the centrality of issues of subjectivity in any consideration of resistance. Within this thesis, subjectivity is seen as a crucial element in influencing, shaping, and conditioning academic resistance to managerialism. The understanding of subjectivity utilised here is broadly compatible with the post-structuralist ‘Foucauldian turn’ in labour process theory. Seeking a notion of subjectivity which accords with the sense of self demonstrated and expressed by the academics interviewed in this study, it avoids simple resistance/consent, agency/structure dualisms, which are not supported by the interview data. Instead this thesis adopts a post-dualist understanding of subjectivity, which incorporates both notions of the active, knowing, creative agent and the ways in which subjectivity is shaped by our positioning in power/knowledge relations. This positioning may involve the effects of broad power/knowledge regimes – such as our constitution as subjects within a neo-liberal discourse – as well as the effects of more limited, localised exercises of power. Subjectivity is seen as a complex mix of active agency and subjectification, which is not fixed in time and space but can be understood as ‘shifting and contingent on power relations’ (Clegg, 1994: 275). This complexity will, necessarily, involve apparent contradictions and inconsistencies, particularly relating to the issue of resistance. In practice, resistance and consent are often ‘inextricably and simultaneously linked in contradictory ways within particular organizational practices’ (Edwards et al, 1995: 293). In the lived experiences of academics in contemporary Australian universities, resistance and consent to managerialism are not easily separated into two neat, discrete categories.

However, post-structuralist accounts have been accused of emphasising the ways in which subjectivities are shaped in ways that reduce the likelihood of resistance. Recent trends towards engaging the ‘hearts and minds’ and not just the ‘hands’ of employees (Warhurst & Thompson, 1998), may result in notions of subjectivity as formed predominantly with reference to one’s positioning within the organization itself. Within such a view, one’s sense of self-identity may be seen as determined in great part by the cultural norms and values of the organization. Disciplinary technologies employed within organizations are seen to ‘colonise worker subjectivities such that they participate in their
own subjugation, effectively removing worker opposition’ (Thomas & Davies, forthcoming, 6). A focus on the ways in which the values of a particular professional subcultural group within an organization shape subjectivities can act as a corrective to such potentially ‘pessimistic’, one-way accounts of subjectivity. Understood as operating within, but at the same time distinct from the culture and values of the organization, such subjectivities constitute important resources in the articulation and enactment of resistance, and are an important factor in the motivation and decision to resist.

Salaman suggests that one of the three bases of organizational conflict is when ‘distinctive functions’ develop their own ‘culture, priority and norms’, offering the example of power struggles between academic and administrative staff at the Open University in the UK as an illustration (Salaman, 1979: 146, 149). It is argued here that such cultures, priorities, and norms will provide, to a great extent, the ontological and moral reference points, motivations, and bases of resistance to the imposition of ‘foreign’ or oppositional cultural and organizational change. They merit, therefore, a detailed examination. An exploration of specifically academic subjectivities, as products of specific times, places, modes of work, belief systems, values, practices and social relations, is, therefore, undertaken in Chapter Five. There, I examine some elements of academic culture that appear to be significant in shaping the subjectivities of academics. At the same time it is acknowledged that the distinctive academic culture, with its own power/knowledge discourse, exists within, and often in opposition to, a broader, hegemonic, neo-liberal discursive regime, within which managerialism is seen as an appropriate solution to the economic challenges which universities face. Both of these – generally oppositional – discourses will have a role in shaping academic subjectivities. Resistance emerges as a result of the perceived incompatibility of these discourses and the taking up of the former subject position over the latter.
Cultural Approaches and Resistance

The understanding of resistance employed within this thesis is also shaped by recent methodological and theoretical developments, common to cultural and labour process approaches to resistance. This trend has involved a broadening of earlier, narrow understandings and definitions of this concept, and has seen increased emphasis placed upon the more routine and everyday forms of resistance. This trend, within cultural and anthropological approaches to resistance, has been illustrated by reference to the work of de Certeau and Scott, respectively. The experiences of the subordinated groups of which Scott writes may seem far removed from those of academics. Indeed, encountering the works of Scott at the beginning of this research project, it initially seemed that his treatment of the resistance enacted by slaves, serfs, villagers, and other powerless groups had little to offer in an examination of academic resistance. There seemed little likelihood that his analyses could shed any light on the resistance enacted by an articulate elite, secure within the stronghold of academic freedom and tenure, and accustomed to engaging in public comment, critique and dissent. Surely those who comprised the sanctioned ‘critic and conscience’ of society would have little need to employ timid, veiled forms of resistance. Their resistance would be the weapons of the strong, the articulate, the powerful! Scott’s commentaries were therefore put aside as being of little use in understanding academic resistance. However, after the interviews were conducted and transcribed, the texts produced were recognised as constituting ‘hidden transcripts’ and Scott’s insights were viewed in a different light.

It is argued here that, in order to explore fully academic resistance to managerialism, it is necessary to consider these ‘hidden transcripts’ — the accounts of managerial power that academics develop and articulate — to explore the ‘discursive production of resistance’ (Thomas & Davies, forthcoming: 8; Thomas et al, 2004: 6-8). It is also important to examine the ways in which such discursive resistance articulates with the often ‘low-profile stratagems’ that academics employ. Their resistance may also incorporate elements of the ‘weapons of the weak’ and the ‘arts of the weak’ that Scott and de Certeau highlight. Academics too, inhabit spaces where the strategies of
(managerial) power employ panopticism through a range of techniques. They too operate on a terrain that is chiefly controlled by a powerful opponent, and may resort to tactics that take advantage of cracks and gaps in surveillance. This thesis, therefore, eschews a 'grand vision' of resistance, and acknowledges that resistance can take more routine and everyday forms, which can be subtle and easy for the researcher to overlook.

It has been argued, in this chapter, that an understanding of resistance blending insights from anthropology, cultural studies, and labour process theory is required for a conceptually adequate consideration of academic resistance to managerialism. This hybrid approach transcends both the 'cognitive failure' approach of the management texts, and an orthodox Marxist labour process position, which regards resistance as essentially based upon struggles surrounding the extraction of surplus value and management control over subordinates. It also provides the basis for a more contextualised understanding of resistance in the professional and academic environment, as it offers a formulation of resistance that emphasises the importance of the cultural values of the academic profession in framing and providing resources for resistance.
Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Numerous studies indicate that academics are opposed to many elements of managerialism. In this regard, academics’ responses mirror those of professionals in a range of public sector organizations. Critiques of the effects of managerialism on professionals have emerged, attesting to the frustration and stress that many have experienced, and emphasising what has been described as the ‘human costs of managerialism’ (Rees & Rodley, 1995). Similarly, studies have demonstrated academics’ dissatisfaction or discomfort with specific elements of managerialism, such as commercialisation (Kayrooz et al, 2001), the adoption of a marketing approach to higher education (Johnson, 2003), the proliferation of quality assurance mechanisms (Bauer & Henkel, 1999; Brennan & Shah, 2000a, 2000b; Newton, 2000, 2002; Stephenson, 2004), accountability requirements (Vidovich & Currie, 1998), and performance indicators (Polster & Newson, 1998). Studies that focus on academic attitudes and job satisfaction have also identified managerialism as a source of great angst for many academics (Currie, 1996; Currie & Newson, 1998; Winter et al, 2000; Anderson et al, 2002; NTEU, 2000).

There is, therefore, broad agreement about academics’ generally negative assessment of managerialist reform. However, analysts disagree about how such attitudes have translated into tangible responses. Broadly, early contributions tend toward the view that resistance from the academy is conspicuous by its absence. Indeed, much of the literature that mentions the topic of academic resistance – often in a mere sentence or so – does so only to argue that such a response is absent from the academy, despite evidence of academics’ widespread dissatisfaction with managerialism. While some simply note this paradox in passing, others explore possible reasons for this omission. More recent studies point to the existence of resistance to managerialist changes, insisting that academics are not mere passive recipients of such changes. These studies argue that
academics are resisting managerialism, ameliorating its effects, and reconstructing its implementation, in a variety of ways.

Other chapters of this thesis review the literature pertaining to the notion of resistance, to the rise of managerialism in higher education, and to academic identities. This chapter is, therefore, confined to an examination of literature that brings together these elements in a consideration of academic resistance to managerialism. It examines, firstly, the literature that argues that the introduction of managerialism in universities has been met with academic passivity, and explores some of the reasons posited for this response. It then moves to consider those contributions that argue that such an analysis is mistaken, and overlooks the existence of academic resistance to managerialist practices. This section includes a review of the empirical literature that focuses on ‘micro’ resistance – those analyses that consider the specific ways in which academics resist particular mechanisms that have been introduced into the managerial university. Overwhelmingly, such studies have been undertaken in the UK, pointing to an obvious gap in Australian higher education research. While a number of Australian studies have provided rich qualitative data attesting to academic dissatisfaction with, and opposition to, elements of managerialism, none focus specifically on the ways in which the frustration and angst they report might translate into resistance to managerialist practices. The study reported in this thesis represents an attempt to address this lacuna.

Representations of Academic Passivity

In 1995, Smyth argued that while academics in the UK were keenly aware of the effects of recent changes to the universities there, such changes had been allowed to proceed ‘largely unexamined and certainly unopposed’ (Smyth, 1995: 1). Others echo such impressions, characterising the response as ‘relatively muted’ (Mears, 2001: 13), and passive. Some suggest that while there is undoubtedly an element within the university which is enthusiastic about recent managerial changes, ‘more common is the reluctant resignation to what is happening, the mumbled coffee-time rejection or the passing sneer
at the latest course in “entrepreneurial achievement” (Smith & Webster, 1997: 4). Others argue that the imposition of specific managerial techniques have been met with ‘resigned disaffection’ (Thompson, 1998: 291), and ‘reluctant accommodation’, rather than ‘outright resistance’ (Pilkington, Winch & Leisten, 2001: 62). Writing of the Canadian situation, Buchbinder and Rajagopal similarly question why the loss of control by academics over the organization and process of their work has, ‘proceeded apace without any significant resistance from the professoriate, in fact without so much as a whimper’ (Buchbinder & Rajagopal, 1995: 68). Australian analysts agree, arguing that the dominant response to significant changes to the higher education sector here has been ‘a deafening silence’ (Brown, 1996: 28). Hinkson argues that, in Australia, recent changes have ‘transformed the university with hardly a whimper of protest’ from academics. Instead, he says, widespread restructuring has been met with a ‘mute and demoralized acceptance’, punctuated only by ‘personalized hostility’ or ‘passive resentment’ (Hinkson, 2002: 233, 235).

Various reasons, situated at different levels of analysis, are put forward to explain this generally passive response. Brown suggests that the non-response of academics is due, in part, to the nature of the academic beast itself. He insists, ‘the reticence of academics is well-known. Our natural home is the subtle footnote rather than the pithy headline’ (Brown, 1996: 28-9). Similarly, Biggs seeks explanations for what he refers to as the ‘silence of the academic lambs’, within the academic persona. He suggests that either a sense of ‘good form’ or awareness that they are ‘political innocents’ may have ensured academics’ silence on the topic of the corporatisation of the university. He also posits that academics may initially have responded with disbelief to some managerialist initiatives and, therefore failed to respond, secure in the conviction that universities ‘could not be run in this way’ (Biggs, 2002: 14).

Others suggest that the tenets of postmodernism, so influential in the university in recent decades, may have contributed to the relatively muted response of academics to managerialism. The rejection of enlightenment values, certainties and meta-narratives – foundational to the postmodern approach – is seen to rob the academy of the ontological
tools, and, indeed, the desire, to mount resistance to the managerialist project. In this regard, Dworkin (1996: 11) argues:

The very possibility of objective truth is now itself under challenge from an anti-truth squad of relativists, subjectivists, neo-pragmatists, postmodernists, and other similar critics ... According to these critics, academic freedom is not just bloodless but fraudulent.

Alluding to the same failure within Australian universities, Miller argues, ‘academics are to some extent responsible for the problems, or the extent of the problems that they now face’, having ‘fallen victim to a kind of collective paralysis’. Miller, like Dworkin, makes a connection between a failure to resist, and the tenets of post-modernism. He claims:

In some areas of the humanities this is in part the result of an abandonment of these academic values. For example, many postmodernists are contemptuous of academic values such as truth, reason, knowledge and individual academic autonomy (Miller, 2000: 114).

Others suggest more pragmatic reasons for the absence of academics’ resistance to managerialism. For example, a desire to advance one’s career may be a factor contributing to academics’ acquiescence. Mears (2001: 19) has noted that younger academics may enjoy ‘career enhancement if they can show they are keen participants in the [accountability] process. Careers can now be carved in the world of the qualitocracy’. Biggs (2002: 14) suggests that the creation of a ‘climate of fear’ within universities may explain academic silence. Others reiterate this point, arguing that academic silence may be the result of self-censorship, prompted by fear of retaliation and even job loss. Julie Wells of the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) argues that ‘it is impossible to gauge the extent of self-censorship among academic staff who fear professional or personal consequences as a result of expressing unpopular opinions’ (Wells, 1994: 42). Perhaps one of the most poignant expressions of this sense of academic self-muzzling was alluded to by a respondent in a recent Australian study, who said, ‘I often feel that our profession is a shell and a joke and that we are all wasting our time. At the heart of our work is challenge to the status quo, but doing so means you will be punished’ (quoted in Kayrooz et al, 2001: 36). Within an Australian context, there is ample evidence that academics must be prepared to face grave consequences if they criticise their universities publicly. Such incidents include the suspension of Professor Alan Patience’s email
access, after he had circulated an email criticising the actions of senior management at his university (Patience, 1999), and Monash University’s threatened withdrawal of Emeritus Professor John Legge’s office accommodation, after he spoke out at a union rally against plans to restructure the Arts Faculty there (Allport, 1999; Ellingsen, 1999). Both instances demonstrate that, as Howie (2002: 144) puts it, ‘when at the pulpit we must sing from the same management song sheet’. Therefore, whether constructed as fear or as self-interest, an awareness of the potential consequences of resistance is likely to be a significant factor contributing to academics’ failure to overtly resist managerialism.

Others suggest that the broader environment, in which such resistance must be undertaken, is a factor contributing to academic passivity. Hinkson claims that the university, previously an institution associated with otherworldliness and disinterestedness, has become increasingly instrumental, rather than interpretive, in both orientation and function. This transformation divests the university of its unique, and relatively removed positioning and perspective, from which to critique such social changes. Effectively, it becomes part of this change, rather than an observer and source of analysis. He argues:

The capacity to form strategies and act is overwhelmed by the transformation of an institution in the world but not of the world into one which is very much of the world ... an institution preoccupied with its emergent role within the everyday world cannot easily draw on its historic cultural resources to critique that world, let alone make sense of its own unique role in that world (Hinkson, 2002: 236).

Smith & Webster argue that the higher education sector is demoralised after two decades of financial constraint, and that ‘no alternative vision seems to be available’ with which to combat managerialist ideas (Smith & Webster, 1997: 4). Certainly the logic of some elements of managerialism – such as accountability mechanisms and quality assurance – are difficult to contest or resist. As Morely (2002: 131) notes, ‘the morality of quality can mean that any questioning of performance indicators is positioned as resistance to public accountability’. Academics who defend more traditional models of the university are often attacked as Luddites, who are unwilling or unable to respond to
change (Miller, 1997: 618). In the face of such seemingly unanswerable arguments, it may be, as Mears (2001: 13) suggests, ‘that academics decided that railing against such processes was politically naïve and pragmatism won the day’. Universities’ dependence on state funding may also act to discourage academic resistance to some managerial mechanisms (Pilkington, et al, 2001: 63). Thompson argues that, in the UK, while disillusioned academics mount an ‘endless lament’ in senior common rooms, they seem to feel powerless to delay managerial trends, when faced with the determination of their ‘political and funding masters and their internal managerial allies’ (Thompson, 1998: 291). As Marginson notes, both individual academics and individual universities are free to disregard government quality assurance requirements, but to do so risks individual or institutional survival (Marginson, 1997a: 365). Thus, for both academics and higher education institutions, continuing autonomy is dependent upon voluntary compliance. In this way ‘autonomy and freedom mostly function as tools of control’ (Marginson, 1997a: 363). Miller highlights the way in which autonomy acts to ensure compliance, and facilitate management control at the level of the individual academic. He argues:

Academics have by no means totally lost control of the organization of their work of teaching and research. It may be increasingly constrained, monitored and documented, but there are peculiar features of the academic labour process which make the forms of control, alienation and exploitation ones which often involve the individual academic in the construction of his or her own fate. There is often a curious collusion between management and academics, whereby degrees of at least apparent control are retained by the individual on the implicit understanding that the targets of increased student number, more articles or more form filling are met (Miller, 1995: 157).

Such descriptions lend themselves to a Foucauldian reading, and a number of analysts have applied Foucauldian insights to an examination of academic responses to changes within the contemporary university. The employment of such a framework suggests that the subjectivity of academics, shaped by the power relations to which they are subject within the managerial university, admits no possibility – nor perceived need – for resistance. The disciplinary technologies of the managerial university give rise to academic ‘docile bodies’, who have internalised and normalised the values that such

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1 For an example of such an attack see Gilbert (2000).
practices represent. In this vein, Shore and Roberts argue that the introduction of quality control, audit, and assessment mechanisms in the British higher education system may be likened to the functioning of Bentham’s panopticon, prominent in Foucault’s analysis of power and control. They suggest that academics’ involvement in such mechanisms ensures that:

Like Bentham’s prisoners, university staff become more or less unwitting accomplices in the setting up of a wider system of imprisonment. In Foucauldian terms, this is a classic example of the moulding of subjectivity through the internalisation of externally-imposed norms (Shore & Roberts, 1995: 10-11).

They further argue that the quality panopticon’s capacity to discipline and punish means that academics, ‘rarely allowed to see where power lies’, become responsible for monitoring and disciplining themselves, and for setting and achieving required targets (Shore & Roberts, 1995: 12). The nature of such goals is, therefore, increasingly defined by the demands of the quality assessment process, rather than by traditional scholarly expectations.

Parker and Jary (1995), also employing the notion of the panopticon, suggest that academics ‘begin to become more instrumental and rationalised’ as they internalise the priorities and requirements of what they term ‘the McUniversity’. They argue that increased managerial control ‘will result in new forms of subjectivity amongst academics’ (Parker & Jary, 1995: 331). No longer assured of responsible autonomy over their labour, the academic becomes ‘an organization person’, defined, to themselves as well as to their university, by their quality ratings, the number of their publications, and the length of their Curriculum Vitae, as they ‘respond to and reinforce the inexorable logic’ of managerial rules (Parker & Jary, 1995: 329-331). Drawing on Merton, Parker and Jary argue that academics are responding to the demands of these redefined academic goals with conformity, retreatism and ritualism, rather than rebellion and innovation (Parker & Jary, 1995: 335).
Disputing the ‘Passive Academic’ Model – Academic Managers Mediating Managerialism

Prichard and Willmott (1997), however, dispute Parker and Jary’s totalising view of managerial control. They suggest that Parker and Jary too easily ‘read off’ the effects of managerial discourse, failing to consider the ways in which academics resist managerialism’s ‘colonising practices and discourses’ (Prichard & Willmott, 1997: 288). Criticising the polemical nature of Parker and Jary’s arguments, Prichard and Willmott cite their own study of 35 senior post-holders in four UK universities as empirical evidence which calls into question the former’s portrayal of academic submission. They argue that existing local practices and traditional academic culture have been drawn upon to mediate and limit the reach and effects of managerialist mechanisms. In their study, they found that some Deans and Heads of School acted to dilute managerialist initiatives, acting as buffers and effectively ensuring that implementation was quite often at odds with policy. In this regard, they note that the imposition of performance appraisal was effectively transformed into ‘a chat between colleagues over a cup of coffee’, and that, ‘elaborate ruses and devices for managing the appearance of “excellent teaching” have been deployed to charm and impress the assessors of teaching quality’ (Prichard & Willmott, 1997: 296). They conclude that while management discourses have been embraced by some of those holding management positions, many senior post-holders were subject to ‘existing discursive regimes and localized practices which have a strong mediating effect on the reception and articulation of “management” disciplines’ (Prichard & Willmott, 1997: 311).

Similarly, Prichard’s expanded study, which draws, in part, on 65 interviews with senior post-holders in four UK universities and four UK Colleges of Further Education, considers the tensions between managerial and traditional academic discourses and practices. He draws upon the conceptual framework established by Prichard and Willmott (1997), including Fiske’s notion of struggle between ‘the power bloc’ and the ‘people’. The power bloc is understood as ‘a precarious alliance of dominant interest articulated through various imperialisng knowledges and practices’. While the ‘power bloc’ seeks to
colonise, 'the people' attempt to maintain 'localized and tactical forms of knowledge practices which themselves provide particular values identities and dispositions' (Prichard, 2000: 39). The process of (attempted) domination and resistance involves the production and utilisation of 'stations' (associated with the 'power bloc'), and 'locales' (associated with the people). 'Stations' are understood to comprise both a physical location, and 'the social positioning of [an] individual in the system of social relations', while 'locales are established and maintained at the "grass roots" by those concerned about their immediate conditions of life' (Prichard, 2000: 40). Prichard demonstrates that the local practices and identities associated with academic locales are used to resist and challenge the imperialising and colonising knowledges and practices of the university's power bloc, even by those occupying middle management positions.

Prichard and Willmott's empirical data and conceptual approach are valuable in emphasising the distance between managerial intent and actual effect, and in highlighting the realities of resistance to managerial discourse and practices. Their interviews with senior post-holders demonstrate that the discourse of managerialism is challenged, disputed, and resisted within universities, even by some of those charged with the task of managing. Similarly, Deem (1998) and Deem and Johnson (2000) examine the role of managers in resisting or ameliorating the effects of managerialism on academic staff. Their work focuses on feminist women academic managers, and the ways in which they interpret and enact this management role in the light of their feminist views. Deem notes that women managers were particularly associated with 'soft' or collegial forms of management rather than the 'hard' forms of management associated with new managerialism2, and posits that gender may be a significant factor challenging the completeness of the managerial project (Deem, 1998: 53). The data emerging from the study indicates that those interviewed were committed to collegial, consultative, collaborative ways of managing, and hinted that 'some women [managers] may find

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2 Trow (1994: 15) distinguished between 'hard' forms of managerialism (which were concerned with establishing a 'bottom line' by which university departments could be judged), and the 'soft' version (which merely reflected an awareness of the role of management in the efficient provision of quality, low cost higher education). Other analysts have explored the argument that the forms of management embedded in managerialism are inherently masculine in nature (Prichard, 1996; Kerfoot & Whitehead, 1998; Whitehead, 1999). In this regard managerialism has been referred to as a 'macho' style of management (Clark, Chandler & Barry, 1999; Harley & Lowe, 1998).
“new managerialism” as much anathema as some of their more junior male and female colleagues’ (Deem, 1998: 66).

In a third UK study, Gleeson and Shain (1999) report on interviews with 31 middle managers in five Colleges of Further Education, and note that many managers reported feeling ‘caught between’ senior management and lecturers (Gleeson & Shain, 1999: 468). They too found that managers often acted as buffers, mediating conflict between the two groups. They concluded that while some managers were ‘incorporated into the dominant managerialist discourse’, the majority adopted ‘an approach of strategic compliance’, maintaining ‘a personal and professional distance from “the corporation”’ and a commitment to collegiality (Gleeson & Shain, 1999: 488). Like Prichard and Willmott (1997), and Deem (1998), they contend that, ‘managerialism is not as complete or uncontested as is often assumed’ (Gleeson & Shain, 1999: 489).

‘Rank and File’ Resistance – Academics as ‘Movers and Shakers’

Prichard and Willmott note that the obvious limitation of their study was ‘the absence of data on the discursive position taken up by rank and file academics’, suggesting that this lacuna might act as a spur to further research (Prichard & Willmott, 1997: 289). Recent work focusses on the ways in which academics receive and respond to elements of managerialism. While such studies are not oriented specifically towards studying resistance, they provide interesting insights regarding resistance to managerialism.

In this regard the work of Trowler is useful. Trowler’s (1998) five year ethnographic study of ‘New U’, in the UK, focuses on academic responses to the introduction of what he terms ‘the credit framework’.

3 Trowler assigns this term to ‘those aspects of the curriculum facilitated by giving credit value to assessed learning. These include modularity, the semester system, franchising, accreditation of work-based learning and of prior learning’ (Trowler, 1998: 4). Trowler argues that ‘the watchwords of the proselytizers of the credit framework are access, flexibility, choice and efficiency’ (Trowler, 1998: 7), and that consumer choice replaces producer control (Trowler, 1998: 9). As a system which facilitates moves towards a mass, market-
academics as passive in the face of such changes, and, using the concept of the 'implementation staircase', argues that academics are influential in policy implementation. He presents four categories of academic responses to the changes wrought by the credit framework: 'sinking'; 'swimming'; 'using coping strategies'; and 'policy reconstruction' (Trowler, 1998: 113-135). The final category, which Trowler suggests is potentially the largest, involves the Mertonian categories of rebellion or innovation (Trowler, 1998: 126), which Parker and Jary argue are largely neglected in favour of conformity, retreatism, and ritualism (Parker & Jary, 1995: 335). On the contrary, Trowler argues, 'academics are clever people. Rebellion and innovation are their forte' (Trowler, 1998: 55). He represents the category of policy reconstruction as a 'robust' response, with academics acting as 'movers and shakers'. Policy reconstruction involves 'the processes academics engage in when they reinterpret and reconstruct policy on the ground, using strategies to effectively change the policy, sometimes resisting change, sometimes altering its direction' (Trowler, 1998: 126). Some of the behaviours that Trowler includes in the 'coping' category, such as avoiding meetings, 'working to rule', and automatically binning university correspondence, might also be understood or interpreted as resistance.

Trowler's ethnography demonstrates that academics have not been 'captured' by the academic discourse, and that 'discursive displacement, resistance, reconstruction and negotiation do occur' (Trowler, 2001: 196). He suggests that a range of factors influence how academics will respond to changes to higher education policy. These factors include: the extent to which the academic stands to profit from such changes; 'cultural traffic' (the set of values and attitudes which are shaped by gender, ethnicity, class and other similar influences); and the ways in which epistemological aspects of disciplinary membership shape the attitudes of academics. In addition, he identifies four 'educational ideologies', which are likely to affect academics' responses to policy change. These categories are: traditionalism (associated with academic as custodian of knowledge and intellectual elitism); progressivist (associated with student-centredness, and a valuing of student

oriented version of higher education, the credit framework may be understood as an aspect of managerialism.
participation); social reconstructionism (which sees education as a means of social transformation); and enterprise ideology (broadly compatible with managerialism, viewing education as primarily vocational and concerned with the development of human capital) (Trowler, 1997: 312-5). Such ideas are useful for understanding the diverse range of academic responses to managerialism, and the values and attitudes that inform and underpin them. They also serve as a reminder that the category, ‘rank and file academics’ must not be approached as a monolithic entity.

Two other single institution studies from the UK offer support for Trowler’s critique of the ‘academic passivity’ model. Benmore’s ethnography of ‘City College’ similarly offers a typology of academic responses to changes in their employment relationship, resulting from managerialist changes. He identifies and explores four responses: ‘exit’ (leaving the employing institution), ‘reinterpretation of the effort-reward bargain’; ‘self-development’; and ‘conformity’ (Benmore, 2002: 48). Benmore defines re-interpretation of the effort-reward bargain as constituting, in part, ‘resistance to managerial efforts to achieve greater productivity from academics’ (Benmore, 2002: 50). Academics who responded in this way either worked very strategically, or reduced the time they spent working. Benmore argues that the relative autonomy of academics allows them to, ‘adjust their levels of consent and resistance to the policies implemented by their managers’, and suggests that, as their autonomy is furthered eroded, one might expect to see a hardening of resistance (Benmore, 2002: 56). Also echoing Trowler’s position, Newton’s (2000, 2002) study of ‘New Coll’ examines academics’ responses to the ‘quality revolution’ in higher education, finding considerable differences between policy initiatives and their implementation by academics. He suggests that, when involved with external quality reviews, academics have become experts at ‘playing the game’ and ‘feeding the [quality] beast’ (Newton, 2000, 2003). Newton suggests that academics do not ‘mutely accept change or the particular demands of quality assurance policy or systems’ (Newton, 2002: 59), but rather ‘respond, adapt to or even resist’ such practices.

Other studies also touch on the notion of academic resistance. Henkel (2000) examines the extent to which changes in higher education policy have resulted in changes
to the academic identity. She draws on a total of 327 interviews, undertaken between 1995 and 1997, with academics at all levels and from a variety of disciplines, at eleven UK universities. She addresses the range of academic responses to higher education policy changes, emphasizing the maintenance of traditional academic values in the face of managerial change, and the process of negotiation, accommodation, and interpretation which accompanies the introduction of new policies. She argues that the academics in her study employed ‘more or less conscious strategies to conserve academic identities, collective and individual’ (Henkel, 2000: 261). In marked contrast to Benmore’s findings, one of the chief reactions was to work harder, a response that, while it is not generally regarded as a resistant one, is often employed in this way by academics (Anderson, forthcoming). Henkel also identified more obvious resistance to particular managerial practices. Academics in her study subverted the intentions of particular policy initiatives in order to sustain academic priorities and standards, and responded to quality assurance mechanisms with ‘overt compliance’ while minimizing actual change (Henkel, 2000: 266-263).

Barry, Chandler & Clark’s study (2001; see also Chandler, Barry & Clark, 2002a; 2002b) of academics and administrators at two UK universities focuses on the ways in which academics, collectively and individually, respond and react to managerialism. They found that managerialism is contested, resisted, and ‘muddled through’, arguing that ‘managerialism is not fully embedded in university life’ (Barry et al, 2001: 87). Focussing specifically on academic responses to ‘targets [for student numbers], appraisals, external peer review and managerial style’ (Barry et al, 2001: 91), they found that while academics often resisted and subverted the first two elements of managerialism, external forms of review were more difficult to outflank. In complying with external assessment, the academics in the study tended to ‘go through the motions’ (Chandler, Barry & Berg, 2004: 129) or ‘jump through the hoops’ (Barry et al, 2001: 92), but also resented the imposition of such practices. Barry et al’s examination of responses to managerial style found that both the academics and the mid-level managers in their study criticized and distanced themselves from autocratic management styles and ‘the kinds of control mechanisms associated with … harsh managerialism’ (Barry et al, 2001: 92).
Instead, they found that academics sought to employ supportive and collegial frameworks of behaviour and ways of relating to each other in the face of funding cuts, work intensification, and new forms of accountability (Chandler et al, 2002a, 2002b). They too offer a typology of responses to hard managerialism, suggesting the categories of: ‘avoidance’; ‘confrontation’; ‘rule-breaking’; ‘scepticism’; and ‘accommodation’ (Chandler et al, 2002b: 10). Within the category of rule breaking, they note examples of deliberately under-enrolling units to avoid overburdening colleagues with excessive teaching loads, and ‘forgetting’ to appraise colleagues’ performance (Chandler et al, 2002b: 13; 2002a: 1062). Such examples illustrate the collegial basis of resistance that is intended to protect fellow academics.

**Gendering Academic Resistance**

Chandler, Barry & Berg (2004) consider the ways in which a gender perspective may be useful in examining what underpins academics’ resistance to managerialism. They suggest that managerialism may be seen as a hegemonic masculinist discourse, which is vulnerable to challenge from alternative discourses. Managerialism, they argue:

> cannot help but encounter other priorities, ways of thinking and ways of being. It cannot help but cut across professionalism, feminism, the discourse of the 'good mother' (Raddon, 2002) or 'good father' etc., and therein lie the origins and meanings of resistance (Chandler et al, 2004: 132).

The authors suggest that the alternate ‘selves’ offered by such discursive positions are potential sources of resistance, as the resistant responses of individuals are understood as ‘rooted in their life histories and social locations’ (Chandler et al, 2004: 132).

Addressing similar concerns, Thomas & Davies (2002) consider the discursive positions taken up by female academics, as they respond to challenges to their sense of self-identity mounted by managerialist changes to higher education. Noting the prevalence of accounts which privilege structure over agency, the authors argue that individual academics should be recognized as responding actively to these changes
(Thomas & Davies, 2002: 376). Moreover, they insist that a gendered perspective is required in order to acknowledge the ways in which masculine discourses underpin both the university itself, and the New Public Management. Drawing on 53 interviews with women academics at three universities in the UK, they suggest that some were accommodating the increased demands of the managerial university, ‘buying in’ to the new regime, and ‘playing the game’ as determined by managerial priorities. Others were consciously and actively resisting the managerial discourse, and ‘opting out’ of the ‘performance culture’ (Thomas & Davies, 2002: 387-8). ‘Opting out’ often meant focusing on teaching and on student welfare, rather than research productivity. As these are roles that may be seen as an extension of the mothering role, carrying ‘second-class’ status within the university, such choices can result in ‘a lowering of self-confidence and further marginalization within the institution’ (Thomas & Davies, 2002: 388, 387). Thomas and Davies (2002: 393) argue that an examination of responses to managerialism reveals ‘a complex picture of accommodation and resistance’, in which academics draw upon a range of discursive positions to resist the encroachments of managerialism.

Academic Passivity Revisited?

Other UK contributions touch on the issue of academic resistance, focusing on specific elements of managerialism, and academics’ responses to them. The work of Harley & Lee (1997) and Harley & Lowe (1998) examines the ways in which, within the discipline of economics, the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) has resulted in increased pressure on academics to publish in ‘core’ journals. Their survey ‘uncovered a stream of hostility to the RAE’ which was broadly seen as interfering with academics’ autonomy in the area of research, and limiting disciplinary diversity (Harley & Lee, 1997: 1444). However, they also found that many academics had responded by adopting more instrumental approaches to the production and publication of research: up to 50 percent of their respondents who acknowledged non-mainstream research interests had shifted the direction of their work to produce the sorts of mainstream articles that they recognized as favoured by core journals. Twenty-nine percent reported resisting pressure to change the
direction of their work in line with RAE imperatives (Harley & Lee, 1997: 1447). Contrary to other studies, which have argued that academic practice has largely remained unchanged by managerialism, Harley & Lowe conclude that, ‘whilst management discourse may indeed have found it hard to penetrate the walls of academe, management practice has not’. They argue that while academics may ‘still talk and think like academics’, their research indicates that ‘many no longer act like them’ (Harley & Lowe, 1998: 15, emphasis added). Harley (2000) addresses similar issues, surveying accounting academics about the ways in which the demands of the RAE affected their work. Again, she found an increased emphasis on producing the types of research recognized by this form of assessment. While attitudes to such changes were broadly negative, a high proportion of those who disapproved of the effects of the RAE reported having changed the direction of their work to comply with its demands (Harley, 2000: 559). Situating her own work within the debate over the ‘passive academic’ model, Harley suggests that the RAE is ‘an effective mechanism of managerial control’ because it co-opts processes of peer review, and operates with an ostensible agenda of rewarding academic excellence – both elements of traditional academic discourse and practice. In this way it acts to disempower ‘those who would wish to resist with an alternative discourse’ (Harley, 2000: 576-7).

Morley (2003) raises similar issues, focussing on quality assurance, and examining academic responses to the introduction of related policies and practices within universities. She suggests that ‘the issue of resistance, or the lack of it, repeatedly surfaced in my study’ (Morley, 2003: 51). However, her examination of quality assurance practices in the UK university paints a convincing picture of the irresistible nature of particular elements of it – particularly the Research Assessment Exercise and the Quality Assurance Agency visits. While many of her respondents condemned the latter, in particular, as an exhausting, demoralizing, and ultimately fruitless exercise, they were effectively powerless to resist it. As one of her respondents noted, ‘there’s a sort of resistance to the philosophy of it, but there’s also a pragmatism … we’ve had to do this, so we have’ (Morley, 2003: 50). Indeed, the schizophrenic feelings generated by anxiously complying with the requirements of an exercise in which they had no faith
added to the stress experienced by many of her interviewees. Yet the rhetoric, and the unanswerable logic of quality assurance, ensured that there was little possibility of, or opportunity for, resistance. As Morley puts it, 'the power relations are such that to name quality assurance as undesirable carries the risk of naming yourself as undesirable' (Morley, 2003: 49). By resisting quality assurance, the critic risks being associated with 'the other side of quality, that is privilege, elitism, mystification of decision-making, unreliability, and shoddiness' (Morley, 2003: 165). While such discursive positioning can discourage resistance, Morley also acknowledges more pragmatic reasons for non-resistance to quality practices, saying that while academics may write angry letters and articles, current funding arrangements make direct resistance unlikely (Morley, 2003: 71). Thus the work of Harley & Lowe (1998) and Morely (2003) move us back towards a modified model of academic passivity. In their studies, academic opposition is felt, and articulated, but enacted resistance is absent; the mechanisms which are utilised, and the rhetoric in which these aspects of managerialism are couched, ensure compliance, albeit compliance without commitment.

Structure and Agency, Resistance and Compliance, and the Importance of Subjectivity

Issues of compliance and resistance, highlighted in the studies reviewed above, raise questions that essentially reflect the structure/agency debate. The extent to which academics are understood and represented as, alternately, managerially colonized subjects or active autonomous agents, reflects a position on a continuum between the two poles of agency and structure. Thus, for some contributors, the literature supporting the academic passivity thesis may be seen as the 'privileging of structure over agency, and [reflecting] general ignorance about individual responses to discourses of restructuring and change' (Thomas & Davies, 2002: 376). In attempting to move beyond an 'over-socialised' view of academic responses to higher education policy, Trowler notes that 'sociological theorizing about the relationship between actor and structure has become increasingly sophisticated'. These conceptual and theoretical developments help us 'to understand that the actor is both constrained and free, operating within social structures.

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yet able to change them’ (Trowler, 1997: 301). It is argued here that such a position is essential for an adequate approach to the study of resistance. It is important to consider the ways in which the discourses of managerialism, and of academia, shape the subjectivities and actions of those who are subject to them, and who take up discursive positions offered by, and within them. The effect of these generally oppositional discourses is likely to result in contradiction and confusion, and the creation of subjectivities that are complex, fragmented, and the source of much internal conflict.

Focussing on such issues, Davies & Bendix Petersen draw on a case study interview with one academic⁴, in order to highlight the ways in which individual academics are involved in the ‘ambivalent take up and refusal of neo-liberal⁵ discourses’ (Davies & Bendix Petersen, 2005: 32). Following Butler (1997) they argue that it is important to focus on the specific mechanisms of power which result in an individual ‘turning that power on herself’, exploring the insidious ways in which subordination ‘is experienced, at least in part, as voluntary and desirable’ (Davies & Bendix Petersen, 2005: 35). To that end they transpose elements of the interview into what they call a ‘narrative poem’, retaining the interviewee’s own words, but altering the order to highlight the ‘complex positioning’ of the academic, in relation to the university, her work, and, importantly, both her ‘willing take-up’ of, and ‘joyful escape’ from, neo-liberal discourses (Davies & Bendix Petersen, 2005: 39). Their ‘poem’ effectively highlights the contradictory nature of academics’ responses to elements of managerialism. For example:

I don’t think universities should be corporate money making organizations
Selling research to industry and education to fee paying students
Of course –
But I do think we have to be pragmatic
We do have to sell –
We do have to raise money to fund what we want to do
(Davies & Bendix Petersen, 2005: 41).

⁴ This case study interview was taken from a study of twenty-five academics from New Zealand, Australia, Sweden and the United States.

⁵ Elsewhere the authors note that they use this term interchangeably with managerialism.
The academic also speaks of the difficulties involved in resisting, which she attributes to lack of time, saying, ‘it’s a good way to keep people quiet, keep them so busy that they can never get their heads above the daily grind’ (Davies & Bendix Petersen, 2005: 43). However, what emerges primarily is the complexity of an academic simultaneously taking up elements of the managerial discourse, and attempting to find a place outside of that discourse through which to mount resistance. For example the academic acknowledges, ‘because of the nature of entrepreneurialism, I certainly feel I have gained in certain ways I wouldn’t have otherwise’ (Davies & Bendix Petersen, 2005: 40). She also suggests that, ‘some of the processes and procedures and quality assurance and all that has actually made our work better’ (Davies & Bendix Petersen, 2005: 44). Yet she also rails at elements of managerialism, bemoaning, ‘funding cuts year after year after year’, and ‘surveillance at the heart of things’ (Davies & Bendix Petersen, 2005: 41, 45). To add further confusion, she is also positioned by elements of the discourse of academia, especially her love of her work, which is compromised and threatened by elements of managerialism. Thus, while she says, ‘I mean I just think it’s an incredible privilege to be able to do this sort of work, to have it as my own’, she also argues that if she didn’t have a day a week to do her writing ‘I might as well chuck the whole thing in – there’s no point going through all this to keep myself healthy for a job I’ve lost my faith in’ (Davies & Bendix Petersen, 2005: 43, 42).

Davies & Bendix Petersen’s ‘poem’ starkly illustrates the complex and contradictory ways in which academics struggle with the discourses of academe and managerialism. Academic subjectivities are shaped by elements of both discourses, but academics simultaneously strive to retain spaces of agency in which to critique and resist their totalizing effects. Thus, as the literature reviewed above demonstrates, resistance and accommodation are not straightforward categories of responses to recent changes to universities. Such responses emerge out of a process of conflict and negotiation between the apparently unassailable logic of elements of managerialism – such as notions of ‘quality’ and ‘accountability’ – and elements of the traditional academic discourse – such as academic autonomy, freedom and collegiality. As Morley (2003) and Harley and Lowe (1997, 1998) suggest, some mechanisms of managerialism prove very difficult to resist,
both pragmatically and ideologically, although evidence of academics’ opposition to them is widespread and convincing. As Davies and Bendix Petersen argue, the managerial discourse:

inserts itself deeply in the social tissue of values, emotions and daily habits of thought and action, even, we will argue, when it is being spoken about as undesirable and irrelevant. That is, we may not have taken it up as our own, we may not believe in its principles and values, but its slippery and imperious nature subjects us to it anyway (Davies & Bendix Petersen, forthcoming: 17, emphasis in original).

Thus, they argue, academics are constituted as neo-liberal subjects even as they attempt to ‘undo’ this discourse through resistance (Davies & Bendix Petersen, forthcoming: 5).

Yet other studies, discussed above, attest to the existence and ubiquity of academic resistance to managerialism, resistance that often manifests itself in creative ways. A number of these analyses have engaged with the question of the discursive or ideological sources of this resistance. They suggest that alternate discourses, including those of professionalism, feminism, the discourse of the ‘good parent’ (Chandler et al, 2004), and the ‘cultural scripts of femininity’ (Fine & McPherson cited in Thomas & Davies, 2002: 391) may be drawn upon in mounting such resistance. This thesis argues that elements of traditional academic discourse also provide resources, which may be drawn upon in resisting managerialism. For example, one study has suggested that attempts to introduce ‘hard’ forms of managerialism were ‘unsettled’ by academics intent upon preserving collegial forms of interaction (Barry et al, 2001; Chandler et al, 2002b).

Many of the studies reviewed in this chapter indicate that academics are engaging in critique, contestation, and resistance, rather than passively accepting managerial changes. These studies are useful in sensitising researchers to the subtle nature of much of this resistance, and the factors that may shape it. They remind us that resistance and compliance are not simple ‘either/or’ categories, and that academics are subject to a range of discursive influences, resulting in responses to managerialism that are complex and often contradictory. Seeking to build upon these insights, this thesis now turns to an
examination of the methodology employed in the present study of academic resistance to managerialism.
Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

‘Foucault was always at pains to say that resistance is an endemic fact in the world of power relations. Yet, for some readers’ tastes he did not give the right answers about who or what resists power, and why. Although he was passionately exercised by the question, he may have thought it had no single, definitive answer, because the answer is everywhere: There is always something in the social body, and in each person, which evades or wrestles with others’ attempts to act on our own way of acting’

(Gordon, 2002: xx).

Introduction

Chapter One explored a variety of approaches to the study of resistance, and arrived at a provisional formulation of the concept with which to approach the study of academic resistance to managerialism. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a description of the methods employed in this study, which are compatible with the theoretical approaches to power and resistance informing the research presented here. The two elements of theory and method are interwoven in this chapter, reflecting the ways in which the theoretical approaches and insights informing this study are embedded in the research design. It is argued here that Foucauldian understandings of power and resistance offer not only an illuminating conceptual and theoretical perspective, but also a methodological prescription for the analysis of managerial exercises of power, and the resistance that such power generates. This is because the ways in which Foucault understands and represents power facilitates an exploration of its exercise at a micro-level of lived experiences, which can then be captured in research interviews with those subject to it.

Foucault’s description of his approach to the analysis of power includes a series of ‘methodological precautions’, providing researchers with guidelines for the conduct of such an analysis. These methodological recommendations facilitate the design of a research method that adequately captures and reflects the formulation of power that
Foucault advocates. While the primary focus of this study is resistance to power, rather than the exercise of power itself, the two notions are, effectively, inseparable. The first section of this chapter, therefore, addresses the understandings of power and resistance that informed and shaped the research methodology employed in this study of academic resistance to managerialism. The second part of the chapter details the research methods that were employed in the study.

**Foucault and the Study of Power**

Resistance can only be understood with reference to control, authority, or the exercise of power. As Best notes, it is difficult to comprehend how the 'very notion of resistance, itself, is imaginable outside of a particular context of domination' (Best, 1998: 25). As discussed in Chapter One, while conventional management formulations of resistance most often refer to 'resistance to change', labour process theory and cultural approaches to resistance couple the term resistance with concepts such as power, control, domination, and hegemony. Indeed, in the wake of Foucault's work, it may be argued that the concepts of power and resistance are 'ontologically inseparable', existing as 'conditions of possibility each for the other' (Butz & Ripmeester, 1999: 2). Essentially, the two concepts imply each other. As Foucault famously observed, 'Where there is power, there is resistance' (Foucault, 1990: 95). It is essential, therefore, to briefly explore the formulation of power embedded in the present examination of resistance.

The concept of power implicit in Foucault's historical accounts of madness, medicine, the penal system, and sexuality is distinctive, and rejects a model of power as a commodity or quality that is possessed by some and not by others. As Marshall notes, Foucault was not interested in 'who or what questions about power', concerning himself instead with questions about how power is exercised (Marshall, 1996: 92). Similarly, Foucault explicitly and repeatedly rejects a concept of power as purely repressive in its nature and effects. For Foucault, power must be understood as also productive – it produces forms of knowledge, which in turn reproduce and sustain the power relations
that produce them. He argued, ‘power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth’ (Foucault: 1991: 194). He noted that, ‘we are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth’. The production of ‘truth’ through power involves processes of ‘interrogation’, ‘inquisition’ and ‘registration of truth’. Power ‘institutionalizes, professionalises and rewards’ the pursuit of truth (Foucault, 1980: 92-93). We may observe the power/knowledge nexus, for which Foucault is famous, in the production of knowledge/truth facilitated by the techniques and operations of managerial power, explored in this study.

While Foucault’s analysis of power never directly engaged with the sphere of work, his analysis is readily applicable to an examination of power within the labour process. Indeed, he concludes his exploration of the panoptic effect in prisons by asking, ‘Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?’ (Foucault, 1991: 228). Various writers have applied Foucault’s understanding of power – and particularly his use of Bentham’s panopticon as a symbol of the internalisation of the disciplinary effects of power – to analyses of power in organizations (Deetz, 1992; Sakolsky, 1992; Townley, 1993, 1994; Jermier et al, 1994; McKinlay & Starkey, 1998). Foucauldian insights have also been applied more specifically to examinations of management power within educational institutions (Ball, 1990; Shore & Roberts, 1995; Currie, 1996). It is argued here that a Foucauldian rendering of power is particularly useful in understanding managerial power, and resistance, within universities. Foucault’s notions of the ‘micro-physics’ of power enable us to understand managerialism as a power/knowledge discourse which is enacted through a series of localised mechanisms, techniques and practices employed within the workplace (Sakolsky, 1992: 236-7). These practices have been described as, ‘micropower structures and power relations that touch every aspect of organizational life and are serially related. They are practical applications of power. They embody very specific mechanisms, procedures, and techniques with particular economic and political utility’ (Ball, 1990: 165). As discussed in Chapter One, post-structuralist labour process theorists have recommended a Foucauldian focus on the ‘contextually specific practices,
techniques, procedures, forms of knowledge and modes of rationality that are routinely deployed in attempts to shape the conduct of others'. They suggest that such an approach – focussing on the exercise of power – is ultimately more productive than an emphasis on the origins and sources of power (Knights & Vurdubukis, 1994: 174-5).

In a lecture given at the College de France on 14 January 1976, Foucault described the principles and ‘methodological imperatives and precautions’ that had guided his analyses of power since the beginning of the 1970s (Foucault, 1980: 92-4). He emphasised that, in these analyses, his focus was on the ‘how of power, its mechanisms, relations, rules and exercise’ (Foucault, 1980: 92-3). Firstly, Foucault suggests that, rather than considering ‘the regulated and legitimate forms of power in their central locations, with the general mechanisms through which they operate’, it is important to concern oneself with, ‘power at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it becomes capillary, that is, in its more regional and local forms and institutions’. This requires a focus on those points at which power ‘invests itself in institutions, becomes embodied in techniques, and equips itself with instruments’ (Foucault, 1980: 96). Secondly, he suggests that power should not be studied ‘at the level of conscious intention or decision’, but at the point at which ‘its intention, if it has one, is completely invested in its real and effective practices’. In this regard, he argues that:

What is needed is a study of power in its external visage, at the point where it is in direct and immediate relationship with that which we can provisionally call its object, its target, its field of application, there, - that is to say – where it installs itself and produces real effects (Foucault, 1980: 97).

He suggests, therefore, that we should ask ‘how things work at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of those continuous and interrupted process which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours’, in order to discover how it is that subjects are constituted by and through such processes (Foucault, 1980: 97).

Thirdly, Foucault reminds us that power should be understood, not as something that is possessed by some, and not by others, but as something that circulates. It should not be understood as a commodity, but as something that is ‘employed and exercised
through a net-like organization'. Subjects must be understood as 'simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power' (Foucault, 1980: 98). The fourth methodological precaution follows from this conception of power. Foucault suggests that we should not attempt to understand power by beginning at its origin or centre, and following its progress downwards, but should rather conduct 'an ascending analysis of power' (Foucault, 1980: 99). We should begin with power's 'infinitesimal mechanisms, which each have their own history, their own trajectory, their own techniques and tactics, and then see how these mechanisms of power have been – and continue to be – 'invested, colonized, utilized, involuted, transformed, displaced, extended etc.' (Foucault, 1980: 99). Foucault recommends that we 'investigate historically, and beginning from the lowest level, how mechanisms of power have been able to function' (Foucault, 1980: 100). Finally, he suggests that the mechanisms of power may well be accompanied by 'ideological productions', but that it is more fruitful to consider that what is primarily produced by the exercise of power is, 'effective instruments for the formation and accumulation of knowledge – methods of observation, techniques of registration, procedures for investigation and research, apparatuses of control'. He argues that power, through its mechanisms, produces 'apparatuses of knowledge', which are not adequately captured by the notion of ideology (Foucault, 1980: 102).

In keeping with these methodological precautions, this thesis seeks to examine managerial power's effects on academic staff, at the point at which managerialism's intentions are 'completely invested in its real and effective practices' (Foucault, 1980: 97). It heeds Foucault's advice that an analysis of power should focus on power at its extremities, at the points at which it comes in contact with its object. The approach employed here, in keeping with such a view of power, is to consider the micro-physics of power – the techniques, practices, and mechanisms employed within the managerial university. These are the means by which managerial power seeks to govern the actions and behaviours of those subject to it. Pollitt suggests that when managerialism is approached at this detailed level of specific techniques and practices, it is more difficult to detect its ideological element. He suggests that performance indicators and other techniques appear to be 'relatively neutral, technical artefacts' (Pollitt, 1993: 11-12).
Foucault has noted, 'the apparent neutrality and political invisibility of such techniques of power is what makes them so dangerous' (Gordon citing Foucault, 2002: xv). Techniques which are apparently neutral and devoid of ideological content, techniques whose goal is to increase efficiency, economy, accountability and other such irreproachable objectives, often prove to be difficult targets to oppose and resist. Such techniques – in the managerial university – include: performance appraisals; compulsory student evaluation of teaching; increased accountability requirements and quality assurance mechanisms; increased pressure to secure external funding through entrepreneurial activity and/or to reduce costs through increased efficiency, economy, and productivity; formalized workload agreements which specify goals and monitor hours spent on different aspects of scholarly work; the devolution of budgetary responsibility to school or department level; and the restructuring of such units in ways which reflect organizational rather than disciplinary concerns.

Therefore, rather than engaging interviewees in a discussion of managerial power as an abstract phenomenon or monolithic entity, the interviews in this study were structured around these specific, capillary exercises of power. Mindful of Foucault's methodological precautions, the interviews focussed on those instances where managerialism sought to 'produce real effects' through such mechanisms and practices. Interviews sought to explore academics' assessment of, and responses and resistance to, those 'continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, [and] dictate our behaviours' (Foucault, 1980: 97), within the managerial university. Thus, in exploring academic resistance to managerialism, an 'ascending analysis' of managerial power was undertaken, beginning at those points at which its techniques and practices of power are experienced by those subject to them.

Moreover, reflecting the inevitable interplay between power and resistance identified by Foucault, managerial power is understood as subject to a process of ongoing struggle, and is, therefore, never completely assured or secure; it is always vulnerable to contestation and resistance. Such apparatuses of power are 'inherently fragile' and 'are always liable to forms of re-appropriation, reversibility and re-utilisation not only in
tactical realignments from “above” but in counter-offensives from “below” (Gordon, 1980: 256). In keeping with his approach to power as productive and not merely repressive, Foucault sees resistance as produced by power. However, while Foucault tells us that resistance is possible, indeed that it is unavoidable, he does not, in his extended analyses of power (1975, 1988, 1991), theorise resistance, nor does he ‘offer an image of subjects resisting’ (Probyn quoted in Best, 1998: 26). We are presented instead, in these historical accounts, with a totalising view of power, which works through the micro-mechanisms he describes, to produce a subject who has internalised its intentions and effects. Such ‘normalised’ subjects no longer require the direct application of power to ensure compliance, due to the panopticon effects of modern disciplinary institutions. Thus:

He who is subject to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection (Foucault, 1991: 202-3).

Such an account of power, and the self-disciplined subject it produces, has led many to suggest that Foucault offers no escape from power – that resistance is impossible within this formulation. Foucault has thus been accused of offering a pessimistic account of power and its effects (Thompson & Ackroyd, 1995; Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999).

However others have noted the emancipatory potential in Foucault’s work, the ‘cry for freedom’ which ‘stands out like a bolt from the blue’ in his work (Marshall 1996: 43). The aim of Foucault’s project has been described as, ‘the opening up of a space in which to think “difference” or “otherness”’ (McNay, 1994: 49). Indeed, in doing so, it offers, ‘opportunities for openings to escape the grasp of categories, objectifications and treatments’ (Marshall, 1996: 164). Shumway suggests that Foucault’s analysis of micropower may be seen as, ‘a manual for the resister who remains inside the disciplinary institutions’, not only prisoners and psychiatric patients but ‘all those whose bodies and souls are subject to repeated examination and normalizing judgement’ (Shumway, 1989: 161). This aspect of Foucault’s work is also noted by Knights, who says that Foucault’s ‘whole intellectual enterprise was to show how subjugated
knowledge can be deployed to resist the subjectivities that, through diverse regimes of power, have rendered us docile and manageable’ (Knights, 2000: 68). Indeed, Knights goes so far as to suggest that the influence of particular works of Foucault (specifically Power/Knowledge and The Subject and Knowledge) is ‘precisely to promote resistance’ (Knights, 2000: 71). Other scholars have agreed that the ‘pessimistic’ reading of Foucault’s analysis of power is unjustified, because, in the very capillarity of power, we see the creation of a ‘channel in which a countervailing force is generated’, allowing for the possibility of contestation and change initiated from below (Hebdige, 1997: 394). The mechanisms, techniques and micro-operations of power are vulnerable to resistance from those who are their object, because the ‘human material operated on by programmes and technologies is inherently a resisting material’ (Gordon, 1980: 255). It is this micro-resistance, this turning back on itself of the capillary exercises of power that this study explores.

Foucault on Resistance

As Gordon acknowledges, the project to which Foucault addressed himself necessitated a greater focus on domination than on subordination. Despite this, the ‘facts of resistance are nevertheless assigned an irreducible role’ within his analysis (Gordon, 1980: 255). Foucault argues that power relations cannot exist without ‘points of insubordination that, by definition, are means of escape’ (Foucault, 2002: 347). He sees resistance as inevitable wherever power is exercised, and points of resistance as existing throughout a power network (Foucault, 1990, 95). Rather than a ‘single locus of great Refusal’, Foucault sees:

A plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested or sacrificial; by definition they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations (Foucault, 1990: 96).

For Foucault, such resistances are more effective when they are specifically directed at a technique or mechanism of power. Such resistances consist of ‘refusing’ the techniques
that ‘facilitate the exercise of power and the production of knowledge’ (McHoul & Grace, 1993: 86). Foucault insists that such resistances are ‘all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised ... [resistance] exists all the more by being in the same place as power’ (Foucault, 1980: 142). Elsewhere, he argues that, in struggles against domination, exploitation, and subjection, subordinates attack particular techniques of power, rather than institutions of power, or dominant groups (Foucault, 2002: 351). Indeed, Foucault suggested that power relations could be studied by focussing first on the resistances to which they give rise. The empirical approach he advocated:

consists in taking the forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point ... it consists in using this resistance as a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their point of application and the methods used. Rather than analysing power from the point of view of its internal rationality, it consists in analysing power relations through the antagonism of strategies... In order to understand what power relations are about, perhaps we should investigate the forms of resistance and attempts made to dissociate these relations (Foucault, 2002: 329).

Ultimately, explorations of resistance should also be able to tell us something about the operations of power, to help us gauge how effective these mechanisms and techniques are, and to explore to what extent they achieve the forms of subjectivity that promote their continued existence, ultimately rendering their exercise unnecessary. However, this study did not approach the phenomenon of resistance purely for what its enactment could tell us about managerial power. Resistance itself was the focus of this study, although – reflecting the inseparability of the two concepts – such resistance was unintelligible without an accompanying consideration of the enactment of managerial power. With this in mind, having established early in the research interviews the points at which they themselves experienced the exercise of power, participants were asked to think about the ways in which they ‘resisted’, ‘got around’ or ‘avoided’ the mechanisms of power they had identified. Thus, having identified managerial power at the point at which it is in direct relationship to its object, the interviews moved to a discussion of the instances where such techniques were ‘refused’, where resistance was enacted towards a specific
mechanism, where ‘resistances were formed at the points and junctures where relations of power were exercised’ (Foucault, 1980: 142).

Such an approach to examining or ‘uncovering’ resistance had at least two distinct advantages. Firstly, it integrated theory and method into a coherent methodology. The theoretical understandings of power and resistance drawn upon in this thesis were consistent with the methods utilised to elicit its existence in a research setting. Rather than approaching managerialism as a monolithic, abstract force or entity, the research interviews focussed on the mechanisms, techniques and practices of managerialism. Thus, Foucauldian understandings of power and resistance were reflected and sustained by the focus of the questions posed. Secondly, it overcame or avoided a problem commonly encountered when researchers focus on the issue of resistance – the problem of interpretation.

**Interpreting Resistance**

A central question within approaches to resistance, whether from an anthropological, cultural studies, or labour process perspective, is, ‘what qualifies as resistance?’ What factors must be considered when determining whether an act may be considered to be resistance? Barker argues that resistance, ‘is not a quality of an act but a category of judgement about acts. Consequently, it is possible and legitimate for critics to identify resistance when participants do not understand it this way’ (Barker, 2000: 347). This view may have the advantage of allowing for an interpretive approach to the actions of individuals and groups, particularly in situations where ethnographic methods are applied. In such situations the interpretive understandings of researchers may supplement the individuals’ or groups’ own interpretations, providing a layering of meaning gleaned through extended observation and close association. However, determining that a particular action constitutes resistance, independent of the corroboration of those studied, also runs the risk of imposing meanings that are not shared by the research subjects. This has been particularly significant when researchers have relied upon participant
observation methods to study resistance. They may observe what might be interpreted as a resistant act, but be unsure as to the intentions associated with it, and for various reasons, it may be difficult to elicit those meanings from those studied. For example, those who are in relatively powerless positions, fearing retribution, may remain silent about their intentions (Scott, 1986: 29).

One of the criticisms levelled at analyses of youth subcultures that have interpreted subcultural expressions as resistance, is that too much meaning has been imputed to particular acts. The actions of such groups have been made to bear 'too much symbolic baggage', and the interpretations offered by researchers bore little resemblance to the accounts the social actors themselves gave of their own actions and motivation (Simpson & Hil, 1995: 13-4). For example, Cohen and Taylor (1976) note that the research subjects – prisoners – to whom they wished to attribute revolutionary actions were 'apparently unimpressed by the new radical role which was held out to them', and, 'continued to give accounts of the world and their actions which were difficult to press into our theoretical framework' (Cohen & Taylor, 1976: 3). Symbolic resistance has thus potentially been ascribed to a variety of acts that may have been open to other interpretations, and may have held different meanings for the social actors involved.

Similarly, within labour process theory accounts of resistance, the point has been made that resistance is inadequately understood because of 'the tendency of researchers to impose, rather than to investigate, the meaning that subjects themselves attribute to their actions or behaviour' (Jermier et al, 1994: 10-11). Within cultural studies accounts, resistance may have been too often attributed to particular acts, while, within labour process theory approaches, it has been argued that resistance often goes under-recognised. This is especially the case since the introduction of modes of control which seek to capture the 'hearts and minds' of employees, and those which employ surveillance in order to minimise the opportunities for misbehaviour (Gabriel, 1999; Knights, 2000).
The problem of interpreting resistance is removed when the accounts of the resistors are privileged, and when they themselves are asked about their own resistance, as was the case in the research interviews undertaken in this study. Rather than assuming that the researcher has a superior ability to interpret resistance from the acts of the research subjects, the agency of those who resist is sustained in their recounting and interpretation of their resistant acts. The ‘social meanings’ and significance behind various actions can only be fully appreciated by referring to the understandings of the social actors who engage in them (Edwards & Scullion, 1982: 2). It is vital, in other words, to ‘take the word of the participants’ in examining instances of resistance (Jermier et al, 1994: 10-11). Such an approach recognises that:

Knowledge about these matters [resistance] does not come directly from metaphysical assumptions about human nature. It is derived from an analysis of the subjective worlds of actors in the systems. Importantly, this includes their views on the experience of domination they encounter and the meanings they attach to the behaviour we are prone to call resistance (Jermier et al, 1994: 6).

It is especially appropriate to draw on such subjective understandings in the case of the professional, academic, research participants who were the subject of this research. Scott, discussing the problem of interpreting the resistance of Malay peasants, notes that, in addition to their tendency to remain mute because of justifiable fears for their safety, their forms of resistance were so embedded in their subcultural practices and routines that they remained unarticulated. As Scott put it ‘the fish do not talk about the water’ (Scott, 1986: 29). This was, understandably and predictably, not a problem for the academics who participated in this study. Such fish are accustomed to discussing, theorising and analysing the water in which they swim. Indeed the problem of interpretation encountered in this study was often quite the opposite to that which Scott refers – a point to which I return below.
The Research Design

An adoption of Foucauldian understandings of power and resistance has obvious implications for research design. While Foucault undertook historical analyses of techniques of power (1975; 1988; 1990; 1991) it is possible to apply his methodological precautions, discussed above, to a study of power in the present. This contemporary approach necessitates recourse to a different type of archive. Any contemporary study of power seeking to follow the methodological principles detailed above, and which is based upon the conceptual framework Foucault provides, will be facilitated by the employment of a qualitative and detailed approach. In order to adequately explore the ‘infinitesimal mechanisms’ (Foucault, 1980: 99) of power, and the micro-resistance of those who are subject to them, it is necessary to employ a ‘micro’ approach in undertaking research. In-depth, intimate forms of research are most appropriate for exploring, uncovering, and understanding mechanisms of power, and the resistance that they produce.

Within the field of higher education studies, this approach has been referred to as ‘close-up research’ (Prichard & Trowler, 2003). Advocates suggest that close-up research results in ‘the illumination of social reality, of the everyday processes of daily life’. They argue that the ground-level approach is an appropriate way to seek answers to the questions that ‘bubble to the surface in higher education every day’ (Prichard & Trowler, 2003: xiv-xv). Similarly, Trowler and Knights (2002: 155) have argued that ‘the microscope, not the telescope, is the appropriate instrument’ to employ in an examination of how changes are received by those in higher education. The application of the microscope to the micro-physics of managerial power, and specifically to micro-political resistance (Thomas et al, 2004) is arguably best attempted in lengthy qualitative research interviews, supplemented by some form of ethnographic observation.

The level at which the study is undertaken is also already clearly determined by Foucault’s injunction to conduct an ascending analysis of power; in order to understand the operation of managerial power it is necessary to begin with those who are subject to its techniques and practices. However, as noted above, uncovering understandings about
resistance was the ultimate goal of the research interviews. This, naturally, necessitated undertaking research interviews with those enacting such resistance, in order to benefit from their subjective understandings about the meanings associated with managerial power and their resistance to it.

The Research Interviews

This study draws on lengthy interviews undertaken with 30 academics (seven women and 23 men\(^1\)) at ten universities in New South Wales, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory. Mindful of the importance of potential differences between institutional types, these universities represent the five ‘segments’ of the Australian higher education system that Marginson & Considine (2000) identify – the Sandstones, Redbricks, GuNmTrees, Unitechs, and New Universities. The academics represented 23 disciplines, and ranged in level of appointment from Lecturer to Associate Professor\(^2\). The sample was essentially a convenience one, relying on a ‘snowball’ effect (Sarantakos, 2005: 165-6), with academics I interviewed referring me on to others. In asking to be referred in this way, I made the point that I was not seeking academics with any particular viewpoint on recent developments within universities. I was anxious to avoid being referred only to those who had expressed dissatisfaction regarding managerialism, as I was interested in a variety of perspectives. However, regardless of the method employed in this type of research, it is likely that those who are dissatisfied with the status quo, and who wish to share this perspective, are more likely to respond to invitations to participate in research. Interviewees were often able to refer me to people they thought might be prepared to

\(^1\) This would initially appear to represent a significant gender imbalance in the sample. However, women occupy only 38 percent of total academic positions in Australia (DEST, 2004: 12). In addition, non-probability samples typically employed in qualitative research do not place great emphasis on representativeness. In any case, the nature of the snowball sample meant that its constitution was, to some extent at least, beyond my control.

\(^2\) As it is often the case that Professors hold the position of Head of School, it was decided to avoid interviewing academics holding this rank. The position that dictated this choice was that heads of school may be seen as representing the managerial agenda rather than being subject to it. This notion was revised during the course of the research, as it became clear that heads of school often occupy an ambiguous (and often uncomfortable and unenviable) position between university management and academic staff.
participate in a research interview. With very few exceptions, academics referred me to others in their own field of study, rather than in their own university, underlining the significance of discipline over institution in shaping academic communities and forms of identity. In almost all cases, academics acknowledged that they had an extended network of colleagues across the country – and in many cases across the world – within their own discipline or disciplinary grouping, but knew no-one beyond it, in their own institution. One exception to this trend occurred in a regional university where the academic referring me on had developed relationships with academics beyond his own disciplinary area, over a period of years. The existence of such connections reflected not only this particular academic’s sociable and gregarious personality\(^3\), but also his long-term residence in a regional city, with the accompanying increased likelihood that a scholarly network may develop a social aspect in a relatively isolated setting.

Most commonly the academics to whom I was referred responded positively to my (usually telephone) invitation to participate in a research interview. In this initial approach, I explained the focus of the interviews – that I was interested in recent changes to the management of universities, and academics’ responses to them. At this point, academics often appeared to be attempting to get a sense of my orientation to the topic. Effectively, many appeared to be gauging which ‘side’ I was on. What appeared occasionally to be an initial mild suspicion usually disappeared quickly in the interview setting, for reasons that are explored below.

Interviews usually took place in the academic’s office, although a small number were conducted in their homes, or in cafes, at their request. Interviews that were undertaken in academic’s offices were frequently punctuated by phone calls, or interruptions by students and colleagues. While academics were unfailingly generous in the time they committed to the interviews, there was also often a sense of haste or urgency about these interviews. This was no doubt associated with the increased

\(^3\) This particular academic’s passion for tennis and the proximity of the tennis courts to his office may also have accounted for the development of friendships based on commonalities which transcend the purely scholarly!
workloads that featured prominently in the discourses of most interviewees. Time given over to a research interview was time that must be made up elsewhere in an environment where there was always so much to be done. Interviews were audio-recorded for later transcription, with the permission of the respondent.

My initial intention was to conduct semi-structured interviews, and interview guides were diligently prepared, ensuring coverage of the areas that appeared to be important for a thorough exploration of the research topic (Sarantakos, 1998: 251; Bryman, 2001: 314). However, while very, very, occasionally academics listened to the questions I posed, answered, and waited for the next question, far more commonly the direction of the interview was ‘taken over’ by the academic. Clarke (1987) and his interviewers report similar experiences in their research interviews with academics in the United States. Clarke notes that, when interviewing academics, ‘answers in one category frequently shaded into other topics, and beyond: Professors are trained to talk, to conceptualise, and to direct the flow of conversations’ (Clark, 1987: 285). While this was initially disconcerting, it soon emerged that interviews in which academics could frame the issues they considered relevant to the research topic in their own terms, had many advantages. Soon, I abandoned semi-structured interviews in favour of very loosely structured interviews, which allowed the respondents the opportunity to draw to my attention issues that they felt were important. This approach is common with ‘in-depth’ interviews. The purpose of such interviews is to allow an understanding of the ‘significance of human experiences as described from the actor’s perspective and interpreted by the researcher’ (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell & Alexander, 1990: 8, emphasis added). This is where the research encountered another unanticipated element, unique, no doubt, to the experience of interviewing academics.

As noted above, Scott referred to the difficulty of eliciting verbal accounts of resistant practices from the Malay peasants he studied, on the basis that ‘the fish do not talk about the water’ (Scott, 1986: 29). On the contrary, my ‘fish’, in keeping with the scholarly practices and approaches embedded in academic culture, often offered pre-theorised, pre-interpreted accounts of their own experiences of power in the managerial
university. In doing so they appeared to find it difficult to maintain their role as research subject, slipping instead into the more familiar and comfortable roles of academic adviser and teacher. Answers to questions were often couched in terms of, ‘Well it’s like (insert name of relevant theorist) says …’, or ‘Are you familiar with the work of (insert name of favourite theorist)?’ They analysed their own experiences, drawing on the insights, expert knowledge, and explanatory power associated with the ‘tools of the trade’ of their own disciplinary backgrounds. This was particularly the case for those academics working in the Social Sciences and Humanities. I often found this frustrating. I expected (and initially wanted) academics to assume the role of respondent, to recount what they themselves were experiencing, and, to some extent at least, to leave the broader interpretation or analysis to me. However, this experience was also enlightening, demonstrating the inseparability of academic as reflective worker and academic as theorist. It seemed likely that the expert knowledge, epistemological backgrounds, and favoured theoretical perspectives of the academics would somehow factor into their responses and resistance to managerialism. Most importantly, it ensured that my account and analysis of resistance was consistent with my interviewees’ own understandings of it.

In any case, there was little choice but to ‘go with the flow’ and follow where the academics led, hopeful that such an approach would prove fruitful in the final analysis. However, it should be acknowledged that I frequently felt that I had very little control over the interview process, and that this continued to be a source of concern. I transcribed early interviews, looking for clues as to how I could more effectively direct the interviews along the lines I had in mind. How could I manage the interviews better? Again, a problem for which a solution was elusive was interrogated for what it could tell me about the nature of those I was studying. In this instance it appeared likely that the propensity of academics to resist any attempt to be ‘managed’ – even in a research interview – provided insights into the resources, motivation, and enactment of resistance to attempts to manage them in far more comprehensive ways.

However, the interview process was by no means all hard work. Most interviews were enjoyable, many yielding eloquent and thoughtful insights, and, often, much shared
laughter. In many cases a sense of rapport developed quickly, and several interviewees said that they had relished the opportunity to ‘vent’ on the topic of managerialism. All interviews are a form of conversation, but a number of those undertaken for this study assumed an almost conspiratorial aspect at times. I made no attempt to assume the role of impartial, objective researcher. I was conscious that, in qualitative research, the relationship one develops in an interview situation is ‘part of the research process, not a distraction from it’, and that, ‘there can be no such thing as a ‘relationship-free’ interview (King, 1994: 15). While this relationship was usually brief, it was important to establish a degree of trust wherever possible. Assurances about anonymity and confidentiality were given, and honoured. However, many of those interviewed appeared, as previously noted, to want to discover what my own position on managerialism was. This was not a question that was asked, either directly or indirectly. Instead, interviewees appeared to relax and warm as I responded empathetically to their accounts of managerialism endured, and applauded their stories of managerialism thwarted.

Gabriel (1998, 1999) has explored the ways in which the stories that are told about organizational life can provide the researcher with valuable insights. While the research design employed in this study made no explicit attempt to elicit such stories, academics often offered anecdotes as illustrations of various aspects of managerialism. Gabriel notes that in using stories as a research tool, the researcher must ‘abandon the stance of neutral observer and recorder and adopt the stance of good listener and even good storyteller, co-conspirator on forbidden plots, and fellow-traveller on dangerous fantasies’ (Gabriel, 1999: 196). My own position on managerialism meant that there was no need to act a false part in responding in this way. Although my initial approaches and the beginnings of the interview were always carefully framed in neutral terms, I took my cue from those I was interviewing, and related to them accordingly. My ability to relate to and identify with the stories, and those who told them, helped to establish a climate of trust, which was vital in interviews of this nature.

However, the privileging of research subjects’ accounts of resistance was not without its own problems. On many occasions academics’ accounts and anecdotes
detailing aspects of managerialism flowed at length (sometimes without any opportunity for me to interpose another question). So too did their critiques of such practices. In this regard the fish had, as noted above, thoroughly analysed the water in which they swim. However, when the issue of resistance was raised the conversation often faltered, and some academics appeared to have little to contribute on the topic of their own responses to such mechanisms. It is possible that while academics could articulate their opposition to managerialist practices in a research interview, what they regarded as actual resistance is much harder to enact, for a range of reasons. However, this hesitation may also relate to the same problem that has plagued researchers — the failure to register or recognize everyday forms of resistance, as resistance. Mindful of this point, I tended to ask interviewees how they ‘got around’, ‘avoided’ or ‘dealt with’ the managerial practices that they had identified as a problem for them, rather than relying on the term ‘resistance’ with its potential connotations of big, bold, spectacular acts. Sometimes, when interviewees appeared ‘stuck’, I supplemented my questions with prompts, asking ‘Well, do you, for example ...?’ These prompts often elicited a chuckle or a wry smile of recognition, as the academic acknowledged that they did, indeed, engage in such acts. These routine forms of resistance included omissions, such as declining to read communications from university management, ‘forgetting’ to comply with administrative requirements, and partial completion of forms⁴. The interviewer’s role as ‘co-conspirator’ and ‘insider’ (Lewins, 1992: 78-79) was conspicuous at such times. The ease with such a role was assumed, and the acquisition of the knowledge required to provide such prompts, was facilitated by my changing role within the university during the period of this research.

The Accidental Ethnographer

At the beginning of this research I was allocated a space in a large shared office set aside for postgraduate students within my School. This was a convenient place in which to

⁴ At the 2001 conference of the Association for the Public University one academic urged colleagues to ‘only fill in half the boxes’ on the proliferating number of forms they were compelled to complete, as a form of resistance to managerialism (Cropper, 2001).
undertake the necessary ‘preparation work’ before entering the field (Minichiello et al, 1990: 69-86). I planned initially to explore the existing literature, in order to clarify the issues that appeared to be causing so much grief to academics in Australian universities. This office was located in the same building and corridor as the offices of the academics in my school. As I had undertaken my undergraduate degree and Honours year at the same university, I already knew almost all of these academics. However, my new role as postgraduate student involved changes in my relationships with them. I was in the habit of using my office every day and became, therefore, more closely acquainted with them than I had been as an undergraduate student. Additionally, I was employed by the university as a tutor from the beginning of my first semester of enrolment. As a result, academics began to relate to me as a junior colleague, rather than simply as a student. This new role facilitated my research in ways that were unanticipated at the beginning of my candidature. It meant that, over a period of time, academics became more inclined to discuss with me, or in my presence, issues that arose during the course of the working day. Frequently, such matters were related to the introduction of managerialist practices. As more academics became aware of the topic of my thesis, they appeared to make a point of including me in discussions of the latest manifestations of managerialism within our university.

From the second semester of my enrolment I was offered casual employment that involved delivering lectures and co-ordinating units of study. This further integrated me into the life of the School, as I was included in School marking meetings, notified of policy changes related to teaching and assessment, and kept up to date with developments regarding proposed changes to the structure and offerings of courses. Later, I was offered — and accepted — two short-term, full-time⁵ contracts as an Associate Lecturer in the School, affording me even greater insights into the life of an academic in the managerial university. In short, the empirical aspect of this research, while it was intended to rely entirely upon a series of semi-structured interviews, also included elements of what I came to think of as an ‘accidental ethnography’. Unplanned, unanticipated participant

⁵ These periods of full-time employment necessitated taking leaves of absence from my studies. Although officially on leave, the experience of working full-time as an academic proved to be invaluable for the study I was undertaking.
observation supplemented planned research interviews. I came to realize that the time I was supposedly spending preparing to ‘go into the field’ was actually being spent in the field – effectively moving between the roles of observer-as-participant and participant-as-observer (Baker, 1994: 245; Lewins, 1992: 78-81), as my involvement in the School increased. My physical location within the School, and my growing integration into the life of the School, resulted in insights into the ground-level effects of managerialist practices – and the resistance it produced – which informed this research, and the research interviews, in invaluable ways.

For me, a particularly ugly blue and white china teapot is emblematic of such ethnographic insights, many of which were useful in guiding the line of questioning during some interviews, and, later, in helping to interpret and understand interview data. As is common in contemporary Australian universities, staff in my School frequently rush from lecture to tutorial to meeting. There is rarely a full complement of academic staff in attendance – when they are not teaching, most work at home. There is a tearoom set aside for the use of staff members, with a table and chairs, and the all-important urn. However, while the administrative staff often ate their lunch there, it was generally used by the academic staff merely to replenish their coffee cups, which were then taken back to their offices. On a particular day of the week, however, a greater than usual number of academic staff had teaching responsibilities. On this day, in the middle of the afternoon, a fairly senior member of staff would regularly pop his head around the doors of offices and announce that there was a fresh pot of tea in the tearoom for those who cared to partake. It seemed a fairly incongruous activity in the midst of the hurly-burly of an academic department in the 21st century. However, I had a great respect for this academic, and was pleased to join the smallish group that regularly assembled in the tearoom. More pragmatically, it seemed a good opportunity to be privy to what I anticipated would be another discussion about whatever changes to the university were currently in train. However, the senior academic responsible for these gatherings (and responsible for the purchase of the rather imposing teapot around which we assembled) seemed to divert the course of the conversation whenever it turned to this – for me – interesting topic. Instead, he encouraged his colleagues to discuss lighter matters, to
regard the gathering as a break from work, and as an opportunity to relate to each other on a more personal level.

Initially, this seemed to me to be merely a quaint (and rather antiquated) custom, preserved by an academic who, whatever the pressures, was unfailingly gracious and courteous in his dealings with all staff and students. However, research interviews provided an opportunity to explore the ideas that emerged during the 'accidental ethnography'. For example, when older academics talked about their early careers, I often asked about their experiences of morning or afternoon tea, and what such institutions had meant to them within the pre-managerial university. Their responses allowed me to recognize the ritual of the teapot as a particularly productive and positive form of resistance to the erosions of collegiality, and the frenetic pace of work within the contemporary university. Academics who spoke of the departmental teatime rituals of earlier times allowed me to fully appreciate that this particular form of resistance drew upon an established and valued tradition within academic culture, in order to preserve a space for collegiality within the managerial university. In this way, insights gained from the accidental ethnography informed research interviews, and vice versa, facilitating interpretation and understanding at both levels.

Not all forms of resistance that I witnessed, however, were as positive, creative, and collegial as the revival of the afternoon tea ritual. My location within the school also allowed me to observe many other forms of routine or everyday resistance. Many of these forms of resistance were subtle, and easy to miss. They included refusal to read university communications or attend forums organized by management, and an increasing reluctance to attend graduations, and university Open Days. Academics used humour, sarcasm and irony to achieve discursive distance from the latest managerial edicts, and appeared to physically distance themselves from the university whenever possible, by

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6 This may seem to be something of a contradiction to my position that social actors should be asked about their resistance, instead of interpreting such meanings from observed acts. In the research interviews, of course, this is the course I followed. However, for a variety of reasons, I made the decision very early in the research project that I would not conduct interviews with those with whom I worked. To an extent, then, interpretation was a necessary part of the 'accidental ethnography'.

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working at home. One of the more amusing (or frustrating, depending on the circumstances) forms of resistance was what I came to think of as the ‘Absent-Minded Professor Routine’. Employing this form of resistance, whenever an academic is reminded that s/he has failed to do something that is required by the university, s/he simply assumes a faraway expression (preferably one that suggests that their brain is fully occupied with matters of a profound nature), and apologetically murmurs something like, ‘Oh dear, was I supposed to do that? Oh dear’. They then glide away, with the required task still not attempted. This mode of resistance effectively avoided any confrontation while still achieving the objective of evading the undesired task.  

First-hand experiences of these routine forms of resistance sensitised me to the forms of resistance I might encounter in interviews. As noted above, such information was often useful in the form of prompts when academics were asked about the forms of resistance they themselves employed. Just as importantly, the insider knowledge about universities acquired during this ‘accidental ethnography’, along with my (albeit limited) experience as an academic member of staff meant that during research interviews I was more likely to be regarded by my interviewees as ‘one of us’. This facilitated the sort of open, honest exchanges without which a meaningful examination of resistance is almost impossible. As Thomas & Davies (forthcoming: 11) note, a situation where interviewer and interviewee share similar professional backgrounds can result in ‘greater empathy and mutual understanding in the interview encounter, with individuals assuming shared experiences, language and vocabulary, political and work orientation’. 

Interviews were transcribed as soon after the interviews as possible. I undertook the transcription myself, and found that listening to the tapes, in the fairly repetitious way necessary for the non-professional transcriber, offered a valuable opportunity to revisit and re-live the interviews, refreshing and supplementing my initial impressions. A summary of the impressions I formed during interviews was included with the

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7 It should be emphasized that the sorts of tasks that were avoided in this manner were of the nature that academics frequently refer to as ‘administrivia’. The tasks that were avoided were usually newly-introduced, and academics perceived them as adding an additional burden without achieving any meaningful outcome.
transcriptions – wherever possible this was completed immediately after interviews, and often supplemented during the transcription process. Transcription was not a routine or mechanical typing task. Listening to the tapes prompted ongoing analysis that was valuable in allowing me to see connections with other interviews, and with existing literature on resistance, on academic identities, and on managerialism in universities. In this regard, the voices of the academics themselves proved to be a valuable stimulus. As a result, I found that later, during the writing process, it was easy to recall the voices, faces, tones, and demeanours of the academics. Thus, the interviews with academics were never reduced to sterile scripts. Instead, my interviewees continued to exert the force of their personalities long after the interviews had concluded.

No software programmes were employed in the analysis of the data. Instead, I ‘lived with’ the transcripts, reading them repeatedly, searching for meanings I may have initially missed, looking for connections, commonalities, consistencies and contradictions. There were no readily available categories to which I could assign data, and the ways in which academics had directed the flow of the interview ensured that there was no possibility of going through answers to questions in an even semi-orderly fashion. It emerged that the data fell into three fairly distinct, although by no means discrete, categories. The stories academics told in these interviews reflected their understandings of academic culture and what it means to be an academic, presented an assessment and critique of managerialism in Australian universities, and related their responses and resistance to these practices. These themes form the bases of Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

Chapters Five and Six explore the discursive resistance mounted by academics in this study as they reflected upon, assessed, and critiqued aspects of managerialism, and contrasted the values and priorities embedded in these practices with their understandings of academic values and academic culture. Chapter Seven presents an analysis of the forms of resistance that were underpinned by this critique. There, an attempt is made to disaggregate the forms of resistance that emerged in this study, without suggesting that it is possible to entirely disentangle or neatly categorise them. Throughout, it seeks to
understand the meanings with which these forms of resistance were imbued by those undertaking them, exploring the motivations, intentions and reflections of the academics in this study.
Chapter Four

MANAGERIALISM AND PROFESSIONALISM

'Evaluation of managerialism is not an easy task. It is in part dependent upon the values and concerns of the evaluator' (Peters & Savol, 1998: 11).

Introduction

While the focus of this study is academic resistance within the Australian managerial university, it is important to contextualise academics' experiences and responses within an understanding of changes to the management of the public sector more broadly. Such changes have had far-reaching consequences for those who are employed within public sector organizations, and particularly for those in professional roles. This chapter, therefore, steps back from a focus on the experiences of academics within the managerial university, in order to consider the broader phenomenon of managerialism in the public sector. This sketch of managerialism's history, tenets, and practices provides a broad understanding of what it is that academics in Australian universities are resisting. The exploration of professionalism, undertaken in the second half of the chapter, provides some provisional understandings of why they resist such changes. These broad outlines of managerialism and professionalism are refined, in the two chapters that follow, to a focus on managerialism in higher education, and the nature of academic professionalism.

The Rise of Managerialism

Since the early 1980s, the public sector has been transformed by the adoption of an approach known as New Public Management (NPM), or managerialism. These terms refer to the incorporation of approaches, systems, and techniques, commonly found in the private sector, to the management and conduct of the public sector. They include:
increased emphasis on, and expansion of, the role of managers; increased emphasis on accountability, audit, and performance evaluation; increased emphasis on economy, efficiency and effectiveness; increased emphasis on ‘the customer’ as the public sector moves closer to the market; increased emphasis on strategic planning and strategic management; increased competition within the public sector; changes in human resource management including the increased use of casual and short-term contract staff; and restructuring, involving increased budgetary devolution and the creation of flatter structures. All of these elements of managerialism have implications for those working within the public sector, often changing the nature of their work in profound and far-reaching ways.

The process by which a managerial approach came to be accepted in place of the Progressive Public Administration (Hood, 1995), or bureau-professional (Clarke & Newman, 1997) model of the public services is complex, and results from a particular conjunction of social, economic, and political factors (Farnham & Horton, 1996c: 261). Briefly, the post-war welfare state/Keynesian settlement – also known as the social democratic consensus (Farnham & Horton, 1996b: 10)–represented a view that the state had an important and legitimate role to play in intervening in the economy, and providing public goods and services, such as education, health care, and social welfare, for its citizens. These services were delivered through an organizational model that drew on both bureaucratic and professional modes of co-ordination (Clarke & Newman, 1997: 4). The principles and values underpinning bureaucracy and professionalism meant that the bureau-professional model was seen to ensure ‘disinterested service’ and ‘impersonal fairness’, thus safeguarding public welfare (Clarke & Newman, 1997: 4-8). Professionals were integrated into public organizations, where they established a level of autonomy, developed internal, collegial forms of control over their work, and enjoyed a degree of confidence from both the state and the public (Sehested, 2002: 1515-6; Clarke & Newman, 1997: 7). Important values within this organizational settlement included ‘justice, equity, fairness and consistency’ (Mascarenhas, 1990: 311), ‘honesty, probity, fairness and consistency’ (Farnham & Horton, 1996c: 275), and an emphasis on ‘the
meticulous application of rules to cases, and parsimony in public expenditure' (Wilenski, 1988: 213).

However, the post-war consensus was challenged and ultimately dissolved by a number of economic, social, and political developments from the period of the mid-1970s. Increasing demand for public services was accompanied by a ‘greying’ of the population, so that the tax base was insufficient to supply the services required (Farnham & Horton, 1996c: 261). Previous stable economic growth, which had served to consolidate the welfare state settlement, was disrupted by a global economic crisis, with attendant increases in unemployment and inflation. These developments were accompanied by the ascendency of a strand of political thought that simultaneously diagnosed the problems of the public sector and offered the prescription for its reform. In this regard, New Right thinking was vitally important in providing an ideological framework for interpreting the ‘crisis of the welfare state’ (Clarke & Newman, 1997: 1). Popular critiques suggested that the public sector was hampered by red tape, and was slow, unresponsive, unaccountable, and inaccessible. In addition, the public began to perceive some public sector professionals – including teachers and welfare workers – as detached from the ‘real world’, and as espousing ‘trendy theories’ and ‘permissive values’ (Clarke & Newman, 1997: 12). The New Right’s assessment of the public sector offered theoretical explanations congruent with these popular critiques. Their explanations were presented in such a way as to harmonise with existing public dissatisfaction with the public sector, in order to ‘emphasize the resonance between their own analyses and public sentiment’ (Pollitt, 1993: 40).

New Right thinking draws upon neo-classical economics and public choice theory to suggest that the market is the most efficient mechanism and ordering principle of economic life. This thinking sees the market as providing all the essential information, as well as the necessary disciplines, required for the effective and efficient organization and coordination of the supply and demand of goods and services. It must, therefore, be allowed to operate unfettered by government interference. The fatal flaw of the public sector, according to the New Right critique, was the absence of market forces
and market principles. The public choice element of this critique suggested that the public sector was also riddled with inefficiency, due to the self-interested behaviour of politicians and public servants. The solution was clear – the public sector must be made to incorporate market principles. Such analyses were disseminated by Right-wing think tanks in Australia, England and the US, and the ideas of Hayek, Friedman, Buchanan and others rapidly gained acceptance\(^1\).

It was not only in countries where parties of the Right held office, however, that the managerialist public sector solutions promoted by the New Right were implemented. Through a process of ‘policy diffusion’ (Hood, 1995: 102), such reforms came to be broadly regarded as the only possible solution for the perceived ills of the public sector. As Marginson notes, the objective of the New Right had not been to lend support to one party, but to ‘reconstruct and control the terrain on which all mainstream politics took place’ (Marginson, 1997b: 79). They have been spectacularly successful in achieving this objective. Managerialist public sector reform proceeded apace in the 1980s, under parties of the Right and those ostensibly of the Left. These reforms are now well established, so much so that some question whether the ‘new’ should be dropped from the term New Public Management (Horton & Farnham, 1999: 248; Owen, 2003: 8).

Yet the rise of managerialism provoked extensive debate and contention. Critics have argued that the private sector provides an inappropriate model, and that many of its practices are unsuitable for incorporation into the management of the public sector. Analysts also note that private sector management practices, and the values, ideas and priorities underpinning them, are far from value-neutral. They suggest that a rubric of efficiency, effectiveness, and empowerment (for public sector employees and clients alike) masks an ideological agenda that ultimately erodes the autonomy, working conditions, and morale of those subject to managerialist changes. The importation of market values, embedded in the management of the private sector, is said to radically transform the nature of welfare provision, education, health and other public sector

\(^1\) Arguably the central ideas of public choice theory have been disseminated most effectively within the broader population by means of the television series *Yes, Minister* and *Yes, Prime Minister*. See especially Borins (1988).
services. As clients, patients and students are re-invented as customers, relationships between them and public sector professionals are also transformed; relations that were previously characterised by reference to professional expertise and professional judgement come to resemble those of the market place. The enhanced role for management, implicit in the managerialist approach, also affects relations between managers and professionals. Professional autonomy is challenged by more directive management styles, and professional integrity is seen to be impugned by the demands of more explicit forms of accountability.

This chapter undertakes an initial exploration of the ways in which the advent of managerialism has affected the working lives of public sector professionals. In order to do so, it is necessary to examine the ideas, values and premises that underpin the notion of professionalism. It is also important to consider the ways in which managerialist approaches translate into specific techniques and practices, and how these tangible manifestations of managerialism challenge, problematise, and, often, collide with notions of professional practice. It is argued here that many elements of professionalism and managerialism are incompatible, and that the practices associated with managerialism have transformed what it means to be a public sector professional in ways that are often confronting. This chapter, therefore, explores the bases of managerial and professional ideologies in order to move towards an understanding of the motivation and logic of professional resistance to managerialism. It begins with an examination of managerialism’s underpinning ideas, theories and techniques, and then moves to an exploration of professionalism’s central tenets. The final section brings together these two areas in an exploration of the ways in which public sector professionals have experienced managerialist changes.

Before proceeding, however, the following caveats are offered. Firstly, the quote that begins this chapter alerts us to the difficulty of evaluating managerialism. As Peters and Savoie note, any such evaluation will reflect the values and concerns of the evaluator. This does not purport, then, to be a value-free exploration of managerialism. It draws on the wealth of literature that critiques the ideology, methods and mechanisms of
managerialism, particularly those which focus on managerialism’s effects on public sector professionals. In discussing aspects of managerialism I consider the implications for power relations, the underpinning value systems, and embedded logics of various practices, rather than simply providing a neutral description of the practices themselves. This thesis begins with the premise that academics experience managerialism primarily as a negative force. This perspective naturally and unavoidably frames the treatment of managerialism and professionalism that follows. Secondly, the account of the rise of managerialism given above is limited in scope and offers only a sketch of the social, political and economic context in which managerialism rose to prominence. Such factors comprise, of course, important parts of the story of managerialism, but the emphasis here is on the nature of managerialism, rather than on the history of its development2.

Pollitt, a prominent and early analyst of managerial changes to the public sector, has argued that managerialism may be understood as an ideology, ‘a set of broad assumptions about the unique potential and rights of management’. He goes on to note that at another level it constitutes a series of theories and models compatible with these ideas, and that at the final level of analysis it may be perceived as a series of techniques and practices (Pollitt, 1993: 11-12). The following exploration corresponds broadly with Pollitt’s typology, providing a descending analysis of the component parts of managerialism. It begins with an examination of the most basic ideas and assumptions that underpin its prescriptions and moves on to consider the theories and models, and finally the practices and techniques that enact and implement these ideas.

Unpacking Managerialism’s Ideological Tenets

To argue, as many analysts have, that managerialism is an ideology, is to suggest that it is a set of more or less coherent and related ideas, beliefs, and values that represent the social world in particular ways, and that justify a particular distribution of power. It is

2 For texts which include an account of the social, political, economic, and philosophic context of the rise of managerialism see Pollitt (1993, especially Chapter 2); Zifcak (1994); Perlie, Ashburner, Fitzgerald & Pettigrew (1996); and Clarke & Newman (1997).
necessary, therefore, to unpack and explore these ideas and beliefs in order to establish the ideological basis of managerialism. Rees argues that the ideology of managerialism has ‘two distinct claims’ – that ‘efficient management can solve almost any problem’ and that ‘practices which are appropriate for the conduct of private sector enterprises can also be applied to public sector services’ (Rees, 1995: 15). Other analysts have identified the same broad assumptions underpinning managerialism and its operations. Pollitt argues that managerial ideology is a ‘systematically structured set of beliefs’ (Pollitt, 1993: 7), which, taken together, ‘envisage a large, sometimes almost apocalyptic role for management’ (Pollitt, 1993: 3). Managerial ideology, he argues, suggests that better management practices, drawn from the private sector, will ‘prove an effective solvent for a wide range of economic and social ills’ (Pollitt, 1993: 1). Lawler & Hearn similarly suggest:

Managerialism refers to a concentration on the interests of management in how organizations are managed, stressing the role and accountability of individual managers and their positions as managers ... Managerialism implies that there are certain core functions of management applicable across all organizational contexts and that certain management techniques can be transferred across contexts – in this case, from the private to the public sector (Lawler & Hearn, 1995: 8).

For Farnham & Horton, too, managerialism comprises ‘not only the importation of private business systems and techniques into the public services but also a set of ideas and values justifying a central role for managers and management within organisations and society’ (Farnham & Horton, 1996c: 260).

These two central tenets – that more and better management is required in the public sector, and that the private sector, with its reliance on the logic and discipline of ‘the market’, is the appropriate model for the operation of the public sector – anchor and underpin managerialism, and justify its implementation. These two beliefs, and their associated values, are translated into practice through models and theories that, when interrogated, reflect their ideological basis. Yet at the same time, as Pollitt (1993: 11) notes, when we move down to the level of theories and models, and techniques, their ideological aspect tends to recede and becomes less obvious. Instead, the dissemination and hegemony of managerial ideology renders such models, theories and practices
‘natural’ and ‘commonsense’. Thus they are represented and become understood as ‘good management practice’, rather than as ideologically driven representations of the ‘right’ way to administer the public sector. As Clarke et al (2000: 8) note, ‘Managing is often presented as a neutral, technical set of activities, performed by neutral technical experts, in pursuit of goals defined by others – and that invocation of neutrality is at the core of ‘managerialism’ as an ideology.’

Managerial Models and Theories

Analysts of changes to public sector management since the early 1980s have identified distinct phases, in which some managerial theories and models were more prominent than others. They suggest that the initial period saw a focus on efficiency and effectiveness, along with an enlarged role for managers, while a later phase emphasised exposure to the disciplines of the market, or the ‘marketisation’ of public sector organizations (Farnham & Horton, 1996c: 264, Pollitt, 19933). Similarly, Ferlie, Ashburner, Fitzgerald and Pettigrew (1996: 10-15) identify four models of NPM - which they term, ‘The Efficiency Drive’, ‘Downsizing and Decentralization’, ‘In Search of Excellence’, and ‘Public Service Orientation’. They suggest that each of these models was dominant at different points in time. Arguably, however, after two decades it is easier to distinguish between such developments in theory, than it is in practice. In the daily experiences of many of those employed in public sector organizations, the influences of the various phases and models have become interwoven, often appearing as part and parcel of the same phenomenon. For many, the enhanced control exercised by managers continues, the imperative to achieve economic efficiencies – to ‘do more with less’ – is still an abiding concern. Similarly, the disciplines of the market, including a focus on accountability and quality assurance, work in tandem with these other concerns. The dominant ideological influences of various phases of managerialism may be analytically distinct, but in practical terms they are broadly compatible and often mutually reinforcing. Some of these – often ostensibly neutral – models, theories, and practices are explored below.

3 Pollitt refers to the earlier phase as managerialism and the later developments as NPM.
The Market Model

Critics argue that managerialism is, fundamentally, underpinned by economic rationalist principles. While other factors figure in its origins, economic rationalism is seen to be its driving force, its foundation and its essence. Hort argues that managerialism’s ‘underpinning logic’ may be found in economic rationalism, (Hort, http://www.nteu.org.au/debates/hort.html), while Marceau sees managerialism as the ‘organisational equivalent of economic rationalism’ (Marceau, 1995: 116). For Bessant, managerialism – or ‘corporate management’ as he terms it – may be seen as a mechanism with which to ‘enforce the prevalent dominant economic orthodoxy, i.e. so called “economic rationalism”’ (Bessant: 1994:1).

The foundational belief of economic rationalism (or neo-liberalism as it is known outside Australia⁴) is the superiority of the market as an allocative mechanism. It is, therefore, seen as appropriate and desirable for the public sector to adopt practices which prevail in the private sector, where market mechanisms determine distribution of resources and, ultimately, the success or failure of enterprises. As Farnham & Horton note:

Managerialism is predicated on the view that private sector economicistic, rationalist and generic management is the ideal model of management to be aimed at. It is seen as being superior to the public administration model and, if the efficiency and quality of public service provision is to be improved, then private sector management practices and ideologies need to be imported into public organizations’ (Farnham & Horton, 1996a: 42).

Therefore, if public sector organizations cannot be entirely subsumed within the private sector, they must, at least, be made to apply the assumptions, approaches, precepts, precepts,

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⁴ While many analysts suggest that economic rationalism is simply the Australian term for neo-liberalism, others argue for a distinction between the two. Wright, for example, sees it as useful to differentiate between ‘free market economics’ and economic rationalism, saying that ‘economic rationalists are one type of adherents to free market economics’ (Wright: 2003: 18, emphasis in original). They support free market economics on the basis of its promise to maximise efficiency, rather than because of a commitment to an ideological position that emphasizes freedom from government interference in the operations of the market. Wright argues that ‘the overriding aim of economic rationalism is to maximise economic efficiency’ (Wright, 2003: 187, fn).
disciplines, methods, techniques and mechanisms of the market; they can be marketised, and forced to operate in a *business-like* manner.

**The Creation of the ‘Customer’**

This process of marketisation involves the importation, into public sector organizations, of a number of concepts that have traditionally been associated exclusively with the private sector. Prominent amongst these is the notion of the ‘customer’. Clarke & Newman note:

> The customer belongs to the discourse of managerialism in the same way that the client or patient belongs to the discourse of professionalism. The managerial claim to be able to act on behalf of customers is manifested in its ethos: being customer centered is one of the foundations of organizational dynamism. The claim is also embodied in the technologies of contemporary managerialism – the use of customer surveys, market research, focus groups and other marketing techniques’ (Clarke & Newman, 1997: 116).

The implications of conceptualising users of public services as customers – rather than as clients, patients, or students – are significant. Indeed, du Gay & Salaman (2000: 79) suggest that the term customer has become paradigmatic, representing ‘a major shift in the ways in which the purpose and structure of work organizations are defined’. Within the bureau-professional model, public sector professionals determined the appropriate services for clients, whereas the notion of ‘customer choice’ is privileged within a managerial model. While the bureau-professional model was associated with claims of inadequate, insensitive, and sometimes discriminatory provision of services, analysts have also identified flaws within the ‘customer’ model. It has been noted that public service transactions are unlike consumer purchases because: there may be no choice involved in using the service (as with social security provision or the taxation department); there is often no market exchange involved (no exchange of goods or services for money); public sector clients often lack the information required to make
choices; and not all public sector organizations provide services directly to individuals (Christy & Brown, 1996: 102).

The notion that the customer is ‘always right’ – widespread within the private sector – is also problematic when applied to public service provision. As Pollit asks, are public sector ‘consumers’ actually likely to know what will work best for them in terms, say, of medical treatment or pedagogical strategies in educational institutions? Are they cognizant of resource constraints, or will they ask for the impossible? What will become of the professional service providers – will they be effectively ‘deskilled’, deprived of most of their discretion and made slaves of the latest public fad or fashion? (Pollitt, 1993: 185).

The reconstruction of client as customer may also involve a diminution, rather than an enhancement, of the relationship between public sector professionals and the users of their services. The provider-customer relationship based on market exchange is arguably far more limited than that which exists between public sector professional and client. The imposition of the customer model, therefore, may marginalise and erode the ‘duty of care’ aspect of professional-client relations, resulting in diminished outcomes for the ‘customer’.

The Public Sector Organization as Enterprise

Just as the market model involves re-imagining the client as the customer, it also requires re-imagining the public sector organization as enterprise. In this view, the bureaucratic public sector organization, thoroughly damned by critiques from both the Left and the Right during the 1980s for its sluggish, hidebound practices, is replaced by the responsive, dynamic, consumer-oriented, competitive public sector organization – complete with newly empowered customers and employees. The adoption of the enterprise approach involves public sector organizations ‘moving closer to the customer’, articulating goals through the formulation of mission statements, engaging in strategic planning, and generally recreating themselves as business units. ‘Enterprising’ public
sector organizations will ‘put their energies into earning money, not simply spending it’, and will measure their success in terms of outcomes, rather than inputs (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992: 19-20, quoted in du Gay, 1993: 644).

Like private sector enterprises, managerial public sector organizations become focussed on minimising costs (often through contracting out the provision of particular services) and on maximising financial returns by attracting private sector capital. Opportunities to generate additional income through entrepreneurial activities vary across the public sector, but may include the provision of consultancy services, the commercialisation of research, and the development of products and services that have commercial application. The traditional virtues associated with public sector administration – careful stewardship of resources, and strict observation of bureaucratic regulations – are superseded by a focus on the qualities valued within commercial enterprise cultures. The introduction of market forces to the public sector encourages the development of entrepreneurial values and beliefs, (Walsh, 1995: 30). Such qualities include ‘self-reliance, personal responsibility, boldness and a willingness to take risks in the pursuit of goals’ (du Gay & Salaman, 2000: 88). For many public sector professionals, such entrepreneurial qualities contrast sharply with those traditionally valued within public sector organizations. Similarly, the entrepreneurial emphasis on securing additional income, cutting costs, and balancing the budget exists in tension with the traditional public sector focus on accessibility, equity, and due process.

The Market Model of Accountability

Thomas suggests that accountability may be understood as ‘an obligation to explain and justify how one discharges responsibilities’ (Thomas, 1998: 352). The market model, and the notion of public sector organizations as enterprises, both imply a particular formulation of public sector accountability. Within the private sector, lines of accountability are presumed to be clear, ensuring that businesses operate to the benefit of their shareholders (Hughes, 2003: 238). Goals are usually easily defined (Farnham &
Horton, 1996a: 29), and generally relate to profit maximisation and the increase of market share. Achievement of these goals, in the private sector, requires a commitment to a customer orientation, and so accountability often involves the demonstration of such a focus. Management and employees in the private sector are also accountable for demonstrating fiscal responsibility, and for ensuring maximum production for minimum expenditure. This private sector model of accountability is regarded as preferable to the confusion and apparent lack of accountability that critics suggest characterised the pre-managerial public sector (Hughes, 2003: 239). Indeed, claims that the public sector was insufficiently accountable acted as a significant spur to the introduction of managerialist reforms.

And yet, of course, the public sector has always been accountable for its operations – directly, to the government, and, less directly, to the public. While its goals are generally complex and less easily defined than those of private sector enterprises, public sector employees are accountable for the appropriate use of finances – in their role as ‘stewards of the public purse’ (Farnham & Horton, 1996a: 33, 34) – for procedural fairness, and for their performance and outcomes (Behn, 2001: 8, cited in Hughes, 2003: 242). Within a bureau-professional administrative model, accountability operated both through bureaucratic hierarchies, and through the expectations associated with professional norms (Broadbent & Laughlin, 1997: 35). The existence of institutions designed to deal with complaints also demonstrates the accountability of the public sector to consumers and clients (Farnham & Horton, 1996a: 35).

The introduction of the market model has wrought significant changes to this traditional model of public sector accountability. Market-accountability emphasises direct accountability to users of public services, and has a greater focus on quantifying and measuring outcomes. The first of these two prongs underscores the notion of the client as customer, discussed above. There are clear implications for changes to existing social relations between public sector professionals and clients in such a formulation of accountability. Those within the private sector are accountable for satisfying and even ‘delighting’ the customer, a notion not always associated with the activities undertaken
by public sector professionals such as social workers and teachers. Critics suggest that this rendering of public sector accountability also emphasises consumer rights at the expense of more inclusive and complex notions of citizenship rights (Walsh, 1995: 214; Ferlie et al, 1996: 211, 213; Dunsire, 1995 in Thomas, 1998: 378).

The second element of the market model of accountability – the focus on quantification – has been termed the ‘accounting logic’ of accountability (Broadbent & Laughlin, 1997). Broadbent & Laughlin suggest that accountability has been ‘captured’ by an approach that emphasises the need to evaluate activities in terms of measurable outcomes and the financial resources used to achieve them (Broadbent & Laughlin, 1997: 37). This process involves the development of performance indicators, and the setting of performance targets that relate to the number of transactions, the cost of activities and services, or the time spent providing particular services. These techniques are all designed to measure productivity and the costs associated with public service provision (Trosa, 1997: 244). Thus, those employed in the public sector – including professionals – are rendered directly accountable for their performance and their use of resources, in ways that reflect the logic and practices of accounting. Broadbent & Laughlin argue that such practices are part of an attempt to exert control over professionals and reduce their level of discretion, and also act to downplay the value of those activities not amenable to such accounting. However, they must also be recognized as part of the attempt to achieve greater productivity in the public sector (Trosa, 1997: 244). This points to a closely related and dominant theme within the market model – the imperative to increase and demonstrate efficiency, effectiveness and economy – to ‘do more with less’.

**The three E’s – Economy, Efficiency & Effectiveness**

The bureau-professional model of the public sector was widely regarded as wasteful, ineffective and inefficient, and, indeed, this apparent defect was probably the most significant element of the rationale for managerialist reforms. Critics, particularly proponents of Public Choice theory, suggested that public sector inefficiency resulted
from the absence of competition, and the practice of budget maximisation, by which public officials deliberately inflated costs in order to increase their budget allocation. The private sector, on the other hand, had incentives to maximise efficiency, economy and effectiveness built into the market system. Those who disregarded such imperatives went out of business. The application of the market model was thus seen as the remedy for a bloated, profligate public sector. De Montricher has argued that ‘the focal point of the managerial principle is the search for efficiency, that is, the capacity to return the best return for a given cost’ (De Montricher, 1998: 124). Within a managerialist paradigm, therefore, the three E’s – economy, efficiency and effectiveness – assume paramount importance.

Pollitt describes economy as the ‘minimization of programme inputs’, efficiency as ‘the ratio between inputs and outcomes’, and effectiveness as ‘the degree to which programme outcomes match the original programme objectives’ (Pollitt, 1993: 59, emphasis in original). He argues that the managerial reforms of the 1980s were focussed more on economy and efficiency than on effectiveness, a criticism that has been echoed by other analysts. It has been suggested that this is because of the inherent difficulty of measuring effectiveness in some forms of public sector service delivery (Tonge & Horton, 1996: 78). Pollitt also notes that ‘the three Es do not always march together’, suggesting the example of larger class sizes (greater efficiency and economy) leading to reduced effectiveness (diminished teaching and learning outcomes) (Pollitt, 1993: 59). Thus increased efficiency, as measured by an organization’s budget, may be accompanied by decreased social effectiveness (Muetzelfeldt, 1995: 104).

Economy, efficiency, and, to a lesser extent, effectiveness, are measured through the formulation of performance indicators, which measure the measurable and tend to ignore that which cannot be quantified. Performance indicators can be applied to the functioning of the organization as a whole, and to the performance of individual employees. Attempts to use performance indicators to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of the work undertaken by public sector professionals are often problematic. Many tasks are not easily quantifiable, and important aspects of work are therefore
potentially marginalised. The focus on the economic bottom line, implicit in a
preoccupation with efficiency, can also divert attention from issues of equity and justice,
and thus sideline traditional ‘public service values’. Critics also suggest that the focus on
economy and efficiency has resulted in increased workloads, stress, and illness for public
sector employees as they struggle to meet the demands for greater productivity at reduced
costs (Muertzfeldt, 1995: 103; Solondz, 1995; Britton, 1995). In this regard Ball (1990:
154) notes that the question of ‘efficient for whom?’ is rarely asked, and that the costs to
workers (loss of autonomy, work intensification, closer monitoring, loss of democratic
process) are rarely counted. Other questions are also overlooked in the focus on
efficiency. As Rowlands puts it, ‘efficiency asks nothing about what should be done; this
is given by the market, the “organisational environment”’ (Rowlands, 1990: 264). The
focus on efficiency, which is generally represented as neutral, apolitical and value-free
may therefore be seen as ‘highly ideological’ in nature (Rowlands, 1990: 266), and is
underpinned by particular sets of values, and the goals and priorities that reflect those
values.

The Manager’s Right to Manage

The belief that better management is the solution to the ills of the public sector implies
the acceptance of an enlarged role for managers – a mandate to ‘let the managers
manage’. For Clarke & Newman, such a claim is ‘both an ideological demand and a
practical issue of organizational power’ (Clarke & Newman, 1997: 56). The issue of
organizational power is a particularly pertinent one for public sector professionals, who
have traditionally enjoyed a high degree of self-management, and now find themselves
subject to unprecedented levels of managerial intervention and control. Managerialism
justifies this shift in the distribution of social power within the organization by
privileging particular bodies of knowledge over others. Professional expertise, highly
valued in a bureau-professional model of public administration, becomes subordinate to
the skills and knowledge associated with the task of management. Managerialism is thus,
‘a normative system concerning what counts as valuable knowledge, who knows it, and
who is empowered to act in what ways as a consequence’ (Clarke et al, 2000: 9).
Central to this normative system is the belief that hierarchy is ‘necessary, efficient, and the only way to avoid disaster’ (Rowlands, 1990: 262). It suggests that ‘voluntary and unrestrained action is a necessary right for managers’ and that obedience to managerial authority is required from other organizational members (Rowlands, 1990: 264). The notion of professional autonomy is problematic within this ideology, as managers are seen as the guardians of the organization. Other groups should not, therefore, be able to set their own priorities, thus challenging managerial authority (Pollitt, 1993: 131). Managers are seen to possess the abilities necessary to ensure the optimal operation of the organization and to co-ordinate the activities of other organizational members. They must, therefore, be permitted the full exercise of this expertise. While the autonomy of professionals has been rendered suspect, through critiques of professional power, the manager’s right to manage has become accepted as a ‘justified, socially beneficial autonomy’ (Pollitt, 1993: 10). Thus, as Pollitt (1993: 11) notes, ‘it is very much in the interests of managers themselves to promote a set of beliefs which highlight the special contribution of management and thereby justify management’s special rights and powers’. These rights include decision-making power (Clarke & Newman, 1997: 64), and setting organizational goals towards which all of those in the organization must work (Rowlands, 1990: 264). These goals are determined and established through a process of ‘strategic management’, the first of a number of managerial techniques – emerging from the models and theories elaborated above – which are explored in the following section.

**Strategic Management and Strategic Planning**

Strategic management involves making choices about the desired direction an organization will take, and ensuring that the appropriate mechanisms are in place to enable these strategic choices (Elcock, 1996: 49). It emphasises the importance of recognizing, responding, and adapting to the environment in which the organization operates, and therefore flexibility and responsiveness are seen as vital for organizational
survival. As Stoney notes, ‘strategic management … is predicated on the assumption that the environment is in a constant state of flux and requires the organization to adapt accordingly’ (Stoney, 2001: 30). Within this model, strategic issues are identified by performing an analysis of the risks and opportunities presented by an organization’s external environment and an evaluation of its ‘internal strengths and weaknesses’ (Paquin, 1998: 226). Strategies are then formulated to address the strategic issues identified in this analysis. In this way, ‘strategic planning creates a vision of the organisation’s success and it proposes an action plan’ (Paquin, 1998: 226).

Strategic management and planning also requires the development of a mission statement, setting out the goals and values of an organization. This mission statement forms the framework within which organizational strategies are developed (Olsen & Eadie, 1982: 19, cited in Hughes, 2003: 137). It defines the reason that the organization exists and what it aims to achieve (Hughes, 2003: 139), providing the ‘ground rules’ for doing business (Farnham & Horton, 1996a: 43). It is intended to articulate a set of shared values and goals for organizational members, providing managers with ‘a unity of direction that transcends individual, parochial and transitory needs’ (Pearce, 1994: ix). The formulation of such mission statements – a task assigned to senior management – assumes that such unity of values and purpose exists within public sector organizations, and that goals can be articulated in a relatively straightforward fashion.

Those who support a strategic management approach within the public sector argue that ‘without strategy an organization lacks direction. Day-to-day activities do not add up to any coherent goal’ (Hughes, 2003: 133). With strategic management, consideration is given to overall strategy, long-term goals and objectives, and the future of the organization, in a move away from a narrow focus on ‘routine management tasks’ (Hughes, 2003: 132). Such advocates argue that the traditional model of public sector administration was ‘preoccupied with process’, rather than ‘the longer-term perspective’ (Hughes, 2003: 132). They note, however, that it is important that the strategic planning process adopted must be appropriate for the individual organization, and supported by an investment of time and resources. Furthermore, strategic planning ‘must be applied in
appropriate situations, that is to say, in situations that are not too turbulent’ (Paquin, 1998: 231).

Stoney has characterised the literature on strategic management, which is framed within traditional business and policy approaches, as generally ‘inadequate’, ‘naïve’ and ‘weak’ (Stoney, 1998: 1). He claims that existing literature has failed to consider strategic management’s ‘potential to intensify work, restrict access to open and accountable decision-making, centralize power, and control and increase the divide between organizational winners and losers’ (Stoney, 1998: 1). He further argues that the emphasis on establishing clear goals reflects the strong unitarist philosophy underpinning strategic management, in which all organizational members are deemed to have common goals. Stoney also notes the power implications inherent in creating a ‘small cadre of senior managers [who] are charged with establishing the organization’s strategic goals and priorities’ (Stoney, 2001: 32). Indeed, strategic management exemplifies the notion of the manager’s right to manage, legitimising organizational hierarchies and rewarding the ‘strategists’, in terms of prestige and remuneration (Levy, Alvesson & Willmott, 2003: 97). It privileges the role of managers in formulating and implementing organizational planning, seeing them as the appropriate organizational members to articulate what are often complex goals, thus re-iterating the Taylorist principle of separating the activities of conception and execution (Stoney, 2001: 32-4). It also underscores the importance of the market model, as it focuses on responding to the effects of the market (the external environment) in a sector that owes its existence to an institutionalised recognition of the failure of the market to provide all necessary social goods and services.

**Organizational Restructuring and Budgetary Devolution**

Once strategic goals have been identified, strategic management often requires a process of internal restructuring to ensure that the organization is able to implement the formulated strategies (Stoney, 2001: 32). Ostensibly this involves a process of decentralization, the creation of flatter structures and the elimination of levels of
hierarchy within public sector organizations. It also often involves a move towards creating internal business units and cost-centres with responsibility for their own budgets. This process of budgetary devolution is accompanied by a rhetoric of empowerment (Hart, 1998: 288), and claims that it represents a greater freedom for line managers to pursue the objectives and priorities of the local unit, department or section. Departments effectively ‘own’ their budgets, and are allowed great discretion and flexibility in spending them (Keating, 1997: 112-3). Budgetary devolution also means that responsibility for the bottom line is effectively devolved to departmental line managers who are required to ‘live within their budgets’ (Keating, 1989: 126). In this view, budgetary devolution does not appear to be a particularly sinister innovation, merely an extension of accountability, one that logically accompanies a process of decentralization and increasingly devolved decision-making. However, when budgetary devolution is considered within the context of a focus on achieving economies, the utility of its application within a managerial agenda is apparent. Not only are departments or sections expected to manage and assume responsibility for their own budgets, they are also expected to do so in a climate of fiscal stringency.

Clarke & Newman have pointed to the capacity of such processes to disseminate managerial priorities throughout the organization. They argue:

Devolution and decentralisation also have the effect of creating a ‘dispersed managerial consciousness’, the embedding of the calculative frameworks of managerialism throughout organisations. By this, we mean to refer to the processes by which all employees come to find their decisions, actions and possibilities framed by the imperatives of managerial coordination: competitive positioning, budgetary control, performance management and efficiency gains (Clarke & Newman: 1997: 77).

The process of budgetary devolution thus proceeds from the centre, to the department or section, and finally makes the public sector professional increasingly responsible for, and conscious of, the cost of the services and interventions they authorise or provide. Rather than being ‘empowered’ by budgetary devolution, they are ‘responsibilised’ by it. Moreover, research suggests that decentralization and devolution may actually be accompanied by increased central control, because the fragmentation of authority
associated with such processes actually requires more central co-ordination, rather than less (Hart, 1998: 286, 304).

**Performance Management**

Performance management can be applied to the performance of an organization, programme, or individual staff, and grows out of notions of accountability. Public sector organizations must have mechanisms in place to ensure that their programmes and staff are performing appropriately, and to demonstrate their accountability in this regard. In the case of organizational performance this involves the development of a range of performance indicators, in order to facilitate a process of performance measurement (de Bruin, 2002: 579). However, the focus here – in keeping with the focus on the effects of managerialism on public sector professionals – is on individual performance appraisal. Critics have suggested that the traditional model of public administration was particularly deficient in regard to staff performance management, and that reforms in this area were ‘a particularly important part of the managerial programme’ (Hughes, 2003: 157). These reforms have involved the introduction of formal and systematic staff performance appraisal, which are now widespread in the public sector.

Performance appraisal generally involves an annual appraisal report, usually completed by a supervisor or organizational superior. The line manager and employee then discuss this report in a meeting, in which the individual’s performance is assessed, by measuring actual achievements against the goals that were set in the previous meeting. This assessment may be accompanied by the imposition of sanctions or rewards (Hughes, 2003: 157; Farnham & Giles, 1996: 127-8). Critics have argued that while performance management is presented as an attempt to increase efficiency and effectiveness, it ‘appears in some instances to make managerial control an end in itself’ (Farnham & Horton, 1999: 251). Appraisal thus becomes a ‘tool of control’ (Farnham & Giles, 1996: 127) in the hands of management, rendering professional employees vulnerable to judgement by those in management positions.
In this regard, Ball’s insights are particularly apposite. Ball sees management practices more generally as comprising a Foucauldian ‘technology of power’. He suggests that the processes through which individuals can be observed, compared, and monitored are key techniques in the ‘moral technology of management’ (Ball, 1990: 158). In particular, he sees the appraisal interview as a ‘formal ritual of power and ceremony of visibility, a technology of objectification’, in which the employee is inspected, reviewed, and recorded in a ‘space of domination’ (Ball, 1990: 159-60). The appraisee is co-opted into this process and

encouraged to see the procedures of appraisal as part of the process of self-understanding and self-betterment – professional development – which Foucault calls ‘subjectification’: the active engagement of the subject in self-formation.

The appraisal interview also resembles a form of ‘confession’ or ‘psychoanalytic encounter’, as appraisees are encouraged to acknowledge their shortcomings and actively seek out appropriate remedies (Ball, 1990: 160-1).

The preceding section does not purport to be an exhaustive examination of managerial techniques. It merely points to some of the processes through which managerial ideology, theories and models are enacted. In practice, managerial techniques, while they share underpinning philosophies, vary across the public sector settings in which they are implemented. In Chapter Six these models, techniques and practices are examined in greater detail in the context of the higher education sector. There, consideration is given to the ways in which the practices that characterise managerialism more generally are employed within the university.

This chapter now turns to an examination of aspects of professional identity which make the imposition of the ideology, models, and practices discussed above so fraught for many professionals employed in the managerial public sector. Just as managerialism in universities is part of the broader public sector phenomenon, so too are
academic identities – explored in detail in Chapter Five – framed by broader understandings of professionalism and professional identity. These understandings, forms of knowledge, and the subjectivities to which they give rise, are important elements for professionals as they interpret, respond to, and resist managerialism. Professionalism, like managerialism, represents the social world in particular ways, and implies normative prescriptions for the appropriate distribution and exercise of power. The norms, values and prescriptions embedded in professionalism are, in many ways, antithetical to those of managerialism.

**Exploring Professionalism**

Early sociological contributions to the study of the professions and professionalism were heavily influenced by a ‘trait’ or ‘attribute’ approach (Johnson, 1972: 23; Pavalko, 1988: 19). This approach consisted largely of the development of a descriptive list of criteria that distinguished professions from other occupations. The sociology of the professions has long since moved to a more critical approach, focussing instead on the centrality of power and control to the project of professionalism, and the ways in which professions maintain their privileged position. However, in the context of this chapter, the trait approach has some utility in developing an understanding of how the notion of professionalism may be understood by those who share its precepts and understandings. Functionalist and trait approaches to professionalism have been criticised for their uncritical adoption of the ideal image with which the professions themselves wish to identify (Boreham, Pemberton & Wilson, 1976: 7; Hughes cited in Turner, 1987: 131). It is not suggested here that the professional traits explored below represent the way professions and professionals are, but rather that they may provide some understandings of the ways in which professionals, through a process of professional socialisation, traditionally regard themselves and their roles. These notions are vitally important in understanding professional responses to managerialism.
It is important to see professions, and professionalism, not as static, but as 'changing historical concept[s]' (Friedson, 1983: 22), which reflect various social, economic and philosophic developments. Professions have 'continually remade themselves in the context of the changing state of the marketplace for services over the centuries, and the different dominant institutional regimes in which they practised their arts' (Davis, 1995: 122). Thus, as Ferlie et al note, 'the accepted attributes of a profession may be debated and may vary over time and space' (1996: 170). An 'ideal-type' definition of professionalism is offered by Oppenheimer, who suggests that professional work is:

artisan or craftsman-like work in which the worker produces an entire product, whether it be a painting, a surgical operation, a book, a bridge, or an idea; where the worker's pace, workplace conditions, product, its use, and even to a degree price, are largely determined by the worker; where the source of income is a more individually-regulated sale of a product or service under fairly loose market conditions established by face-to-face bargaining, rather than sale of labour time (in advance of the creation of anything); and where virtually the whole income goes directly to the worker without any bureaucratic intermediary except perhaps an agent (as in the case of an artist). In brief, professional work is work in which there is discretion and judgement by the worker, in which work is not readily standardizable, and in which high levels of training are required (Oppenheimer, 1973: 213-4).

While Oppenheimer goes on to note that the only one of these criteria that endures is high levels of training, such a definition reminds us that the conditions experienced by public sector professionals are, and have always been, quite distinct from those of self-employed professionals. A more modest or limited definition is required to adequately capture this variant of professional work. Ferlie et al, summarising a range of theoretical perspectives on professionalism, suggest that, despite differences in focus, there are 'some commonly agreed characteristics of a profession'. Professions, according to these analyses, have the following features:

There is a body of expert knowledge over which the profession exercises a degree of control and, in the purest form, a monopoly of practice. The profession sets standards of training and controls entry to the group. Once professional membership has been achieved, members of the profession relate to each other on a collegial basis. Within a profession, individuals – as the holders of specialist expertise – expect to exercise a degree of
autonomy over their work and their work processes (Ferlie et al, 1996: 168).

While this describes the nature of professional work, analysts have also explored professionals' orientation towards their work. Barber suggests that there are four 'essential attributes' of professional behaviour. They are:

(1) a high degree of generalised and systematic knowledge; (2) primary orientation to the community interest rather than to individual self-interest; (3) a high degree of self-control of behaviour through codes of ethics internalised in the process of work socialisation and through voluntary associations organised and operated by the work specialists themselves; and (4) a system of rewards (monetary and honorary) that is primarily a set of symbols of work achievement and thus ends in themselves, not means to some end of individual self-interest (Barber, 1963: 672, cited in Johnson, 1972: 33).

Later theoretical developments in the sociology of the professions have challenged such claims, suggesting that such portrayals of altruistic and principled behaviour are unduly idealistic. More critical analyses of the role of professions suggest that trait approaches simply accept professionals' own 'biased definitions of themselves' (Aungles & Parker, 1988: 95). However, while this criticism is well founded, it does not invalidate the use of a trait approach in the present examination of professionalism. What is significant here is the degree to which professionals identify with and internalise these traits, and the extent to which they become part of the individual's identity. It is not important whether or not such beliefs are 'true', but rather that they are real to those who hold them.

Johnson, an early critic of professional power, acknowledges the importance of elements of professional ideology in inculcating shared values and beliefs among members of the professions. He argued that, 'professionalism creates occupations with a high degree of self-consciousness, and 'complete identity' ... The core meaning of life is central to the work situation, and occupational skills are regarded as non-transferable – the property of a specific community' (Johnson, 1972: 57). Professionals, therefore, become deeply invested in the attributes associated with membership in their profession.
As Parker & Jary note, the ‘epithet ‘professional’ is not merely an occupational category, but a valued self-identity that implies both commitment and skill’ (1995: 328, emphasis added). Elements of this self-identity are likely to provide important discursive resources that may be drawn upon to resist managerial changes. The following section explores aspects of professionalism, as identified within the trait or attribute approach, which may provide the basis of professionals’ resistance to elements of managerialism.

**Autonomy**

Autonomy is regarded as central to professional identity. Professionals traditionally expect extensive latitude in the exercise of their own judgement and skills. Friedson suggests that professionalism ‘revolves around the central principle that the members of a specialized occupation control their own work’ (Friedson, 1994: 173). Similarly, Raelin notes that ‘autonomy, or freedom to examine problems using the methods in which one has been trained, appears to be the most critical [attribute] for professionals’. Indeed, Raelin argues that autonomy is ‘synonymous with the very concept of professionalism and is critical to the professional’s role in the organization’ (Raelin, 1985a: 19). Clarke & Newman (1997: 6) similarly suggest that ‘professionals lay claim to an irreducible autonomy – the space within which professional judgment can be exercised and must be trusted’. The exercise of this autonomy requires freedom from being directly or overtly managed – a point well understood by those who offer advice on the most appropriate way to co-ordinate the efforts of professionals (see especially Raelin 1985a; 1985b; Martin & Shell, 1988; Shapero, 1985).

Professionals require a ‘hands-off’ approach, and are recognized as resistant to rules and close supervision (Lawler & Hearn, 1995: 11; Pavalko, 1988: 26). Raelin insists that professionals are ‘by nature individualistic and resist conformity to regulations imposed upon them from outside the profession’ (Raelin, 1985b: 171). They reserve the right to exercise their autonomy and their capacity for critique, which can extend to a critique of management-formulated goals and procedures. As with other elements of
professionalism, the ideal may often be distinct from the lived reality of professional employment. Few professionals achieve complete autonomy and discretion in the exercise of their profession. However, while some degree of managerial control or direction is inevitable in many forms of professional employment, autonomy remains a primary objective for professionals, and a valued signifier of professional status.

**Altruism/Service orientation**

Professional ideology views close supervision as unnecessary – and even insulting – because of professionals' identification with, and adherence to, ethical norms and codes relating to conduct, altruism, and service orientation. This view is related to the notion that professionals are those who serve the public good, and the belief that professionals 'are motivated by the desire to best serve their clients, rather than by self-interest and the desire for monetary gain' (Pavalko, 1988: 23). Such claims, of course, have been rejected by a well-developed critique of professional power (see especially Johnson, 1972; Boreham et al, 1976; Illich, Zola, McKnight, Caplan & Sharken, 1977). Social scientists have identified these claims as paternalistic, and as little more than a cover for advancing the interests, and securing the power, of professionals over those they purport to serve. However, as Coady notes, 'there is a vast gap between social scientists' view of professionals and professionals' view of themselves' (Coady, 1996: 32, emphasis added).

What is of interest to us is how professionals view themselves, and the ways in which this affects their reception of managerialist innovations that run counter to their self-identity as professionals. When professionals see themselves as adhering to a moral framework that is determined, to a great extent, by reference to a professional code of ethics, conflict is likely to result when actions by the employing organization are seen to violate those norms. Accountability requirements may also be interpreted as impugning professional standards of ethical behaviour, and may therefore elicit resentment from the professional. Themes of selfless, altruistic service are prominent in the discourses of many of the 'helping professions' (Aungles & Parker, 1988: 97; Jones, 1976), including
those of medicine, nursing, education, and social work. Within such discourses, professionals are seen to act in the best interests of patients, students, and clients. At times this may involve bending or breaking organizational rules, or prioritising the needs of the client over those of the organization. Such notions are validating for those who apply them to themselves, comprising part of the ‘valued self-identity’ of the professional. They represent to such professionals who they are, rather than simply what they do, and will not, therefore, be easily relinquished. Notions of professional altruism and ethical behaviour are, therefore, likely to prove resilient in the face of challenge, and to contribute to professionals’ resistance to forces which mount such challenges.

**Expert Knowledge**

A further defining feature of professionals is that they have acquired a degree of expert knowledge in their field. Mastery of this body of knowledge is crucial to professionals’ claims to ‘special competence’ (Pavalko, 1988: 20). Daniel argues that, ‘central to professional identity is the command of a field of abstract, expert knowledge that practitioners interpret and apply in the interest of their clients’ (Daniel, 1990: 36). This knowledge cannot be completely codified or standardised: the professional’s expertise and judgement is required to determine how this knowledge should be applied in each individual case. Flynn (1999: 34) argues that professionals’ claims to expertise rest on the ‘indeterminacy of the knowledge and the skills that they possess, and the necessary discretionary content of their work’. This indeterminacy makes professional judgement crucial, and ensures that each case must be treated as ‘unique and complex and irreducible to a commensurate bundle of factors’ (Daniel, 1990: 37). Professionals thus claim the unique ability to deal with problems ‘for which no routine or mechanical solutions exist’ (Fullinwider, 1996: 76). They are, therefore, likely to resist changes to their work that facilitate the division of their work into discrete components that may be standardised and routinized, thereby reducing the discretionary aspect of their work.
As a demonstrated mastery of a body of knowledge is a prerequisite to an individual’s admission to a profession, the conscious possession of this expert knowledge constitutes an important element in a professional’s self-identity. Professionals may become deeply invested in their sense of themselves as experts in their field and are likely to resent, and resist, challenges to their professional expertise and knowledge. Such challenges may, indeed, be interpreted as a serious threat to their professional status. As Fullinwider notes, ‘in light of their special knowledge, professionals expect to make recommendations and have them acted upon’ (Fullinwider, 1996: 76). In addition, in many cases the content of this expert knowledge is not regarded as merely technical or morally neutral. Pavalko has noted that professional work, within an attribute approach, is seen as closely associated with the dominant values in a society, such as health and justice. Professionals see themselves as promoting and protecting these values, through the performance of their work (Pavalko, 1988: 21). The body of knowledge that constitutes the basis of a professionals’ claim to special expertise may thus involve a worldview in which particular values (such as the importance of education) are accorded dominance over others (such as economic efficiency). The values embedded in the field of professional knowledge may come to frame the professional’s understandings in a range of contexts and settings. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that professionals have been described as ‘not generally lacking in the conviction of their intellectual and moral powers’ (Lichtenberg, 1996: 14). These convictions – which, it is argued here, are often deeply embedded in professionals’ sense of self – may provide motivation and resources to resist changes that challenge professionals’ expertise, or run contrary to their professional values.

**Intrinsic Interest**

Professional work is also regarded as inherently rewarding. The tasks that comprise professional work are seen as intellectually stimulating, challenging, and satisfying. Because of the notions of altruism and social value, discussed above, professional work may also involve a sense of moral satisfaction, as professionals see themselves engaged
in socially useful or socially important endeavours. Because of the intrinsic interest that professionals find in their work, they are unlikely to readily ‘down tools’ at the end of the working day in the way that manual workers might. Professionals are more likely to allow their work to dominate their lives, and to devote what is traditionally regarded as leisure time – weekends, evenings, holidays – to their work. Thus, the performance of professional work may become more and more central to the formation of self-identity for the professional, as work assumes a dominant and even a defining role in a professional’s life. This intrinsic interest may also provide motivation for professional resistance to managerialism. Innovations or managerial edicts that have the potential to erode the intrinsic interest or pleasure of professional work are likely to be strenuously resisted, as the professional strives to preserve the source of much of their satisfaction and self-identity.

Professional Socialisation

The professional’s adherence to, and identification with, these and other professional norms and values is accomplished through a process of professional socialisation. An extended period of education and training, which may have some features of a master and apprentice model, facilitates this socialisation. Daniels (1990: 42) notes that professional socialisation ‘inculcates values about intellectual excellence, good teamwork, self-discipline and endurance of long hours of study and practice, as well as a regrettable arrogance towards subordinate workers’. While the acquisition of an occupational subculture is not unique to professionals, Pavalko notes that the attribute model emphasises that the values, norms and beliefs acquired in training for the professions are ‘more elaborate and complex than is the case for non-professional work’ (Pavalko, 1988: 23). Raelin suggests that of the period of ‘anticipatory’ socialisation into the profession, which is undertaken during the professional’s education, invests the fledgling professional with ‘a sense of self-importance and prestige’ (Raelin, 1985b: 149). It also reinforces the notion that the individual professional ‘belongs’ more to their profession than to their organization, that they retain an ‘extra-organizational independence’
(Halford & Leonard, 1999: 105). They are, in the terms that Gouldner popularised, 'cosmopolitans' rather than 'locals', whose orientation and loyalty reflects the primacy of their profession and the importance of an outer reference group (Gouldner, 1958: 290). Professionals insist, therefore, upon the right to be evaluated by those who share their expert knowledge and professional status, rather than submitting to regulation by those in management positions within their organizations. The emphasis placed upon these shared professional values reinforces the sense of collegiality and social closure associated with the acquisition of professional status.

The Proletarianisation Thesis

While professionals have traditionally been regarded as enjoying autonomy, freedom from direct supervision, and superior conditions and remuneration, analysts have identified a process of proletarianisation among employed professionals. Oppenheimer, an early proponent of the proletarianisation thesis, sees this process as an unavoidable consequence of their location within bureaucracies, in both the private and public sectors. He argues that 'bureaucratic organizational structures lead to proletarian conditions of work' (Oppenheimer, 1973: 213). For Oppenheimer, the proletarianisation of professional work includes: the application of factory-like conditions, including the enforcement of rules and a hierarchical command system; an increasing division of labour and specialisation involving alienation from the product of one's labour; deterioration of conditions, related to demands for cost-cutting and increased accountability and productivity; demands from client groups for improved and more responsive services; and feminisation of professional work leading to further downgrading of conditions (Oppenheimer, 1973: 214-5). Within the proletarianisation thesis, professionals within bureaucracies become subject, like other workers, to the control of management, and experience erosion of their working conditions, rewards and status (Derber, 1983: 310). Derber, refining this thesis, argues that proletarianisation may either be technical, relating to the loss of control over the work process, or ideological, relating to the loss of control over the ends of the work – 'the goals and social purposes to
which work is put'. Writing in 1983, Derber argued that professionals were then primarily experiencing ideological proletarianisation, but posited that 'technical proletarianisation may be introduced with surprising speed in the coming decades' (Derber, 1983: 313).

The proletarianisation thesis precedes the historical point at which managerialism became a significant factor for sector professionals. These early contributors refer to the effects of professional employment within bureaucracies, and the ways in which this form of employment contributes to reduced autonomy and deteriorating employment conditions. The decline of professionals' conditions, in this context, reflects the growth in numbers of those professionals within the public sector – and within corporations – and professionals' growing dependency on these avenues of employment (Derber, 1983: 309). A later wave of critique engages with the changes wrought to public sector management by the advent of managerialism from the 1980s, and highlights the ways in which managerialist approaches and techniques have transformed the work experiences of public sector professionals. This critique forms part of the broader analysis of managerialism’s effect on public sector management, and is explored below.

The Effects of Managerialism on the Public Sector Professional

Clarke & Newman suggest that the experience of those working in the public sector over the last two decades has been one of 'permanent revolution' (Clarke & Newman: 1997: ix), while Peters and Savoie refer to the same period as producing 'orgies of reform' (Peters & Savoie, 1998: 3). Writing specifically of the Australian situation, Prasser argued in 1990 that public sector reform 'seems endemic to our age' (Prasser, 1990: 185), while Considine and Painter (1997, 1) describe changes to the Australian public sector as a 'revolutionary transformation'. For public sector professionals, these changes have had far-reaching implications for the nature of their work, as managerialism challenges traditional notions of professional autonomy and authority. It is unlikely, of course, that the effects of managerialism on public sector professionals will be uniform (see
especially Exworthy & Halford, 1999). As Ferlie et al note, some professionals – particularly those engaged in accountancy – have actually increased their levels of influence, while others, such as engineers, are comfortable with the introduction of market mechanisms (Ferlie et al, 1996: 190). However, many analyses point to the deleterious effects of managerialist changes on the practice of professional work, and highlight the fundamental incompatibility of managerialism and professionalism, in a range of public sector contexts. Within these critiques a number of inter-related themes emerge, some of which are explored below.

Managerialism and Deprofessionalisation

Analyses of the effects of managerialism on professionals generally focus on the new power relations inherent in managerialist changes, and the corresponding loss of professional control. Clarke & Newman (1997: 68), for example, contrast managerialism in the area of social welfare with the previous ‘regime of power’, which they term ‘bureau-professionalism’. During the post-war welfare state consensus, public sector professionals were seen as trusted ‘indispensable partners’ in the important tasks performed by the state. They were regarded as the ‘institutionalised guarantors of the pursuit of the public good’, and were accorded a wide degree of autonomy, reflecting both their professional status, and the disinterested neutrality claimed within the ideology of professionalism (Clarke & Newman, 1997: 7-9). Clarke & Newman argue that managerialism has succeeded this regime, variously displacing, subordinating and co-opting the power of bureau-professionalism. They suggest that complete displacement of bureau-professional power with managerial power is relatively rare, but occurs where the organization is ‘reshaped around a command structure which privileges the calculative framework of managerialism: how to improve efficiency and organizational performance’. Subordination, they suggest, is the most common process, and refers to the situation where the exercise of professional judgement is reframed by the requirement to consider budgetary constraints – represented as ‘realities and responsibilities’. They see this as an attempt to discipline professionals, who might otherwise make decisions purely
on the basis of client need. *Co-option* occurs when management attempts to colonise professional discourses, constructing articulations between traditional areas of professional concern – such as the issue of quality – and the discourses of management (Clarke & Newman, 1997: 76).

This re-distribution of power and control underpins a heightening of the process of deprofessionalisation. As noted above, analysts had already pointed to the deprofessionalisation and proletarianisation of professionals employed in bureaucracies. However, while public sector bureaucracies have always imposed particular constraints on professional practice, this trend has been ‘massively amplified’ by the advent of managerialism (Hough, 1995: 174). The substantive expertise of public sector professionals is challenged and overridden by the ‘technical or methodological’ expertise of the professional manager (Yeatman, 1997: 24). Geiselhart’s two-year study of the Australian Department of Finance and Administration illustrates this trend. Her findings reveal a picture of ‘profound deprofessionalisation, democracy being hollowed out from within the bureaucracy, and short shift for those who challenge this dynamic’. She identified an ‘intensified centralization of control based on managerial mantras’, arguing that the advice of professionals was often ignored, and that they were often reduced to performing trivial tasks (Geiselhart, 2000: 38-9).

This shift in the distribution of power is manifest across a range of professions, effectively changing the nature of professional work and the conditions of professional employment. Farrell & Morris’ (1999) UK study of general practitioners’, social workers’ and headteachers’ perceptions of managerially-inspired, market-oriented change in their sectors indicated that all groups had experienced increased paperwork associated with bureaucratic and administrative requirements. This added significantly to individual workloads. Menter & Muschamp’s study of primary school teachers in one English city similarly reported increased administration and work intensification, along with increased control by supervisors and a loss of autonomy (Menter & Muschamp, 1999: 78). In another area of professional work, Reiger & Keleher (2004) consider the effects of managerial change on Victorian Maternal and Child Health (MCH) nurses. They note
that these nurses were experiencing more direct forms of management, challenging their traditional expectations of autonomy and independence. Nurses in this study found their clinical judgement challenged by managers in situations where patients – newly constructed as ‘customers’ – complained about aspects of their care (Reiger & Keleher, 2004: 60). Those who undertook co-ordination roles found themselves required to participate in training which included a session on how to answer the phone, and another which involved the use of Lego bricks to explain key performance indicators (Reiger & Keleher, 2004: 62). Unsurprisingly, the professionals involved resented these aspects of training.

In the areas of social work and welfare work, analysts report similar trends. Duncan argues that the professional autonomy of social workers in the New Zealand Children & Young Persons’ Service (NZCYPs) has been eroded and their professional discretion curtailed by a managerial approach that requires professional subordination to management objectives (Duncan, 1995). Face (1995) notes that the Department of Community Services (DOCS) in NSW went through a series of restructures and reviews which, in one branch of the service, amounted to eight or nine restructures in a period of ten years. This process brought with it job cuts, job insecurity and added layers of bureaucracy (Face, 1995: 185-7). The nature of professional welfare work was also changed by the introduction of performance benchmarks specifying the numbers of cases that district officers should handle, and the introduction of a computer system into which the details of clients’ cases must be entered. Each case had to be approved by a manager before the district officer was permitted to undertake any action. Consequently, Face reports, professional staff, ‘feel they cannot get on with their job and that their professionalism is compromised’ (Face, 1995: 188). He also notes that the emphasis on the computer system, and the requirement for professionals to enter all the relevant data – a consequence of axing many clerical positions – meant that those professionals who lacked typing skills were further burdened (Face, 1995: 189). Also in the area of child welfare, Hough identifies the process of deskilling, arguing that the ‘product’ of welfare provision is ‘changed, by higher design, from a complex one to one that is readily assessed and controlled’ (Hough, 1995: 179). In this way, the indeterminate nature of
professional work is challenged and professional tasks become more amenable to external monitoring, assessment and control.

These and other studies illustrate the potential for depersonalisation embedded in the managerialist project. Indeed, it is reasonable to argue that a challenge to professional power is a foundational element of the managerial agenda. Factors which contribute to the process of depersonalisation include the fragmentation and de-skilling of professional work; the incorporation of unskilled work into the professional’s workload; increased management control and surveillance of professionals, and a corresponding loss of autonomy; work intensification; erosion of working conditions and pay; increased job insecurity, including the increased use of short-term and casual contracts; and increased accountability requirements, including the introduction of performance appraisal. All of these may be seen to pose a profound challenge to the nature of professional work.

The Emergence of Macho Management

Managerialism has been described as ‘a gendered phenomenon which ensures that women remain in roles and occupations subordinate to men’ (Perrott, 2002: 21). A number of analysts have noted that those employed within the managerialised public sector have found the new regime to be characterised by a masculinist, even ‘masoch’ approach to management. In Australia, as early as 1986, Bryson argued:

Managerialism has a very masculine flavour. Its tenets might have been designed to illustrate the classic syndrome of dominant, stereotypically masculine features. It is about structure, order, forceful activity, rationality. It is about hardware. It is about technique. It does not emphasize values or how this climate affects the people who are the subject groups – that is, the public, clients and workers (Bryson, 1986: 367).

Bryson notes that such an ethos favours those who are prepared to and are able to commit long hours to their work, and suggests that, within such a culture, women are likely to suffer, despite the presence of official equal opportunity policies. Pollitt makes a similar
point, with reference to the UK and US public sectors. He quotes Coyle (1989: 47-8) who argues that the managerialised British local authorities are the site of a ‘workaholic “macho” ethos’, which ‘increasingly associates managerial competence with masculinity’ (Pollitt, 1993: 141). Of the US, Pollitt suggests that the masculinist ‘cultural and behavioural expectations’, associated with managerialism, militate against the likelihood that women will reach the higher levels of management (Pollitt, 1993: 141-2).

For Clarke & Newman, this cultural shift reflects the adoption of private sector management approaches. The ‘unshackling of bureaucratic restraints’ previously imposed upon public sector managers has resulted in them mimicking the competitive behaviour of the marketplace, and assuming ‘hard, macho, or ‘cowboy’ styles of managing’ (Clarke & Newman, 1997: 70). Similarly, Kerfoot and Whitehead refer to a ‘boys own’ style of management in UK Colleges of Further Education, saying that the advent of managerialism brought with it ‘highly competitive and aggressive behaviour indulged in by predominantly men managers often with the direct aim of substantiating or progressing their own hierarchical position’ (Kerfoot & Whitehead, 1998: 443). They argue that while management in Further Education has always been male dominated, the discourses of competition and survival of the fittest associated with the adoption of market orientation have allowed ‘bullying and oppressive practices’ to develop (Kerfoot, & Whitehead, 1998: 449).

The consequences of the development of a macho managerial ethos in the public sector are significant, for managers and managed alike. While professionals acting as managers are expected to commit to a culture of entrepreneurialism and ‘head-kicking’, managed professionals are exposed to coercive forms of management control. Both experiences represent a significant departure from the modes of working associated with professionalism. Moreover, the dominance of masculine values has consequences for the type of professional work that is valued, encouraged and rewarded within public sector organizations. For example, research in the higher education sector indicates that the pastoral care aspect of a lecturer’s role – often associated with feminine ‘caring’ values – is less visible, and is, therefore, not recognized or rewarded by the new forms of
accounting and accountability employed in the managerial university (Deem, 1998: 53). Indeed, Cotterill and Waterhouse argue that, as a consequence of funding constraints, academics are now advised not to spend too much time in personal contact with students. They suggest that, rather than receiving individual pastoral and academic support, students are confronted with the cancellation of tutorials and seminars, and the introduction of a “fuck off and find out” model of education’ (Cotterill & Waterhouse, 1998: 225, 227).

Managerial/Professional Ideological Conflict

I ideological conflict between professionals and managers in the managerialised public sector is often apparent in disputes that illustrate the competing priorities of the two groups. These priorities relate to the primacy accorded to, alternately, professional notions of client need, and managerial notions of efficiency, cost-effectiveness and economy. Thus, the managerial requirement for stringency in resource allocation competes, and often collides, with professionals’ notions of appropriate and timely service provision. As Exworthy & Halford (1999: 4) note, while public services have always had to consider issues of resource allocation, managerial changes entail a greater emphasis on detailed costing and pricing of public service activities.

Within a managerial model, services provided by public sector professionals are resources that must be measured, costed, accounted for, and rationed. For professionals, however, such services are intimately tied up with notions of the public good, and important social values – such as equity, social justice, the value of healthcare, education etc – which are central to their sense of self. For example, Anaf, writing of the effect of managerialism on the practice of psychiatry in Australia, identifies a ‘move to turn medicine into a measurable and controlled commodity devoid of social equity issues and concern for the ill’ (Anaf, 1999: 70). For professionals, such an approach represents a profound challenge to elements of professional ideology that emphasise client care and service orientation. In this regard, Traynor, considering the effects of managerialism on
NHS trusts in the UK, describes the emergence of a ‘caring/cash dualism’ in the comments made by the nurses in his study. Nurses juxtaposed their commitment to providing appropriate patient care with management’s pre-occupation with costs and budgets, often giving voice to their ‘moral outrage’ on this issue (Traynor, 1999: 140-2). Many of his respondents also complained that financial constraints meant they were unable to provide the level of care they considered appropriate (Traynor, 1999: 149-152).

Yet managerialism deliberately draws professionals into the process of conceptualising services in this way. The introduction of internal markets has meant that professionals are expected to offer care or treatment plans which are formulated with an increased awareness and concern for the costs involved (Lawler & Hearn, 1995: 9). This organizational emphasis on resources can result in professionals feeling that their professional care ethos has been compromised (Farrell & Morris, 1999: 35). In this regard, Harris reports that state social workers in the UK are now expected to strictly ration, and account for, their use of service resources. This requirement has been reinforced by the introduction of computer systems that prioritise budgetary considerations, and allow the monitoring of social workers’ use and allocation of resources (Harris, 1998: 31-2). Similarly, Duncan notes that social workers in the NZCYPs are often placed in the position of having to argue for the funding of services to their clients. Failure to provide what they regard as adequate service – because of funding shortfalls – is a widespread cause of professional dissatisfaction (Duncan, 1995: 162). Indeed, Duncan suggests that the emphasis on financial goals contributes to ‘a demoralization of professional staff due to the denigration of [their] internalised professional values’ (Duncan, 1995: 163). Duncan sees such conflict as indicative of the clash between the managerial culture, whose ‘ruling ideology’ is that of neo-liberal economic rationalism, and a professional social work culture, which values ‘altruism, social equity and justice’ (Duncan, 1995: 164-5). Marston notes that social workers who espoused such values reported being marginalised as a result. He argues, ‘their opposition to elements of the managerial agenda marked them as “romantically holding onto an “old welfare model” informed by social justice and universality, rather than being forward looking and embracing change’ (Marston, 2004: 14). One area manager in his study
suggested that the organization had no respect for the service values of the social-work-trained housing professionals, regarding them as ‘bleeding heart lefties’ (Marston, 2004: 15).

Managerialism and Professional Identity

All the trends identified above have implications for the professional’s sense of self or self-identity. As bureau-professional modes of co-ordination give way to managerial regimes of power, and traditional professional values and substantive expertise are subordinated to the technical professionalism of managers, notions of what it means to be a professional are questioned and tested. The central tenets of professionalism are challenged by the foundational beliefs of managerialism, often resulting in both internal and organizational conflict as professionals, in turn, question the validity, efficacy, and even morality of managerial approaches and priorities.

In some cases the challenges to professional identity are very direct and result from professionals undertaking management roles. A number of analysts suggest that many professionals experience some level of discomfort or distress as their professional self-identity conflicts with their new organizational role as manager (Ferlie et al, 1996: 187; Currie, 1997: 126; Reiger & Keleher, 2004). Reiger & Keleher (2004: 61) note that those in their study who undertook co-ordinating roles were often exposed to painful challenges to their professional identity, particularly in situations where staff morale was low as a result of managerial changes. The authors refer to the ‘anguish’ experienced by senior nurses in coordinating roles, who were exposed to the frustrated backlash of those affected by amalgamations and restructurings. Farrell & Morris also note the ‘role tension’ experienced by professionals who have become managers within the managerial public sector, as well as the tensions present between ‘managing’ and ‘managed’ professionals (Farrell & Morris, 1999: 35).

Those who were more overtly managed as a result of managerial changes also experienced challenges to their professional identities. The erosion of autonomy and
intrinsic satisfaction resulting from the rise of managerialism represent significant challenges to professional self-identity. However, other elements of managerialism are also problematic in this regard. Reiger & Keleher (2004: 59) note that the process of service tendering meant that MCH nurses’ ‘identities and professional relationships had to be altered to meet new political agendas to create a business ethos in human services’. Their traditional approach to professional relations, embedded in notions of collegiality and open communication, was in conflict with the environment of ‘commercial confidentiality’ that characterised the competitive tendering process. They found that the imperative to engage in marketing and entrepreneurial activities ‘went against established ideas about what it means to be a MCH nurse and about professional relations’ (Reiger & Keleher, 2004: 60). In other public service organizations, the advent of managerialism has also challenged professional self-identity. Farrell & Morris quote a manager in their study who succinctly identified the role conflict embedded in the managerial emphasis on cost-effectiveness. He insisted, ‘social workers still think of themselves as advocates of people, not rationers of services’ (Farrell & Morris, 1999: 34). Similarly, Menter and Muschamp note that the bureaucratic demands associated with managerialist changes represent a challenge to the professional identity of primary school teachers, which is based on ‘the primacy of a class teacher’s relationship with the children in her class’ (Menter & Muschamp, 1999: 82). They report that the work intensification that teachers have experienced has been interpreted as an attack on the primacy of this relationship, and that their study ‘reveals a deep alienation in the work of many teachers’ (Menter & Muschamp, 1999: 75).

This chapter has examined the ideologies, values, and practices embedded in managerialism and in professionalism. It has also explored the effects of managerialism on a range of public sector professionals, and has demonstrated the potential for depprofessionalisation, lowered morale, and challenges to professional self-identity implicit in managerialist changes to professional modes of work. At the same time,
elements of professional ideology and professional identity have been identified as potential sources of resistance to managerial changes that strike at the heart of this 'valued self-identity'. The forms of subjectivity to which professional values and modes of working give rise serve not only to increase the likelihood that many managerialist changes will be resented and resisted, but also provide important resources which can be drawn upon in mounting such opposition. These themes are continued in the following chapters, in which the focus is refined to consider the particular variant of professionalism that is manifest in the academic identity, and the ways in which managerialism is experienced in the Australian university sector.
Chapter Five

ACADEMIC CULTURE
AND THE PRODUCTION OF RESISTANCE

"While the discipline and the enterprise provide the immediate cultures, the academic profession at large offers one that is more remote and ambiguous. Sweeping across all the fields and institutions, assumed by professors of biology, sociology, and classics alike, is the identity of the "academic man" [sic]. All such men and women, in the doctrines of the profession, are part of a single "community of scholars", sharing an interest that sets them apart from others. Community members are entitled to special privileges, particularly "freedom of research" and "freedom of teaching". Downgrading all external controls, the culture of the profession everywhere emphasises personal autonomy and collegial self-government. It portrays altruistic commitment, suggesting that it is a high form of service to society to create knowledge, transmit the cultural heritage and train the young to fulfil their highest potential" (Clark, 1983: 91).

"What unites academics' various expressions of the meaning of loss and change is a relatively coherent and commonly-shared set of values. Whilst this counters rather cynical assumptions about academics' reactions to increased demands for accountability, to more explicit and direct controls on performance, and to internal and external limits to autonomy, it also provides a positive discourse as an alternative to (perhaps more frequent) cynical, recalcitrant or derisive forms of resistance to managerialism. In order to resist the force of managerialism it is necessary to recognise, articulate and re-value a value-based interpretation of the nature of academic work and organisation. In this sense 'collegiality' is a meaningful, relevant and potent concept" (Johnson, 1999: 31-2).

"Resistance is an essentially defensive relationship to cultural power that is adapted by subordinate social forces in circumstances where the forms of cultural power in question arise from a source that is clearly experienced as both external and other. As such, it arises in relationships of cultural superordination/subordination which have an impositional logic – that is, where a dominating culture is imposed on a subordinate culture from without and, in extreme cases, aims at eradicating the latter and substituting itself in its place. Resistance is, accordingly, always – at least in part – a conservative practice that is oriented to the defence or strategic adaptation of the subordinate culture in question in a hostile and threatening environment in which the continuing viability of that culture is placed in question. To the degree that resistance is orientated to repulsing, to warding off, the influence of the dominating culture to which it opposes itself, it follows that the resources of resistance must be located, at least in some measure, in a source located outside of that dominating culture. In some accounts, these resources are derived from the subordinate culture in question as well as from the dynamic patterns of its interactions with the dominating culture" (Bennett, 1998: 171).
Introduction

Chapter One explored a variety of approaches to the study of resistance and their utility for an examination of academic resistance to managerialism. It was established that both cultural and labour process theory approaches highlight the importance of local forms of knowledge and identity in shaping resistance. Recent work emphasises the importance of the availability of alternate subject positions in the production of discursive resistance, particularly with regard to resisting the subjectivising effects of managerial practices and managerial discourses (Thomas & Davies, 2002, forthcoming). The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to identify elements of academic culture that may provide important resources in shaping and framing academics’ resistance to managerialism in the contemporary Australian university. It examines a number of values, beliefs, and practices embedded within academic work, which form the basis of traditional academic culture. The elements of this culture reflect and represent a shared understanding of what it means to be an academic, transcending disciplinary, organizational and national boundaries. It is argued here that academic subjectivities are constructed in ways that reflect the importance of these values, allowing individual academics to locate themselves within, and identify with, the discourse of the broader academic culture.

This chapter draws on literature from the US, the UK, Europe, and Australia that examines academic identities, academic culture, and aspects of academic work. These analyses have many commonalities, attesting to the existence of relatively uniform and consistent notions of what it means to be an academic, despite the fact that those who hold them work in different institutions, different higher education systems, and different locations. Analysts have noted that the institution, the discipline, and the profession offer different sources of identity for the academic (Henkel, 2000: 18-21) and that, as a result, the academic identity is not ‘a unitary construct’ (Taylor, 1999a: 42). While the importance of these different ‘indexes of the self’, derived from the institution in which one is employed (‘I’m from Harvard’), and the discipline in which one is engaged (‘I’m a biologist’), (Taylor, 1999a: 41) is acknowledged, it is argued here that the more salient identity is that associated with the notion of being an academic. This overarching source
of identity – ('I'm an academic') – appeared paramount for those in this study, subsuming disciplinary and institutional differences. The exploration of academic culture undertaken here also draws on the reflections of those who participated in this study, illustrating the ways in which they identified with the values, norms, and practices embedded in these shared understandings.

The use of the term 'culture' in this chapter is best captured by Hall and Jefferson who define it thus:

We understand the word 'culture' to refer to that level at which social groups develop distinct patterns of life, and give expressive form to their social and material life-experience ... The 'culture' of a group or class is the peculiar and distinctive 'way of life' of the group or class, the meanings, values and ideas embedded in institutions, in social relations, in systems of belief, in mores and customs, in the uses of objects and material life ... A culture includes the 'maps of meaning' which make things intelligible to its members. These maps of meaning are not simply carried around in the head: they are objectified in the patterns of social organisation and relationships through which the individual becomes a 'social individual'. Culture is the way the social relations of a group are structured and shaped: but it is also the way those shapes are experienced, understood and interpreted (Hall & Jefferson, 1976: 10, emphasis in original).

Academic culture involves 'the store of knowledge' that academics draw upon in reaching a consensus of understanding about the world (Habermas quoted in Reid, 1996: 56). It includes the 'shared accounts and common beliefs' that help to define for academics who they are, and what they do (Clarke, 1983: 72). This is by no means meant to infer that all academics share all these values and beliefs at all times, or that these values, beliefs and practices reflect the lived realities of the contemporary university. However, taken as a whole, they produce a series of discourses and cultural myths, which establish and reflect shared understandings about the university and the world outside it. They do not always serve as accurate representations of the way things are, but provide ideal images of the way they should be (Taylor, 1999a: 42).

It is argued here that these discourses were important in shaping the subjectivities of the academics in this study. As a set of shared understandings and values, they acted to
enhance academics' sense of agency, expressed in their capacity, and will, to resist what they perceived as the alien culture of managerialism. As discussed in Chapter One, the term subjectivity is open to a number of readings and interpretations. While some refer to subjectivity as 'the open, reflexive, embodied quality of human agency' (O'Doherty & Willmott, 2000: 114), the same term, when used in a Foucauldian sense, indicates the ways in which the subject is constituted with reference to relations of power. The sense of agency associated with subjectivity is diminished, as the emphasis is placed on the ways in which individuals are made 'subject to' such relations of power. However, academics are situated in power relations in particularly contradictory and ambivalent ways.

Foucault suggests that individuals are 'always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising' power (Foucault, 1980: 98). While academics find themselves subject to the exercise of power in the managerial university, they also exercise power over others – particularly students. Traditionally, however, academics have also enjoyed significant levels of control over their own conduct, and over the governance of the university. This relationship to power constitutes and shapes academic subjectivities in ways that render resistance a likely response to challenges to this control. Other elements of academic culture – explored in this chapter – also contribute to the formation of a subjectivity that makes it difficult for the disciplinary mechanisms of the managerial university to accomplish the creation of the disciplined, docile, Foucauldian subject. To a great extent, academics' subjectivities are formed with reference to a culture in which they have traditionally enjoyed great autonomy and control, and the belief that it was their right – indeed their responsibility – to act as critic and conscience of society. Academics are unlikely, therefore, to meekly accept any diminution of their autonomy, control, or right to engage in critique. Traditional academic discourses, therefore, provide important resources, and produce particular types of subjectivities, which academics draw upon to resist the values, mechanisms and practices that many of them regard as an alien and inferior colonising culture.
A Shared Academic Culture?

Many would argue that the universal ‘academic man’ [sic] to whom Clarke refers is a myth. Firstly, the academic culture is inherently multicultural; it is fragmented – or at least differentiated – along disciplinary lines. These differences are reflected in the different meanings and understandings associated with comprehending oneself, and the world, as a biologist, historian or sociologist. In this regard, Snow (1959) argued that there were effectively ‘two cultures’ within the university, based on the broad epistemological and disciplinary division between the arts and the sciences. More recently, scholars have pointed to the important ways in which disciplinary groupings constitute ‘tribes’ with their own distinct cultures, located within the broader university culture (Becher, 1987; Becher 1989; Becher & Trowler, 2001). In recent decades, the introduction into universities of new courses of study, and especially vocational disciplines such as nursing, policing and tourism studies, has amplified this disciplinary diversity. The admission of disciplines that possess well-developed and distinct vocational cultures of their own has added to the complexity and fragmentation of the academic culture. McInnis (1996) has argued that the different organizational forms, structures, and processes that prevail in various disciplinary-based faculties may interact with the ‘shared world views’ (McInnis, 1996: 100) of those working within them, to produce distinctive academic cultures. He suggests that this can result in different faculties exhibiting ‘egalitarian’, ‘hierarchical’, or ‘individualistic’ principles, which then underpin the collective response to, and implementation of, policy change.

Despite such diversity, many argue that the university is characterised by a common culture – a sense of what it means to be an academic – which binds together those from disparate disciplinary and institutional backgrounds, through a core of shared understandings, values and practices. Bailey (1977) argues that ‘each tribe has a name and a territory, settles its own affairs, goes to war with others, has a distinct language or at least a distinct dialogue and a variety of symbolic ways of demonstrating its apartness from others. Nevertheless, the whole set of tribes possess a common culture’ (Bailey, 1977: 212, quoted in Becher, 1987: 272, emphasis added). Continuing Bailey’s metaphor,
Becher and Trowler acknowledge, 'the tribes, after all, share the same ethnicity; the territories they inhabit are part of the same land mass' (Becher & Trowler, 2001: 205). While there are internal differences between those from various disciplines, they are secondary to an awareness of shared 'otherness' from the outside world. Many writing in the field of higher education have explored this shared otherness – the unique aspects of academic culture, academic life and academic work – identifying the core values, norms, and practices that characterise it. There is a remarkable degree of consistency within these accounts. While the ubiquity of change within universities has been a common theme within recent higher education research (Tight, 2003: 159), overall, as McInnis notes, 'the university has long been regarded as a remarkably stable institution with a powerful set of core values kept in place despite social and political pressures over the centuries' (McInnis, 1998b: 171-2).

Importantly, the notion of a shared academic culture is one that has resonance for many academics. Hort (1997) acknowledges that the diversity characterising contemporary higher education might suggest a very fragmented model of an academic culture. 'Yet', she notes, 'academic culture is a phenomenological reality – it is invoked in academic writing and by academics in conversation' (Hort, 1997: 33). She further suggests that outside pressures, including managerialism, have in fact contributed to academics' heightened consciousness of a shared academic or collegial culture (Hort, 1997: 36). Others have noted a 'Dunkirk spirit' among British academics, referring to 'an increased sense of community in adversity', induced by recent increases in accountability and surveillance (Kogan 2000 cited in Becher and Trowler, 2001: 19). In atmospheres of adversity or conflict, shared cultural understandings are often invoked and celebrated, serving as a source of resistance to the common 'enemy'. The resources of the subordinate culture are then marshalled and utilised in resisting the encroachments of a dominating culture (Bennett, 1998: 171).

Similarly, the notion of a shared academic culture was certainly a 'phenomenological reality' for most of the academics in this study. A number referred directly to 'academic culture', or to the 'culture of a university', contrasting their
understandings of this culture to those values embedded in managerialism. Others referred to aspects of ‘academic life’ and what they understood academic life to entail. While it is not suggested that those interviewed held identical views on the notion of what it means to be an academic, a remarkable degree of consensus did emerge, regarding the core values of the academic culture. This was especially striking given the diversity of disciplinary backgrounds, ages, occupational history, level of appointment, and length of service of those interviewed. Interestingly, even recently-appointed academics, who suggested that they had never known anything but the managerial university, nevertheless framed their understandings of academic culture in terms of collegiality, autonomy, and similar traditional values.

A sense of shared membership of an embattled culture also emerged during the interviews. One historian, referring to the re-structuring of his department, said, ‘the culture was literally ploughed up in order to make it possible to manage us’. He noted that, as historians, he and his colleagues were particularly adept at noticing when a cultural field had been ploughed up, and were ‘tenacious in recreating the culture if it’s disturbed, disrupted’ (Associate Professor, History). Another ridiculed what he saw as superficial understandings of change management agents who sought to effect cultural change in universities saying, ‘these clowns that talk about changing the culture of organizations, they’ve got to be dickheads, they really are, they should be set to do three years of anthropology’ (Lecturer, Sociology). While these two quotes indicate awareness of the existence of a shared academic culture, and of management’s attempts to change it, they also underline the importance of the disciplinary understandings through which both academics understand and interpret the world. In the instances cited above, these understandings shaped their explanations and representations of enforced cultural change in the university.

If we accept the existence of a shared academic culture as a ‘phenomenological reality’, the next step is to unpack its elements or features. Higher education literature contains many examples of this task. Hort (1997), summarising this literature, argues that we can see a ‘grouping of core values, involving intellectualism, the centrality of
learning, criticism of ideas and of society, academic freedom, autonomy and collegial
decision-making' along with 'an internal versus an external focus [and] an intrinsic
motivation for academic work' (Hort, 1997: 12, 200). Similarly, Miller (1997: 613)
suggests that academic values include 'institutional autonomy, collegial conceptions of
governance, academic freedom, tenure and ownership of intellectual property and the
centrality of academics and of academic matters in university life'. An analysis of the
results of a number of surveys, conducted between 1968 and 1996, which focussed on the
work-related attitudes and values of academic staff in Australian universities, concluded
that, despite a raft of changes to the higher education sector in the relevant period,
particular core values emerged from academics’ responses. These values include
'freedom to do original work; a flexible work schedule; independence and autonomy;
[and] the opportunity to make a contribution to knowledge' (Adams, 1998: 427). Adding
a sting to the tail of a similar list, Coaldrake and Stedman suggest that academic values
'extol individual independence and autonomy underpinned by secure full-time
employment, authority derived from academic standing, local control over all academic
matters, high status for original research and widespread disdain for what are seen as the
lesser tasks of administration and management' (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1999: 9).

The degree of commonality in such précis of academic culture adds support to the
argument that, despite diversity, it is possible to delineate the features of a common
academic culture. The next section of this chapter undertakes a detailed review of the
elements of academic culture that shape academic subjectivities in ways that have
important implications for resistance. Many of these elements are difficult to separate out
into analytically distinct categories, as they are enmeshed in complex webs of meaning
that constitute the culture of academe. However, an attempt is made to elucidate and
explore particular features that appear salient to the enactment of academic resistance to
managerialism.
‘Scholarly Unworldliness’

A familiar traditional image of the university, at least to those outside it, was that of the ‘ivory tower’. This image was used to indicate that those within were isolated and sheltered from the harsh ‘realities’ of the outside world. While it can be argued that this was never the case, managerialist discourse often invokes the term ‘real world’ to indicate to recalcitrant academics that they must face up to the imperatives of the ‘bottom line’ – reduced government funding accompanied by increased accountability requirements. In essence, references to other ‘worlds’ refer to the different values that prevail within certain discrete groups, in this case within the often antithetical cultures of academe and managerialism. Academics invoked this metaphor in several interviews in this study. In one, an academic reported having asked a senior administrator, who had just delivered his plans for the university’s future to a forum of academics, ‘what planet he came from’. The administrator retorted, ‘I’m trying to tell you what planet you’re on!’ (Lecturer, History). In another instance a very junior academic reported telling the Vice-Chancellor that he considered his ‘vision of the world’ to be ‘appalling’ (Lecturer, French).

At a superficial level, the ‘otherworldliness’ of academics can be traced in the degree of eccentricity that is seen to characterise academe – personified in the image of the ‘absent-minded professor’. Adams, with tongue firmly in cheek, refers to it as ‘The Protective Coloration of Eccentricity’, saying, ‘eccentricity is not only to be tolerated in academic life, it is often a positive virtue ... The model for the researcher is the genius. Genius is eccentric. Therefore researchers should be eccentric’ (Adams, 1988: 12). The ‘idiosyncratic and eccentric’ ways of academic dissidents has also been seen to ‘contribute to the richness of experience for university students’, challenging the ‘normal and banal’ (Blunden, 1996: 147). Embedded in all of this is a notion of disconnection from the ‘real’ or everyday world, a conscious rejection of the values and norms which prevail there, and a celebration of otherness or ‘otherworldliness’. Adams suggests that within academe, ‘the outer world, sometimes referred to peculiarly as the “real world” is suspect: possibly it is an enemy; often it seems incapable of understanding academic
language and in possession of quite different customs and values' (Adams, 1988: 25). Bailey even argues that stories highlighting the 'asinine ineptitude' of academic financial management have, as their moral, the understanding that 'academics have special talents ... which are eroded and diluted by being brought into close contact with the affairs of the everyday life' (Bailey, 1977: 22). Academics are notoriously impatient with some of these elements of 'the everyday'. As Burchell suggests, 'we all know some especially talented colleague or colleagues who persist stubbornly in their capacity to deal with the photocopier, their email and voice-mail, or any of the routine calendar items of contemporary academic life' (Burchell, 2001: 30). Amusing stories of more spectacular manifestations of eccentricity are one of the artefacts of academic culture, and are usually told in ways that associate such eccentricity with the brilliance of the perpetrator. However, particularly in times of university budget cuts, this element of 'scholarly unworldliness' has a more serious side, in which the values embedded in the world of academe and those of the outside or 'real' world collide. Such conflicts are often played out over issues relating to budgetary imperatives, and academic reactions to managerial responses to funding cuts.

The notion of the 'disinterested pursuit of truth' as a scholarly imperative, carries with it the implication that the activities conducted within universities require the support of adequate government funding (McCullow & Lingard, 1996: 12). Universities have traditionally, therefore, existed outside the market, with its profit imperative. A view of universities as a public good, in which knowledge and learning are valued in, and for, themselves – rather than for their exchange value – is central to academic culture and is considered an 'unworldly' one, when viewed from the perspective of currently dominant economic rationalist discourses. The values and practices of the traditional 'academic world' are, therefore, often in conflict with the economic rationalist values that are implicit, and embedded, in the managerialist project. An example of this conflict is

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1 Such stories are often told to students and fledgling academics as illustrations of those for whom their fascination with their subject matter precludes attention to the more mundane aspects of life. During this research, for example, an academic related a story about a (now-retired) academic who would not finish a lecture when the allotted time had expired unless another staff member was dispatched to tell him that his hour was over and he must allow the students to leave the lecture theatre. The moral of the story was, of course, that the academic's absorption in his subject matter rendered trivial the mundane timetables imposed by the university.
highlighted in the Australian documentary film *Facing the Music*, and in the exchange between two scholars in the pages of the *Australian Universities’ Review*, in the wake of its release. This film – *inter alia* – traces the efforts of the head of the Music Department at the University of Sydney, Professor Anne Boyd, to secure external funding for her department in the face of budget cuts. Her efforts were simultaneously heart-rending and excruciatingly inept, illustrating the truth of the often-repeated claim of academics that they did not enter academe with the desire or the skills required to become entrepreneurs. Burchell, in his review of the film, suggests that, ‘Professor Boyd and her colleagues occupy a plane of concerted scholarly unworldliness which is simply beyond my compass’. He further argues that the movie portrays what some might regard as the ‘irrationalism of the traditional scholarly ethos’, which, in the present economic climate, renders such academics open to the charge of dysfunctionality and fiscal irresponsibility (Burchell, 2001: 28-29). Rosewarne (2002: 39), in his riposte, acknowledges the range of ‘idiosyncratic and eccentric responses’, which have been elicited by cuts to Federal funding of universities. However, he takes Burchell to task for choosing to focus on academic eccentricity, rather than analysing the effects of such cuts on the academic labour process.

At the superficial level of ‘unworldliness’, some interviews in this study elicited stories reminiscent of those talented but technically inept colleagues to whom Burchell refers above. One early career academic spoke in exasperated terms of an Emeritus Professor who, because he didn’t know how to use a computer, persisted in asking administrative staff to type his papers, despite directives forbidding academic staff to make such requests. The interviewee noted that the administrative staff resented doing so, but explained, ‘he just looks so hopeless that they crack’ (Senior Lecturer, History). Another academic referred to dealings with an academic he called ‘a technophobe’, saying, ‘he can’t read his emails, so whenever you don’t get a response from the guy [he says], “Oh, I haven’t looked at my emails, I can’t use it” ... He uses it as a defence’ (Lecturer, Tourism). This otherworldliness, or disconnection from mundane matters, was acknowledged as relatively common within academe, or at least it was understood as an enduring cultural myth within the academy. One academic recalled: ‘When I was doing
my PhD actually one of the people I interviewed said, "You're very sensible for an academic", which I thought was quite funny" (Senior Lecturer, Computing). Another early career academic argued that there is a high proportion of idiosyncratic people in academe, referring to them as:

very precious people, but people who are often very gifted ... But they’re in their ivory tower and thinking about esoteric questions or whatever it is that their research is, and so they’re often not very practical... Some of them will be precious and vain, but others will just be a little quirky, you know, and some of them are brilliant ... If they’re brilliant they’re often impossible" (Lecturer, History).

However, as noted above, there is a more profound way in which we can see academics as inhabiting other ‘worlds’. This essentially refers to conflict between dominant values within specific cultural milieu. In this sense, the collision of ‘worlds’ is played out in a conflict between the economic rationalist values embedded in the managerialist project, and the values of unfettered intellectual inquiry, emphasised within academic culture. Within the latter framework, research is curiosity-driven, and need not have an immediate economic benefit. For those who subscribe to such a view, universities are a bastion of such values – a ‘protected space’ (Lecturer, Industrial Relations) for inquiry and critique – in which economic rationalist values must not be allowed to colonise the existing culture. This view was prominent within the research interviews. Overwhelmingly, academics rejected a view of the university as a business, although all identified the adoption of a business model by their university. A number of academics deplored the ‘vocationalisation’ of universities – a trend in which ‘work readiness’ and vocational relevance is emphasised (Symes, 1999). One argued:

For a lot of people at university, this was not what a university was about. It was about research, and teaching people to think, and teaching people to express themselves, and to question ... But [now] it's all about cost effectiveness it seems ... Nothing has anything to do with real learning and research and pedagogy any more. It's all about money and student numbers and how are we going to make up the shortfall in budgets (Lecturer, History).

Such comments were common, as academics argued that their universities were only interested in ‘bums on seats’ (Lecturer, Criminology), and that such a view was adopted
at the cost of all other principles. Many argued that, within their universities, the profit imperative appeared to be far more important than scholarly goals. One insisted, ‘the bottom line, the financial bottom line, is harder than the academic bottom line’ (Reader, Botany). Many academics in this study argued passionately that universities cannot, and must not, be understood or treated as businesses. One argued, ‘universities are part of the educational fabric of society and they need to be treated as something different from a business’ (Reader, Botany). Another said she was reminded of ‘the poet who said that everything that makes life worth living is strangely without utility, and to me that’s what is typical of a university. It should be about everything that makes life worth living, but it is strangely without utility’ (Senior Lecturer, Computing). A Lecturer in History suggested that a university system in which research and teaching has to, effectively, ‘earn its own keep’ is ‘inimical to the idea of disinterested scholarship, because we turn into a business’. In this regard, most academics in this study rejected the notion that courses attracting small numbers of students should be discontinued in the interests of cost effectiveness. Similarly, they saw research undertaken purely to attract funding, rather than because of scholarly interest, as ‘prostituted’ (Senior Lecturer, Sociology). Several academics argued that their universities valued their research, not for its scholarly excellence, but for the income it generated. In this regard, one insisted, ‘this university would care more about six articles about in-growing toenails than it would about one article about a cure for cancer’ (Senior Lecture, Surgery). Another spoke of his view of the university, and his sense of what had been lost, saying:

I’d always seen universities to be places where people did research, some of it was arcane, but that was fine, because where else could that type of research be carried out? But also as places where people were given the time and the resources to reflect upon, essentially, the world in which we live, and who had the freedom to criticise the world in which they lived. And I see that being taken away from us ... It’s all about that vocational thing now, it’s not about teaching students to reflect or think differently or to see the world in a different light (Lecturer, History).

Signalling a rejection of a business model of the university, many academics in this study refused to use the terms ‘client’ and ‘customer’. Many perceived ‘customer’ as a loaded designation, one that was ‘wholly inappropriate’ (Lecturer, French). A number
indicated that it is a term they abhor. One academic claimed that he ‘even got one of those swipe things for a credit card and put it on my desk for consultation’ in humorous protest (Associate Professor, Economics). Another noted that his Dean had, in a Faculty meeting, referred to students as customers. He said, ‘I think 90 percent of the staff cringed, we wanted to vomit, we wanted to go over and vomit all over this clown’ (Lecturer, Sociology). Such views are consistent with the findings of Bauer and Henkel’s study of British and Swedish academics, which concluded that, ‘academics, at least those outside managerial circles, largely rejected market values. They were critical of conceptions of students as consumers or customers, considering that this would lower standards’ (Bauer & Henkel, 1999: 255).

It should be noted, however, that while a business model of universities was rejected by the vast majority of academics in this study, this was not a unanimous response. One academic argued, ‘You need a strong business model. And that model says to you that if you can’t make it in the marketplace .... if the students don’t like what you’ve got to offer – your educational product if you like – they won’t come’. Acknowledging the influence of disciplinary understandings in this regard, he added, ‘but I’m probably a little bit biased, I come from a business faculty’ (Senior Lecturer, Tourism). A young, early career academic also suggested that, given the broader economic conditions, ‘everyone’s got to tighten their belt these days’ (Lecturer, History). Another early career academic made an interesting link between the degree of autonomy he was allowed, and the very large amount of research funding he had attracted since his appointment. He suggested, ‘so if I didn’t have this [funding] would I be getting pushed around? Oh, yeah!’ (Senior Lecturer, Physics). Such ‘real world’ orientation, or pragmatism, was in marked contrast to the views expressed by many of the older or late-career academics in this study.
‘All By Myself …’

Much academic work is performed in a solitary fashion. In a memorable phrase, Damrosch (drawing on Bromwich, 1992) argues that, ‘at heart an intellectual community is a community of one, oxymoronic though that phrase may sound’ (Damrosch, 1995: 100). While team-teaching and collaborative research are common within some disciplines, academics have traditionally planned courses, taught, and researched in isolation (Berquist, 1992: 43). University architecture facilitates this tendency, as each academic has his/her own office, the door of which may or may not be closed. Academics’ traditional privilege of working at home further facilitates this tendency to work alone. Equally importantly, it is a mode of working that is encouraged and favoured through the modes of training and socialisation embedded in the academic ‘apprenticeship’ or training system – the doctorate. The process of completing one’s doctorate is the most significant rite of passage in academic culture, one that an academic in this study referred to as, ‘such a despicable process, a medieval form of torture’. He saw it as a form of fagging, saying, ‘all the way through my doctorate … you think, “this is a primitive form of assessment … why are we still doing this absurd tome?” … But the moment I got it I said, “I’ve done it, every other bastard can do it [too]”. And I think it’s the very reason it stays’ (Senior Lecturer, Philosophy).

Damrosch (1995) has pointed to the negative and destructive aspects of individualism in academe. He argues that the academic socialisation process, particularly the solitary process of completing a doctoral degree, means that those who are intellectually sociable self-select out of academe, and those who remain are essentially those who ‘have relatively little need for extended intellectual exchange’ (Damrosch, 1995: 10). This personality type then becomes a norm, contributing to the ‘archaic hyperindividuality of our prevailing academic ethos’ (Damrosch, 1995: 7). While some of those interviewed described themselves as intellectually sociable people – even gregarious – others noted that the nature of academic work meant that much work was done in isolation, that, ‘once you close your office door, you’re on your own’ (Associate Professor, Economics). Indeed, another suggested that ‘most academics are prima donnas
who don’t like working with anyone, so we ... well it’s the nature of the place, isn’t it?’ (Senior Lecturer, Engineering). Acknowledging these traits in herself, one academic said, ‘I’m not a good networker, because people piss me off and so I just can’t be bothered ... I don’t interact with my colleagues very much’ (Lecturer, Criminology). Instead she preferred to ‘run her own show’ and ‘get on with her work’. Another academic, with a professional background outside the university, noted that while he had always considered himself a ‘team player’, he now found himself working with ‘the sum of a group of individuals’ (Lecturer, Tourism).

Becher and Trowler (2001: 125-6) have noted that, in many disciplines, especially those where interpretation is a significant element of the scholarly endeavour, the model of the ‘lonely scholar’ is particularly salient. Berquist suggests that for many academics, the autonomous, independent, ‘lone wolf’ mode of work is one of the most attractive features of the collegial culture (Berquist, 1992: 43). Academics often work alone, on topics that not even their colleagues understand, for long periods of time (Hort, 1997: 200). While, as Damrosch notes, this ability is acquired as part of the socialisation process, it also requires that academics must be content with (or at least inured to) their own company for long periods, and that they be equipped with an ‘internalised or “centred” focus, that may perhaps be described as “introversion”’ (Hort, 1997: 200). This mode of work, and its normative status within universities means that individualism is an important element of academic culture. Academics are ‘powerfully bonded to one another by their strong valuation of individualism’ (Clark, 1983: 105). Clark argues that this shared value legitimises much variety within universities, inculcating ‘respect for the choices and actions of others’ (Clark, 1983: 105). However, this shared value of individualism, which breeds respect for the differences of others, does not preclude fierce disagreement and controversy at times.
The Disputatous Academy

The image of the lone academic, working in isolation on his/her own particular intellectual problem, solitary, introverted, and perhaps even socially awkward, is an essentially benign one. Such images may be juxtaposed with representations of the backbiting, acrimony, and fierce rivalry of the academic profession, encountered in the ‘campus’ novels of David Lodge, Malcolm Bradbury, Howard Jacobsen, Tom Sharpe, Frank Parkin and others\(^2\). Baldridge has noted that ‘warfare’ is common in academe, and is ‘no less deadly because it is polite’ (Baldridge, 1971: 107). The expression of aggression towards other scholars (Damrosch, 1995: 82), the ‘good, blazing row’ (Becher & Trowler, 2001: 126), has traditionally been a feature of scholarly debate and academic life. Damrosch sees this as a consequence of the process of socialisation embedded in the academic apprenticeship though the completion of the doctorate. He argues that ‘alienation and aggression are built into the very structures of academic life and work’ (Damrosch, 1995: 16), and that the ‘extended rituals of training and acculturation’ within universities encourage and reward such qualities (Damrosch, 1995: 9).

While academics in this study spoke of collegiality and co-operation within their departments, they also acknowledged the rivalry and disputes that characterise academe. An academic who had begun a course of study intended to provide him with an escape route from the university, was careful to hide this fact from his colleagues. He said, ‘as soon as they knew I was planning to leave, it would be like a pack of sharks who’d know that I was no longer a player in here’ (Senior Lecturer, Philosophy). A Senior Lecturer in Sociology referred to the ‘bitchiness out there’, saying that in one department, ‘half the people don’t talk to the other half, you know, they’re incredibly divided’. Another academic suggested that he had ‘fallen out with enough people already, there’s not that many more to go’ (Senior Lecturer, Surgery). Some attributed this tendency to their own

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\(^2\) Adams suggests that, ‘the academic novel, usually written by a professor of English, is most often satire, sometimes farce, and often a symbolic act of revenge against a world that has turned out to be different from what has been advertised’ (Adams, 1988: 37). The extreme caricature of such novels is often useful in highlighting the often taken-for-granted elements of academic culture (Cuthbert, 1996: 201; Delamont, 1996).
personalities, referring to themselves as ‘a bit aggressive’, ‘bolshy’, or having ‘a big gob’. One acknowledged, ‘if I feel that something is wrong, I’m likely to say it’ (Senior Lecturer, Philosophy), while another noted, ‘I talked myself out of a couple of jobs in the UK by telling people what I still think is the truth’ (Lecturer, French). A third argued, ‘the only way you get anything, all too often in the world these days, is by being the person who is prepared to make a fuss and shout ... I don’t suffer fools gladly, and if they try things on with me I’ll just tell them to get stuffed’ (Senior Lecturer, Surgery).

Whether the origins and causes may be traced to the processes and socialisation embedded within the university, or to the personality traits of those who are attracted to academe, or to some fusion of the two, disagreement is an inherent part of academic life. As Tight notes, ‘we have to accept that academic life is not about agreement ... that the processes involved are intrinsically concerned with conflict. Criticism, disagreement, rebuttal and refutation are the stuff of academic work’ (Tight, 1988: 119). New knowledge is arrived at through a process of questioning existing ideas, ways of thinking, and bodies of knowledge. This process of scholarly critique and debate is foundational to the development of new knowledge, paradigms and approaches. Barcan suggests that academic work in Humanities disciplines is structured ‘around the logic of “yes, but”’, in which knowledge claims are considered only temporary and provisional, and are open to contestation and rejection. Thus, she argues, knowledge practices are ‘often adversarial and constestorial in their deep structures, even at their most collegial and friendly’ (Barcan, 1996: 136). The logic of ‘yes, but’, the process of critical analysis, and a refusal to accept claims without detailed scrutiny, are deeply embedded in academic culture. As Blunden argues, ‘to some extent, at least, the role of a university academic requires a dissident approach. This is impossible without questioning established practices and received opinion both at an epistemological as well as at a practical level’ (Blunden, 1996: 147).

Academics’ propensity to engage in critique goes beyond evaluation of the latest developments in their own disciplinary areas. Academics have traditionally been regarded as bearing the role of ‘critic and conscience’ of society. As Clarke argues,
"scholars everywhere expect to have the right to criticise one another and to serve as
critic of the action of others outside the academy, including state officials" (Clark, 1983: 94-5). Bargh, Scott and Smith (1996: 29) suggest that, while universities are influenced
by their environment, they retain a reflective critical approach to ‘dominant value
systems and political ideologies’. The authors regard this as the ‘fundamental
emancipatory function of higher education, a function endemic to the academic value
system’.

The academics in this study readily engaged in critiques of their own universities,
and saw this as a legitimate aspect of their role as academics. One said:

The university, to me, should stand as an almost entirely independent body
of people who are extremely well-educated, who should behave extremely
ethically, who have an enormous interest in advancing knowledge,
because that’s what they love to do. But who also, therefore, are extremely
critical of society, who are like opposition in government if you like ...
What we want is people who can think, who do not accept what is given to
them, who look around them and say, ‘Is this the best way we can proceed?’ You know, ‘Is this the best thing for society?’ (Senior Lecturer, Computing).

During the interviews academics critiqued directions, priorities, policies and practices
within their universities. A number of them referred to having mounted the same
arguments to various levels of administration and management within their own
universities. Recounting a very acrimonious exchange with an administrator, one
academic invoked the logic of ‘yes, but’, and the rules of scholarly engagement, saying:

Well, arguments are arguments, right? I mean I know logic – every
collection is based on premises and premises are merely conclusions from
other arguments which may or may not be true. And I said [to the
administrator] ‘Well I don’t accept your argument and if you can present
me with a better argument I will give in, but right now I’m saying to you I
do not accept your argument’ (Senior Lecturer, Computing).

Another referred to a Deputy Vice-Chancellor who had asked staff not to say anything
negative about the university during a forthcoming Australia Universities Quality Agency
Audit. He insisted:

I mean if I’ve got things to say [about the university] I would say them in
public, they’re my opinions. I don’t have any ideas about burning the
university down ... But people who definitely want to see the university
go down are only going to see that as a red rag to a bull, you know, being
told not to say nasty things about the university (Lecturer, French).

Just as critique is integral to the process of knowledge production, contestation
and refinement, it is an accepted feature of academic culture that members of the
academic community must be prepared for their ideas or claims to be challenged and
contested, and to defend them appropriately. There is a shared understanding that new
contributions to the scholarly corpus must be able to withstand rigorous scrutiny. Such
disputes can become acrimonious, but at the same time they must conform to particular
‘rules of engagement’, which include avoiding *ad hominem* attacks. Similarly, the rules of
engagement dictate that those challenged must not take such criticisms personally, nor
call foul when they are mounted; they must be accepted as part of the rigorous scholarly
process. However, such cultural norms often collide with another feature of the academic
culture – a deep investment in one’s own expert knowledge, and the status associated
with the possession of that expert knowledge.

‘Trust Me, I’m a Doctor’

Like other professionals, academics’ claims to professional expertise rest on their lengthy
period of education and the specialized knowledge they have acquired (Bargh et al, 1996:
28). Such claims are associated with a degree of prestige within a labour market
organized around hierarchy and status, and, traditionally, academics have occupied a
relatively high status within the occupational hierarchy. Surveys of academics have
suggested that they value the prestige associated with their occupation (Adams, 1998:
427; Anderson et al, 2002: 86). Broad social recognition of high occupational status has
implications for the ways in which an occupation or profession views itself. In this
regard, Bailey refers to a ‘dominating myth among academics about their own
superiority’ based on their access to scarce knowledge (Bailey, 1977: 21).
This notion of a ‘myth of superiority’ as an element of academic culture is reflected in Riemer’s reference to the ‘fierce egotism, which is never far from the academic sensibility’ (Riemer, 1998: 135). Stewart (1999: 30) refers more neutrally to ‘robust self-belief’ as an essential ingredient for success in academic life. This aspect of academic culture is under-emphasised in the literature, perhaps because it is a rather uncomfortable area for academics to explore. Academic egos often appear to be a curious mixture of the robust and the fragile, and therefore the process of scholarly debate and disputation referred to above is not accomplished without considerable angst at times. There would seem to be little doubt that this is associated with the process of investing so much of oneself in what Hort refers to as the ‘search for the truth’ – the lengthy process of enquiry and research. The ‘flip’ side of this core academic value, she argues, is that academics ‘must believe in a committed way that they are right ... they may well be so convinced of their correctness that they are rigid and inflexible’ (Hort, 1997: 202). The ways in which academics identify personally with their scholarly work, the amount of time and energy they commit to the pursuit of scholarly excellence, and the importance of being able to substantiate one’s expert status means that claims to ‘being right’ are intimately tied up with academics’ sense of self.

This is not an issue readily approached in an interview situation. The question: ‘Are you a fierce egoist who is deeply committed to always being right?’ is not easily posed. Perhaps it is safest to say that a number of those interviewed for this study presented as gentle, self-effacing, almost tentative individuals ... but that many more did not. The good-humoured reflexivity of one academic is helpful in illustrating this element of academic culture. She laughed as she acknowledged her reluctance to devolve some of her teaching to casual staff, ‘because obviously [subjects] can only be taught properly by me’. She added that she needed to be everywhere and do everything, saying ‘nobody can do it better than me, because of my megalomania’ (Lecturer, Criminology). On a more serious note, a number of academics were emphatic that, because of their particular expert knowledge, they were best placed to make particular judgments and decisions within their universities – particularly those that related to their discipline. One academic argued, ‘I’m advocating that the best people to decide about standards in the discipline
are academics’. Referring to a situation in which a fail grade she had submitted had been altered by someone outside the relevant discipline, she insisted that the person who had over-ruled her judgement, ‘would not know what architecture was if it came up and bit him on the bum’. She fumed, ‘If I say it’s a fail, it’s a fail!’ (Associate Professor, Architecture).

‘I’ll do it my way’

The solitary nature of much academic work, coupled with academics’ investment in their own expert knowledge, gives rise to another major feature of academic culture – an expectation of autonomy and academic freedom. Anderson et al distinguish academic autonomy – ‘the freedom of the academic to pursue his/her own preferred areas of teaching and research’ – from academic freedom, which they see as ‘the freedom to speak out openly on matters of university politics, and to include all ideas in the process of teaching’ (Anderson et al, 2002: 54, 56). While the concepts may thus be seen as analytically separate, in practice they often overlap; indeed, it may be argued that academic freedom is achieved through the exercise of academic autonomy, or, conversely, that academic autonomy makes academic freedom possible. In this regard, a survey of Australian academics found that most respondents ‘interpreted academic freedom in terms of individual autonomy, where they thought academic freedom involved the responsible and disciplined exercise of their expertise’. However, it may also be understood at the level of institutional freedom from the state, and collegial freedom, where standards are determined with reference to a peer group (Kayrooz et al, 2001: viii).

Generally, however, academic freedom refers to the rights of individual academics to teach, publish and research without undue interference, in order to enhance the pursuit of knowledge (Tight, 1988: 132). This process maintains the role of universities as ‘important and independent sources of social inquiry’ (Kayrooz et al, 2001: viii). Historically, tenure has been seen as a means of guaranteeing academic freedom, protecting academics from outside interference and ensuring they have the

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security necessary to pursue their work (Oliver, 2003: 2, 5). As one academic in this study put it, ‘I’ve got tenure, and it’s much easier to write something critical of the government or of my own university, which is the point of it’ (Senior Lecturer, Geography).

Academic freedom is one of the most significant and prized artefacts of academic culture and has been described as the ‘key legitimating concept of the entire enterprise’ (Menand, 1996: 4). Henkel, in her UK study of academics, found academic freedom to be the most prominent academic value, and one that was central to academics’ sense of identity. She defined it as the capacity to follow one’s own research agenda, to ‘manage the pattern of one’s own working life and determine one’s own priorities’ (Henkel, 2000: 257). Such a definition further illustrates the inseparability of the concepts of academic autonomy and academic freedom. In practical terms, the craft-like nature of academic work necessitates self-regulation and professional autonomy (Dearlove, 1997), but analysts also point to the ways in which autonomy is central to academics’ personal and professional identity (McInnis, 2001: 54). Kayrooz et al report that their respondents regarded academic freedom as essential to their job satisfaction, motivation, and capacity to discharge their ‘social responsibilities to students, universities and the community’ (Kayrooz et al, 2001: 18). Importantly, their respondents frequently cited academic freedom and autonomy as the reason that they had become academics.

The academics in this study echoed this attachment to academic freedom and autonomy. One acknowledged, ‘I do love the freedom of being able to research what you want and pretty much publish it where you want’, saying that academic life provided for him, ‘a beautiful blend of social interaction and personal freedom’ (Lecturer, Sociology). Another suggested that autonomy was a central issue for academics, who ‘think of ourselves as pretty independent operators getting on with things, having a live-and-let-live attitude toward anything that isn’t what we’re doing.’ He argued that, despite the imposition of a number of managerial mechanisms, ‘I continue to be a self-directed academic who sets his own agenda each day, chooses who he’s going to meet with and
what projects he’s going to develop’ (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). Arguing that academic life is ‘supposed to be self-driven’, another suggested:

That’s why people get attracted to it, because you set your own goals and have your own objectives and you can really take things almost where you want them to be, and that’s what I like from life ... To a great extent I’m my own master (Senior Lecturer, Engineering).

Academics in this study were very protective of their autonomy, and deeply resented anything that threatened or impinged on it. One had been particularly irritated by an email by a Deputy Vice-Chancellor reminding academics to be in their offices so that students could contact them (Associate Professor, Management). In another department the notion of keeping office hours had been mooted by the Head of School, and was quashed by a chorus of protesting academics. One argued:

I simply can’t write in my office. I mean it is a bigger office than most, but it is a cubby hole ... A person is maybe not in [the university] more than two to three days a week, [but] is producing. That should be enough for us. I couldn’t care less if they spend their time in the toilet with a pad and pencil as long as they write (Associate Professor, Economics).

This comment illustrates the ways in which the importance of autonomy, solitary modes of academic work, a dislike of being managed, and a disinclination to manage others are interwoven aspects of academic culture. Another academic suggested that ‘there’d be a riot, basically’ if there was an attempt to impose a nine-to-five attendance rule in her department (Associate Professor, Cultural Studies). Applying the importance of autonomy to the way in which academics work, rather than *when* and *where* they work, another academic spoke of an anticipated move toward standardising teaching methods, saying, ‘I think that’s when there will be a big revolt’ (Lecturer, Sociology).

It is important to note that the notion of academic freedom and autonomy does not imply a lack of accountability associated with academic work, but rather an emphasis on the nature and direction of accountability. Academics understand and experience accountability primarily as inward and horizontal – to oneself and to one’s peers - rather than upward – to one’s superiors. That is, only fellow academics are qualified to judge academic work, within certain clearly defined and understood limits. Traditionally, this
form of self-regulation has ensured that academic work was not interfered with or evaluated through administrative forms of control (Blau, 1973: 12-13). Perhaps more importantly, academics are seen to impose particular standards or expectations on themselves. These expectations are tied up with their self-identity as autonomous professionals committed to the pursuit of academic excellence. Therefore, the notion of academic freedom exists within a ‘framework of academic responsibility’, which encompasses ‘ethical obligations to students, peers, employer and society in general’ (Kayrooz et al, 2001: 21). Kayrooz et al note that in their interviews with Australian academics a tension emerged between the terms ‘responsibility’ and ‘accountability’. They suggest that the former was associated with ‘ethical and professional excellence’ while the latter referred to ‘an institutional and bureaucratic requirement often involving formfilling’ (Kayrooz et al, 2001: 21-2).

The academics in this study appeared acutely aware of this distinction. The ‘responsible autonomy’ (Friedman, 1977) embedded in academic work meant that they embraced notions of ‘inward’ accountability in issues of quality, integrity and professionalism, in various aspects of their working lives. A number defended the right to apply their own measures of quality assurance rather than those imposed by the university. In this regard, some academics had devised their own methods of evaluating teaching, rather than using the standardised forms supplied by the university. Others spoke of the intersection of inward accountability and accountability to peers. One said:

I guess we all have our eye on each other, because we do cross marking and stuff like that, and you’re responsible to your team members, but it all comes down to professionalism, integrity, acute awareness of law and ethics. We know that these people aren’t going out there to teach and screw up a kid’s life for a year, they’re going out there to nurse, and either look after your health or kill you (Lecturer, Nursing).

Many interviewees saw externally imposed modes of accountability as impugning their professionalism. They interpreted them as suggesting that they were abusing the autonomy they had been granted. One academic argued that the introduction of a formal workload agreement had worked to ‘eradicate the trust’ between academics and management, saying that such agreements ‘are not part of professional life’ (Lecturer,
Nursing). Another insisted, ‘the only thing in my mind that makes being an academic worthwhile is the package, and the package includes the autonomy, the flexibility, the trust that comes from your employer. So if they begin to go then I might consider going myself. I would just no longer see the point’ (Lecturer, Sociology). Academics in this study invoked the notion of a ‘framework of academic responsibility’ (Kayrooz et al, 2001: 21), emphasising that their own standards and expectations were what drove them, rather than the expectations of their institution. One, speaking of his teaching load, said, ‘I mean partly it’s self-inflicted too. I teach subjects four hours a week that I could teach three hours a week, [but] that’s what seems, to me, to be required’ (Lecturer, Education). A Lecturer who was involved in distance education teaching reported being told, at her probationary meetings, that she updates her material too often. She concluded, ‘I think that the pressures there are pressures that I put on myself, what I term best practice, and the standard that I would like to see set’ (Lecturer, Criminology).

Along with the freedom to determine teaching content, research agendas, research partnerships, and outlets for published research, academic freedom involves the autonomy to determine work priorities and hours of work. Control over one’s working hours has been a traditional feature of academic working life, and one that academics see as adding considerably to its attraction (Aronowitz, 1998). While a level of autonomy regarding time use is shared by other professionals, there are virtually no other areas of employment besides academe where, traditionally, no attempt has been made to control employees’ attendance or working hours (Wilson, 1991: 253). Barcan suggests that this flexibility is ‘frequently vaunted as the prime privilege’ of academic work and that academics’ ability to determine their own working hours has ‘traditionally functioned as one marker of the distinction between academic and administrative work’ (Barcan, 1996: 137).

This aspect of academic work was well recognised and highly valued by the academics in this study, with the term ‘flexible’ appearing frequently in academics’ descriptions of their working lives. Somewhat astonishingly, they often expressed their appreciation of this flexibility in the same breath as they reported working weeks in
excess of 60 hours. Those interviewed particularly appreciated being able to choose their hours of work, with one academic asking (apparently without irony), ‘What other job would I have where I can work four days straight and then sleep for three days?’ (Lecturer, Criminology). Another said he appreciated being able to work at home, interspersing his intellectual work with small physical tasks (Lecturer, Education). Many acknowledged that while they work extraordinary hours, they particularly enjoy the sense that no one directly controls this aspect of their working lives, and that this is an important element of their satisfaction in their work. As one put it:

One of the things that attracted me to academia was the autonomy and the freedom, but also that culture of trust, that you weren’t supervised on an ongoing basis, and there was a perception that you didn’t need to be … I think there was a view that as a professional you had a certain amount of integrity (Lecturer, Sociology).

‘I’m an Academic - I Don’t Need Anyone to Manage Me!’

A commitment to self-management and autonomy implies a corresponding disinclination to be actively managed. Indeed, as Dearlove notes, the importance attached to autonomy and peer control ‘denies a place for management’ within the university (Dearlove, 1997: 58). Prichard suggests that ‘the manager’ effectively did not exist in higher education before 1970 – that tertiary education before that time was administered rather than managed (Prichard, 2000: 32). Traditionally, academics themselves have taken an active role in administering the affairs of the university, through collegial forms of governance.

Academics often regard the advent of managerialism, with its emphasis on the ‘manager’s right to manage’, as an attack on this traditional right and privilege. Coaldrake and Stedman relate an anecdote that took place at an Australian university in 1995, during the Higher Education Management Review. During a session at a seminar, a member of the academic audience told a member of the Review Committee that it was important he understand that, ‘there is no place for management in a university’. According to the authors, the visitor ‘assumed that the questioner was joking, but quickly
realised that this was not the case, given that no one in the audience was laughing' (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998: 146). Similarly, while researching this thesis, I attended a conference of the Association for the Public University³. During discussion, one attendee said that he believed there was a need and a place for management in universities. Another academic suggested that, in that case, perhaps he was at the wrong conference. The mood of the room was clearly with the latter speaker. At the same conference an academic delivered a paper entitled ‘What is an academic?’ and, subtitled ‘and why I will not be managed’ (Cropper, 2001).

For many academics, then, the notion of being managed is antithetical to the academic endeavour, and anathema to the academic identity. As Bargh et al (1996:33) note, the notion of the ‘managed academic’ is something of an oxymoron. Attachment to the value of academic autonomy is often, therefore, accompanied by antipathy between academic staff and university administration as the latter’s management role becomes more pronounced within the managerial university. Everett and Entrekin’s study of academic attitudes suggests that ‘a uniformly negative view is held of the administrative hierarchy’ (Everett & Entrekin, 1994: 216), while McInnis refers to the ‘uneasy and ambivalent relationship between academics and administrators’ (McInnis, 1998b: 161), identifying a range of differing values and attitudes between the two groups. Importantly, McInnis identifies contrasting views over issues of academic freedom and autonomy, with a majority of administrative staff suggesting that academic staff were not ‘sufficiently accountable for their work time’, and that contract employment was preferable to tenure (McInnis, 1998b: 166). As both issues are central to academic culture, this is illustrative of significant differences between the two groups. Perhaps the most vivid illustration of the well-documented antagonism between academic staff and management comes from a respondent quoted by Anderson et al (2002: iii), who recommended, ‘line the University Council, including the VC and at least two rungs beneath him up against a wall and machine-gun the lot of them’.

³ The Association for the Public University is a Victorian-based association formed in 1999, which aims, in part, ‘to promote a collegial administrative culture in Australian universities’, and ‘to defend and extend academic freedom and intellectual responsibility in Australia’s universities’ (http://www.publicuni.org).
While the antagonism between academics and management is rarely expressed so strongly, opposition to being actively managed or controlled is an established feature of academic culture. Academics' well-known propensity to resist control has given rise to some memorable analogies. Perhaps the best known is that managing academics is like trying to herd cats (Kennedy cited in Brown, 1996: 32). A Faculty Dean interviewed in Marginson and Considine's study invoked this image saying, 'dealing with this place is like shepherding cats. If you take the whips to them, they'll all just disappear over the fences into the night and most of them you'll never see again' (Marginson & Considine, 2000: 194). A non-academic administrator, also quoted by Marginson and Considine, likened co-ordinating academics' research efforts to making 'the butterflies fly in formation' (Marginson and Considine, 2000: 133). These are images with which academics themselves often identify. Cats are notoriously lone and independent creatures, and academics are often attached to the notion of being unherdable, independent, non-conformist - even ornery and rogue.

Many academics in this study were very conscious of tension and even antagonism between academic staff and administrative staff in their universities. One academic referred to a 'game of us against them' (Lecturer, History), while another referred to the mutual 'contempt' between academic staff and administrators (Senior Lecturer, Computing). According to a Lecturer in Tourism, 'academic staff hate admin staff because they supposedly tell them what to do. Admin staff think the university would run great if there weren't any academic staff'. University management was characterised as 'a separate bunch of people who are pursuing their own agenda ... by isolating themselves from the rest of the university community' (Senior Lecturer, Surgery). This sense of distance and antipathy between academic staff and management was a prominent and recurring theme. Some academics seethed with indignation as they recounted interactions with administrative or management staff in which they felt treated with contempt and disrespect. One suggested:

If you don't get on well with the admin staff, you're dead meat, because if there's anything that comes down the chute that can impact upon you and they don't care about you, well they say, 'Well stuff you.' You're dead;
they'll just eat you for breakfast. The old story is you cannot beat an admin person (Lecturer, Tourism).

An academic who had undertaken an internal course on university management said that while none of the content had been of real value to her, 'what I learned was what I wanted to learn, which was how they were thinking. And I thought it was pretty bloody appalling' (Associate Professor, Cultural Studies). Another suggested that those in senior management 'think they've got their own little creation there, and they think we're here to serve them and do whatever they want us to' (Lecturer, Nursing).

In particular, interviewees resented administrators and managers making decisions that they felt did not reflect scholarly imperatives or scholarly standards, and without consulting academic staff. One said, 'it's like people who don't know what we're really on about are in control of things' (Lecturer, History). Another complained that, 'within my department, the department manager has more say in how we actually run the show and develop curriculum than the academics do' (Lecturer, Tourism). An Associate Professor in Architecture complained of a 'crappy, awful, dreadful, shocking, debacle' in which a student who had failed had their appeal upheld by administrators without the academics involved being consulted. Others complained that funds were 'creamed off' by levels of senior management, impoverishing departments, and raising 'all sorts of suspicions' (Senior Lecturer, Surgery). Although not unanimous in this regard, an overwhelming majority of academics evinced dissatisfaction with the management of their universities. One academic suggested that there was a widespread feeling within his university 'that the place could be managed a darn sight better' (Senior Lecturer, Engineering), while another argued that while 'there is no university in Australia that is well managed', his university had 'raised mismanagement to an art form' (Associate Professor, Management).

In addition to mounting critiques of specific aspects of management at their universities, academics in this study also acknowledged their disinclination to be managed per se. One argued that while he understands the need for management in large organizations, he 'detests being micro-managed', and suggested that such an approach
constitutes ‘no management at all’. He argue, ‘I’m hired on the grounds that I had a
certain set of skills and that they would let me grow into a certain set of roles. [If] they
leave me alone, I’ll do it just fine’ (Lecturer, Physics). A number of academics referred to
being actively managed as not part of the ‘package’ of academic employment, regarding
it as an inappropriate form of control for academic work. Acknowledging academics’
desire for autonomy, an Associate Professor in Management argued, ‘we do need to
manage professional work but we need to do it in a way that is consistent with what the
professional needs.’

Others associated their disinclination to be managed with their own personality
traits. In this regard many illustrated the ways in which they identify with the image of
academics as mavericks, nonconformists, and unherdable cats. One academic described
herself as ‘a rebel’ (Lecturer, Nursing), another as having a ‘contrary nature’ (Senior
Lecturer, Psychology). Another said, ‘I don’t like giving orders, and I don’t like taking
them either’ (Associate Professor, Economics). One interviewee described his resentment
at being told by university administrators that he could not undertake a planned trip to
Indonesia in the wake of the Bali bombing. He noted, ‘I took that as an intrusion ... 
Anyone who knows me knows that I’m not readily managed, I tend to do what I’m going
to do’ (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). Such attributes were seen to be common in
academe. One academic who had been Head of School for a period of time argued that
‘some of the [academic] staff can be damn difficult’ (Associate Professor, Economics).
Interestingly, the same academic referred to having had a Head of School who was ‘a real
ogre’, in the 1970s. He noted that he and his young peers had really enjoyed ‘taking the
piss out of’ this Head, and particularly relished ‘accidentally’ breaking a large proportion
of his china tea set at a departmental morning tea (Associate Professor, Economics). In
part, such views reflect the rejection, within academic culture, of the notion of having a
‘boss’. One academic pointed out, ‘I will confess to occasionally and in good humour
using the word [boss] with people in power, to remind them that being a ‘boss’ is not
what they aspired to be’ (Senior Lecturer, Psychology).
Almost all interviewees acknowledged their dislike of being actively managed, and saw this aversion as a characteristic strongly associated with being an academic. They argued that ‘academics don’t like managing other academics’ (Associate Professor, Management), and that ‘there is something inherently anarchic about universities’ (Senior Lecturer, Geography). While this was generally accepted as a cultural norm, two interviewees highlighted the negative consequences of this academic value. One argued, ‘I was on the union for a number of years, and I gave up in the end. I thought that it was impossible to organise academics – it’s not the same as the shop floor’ (Associate Professor, Economics). Another posited that, because academics dislike managing other academics, they have tended to ignore situations where some colleagues were underperforming. He suggested that this had provided legitimation for the adoption of a system of more active management and more explicit measures of performance (Associate Professor, Management).

A Community of Scholars

Managerialism finds its organizational and ideological antithesis in collegiality, and those who write about recent changes to higher education often contrast the values embedded within managerialism with those inherent in collegiality (see Dearlove, 1997; Hort, 1997; Johnson, 1999; Pilkington et al, 2001). Collegiality is a term that embraces a number of meanings. While it can refer to a mode of governance and its associated structures, the term ‘collegial’, is also often used as an umbrella term that encapsulates the entire ethos of academe, and, therefore, invokes many of the other values discussed in this chapter. Such broad usage of any term is likely to result in considerable ambiguity, and yet the multiplicity of meanings embedded in it reflect a set of shared values ‘about the processes necessary to academic work’ (Johnson, 1999: 1). In this sense collegiality is understood to involve ‘traditional freedoms, respectful relations and mutual participation for collective development’ (Johnson, 1999: 25). It may be argued that it is the defining cultural artefact of academic life.
Writing in 1978, Anwyl and Bowden claimed:

Academics are the university or college. They are influential in the governance of their own institutions, in implementing national and state higher education policies, and in educating and selecting their own successors. They have loyalties to their employing institution and to their own society, as well as to the international community of scholars and its traditions’ (quoted in McInnis, Powles & Anwyl, 1994: 6).

These words capture the essence of collegial governance. While some argue that universities ‘abandoned the collegial model a long time ago’ (Fulton, 1996, 160), the ideals associated with collegial forms of governance and decision-making remain an important residual element of academic culture. As Marginson and Considine (2000: 65) put it, ‘the lingering idea of the collegial is surprisingly strong’. Traditionally the defining feature of universities, collegial governance draws on a model of consensus, arrived at through discussion and debate, within a community of academics who are acknowledged as equals. Within such a model, academics do not regard themselves as employees of the university (Millett, 1962: 101, cited in Berquist, 1992: 45); instead, the ‘university is the faculty’ (Dearlove, 1997: 58, emphasis added). Collegial governance involves direct participation in decision-making, through a system of committees, rather than representative democracy (Dearlove, 1997: 58), and academic involvement in governance is regarded as an institutional and professional duty. Academics are admitted to the demos on the basis of having reached ‘a certain level of expertise and acclaim’ (Bargh et al, 1996: 30), rather than through a system of hierarchical appointments. As each academic is considered to be of equal worth, there is an absence of hierarchy and ‘bosses’ (Dearlove, 1997: 58). Indeed, within a collegial model even Vice-Chancellors are seen as ‘subordinate leaders of the academic demos, being described as ‘first among equals’, having reached their position because others see them as embodying the group’s aspirations and achievements’ (Bargh et al, 1996: 30).

Collegial forms of governance require a model of leadership based on consultation and persuasion, and the promotion of consensus within the academic community (Larsen, 2003: 74). Whatever authority is acknowledged within this system is derived from academic standing rather than from positional authority. Traditionally, the
role of Department Head generally fell to the appointed Professor. However, in Australia, from the period of the 1960s, this role was often allocated on a rotating basis, through a system of election (Harman, 2002: 54). Undertaking this leadership role was often regarded as a ‘temporary period of service away from the real business of the university’ (Caldarake & Stedman, 1999: 13). Like the Vice-Chancellor, the Head of School is traditionally regarded as prime inter pares, or first among equals, and in some cases is seen as having the role of ‘servant of the group’ (Bolton cited in Larsen, 2003: 74); s/he is not seen as ‘the boss’ (Moses, 1988: 59). Heads are expected to be sensitive and democratic in their dealings with academic staff, and to employ a ‘hands-off’ approach (Larsen, 2003: 74, 75). More direct forms of control are regarded as unnecessary because of academics’ professionalism and their ‘mutual adherence to the code of norms and obligations’ implicit in the process of academic work (Johnson, 1999: 9). Such benign models of governance are, in reality, more a feature of the ‘golden age of democratic collegiality’ of the 1970s and 1980s (Caldarake & Stedman, 1998: 148). However, collegial governance is one of the ‘folkloric myths, [which are] taken as accurate and important representations of how academic culture came into being, and, perhaps more importantly, how it ought to be’ (Taylor, 1999a: 42, emphasis in original). As such it is an important element of academic culture.

In recent years, the position of Head of School has returned to one of appointment rather than election, as part of a drive towards ‘strong managerial modes of control’ (Dawkins, 1988: 103). The role has assumed a more overtly managerial aspect, with an increased emphasis on financial management, especially as budgetary responsibilities have been devolved to School or Department level (Harman, 2002: 54). All academics in this study worked under appointed Heads, yet the notion of headship as an unwelcome distraction from academic work, typical of the collegial model, persisted. One academic argued that ‘no one wants to do the job [of Head of Department] (Senior Lecturer, History), which was regarded as ‘a pain in the arse’ (Lecturer, Sociology), that interfered with one’s research work. Another, who had been asked to take on this role, said that he had, ‘decided that I want to be a historian, and not a junior – a very junior – member of the management team’ (Associate Professor, History). Disinclination to take on such
roles is connected to an enduring element of academic culture, an antipathy to being managed, and a corresponding discomfort with the task of managing others. It is also associated with a dislike of administrative tasks. However, it may also be understood as indicative of commitment to collegial modes of interaction, and a rejection of the ways in which the role of Head of School is increasingly understood as a minion of those above, rather than an advocate and protector of those below.

Most of the academics in this study were uncomfortable with notions of themselves as employees of the university – even those who acknowledged ruefully that that was how they now saw themselves. Reflecting on a previous association with another university, one academic mused:

Oh, every now and again, I remind myself that the contract I had with Oxford University when I was working there as a Research Officer was made in the name of the Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars of the University … That’s to me what a university is about – a funny place, hard to get decisions made because everybody could have a go at the major decisions. But they’re able to survive because of that diversity … To me, I guess, it’s an educational community (Reader, Botany).

Another argued that the nomenclature employed to identify elements of the university was important in emphasising the original purposes, relationships and structures within the university. He insisted, ‘the administration, [is] erroneously called “the university” – we should never refer to them as the university’. Instead, he argued, the university was originally ‘a society of scholars that had a contract of scholars and students – a contract to do something together’ (Senior Lecturer, Biomedical Science). Rejecting the notion of academics as merely workers in an organization, one academic insisted, ‘I definitely do not identify myself first and foremost as a university employee. I work with the university on a good day, and I work at the university, going ahead with my agenda, on other days’ (Senior Lecturer, Psychology).

Importantly, over two thirds of those academics interviewed used the terms collegial or collegiality in their interview, without offering any explanation or clarification. There was a sense that this was a concept understood by those within universities. Often, it was used in the context of comparing previous modes of
governance with the current managerial model. In this regard, some later career academics related the abolition of participatory, collegial structures, such as academic boards, and expressed their regret at their replacement by more centralised decision-making processes. One referred to his membership on such a board as 'a form of responsible participation', saying he had fought against 'the loss of collegiality, in fact democracy' implicit in dismantling this forum (Senior Lecturer, Biomedical Science). Academics who had experienced participatory governance keenly felt the loss of such structures and modes of decision-making. However, other academics spoke of participation in committees as a time-consuming nuisance and a distraction from core academic work. This was often because they believed that committees within the managerial university effectively undertook 'busy work', which had no real influence on decision-making processes. As one academic put it, 'it has no effect upwards' (Associate Professor, Economics). However, this illustrates an anomaly within academic attitudes towards collegial governance. Academics have, traditionally, tenaciously defended their right to participate in university governance, through a system of committee membership. However, there is also a rich tradition of academic impatience with the committee meeting – the chief tool of collegial decision-making. This paradox is illustrated by one academic who said, 'I mean, I was always in favour of us keeping as much administration in the school ... because otherwise it would be taken over by the bureaucrats, or in this case the managers' (Associate Professor, Economics). However, he also spoke of his impatience with protracted meetings, saying:

    You do have some academics that you might call windbags, and they can make a meeting that should last an hour go on for three hours ... Whereas usually with a committee, when I get myself elected chairman, I insist we get through the business within an hour so we can go home, or go and do some research, but we do have a little bunch of 'committee academics', if you like, that spend most of their week on committees.

Clearly, the time-consuming nature of the collegial decision-making process is, at times, in conflict with the academic prioritising of core work. It is likely that academic impatience with the demands of committee-based decision-making has facilitated the decline of collegial modes of governance. Buchbinder and Rajagopal suggest that, in Canada, the reluctance of faculty members to become involved in the governance bodies
of the university has contributed to a situation where senior administrators have assumed responsibility for ‘financial and resource allocative functions’ (Buchbinder & Rajagopal, 1995: 68).

The term ‘collegial’ was also used to describe ways of working and relating to each other. Within this usage, the term implied acceptance of difference, respect for another’s right to autonomy in their work, and an awareness of shared cultural understandings. This could extend to protecting colleagues who might be seen as underperforming. One academic, discussing the potential for research non-performers to be targeted by management, said:

I mean we are a strange place, and there’s a lot of bitchiness in here, but there is a level of collegiality that if anyone does try to touch somebody, regardless of how poor their teaching and their research is, they’ll usually be defended, on some grounds … People still do close ranks an awful lot around here. Well, the majority of them will (Senior Lecturer, Sociology).

There was a sense that the collegial mode of interaction endured, despite the dismantling of collegial structures. Others used the term ‘democratic’ in describing interactions within their department, reflecting the commitment to equality implicit in the collegial model. One academic argued that his ‘commitment to collegial culture’ was due to the influence of his Head of School at a previous university. He said:

He was an incredibly encouraging person. He wanted input from all staff members including the most junior … He challenged you to say what you thought about this and that – sometimes it was intellectual, sometimes it was departmental decision-making. And he got people’s opinion, and if you stood up to him, he thought the better of you for it, and then at the end of the discussion he’d say, ‘Well I’m doing this anyway’. But it was only after he’d taken soundings. So that’s where I got the commitment, because I saw it in action (Associate Professor, History).

The Cosmopolitan Academic

It is a well-established feature of academic life that the profession, and the discipline to which one belongs, elicits greater loyalty, and provides a more salient source of self-identification than does one’s employing institution. Academics are generally considered
to be ‘cosmopolitans’ rather than ‘locals’, having a greater sense of the inter-institutional and international fraternity of their own profession and discipline, than a sense of ‘belonging’ to a particular university. In 1958, Alvin Gouldner applied this typology, originally developed by Robert Merton, to an analysis of the ‘latent organizational identities’ of academics in ‘Co-op College’ (Gouldner, 1958). He posited that ‘cosmopolitans’ would be characterised by ‘low organizational loyalty, high commitment to specialized skills, and use of an outer reference group orientation’ (Gouldner, 1958: 293). Those identified as cosmopolitans in Gouldner’s study were more likely to emphasise the importance of independent research, published more, were more likely to derive their intellectual stimulation from outside the institution, and had fewer intellectual connections within the college (Gouldner, 1958: 295-6).

Illustrating the lasting influence of Gouldner’s work, the 1992 Carnegie Foundation study of the academic profession in fourteen countries asked academics to identify the extent to which their affiliation with their academic discipline, their department, and their employing institution were important to them. In all countries, the largest proportion of academics ranked them in the order of discipline, department and institution. In Australia, 67 percent of academics rated their discipline as ‘very important’ to them, with only 22 percent attaching similar significance to their institution (Altbach & Lewis, 1996: 19-20). The results of this survey are consistent with others indicating that academics generally emphasise their disciplinary, rather than their institutional, affiliations and loyalties (Fulton, 1996: 162). Henkel’s UK examination of academic identities suggested that, ‘academic working lives continued to be centred on their disciplines’, regardless of whether the academics saw themselves primarily as teachers, researchers, or managers (Henkel, 2000: 256). In Australia, studies have suggested that academics report ‘neutral organizational commitment’ (Winter & Sarros, 2000: 1). Indeed, the results of a 1994 survey suggested that institutional loyalty was becoming less relevant for academics, with the authors attributing this trend to the widening gap between academics and administration (McInnis, Powles & Anwyl, 1994: 26). As cosmopolitans, therefore, academics primarily derive ‘peer support, satisfaction, direction, recognition and work focus’ from their disciplinary membership, rather than
from their institution (Coaldrae & Stedman, 1999: 16). Indeed, Truman (1970, in Kellner: 1983: 172) suggested that many academics will have ‘more intimate and close contact with colleagues 3000 miles away’ than with those from other departments within their own institutions.

However, the department, as the tangible, local representation of disciplinary membership, also provides an important point of identification for many academics. Dearlove suggests that ‘discipline-based departments are the basic units and life blood of academic work the world over’ (Dearlove, 1997: 68). For Henkel, the department ‘embodies the discipline’, providing a physical structure and a ‘second, local framework’, which complements the cosmopolitan ‘invisible college’ (Henkel, 2000: 19). The organizational structure of universities reflects the dominance of this disciplinary identification. Traditionally, the most basic academic units represent specific disciplines or disciplinary groupings, which then combine with others, on the basis of similar subject matter or other shared concerns, to form departments, schools, and colleges. Given the importance that academics attach to disciplinary membership, such departments provide potentially powerful resources for resistance. While the restructuring of academic departments – which has been a feature of the academic landscape over the last decade – has weakened such potential, the residual discourse of loyalty to one’s discipline remains a potent concept for many academics. This is especially the case whenever institutional changes are seen to threaten the disciplinary integrity of academics’ research and teaching.

The primacy of disciplinary and departmental affiliation over institutional loyalty is significant in terms of the ways in which subjectivity is shaped by these often-competing claims. Rae argues that this hierarchy of loyalties means that academics ‘resemble the members of a voluntary organization’, rather than ‘employees of a typical company’. They have ‘a greater sense of self than they do of organisation’ (Rae, 1997: 189, emphasis in original). The relative unimportance of institutional affiliation has therefore meant that academics rarely see themselves as corporate creatures, but rather as part of a broader, and more affectively significant, international community of scholars.
This feature of academic culture is related to academics’ self-identity as independent, non-conformist individuals, as discussed above. As Brown puts it, academics are ‘not well-adapted to singing company songs’ (Brown, 1996: 32). Symbols of corporate identification or membership – such as uniforms and name badges – are traditionally absent within academe, and most academics respond to suggestions of the introduction of the latter with something akin to horror. This traditional affiliation and sense of identification with discipline and department over institution, has meant, therefore, that academics’ propensity to engage in critique – discussed above – is not limited to debates within their own disciplinary fields. As the academic profession does not emphasise or valorise loyalty to institutions, academics have traditionally engaged in critique regarding developments, trends and practices within their universities⁴.

One of the most telling illustrations of academics as cosmopolitans, was the fact that interviewees, when asked if they knew others who might be prepared to participate in research interviews, almost always suggested colleagues in their own discipline, from other universities, and often from other states, but rarely those from other disciplines within their own institution. One academic suggested that he sought advice and feedback from mentors in other universities, noting that he was about to ring a colleague in Canada for advice about his research and publication strategy for the coming year. He argued that he would ‘pay much more attention to what he tells me’ than he would to institutional requirements and expectations, ‘because he knows his field, he’s an academic of some consequence, and he’ll give me good advice, and then I’ll fill the forms out later to make other people [in this university] happy’ (Associate Professor, Management). Another, explaining that his discipline was his great interest, and that he had no desire to become involved with university administration, said, ‘I’m happy to not want to become a Professor, but to be recognised in my field outside of the university’ (Lecturer, History). These two comments also underline another key value of academic life – a commitment to academic excellence. Within a cosmopolitan orientation such excellence can only be validated by other academics.

⁴ This traditional privilege has been eroded under revisions to the Codes of Conduct within many universities. Within such guidelines academics are now constrained from engaging in comment which could be detrimental to the interests of their employing institution.
Underscoring academics' primary identification with their discipline, rather than their institution, several noted that they had immersed themselves even more in their discipline as a response to managerial changes within their universities. One academic was particularly incensed by what she regarded as her university's ignorance and disrespect towards her discipline – Nursing. She argued, 'they do not appreciate what we do or the level of knowledge that we have' and suggested that, as a response, 'what we've done to protect ourselves, I guess, is to become insulated within the Bachelor of Nursing. So as far as the rest of the university goes ... I'm not really interested in what's happening' (Lecturer, Nursing). Another said:

I think my way of dealing with [managerialism] has been to immerse myself in the education of students in my discipline. And my discipline remains much more constant than the university does, if you know what I mean. It's a very old discipline, it has a whole lot of traditions and culture, and knowledge bases, and all kinds of things that I can completely and utterly occupy my time with (Associate Professor, Architecture).

For those in professional disciplines, the opportunities for meaningful and rewarding professional exchanges outside the university were even greater; such academics represented themselves as 'very tied to our professions' (Senior Lecturer, Engineering).

The cosmopolitan orientation of the academics in this study was further illustrated by the apparent absence of any significant sense of identification with or loyalty to their employing institution. Not one academic in this study hesitated to criticise their institution, its management, or practices, in the research interviews, and some suggested that they had done so in public forums within their universities. One argued, 'I never suffer in silence, so if I'm unhappy with management, management will know' (Lecturer, Nursing). Other academics' critiques of their university illustrated the twin elements of the cosmopolitan identity – identification with discipline and absence of identification with institution. They employed the conceptual and theoretical understandings developed within their disciplines as a framework to support their criticisms of their institutions. This was alluded to earlier in this chapter, in the comments made by academics who referred to ploughing up cultural fields, and the anthropological understanding of culture.
Another, arguing that levels of funding were being ‘creamed off’ by those in management, said:

I’m a Marxist, by and large — historical materialism is my forte. With the pumping out of surplus, it doesn’t matter whether you live in a feudal society, a late capitalist society or whatever, right? A surplus has to be pumped out of people who perform physical or intellectual production in order for these so called co-ordinators to survive. They live off the surplus, right? It’s as simple as that (Lecturer, Sociology).

Thus, understandings associated with disciplinary membership were drawn upon in developing a critique of managerialist practices.

‘Nice Work’

The primacy which academics accord to their discipline is associated with another important element of academic culture – the intrinsic interest and satisfaction which their work holds for them. In David Lodge’s novel Nice Work, Dr Robyn Penrose, a British academic, describes her academic job, saying, ‘Well, it’s nice work. It’s meaningful. It’s rewarding. I don’t mean in money terms. It would be worth doing even if one wasn’t paid anything at all’ (Lodge, 1988: 126). In the US, pondering the future of academic work, Stanley Aronowitz suggests that as a tenured full Professor, he may have ‘the last good job in America’ (Aronowitz, 1998). Both of these descriptions of academic work highlight the pleasure that academics find in it. Evans (2002: 7) suggests that it is this enjoyment that has probably always been the ‘chief enduring motivator of researchers and scholars and teachers’, and is what keeps academics focussed on a potentially fruitless self-imposed task, even into their retirement. For Trow, this intrinsic interest is an indispensable element of academic work, as ‘almost everything in a university depends on the inner motivations of teachers’ (Trow, 1994: 14).

Empirical research indicates that academics do experience this intense intrinsic interest in their work. Clark, in his US study of academics, reports that ‘whenever the intensive field interviews touched the domain of satisfaction, they tapped the strength of intrinsic motivation, the rewards of doing academic work for its own sake, its own challenge and passion’ (Clark, 1987: 222). He acknowledges that such accounts draw on
'reasons couched in the shibboleths of academe all tough-minded observers have learned to distrust'. He notes, however, 'the shibboleths are real: Academic professionals believe them. And a cynical approach by observers is a poor way to capture the intrinsic, the very excitement that many professors find in their teaching or their research' (Clark, 1987: 224). In the UK, Becher and Trowler (2001) also report academics voicing a 'strong sense of personal involvement in their work', quoting academics who said it was difficult to 'switch off', and that they 'lived' their disciplines (Becher & Trowler, 2001: 147-8).

In the Australian context, McInnis suggests that the academics in his sample were 'overwhelming motivated by the work itself' (McInnis 1999: 8), with 80 percent reporting that they are 'motivated almost solely by intrinsic interest in their work' (McInnis, 1995: 43). In addition, more than two-thirds of respondents in another study reported that they valued the opportunity to pursue their own research agenda, and the chance to contribute to the good of society (McInnis, Powles & Anwyl, 1994: 21). Adams, reviewing three decades of surveys of Australian academics, similarly suggests that 'the lesson to be learned from the surveys is that academics derive a high level of satisfaction from their work and are motivated both by the intrinsic rewards of their core activities and their perceptions of academic freedom in which to create and disseminate knowledge' (Adams, 1998: 433).

Many of the academics in this study were keenly aware that they were engaged in what they regarded as 'nice work'. One of them referred to it in Lodge's terms, saying:

Regardles of how much extra managerial burden is being placed upon us, when it comes down to it, and we look around, it's still nice work ... I think that is one thing that has always been a problem with academic unionism and resistance to management. The management knows damn well fine that underneath it all it's still nice work (Senior Lecturer, Sociology).

Others referred to it as 'the best job in the world' (Senior Lecturer, Computing), 'a very special job' (Senior Lecturer, Geography), 'a good life' (Lecturer, History), and 'more and different than a job' (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). Those interviewed were virtually unanimous in their assessment of what made it so. While academic pay was described as 'awful' (Senior Lecturer, Computing), and 'peanuts' (Lecturer, Sociology), and
conditions generally were deemed to be deteriorating, it was the freedom, autonomy and flexibility to satisfy one’s intellectual curiosity through research, and to share one’s knowledge through teaching, that made their work so attractive. While the status associated with an academic position was mentioned in positive terms by one academic (Senior Lecturer, Philosophy), and the opportunities for travel by another two (Lecturer, Criminology; Senior Lecturer, Tourism), it was the intrinsic interest inherent in the academic endeavour which was seen as central to the job satisfaction of all those interviewed. As one academic put it:

Curiosity, I think, is the driving force. I mean academics are like children who just can’t stop saying ‘Why? Why? Why? What’s that? Can I have a look at that? Open that up, I want to see what’s inside’ ... Your health may go, your looks may go, but while you have intellectual curiosity, while you find the world, or whatever part of the world you are studying, fascinating, you have a joyful life (Senior Lecturer, Computing).

It is not an exaggeration to say that almost without exception the academics in the study loved their work. Indeed, ‘love’ was a word interviewees frequently employed to describe their relationship with their discipline. One said that he ‘fell in love with French’, (Lecturer, French), another that he had completed his Honours degree at night ‘doing history for the love of it’ (Associate Professor, History). One interviewee who had come to study and academe late in life spoke of his exposure to his discipline as life-changing, ‘really revolutionary stuff’ (Lecturer, Sociology). Some talked of their love of teaching, one saying, ‘I love teaching, I love students, that’s fantastic’ (Lecturer, Education), while others referred to the ‘joy’ and ‘excitement’ they found in teaching. ‘Passion’ was another frequently-used term. One interviewee suggested that all those in his discipline were ‘very passionate about what we’re doing’ (Senior Lecturer, Physics), while another said he was ‘passionate’ about teaching and pedagogy (Senior Lecturer, Sociology).

Interviewees’ sense that they were engaged in ‘nice work’ was heightened by two factors. One was their awareness of the scarcity of work in the academic labour market. As Barcan notes, ‘it might seem in extraordinarily bad taste to complain of work conditions in contemporary academia when so many excellent scholars both in Australia
and overseas are unable to gain academic work at all' (Barcan, 1996: 129). One academic in this study suggested that, in his department, after a restructuring involving a number of job losses, those still employed were 'glad that they at least still had a job' (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). The other factor was previous experience in employment outside the university. One academic said that his previous work experience on a mine site 'taught me, I guess, that I had a mind, and that the mind wasn't going to be valued in every work environment' (Lecturer, Sociology). Another referred to having hated previous jobs that were essentially 'just slogging it out every day' (Lecturer, Criminology). Yet another said that he appreciated the freedom of choice involved in his academic position, especially as he had worked in factories, in abattoirs, and digging holes in the road as a part-time university student (Lecturer, Education).

Perhaps the most succinct description of the meaning of academic work came from a new appointee who said, simply, 'It's who you are' (Lecturer, History). For many academics in this study, their academic work was central to their sense of self-identity. One academic acknowledged, 'my sense of myself is formed around my research' (Associate Professor, Cultural Studies), while another suggested that academics 'self-esteem suffers' if their research gets 'pushed off-track' (Associate Professor, History). Unselfconsciously, several academics spoke of finding time for their 'own work', by which they meant their research, as opposed to teaching and administration. Their research was an aspect of their work that they 'owned' or perhaps – reflecting the passionate intensity of the relationship between academics and their work – it 'owned' them. One early career academic insisted, 'this is the truly sad thing about Physicists, we would do it even if you didn't pay us' (Senior Lecturer, Physics). This claim would seem supported by the case of two academics, interviewed for this study, who were about to retire. Both had organised honorary university positions and both planned to spend their retirement writing up their research (Associate Professor, Economics; Reader, Botany). Only one academic said that he saw his work merely as a job. He attributed this to his involvement with his Church, saying, 'that's the real love of my life'. He suggested, though, that for most academics their academic work 'is their life ... it defines them' (Senior Lecturer, Engineering).
Central to such passionate interest and intrinsic motivation is the desire to satisfy one’s curiosity, the freedom to decide the topic of one’s research, and the pleasure found in the process of academic work itself. Aronowitz, musing on academic work as ‘the last good job’, acknowledges that while he works hard, he has the capacity to direct his own work time and notes that many of the tasks he undertakes are for ‘personal or intellectual gratification’ (Aronowitz, 1998: 205-6). This comment reflects the ways in which the intrinsic interest that academics’ work holds, is, in practical terms, inseparable from academic demands for autonomy, as discussed above. Part of the satisfaction accruing to academic work derives from the freedom to determine one’s own agenda and control one’s own work time. A combination of this traditional access to autonomy, along with the intrinsic interest that academics attribute to the work itself, often leads to a situation in which it is difficult for academics to differentiate between work time and leisure time. Barcan refers to the ‘traditional scholarly inseparability of research work and personal pleasure’ (Barcan, 1996: 136), while Aronowitz acknowledges, ‘I don’t experience “leisure” as time out of work because the lines are blurred’ (Aronowitz, 1998: 205). This inseparability of work and pleasure, especially when coupled with demands from employing institutions and governments for increased accountability and productivity, can result in academics subordinating all other aspects of their lives to work.

‘Weekend? What’s a weekend?’

The notion that many academics live for their work, that their work is their life, that it defines them, is a central element of academic culture. One measure of this is the extent to which other elements of their lives are subordinated to work. McInnis, in his 1999 survey of academics in fifteen Australian universities, asked his respondents if they subordinate ‘most other aspects of [their] life for [their] work’. Fifty-one percent agreed or strongly agreed that they did so (1999: 8). In addition, 60 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the proposition: ‘My work commitments leave me very little time for myself’ (McInnis, 1999: 9). Currie (1996: 105) suggests that this prioritising of
work over other aspects of life occurs because many academics have ‘the passion of a revolutionary’, and feel that they can never give enough to their research, teaching and students. Therefore, ‘they often commit themselves totally to their work, allowing little private time for themselves or their families’.

This tendency is illustrated in a range of surveys that examine the hours that academics work. A 1993 survey of academic staff indicated that they were working an average of 48 hours per week during teaching periods (McInnis, 1998: 2). When this survey was repeated in 1999, 60 percent of full-time academics reported working in excess of 45 hours a week, while 40 percent reported working more than 50 hours per week (McInnis, 1999: 20). In the Australian component of the Carnegie Foundation’s survey of academic staff, full-time academics reported working an average of 46.5 hours, with those in some disciplines reporting average working weeks of 49.9 hours (Sheehan & Welch, 1996: 40). The National Tertiary Education Union’s (NTEU) 1998 survey of Australian universities indicated that 88.8 percent of academic respondents were working in excess of 40 hours per week, with the average hours worked per week reported at 52.8 for full-time academic staff (NTEU, 2000: 16, 17).

There is little doubt that such hours reflect increased workloads and work intensification, a trend that is by no means unique to academe (NTEU, 2000; Thompson & Warhurst, 1998). The NTEU’s survey indicated that 83 percent of full-time academic respondents reported that their workload had increased since 1996 (NTEU, 2000: 45). However, it is a well-established feature of academic life and academic culture that long working hours are the norm. This is related to the issues of intrinsic interest in work, and academic autonomy, as discussed above. Because much academic work is self-regulated, and because academics are generally passionately interested in their work, they have traditionally been ‘self-managed and largely self-driven professionals who are willing to work far longer hours than they are contractually obliged to’ (Shore & Wright, 2000: 79). Indeed, what Barcan terms the ‘scholarly model’ of academic work means that academics are not protected by a formal ‘division of time and space’ which is normally afforded by the designation of particular times as lunch hours, weekends, and annual leave (Barcan,
1996: 139). Instead, academics use time that other workers regard as ‘leisure time’ – evenings, weekends and annual holidays – to pursue reading, research and writing (Anderson et al, 2002: 66-7). This inseparability of work and leisure, and the attendant encroachment of work into the areas and times normally designated as ‘down time’ is an accepted feature of academic culture, and one well-understood by those within academe, if not always by their families. In this regard, Becher and Trowler report that one of their respondents described how his wife ‘had instituted a customs-type search of the car to impound all contraband work from the holiday luggage’ (Becher & Trowler, 2001: 148).

Almost all of the academics interviewed for this study reported working weeks in excess of 50 hours, and several in excess of 60. It is important to note that when asked how many hours a week they devoted to academic work, none of the respondents answered glibly. Instead, most took the time to calculate a figure, detailing the times they typically worked in their university offices, along with the hours spent working at home. Only three academics reported quarantining weekends from work, and in all those cases it had been a deliberate decision, made, in one case, after the birth of a child. Others reported working between half-a-day, and one-and-a-half days on the weekends, and experiencing guilt if they did not do so. One said: ‘There isn’t a weekend that goes past when I don’t do work or feel guilty for not doing it’ (Lecturer, Sociology). Another, who had reduced his weekend working time to two or three hours a day, said he experienced ‘gnawing guilt’ as a result (Lecturer, History). While some academics reported getting into the office as early as 7.30am, others stayed late at night. One academic said that at least once a week he runs for the train at 11.30pm (Lecturer, Sociology), while another noted that, in her department, there are typically three or four academics in their offices at 9.30 at night (Lecturer, Industrial Relations). Another said that when he comes into his office on Sundays – which he routinely does – ‘there’s always someone else here, often half my department will be here’ (Senior Lecturer, Geography). In particular, academics noted that it was necessary to work these additional hours in order to undertake any research, one saying, ‘if you work to the clock, you’d never get it done’ (Senior Lecturer, Tourism).
In addition, academics saw the demands of marking and returning work and submitting grades as requiring a flexible approach to work. One academic reported marking papers at 2am in order to get marks in by university deadlines (Senior Lecturer, Computing), while another said ‘there are some times when it is not unusual for me to work two days straight with no sleep just to get stuff done’ (Lecturer, Criminology). A Historian referred to the ‘incredible disparity between the number of hours of work per week that you are formally paid for, and the number of hours which are necessary to perform at any level of competence’. He insisted:

It’s quite clear that academic life has to be fluid and you have to be prepared to do things when the time is available … I’m in charge of a big first-year course, and if I’m going to get these essays back to the students in time for the mid-term break, when any feedback is going to have any effect on the next assignment they do, then I have to work through weekends to do it (Associate Professor, History).

The hours devoted to work appeared to be the result of a complex combination of academics’ commitment to their own standards of excellence and professionalism, and the imposition of greater workloads. Some academics referred to the difficulty of separating out the reasons for such long working weeks. One admitted, ‘I keep on telling myself, there’s absolutely no one putting pressure on me to perform the way I do except myself. And it’s a question about at the end of the career what you want to have achieved and what you want to be known for’ (Lecturer, History). Another argued, ‘everything I do beyond the 40 hours – the weekends, the taking stuff [home] with me, coming in early – that is all completely off my bat, serving the genuine academic commitments that I have always had’ (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). When asked about increasing workloads another mused, ‘yes, the workload is increasing, but I’m not … I can’t necessarily extract that from … whether that’s expectations, or whether that’s just expectations I’ve placed on myself. I’m not necessarily sure I could tell you the difference’ (Senior Lecturer, Philosophy). Finally, referring to the way in which academic work is never ‘done’, another suggested, ‘if you have a certain work ethic it can suck you into working just a zillion hours because there’s always … it never, I mean it just doesn’t stop’ (Senior Lecturer, Tourism).
The consequences of committing such hours to work were often profound. While many early career academics seemed to accept extraordinarily long hours as part of academic life, several academics complained of being completely exhausted, and argued that they would become ill if they worked any harder. Some single academics, particularly those in the early phases of their careers, spoke of the lack of partners and families in their lives, in a positive sense, saying it allowed them to ‘carve out the space more easily than other people’ in order to work the hours required in an academic post (Lecturer, Sociology). Others spoke of limiting or delaying families until careers were well-established. One academic captured the nature of such choices, saying:

I mean I’m not married and I don’t have a partner at the moment but I kind of feel that it was a choice between a career and kind of private life. My career is going great guns but my personal life at the moment sucks completely. But those are the choices I guess you make, even if they’re not conscious choices (Lecturer, History).

He added that academics experience a ‘struggle between the image, the idealised image of themselves and the real kind of person they are’, saying, ‘to achieve the idealised image you’ve got to work ten to twelve hours a day, for the rest of your life’. It was a struggle he was experiencing as he tried to reconcile his desire to ‘potter in the garden, or just watch trashy TV’, with his habit of working nights and weekends, in addition to long working days. Although he had deliberately cut his work time back, he admitted, ‘I still don’t feel entirely comfortable, I still feel that gnawing guilt’.

‘Just Say ‘No!’ to Administrivia’

Coaldrake and Stedman (1999: 9) suggest that academic values incorporate ‘widespread disdain for what are seen as the lesser tasks of administration and management’. Certainly, academic culture does not traditionally elevate such tasks, and academics’ responses to the task of managing, and the experience of being managed, have been explored above. However, while academics, within a collegial model of governance, have traditionally been involved in the large-scale administration of the university, they have similarly shown a reluctance to engage in small-scale, clerical administrative tasks – or
‘administrivia’ as it is sometimes termed. Everett and Entrekin’s survey suggested that a
‘generally low opinion is held of the administrative duties academics have to do; most
think it could be done by a competent clerk’ (Everett & Entrekin, 1994: 216). The
administrative demands associated with accountability mechanisms and other processes
are seen as a distraction from the ‘core’ business of academic life – teaching and
especially research – resulting in frustration, a perceived loss of autonomy, and
undermining academics’ primary work motivation (McInnis, 1998a: 1; Currie, 1996: 105-
6). As an illustration of such frustration, at the 2001 conference of the Association for the
Public University a speaker exhorted academics to ‘just say no’ to ‘administrivia’ or to
‘only fill in half the boxes’ (Cropper, 2001) to protest its encroachment into academic
work.

Many of the academics in this study indicated their impatience with, or dislike
for, ‘clerical’ administrative work. One suggested:

It’s probably like asking a doctor to go and sit out and become a
receptionist for half an hour, isn’t it? You’re asking people to do a thing
that they probably became an academic to avoid doing, that they don’t like
doing, [and] that has an ethos and culture associated with it that is
completely alien to the academic culture ... It’s beyond me why anyone
would want to do anything administrative’ (Senior Lecturer, Computing).

A Senior Lecturer in Philosophy referred to his dislike for work that is ‘pointlessly trivial
piffle associated with shuffling grades and so on’ while another academic protested, ‘I’m
not here to fill out forms for bookshops and every other Tom, Dick, and Harry that thinks
I should’ (Lecturer, Nursing). Academics frequently complained about the devolution of
low-level clerical work to them, and the absence of adequate administrative and
secretarial support. Some talked of taking a ‘minimalist approach’ to paperwork (Senior
Lecturer, Psychology) while others admitted to saving it up for weeks at a time and doing
it all at once (Senior Lecturer, Physics). Most academics suggested that they found
clerical administrative duties irksome to some degree, and some questioned the logic of
paying academics in excess of $60 000 to perform clerical tasks that could be undertaken
by those less qualified (Senior Lecturer, Philosophy).
This chapter has identified a range of values, beliefs, and modes of work which are central to academic culture, with a view to exploring the ways in which they serve as cultural resources, shaping and influencing academics’ resistance to managerialism. This chapter concludes, therefore, with a brief and provisional examination of the ways in which the features identified above may shape the resistant practices of academics.

Many of the cultural values and features of academic life identified in this chapter might imply that academics would be ‘resisters’ *par excellence*. Firstly, many of the values explored here have their antithesis in those privileged within managerialism. The values and associated norms that prevail within the managerial university conflict with those of academic culture, signifying the ‘different worlds’ that academics quoted in this chapter identified. The ‘unworldliness’ or ‘otherworldliness’ of academics can, therefore, be effectively harnessed as a resource for resistance to managerialism. This occurs when academics draw upon an alternative set of values, which act to challenge the hegemonic values of economic rationalism. These values serve as a resource with which to question the certainties of the hegemonic discourse, problematising the logic of the market and undermining the idea that efficiency and economy are unassailable virtues. The longevity and embeddedness of such values within academic culture gives rise to a level of confidence in their validity, allowing academics to draw upon this alternate discourse in questioning the seemingly irrefutable logic of neo-liberalism. At a much less profound level, the eccentric ‘otherworldliness’ which is an established myth within academic culture may also be used to evade some demands associated with the rise of managerialism, through adopting techniques of studied ‘wooliness’ or helplessness.

The solitary nature of academic work is also likely to affect the type of resistance employed, promoting and facilitating particular types of resistance. As academics’ work is not directly overseen by others, individual acts of resistance can remain subterranean and hidden from view. While more overt, public resistance to managerialism through union activities is a form of resistance beyond the limits of this study, a few academics in this study did suggest that they saw this as the appropriate avenue for such resistance. However, the relative isolation of academic work, and the positive valuation of
individualism in academe, are likely to produce resistance that is individual in nature. Taylor has pointed to the potential for such resistance to be dismissed as the protests of ‘difficult’ individuals (Taylor, 1999a: 45).

However, the literature on higher education, and the academics in this study, suggested that it might be legitimate to characterise academics in this way. It is a part of academic folklore that academics are prickly, nonconformist individuals, who often relish a good ‘stoush’. This aspect of academic culture is accentuated by ‘the logic of “yes, but”’, which characterises the creation, contestation and reformulation of knowledge within universities. Academics, therefore, are unlikely to accept managerial innovations without applying the same logic and critical analysis to management’s claims. In this regard, academics’ investment in, and awareness of, their own expert knowledge provides a further resource for resistance. As Taylor notes, the ‘intellectual skills and attitudes’ of academics mean that they are unlikely to respond well to ‘emotion-charged exhortations’ or ‘warnings of grim consequences’ which tend, instead, to produce dissent and alienation (Taylor, 1999a: 76). In particular, academics’ expert knowledge within their own discipline or field is likely to give rise to tenacious resistance of managerial changes that appear to challenge or threaten their authority or standing.

Academics’ traditional attachment to autonomy is a further cultural spur motivating resistance to managerialism. The conflict between the ‘manager’s right to manage’ and the traditional right of academics to manage themselves means that resistance is a likely response to aspects of managerialism that threaten this valued element of academic work. Further, this autonomy, coupled with the individual nature of academic work, means that academics enjoy the latitude to resist the impost of managerialist initiatives, free from direct supervision.

Academics’ traditional attachment to collegial modes of governance provides an alternative model to the ‘strong managerial modes of operation’ and ‘streamlined decision-making processes’ (Dawkins, 1988: 103) advocated in recent decades. The long history of collegial modes of governance, and the romantic associations that attach to
them are powerful cultural resources to be invoked in resisting managerialism. Managerialism may thus be dismissed as simply a ‘flash in the pan’, when compared to the endurance of the collegial model. Further, collegial forms of interaction may serve as an effective mode of resistance to managerialism, as academics refuse to acknowledge a hierarchy based on positional authority within departments, and persist in treating each other as a community of equals.

The cosmopolitan nature of the academic identity means that resistance is likely to arise from a lack of identification with, or loyalty to, the employing institution. Similarly, any managerial initiatives that are perceived to degrade the standards and imperatives of their disciplines appear likely to elicit academic resistance. The particular disciplines in which academics are trained may also provide them with the ontological or epistemological tools with which to interpret and critique managerialism and its mechanisms.

The intrinsic interest that academics derive from their work may shape academic resistance in contradictory ways, making them both more and less inclined to mount resistance. Their love of their work and their sense that they are engaged in ‘nice work’ may mean that academics are tenacious in protecting the aspects of their work that are important to them. Similarly, their distaste for trivial administrative duties may ensure their resistance to the clerical demands associated with new forms of accountability. However, it may also mean that academics, so long as they can seek refuge in the joys and consolations of their chosen disciplines, may withdraw from institutional engagement. Bridgstock writes of the temptation of ‘retreating into one’s subject matter’ saying that academics with tenure may simply ‘sit and wait, get on with the research, and let times change’ (Bridgstock in McWilliam et al 2000: 250). It is possible then, that the ‘nice work’ inherent in academic employment may act to retard resistance.

The ways in which academics use and relate to time is another crucial element contributing to the specific types of resistance they mount. Blue-collar workers, on whom studies relating to resistance within labour process theory have generally focused
(Jermier et al, 1994; Edwards et al, 1995), have often enacted resistance to management by claiming back time or effort from the working day. Labour process analysts have described the ways in which manual workers were able to ‘appropriate time and space’ from within the working day (Collinson, 1994: 35), and the ‘fiddles’ in which line workers engaged to ‘make time’ for themselves (Webb & Palmer, 1998). In marked contrast, academics’ very different orientation to both time and work is likely to result in significantly different uses of time in their enactment of resistance to managerialism.

The importance of elements of academic culture, and the discourse to which they give rise, emerge clearly in the comments of the academics. They draw upon the understandings embedded in traditional academic discourses, to elaborate a critique of managerial practices and managerial priorities. These critiques represent a form of discursive resistance to the encroachment of managerialism, acting as ‘interpretive challenges to managerial discourses’ (Thomas et al, 2004: 4). Thomas et al tell us that micro-political resistance ‘involves contests over meanings, [and] the articulation of counter discourses’. This resistance is the result of ‘critical reflection’ upon the disjunction between an individual’s notion of self (itself derived from discourse) and the subjectivity offered in a dominant discourse. This offers an agential self, a thinking subject with the will and capacity to resist through the reflection upon, and challenging of, the hegemonic way of being, offered in a dominant discourse (Thomas, et al 2004: 6).

These moments of critical reflection, and the articulation of counter discourses that contest the hegemonic managerial discourse, continue in the following chapter. In it, academics present their experiences and interpretations of the practices that implement managerial power in the contemporary Australian university.
Chapter Six

MANAGERIALISM
AND THE AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY

'It sounds like a shambles,' said Vic. 'Surely the answer is to change the system. Give management more muscle.'

'No!' Said Robyn hotly. 'That's not the answer. If you try to make universities like commercial institutions, you destroy everything that makes them valuable. Better the other way round. Model industry on universities. Make factories collegiate institutions.'

'Ha! We wouldn't last five minutes in the marketplace,' said Vic.

'So much the worse for the marketplace,' said Robyn. 'Maybe universities are inefficient, in some ways. Maybe we do waste a lot of time arguing on committees because nobody has absolute power. But that's preferable to a system where everybody is afraid of the person on the next rung of the ladder above them, where everybody is out for themselves, and fiddling their expenses or vandalizing the lavatories, because they know that if it suited the company they could be made redundant tomorrow and nobody would give a damn. Give me the university with all its faults, any day.'

'Well,' said Vic, 'it's nice work if you can get it.' (Lodge, 1989: 345-6).

'Is it surprising that corporations resemble Universities, health-care facilities, and international organisations, which all resemble corporations?' (Readings, 1996: 29).

'Somewhere around the 1990s the mood changed and the earth moved; university management became a conscious act of self-invention. You must have noticed this yourself. Administrators started tugging nervously at their 'bottom lines', 'pushing the envelope', 'thinking outside the square', getting 'all their ducks in a row' and crafting plaintive homilies about the Gnostic importance of 'transparency' and the solemn virtue of 'accountability'. Mission statements started appearing on the walls and advertisements for Discovery Day could be heard on rock stations' (Considine, 2001: 145-6).

'There can be no adequate study of forms of resistance without a prior and simultaneous study of forms of domination -- forms of disqualification, subordination, penetration, menace, suppression, attack; and also co-option, toleration, temptation, donation, etc. -- by controlling groups and classes and their agencies. This should illuminate not only what is being or might be resisted, but also the constraining powers which limit, and occasionally enable, forms and strategies of resistance themselves' (Tufton, 1986: 39).
Introduction

This chapter examines the phenomenon of managerialism in the contemporary Australian university, drawing on relevant critical literature, and the experiences of those who participated in this study. Chapter Four considered the rise of managerialism in the public sector more generally, and, following Pollitt’s tri-level model, examined some of its assumptions, approaches, and mechanisms. Those who have explored managerialism’s effect on higher education also acknowledge its multi-layered nature. Fulton suggests that managerialism in higher education may be seen as ‘a generic narrative, of strategic change’ intended to persuade others regarding the proper management of universities; as ‘an emergent organizational form that may provide the administrative mechanisms and managerial processes through which change is to be realised’; and as a ‘practical control technology through which strategic policies and their organisational forms may be translated into practices, techniques and devices’ (Fulton, 2003: 155-6, emphasis in original). These three levels are broadly compatible with those identified by Pollitt (1993: 11-12), who sees managerialism as an ideology, a series of theories and models, and a range of techniques and practices.

It is argued here that a tri-level approach to managerialism is both useful and insightful, and that the recognition of managerialism as a persuasive narrative or ideology is fundamental to an understanding of the power relations that it promotes, justifies and sustains. The practices of managerialism are underpinned by particular ideologies, and the understandings generated and articulated within particular discourses — discourses which advocate the manager’s right to manage, or which recognise the market as a primary mechanism of allocation, or which see education as a product which must be ‘quality assured’. These ideologies and discourses are implemented in organizational forms and processes, based on theories and models commonly associated with the private sector. Academics’ resistance to managerialism also draws on understandings embedded within specific discursive repertoires, particularly those associated with elements of academic identity, discussed in the previous chapter.
However, this thesis adopts Foucault's suggestion that one should conduct an ‘ascending analysis’ of power, focussing on power at its extremities – an approach that was explored in Chapter Three. Additionally, the conceptual framework employed here means that, as Turton (1986: 39) suggests, it is impossible to consider resistance without considering the specific mechanisms and practices that are the target of that resistance. Resistance, in this thesis, is not understood as a general response to the exercise of power, but as a range of responses to specific knowledges, discourses and mechanisms associated with managerialism. The research interviews undertaken for this study focussed on managerialism, not as an ideology, nor as an organizational form, but as a range of practices and techniques, amenable to re-interpretation, resistance and refusal by the academics subject to them. This chapter, therefore, explores that which is being resisted – managerialism in the Australian university – primarily as understood at Pollitt’s (1993) and Fulton’s (2003) third level of analysis. This level reflects the lived realities of managerialism as experienced by the academics in this study. In their descriptions, assessments, and critiques of managerialist practices we see again the production of discursive resistance, underpinned by their identification with values emphasised within traditional academic discourses. This chapter begins, however, with a brief history of the rise of managerialism in universities, drawing on literature that describes and analyses the British and Australian experiences.

Managerialism and Higher Education

Universities, with their traditions of individual and institutional autonomy, and collegial forms of governance, have not been insulated from the spread of managerialism in the public sector. Indeed, analysts of higher education identified the advent of managerialism in UK universities as early as 1989. In the wake of the 1985 Jarratt Report on efficiency and effectiveness in higher education, Kogan (1989) warned that management in universities was increasingly regarded as ‘a self-sufficient and self-justifying objective in
its own right', based on the assumption that 'the institution and the system to which it becomes subordinate can specify objectives within which those of the basic units can be subsumed' (Kogan, 1989: 74).

In 1994, Pratt argued that UK universities were 'turning increasingly to 'management' as a way of responding to increased concerns about efficiency and value for money'. He noted that universities had begun to employ managerial 'tools' including "executive" management structures, strategic plans, performance indicators [and] quality assurance systems' in order to evaluate and justify their activities to funding bodies (Pratt, 1994: 5). Trow (1994) suggested that managerialism in UK universities was effectively a substitute for trust between the government and higher education institutions, noting that the 'ism' in managerialism reflected an ideology, rather than simply a concern for effective management (Trow, 1994: 11). He warned that forms of external accountability imposed under the new funding systems relied too heavily on quantitative measures, which could ultimately serve to diminish quality as more time was devoted to satisfying such indicators. He argued that managerial processes could be seen as part of a 'systematic effort to make universities into 'knowledge shops' run in businesslike ways', leading to the de-professionalisation of academics (Trow, 1994: 15).

In more recent years there has been a proliferation of literature examining the phenomenon of managerialism in UK universities, charting its features, and its effects on the nature of higher and further education (see especially Miller, 1995a, 1995b; Smyth, 1995; Willmott, 1995; Dearlove, 1997; Harley & Lee, 1997; Prichard & Wilmott, 1997; Randle & Brady, 1997a, 1997b; Clark et al, 1998, 1999; Deem, 1998, 2001; Trowler, 1998; Shattock, 1999; Lumby & Tomlinson, 2000; Prichard, 2000; Shore & Wright, 2000; Davies & Thomas, 2001; Reed, 2001; Chandler et al, 2002a; 2002b; Thomas & Davies, 2002; Fulton, 2003; Morley, 2003).
Managerialism and the Australian University

While managerialism in higher education was first identified in the UK, it has since become a global phenomenon (Amaral, Meek & Larsen, 2003). Interestingly, it has been suggested that it is in Australia and the UK that ‘managerialism has assumed some of its most virulent forms’ (Amaral, Fulton & Larsen, 2003: 288). In 1994, Lowe linked the rise of managerialism in Australian universities to the Federal government’s reluctance to fund universities’ ‘traditional pursuits’. He argued that Australian universities had ‘embraced a managerial ethos’, and had implemented hierarchical, top-heavy management structures that were outmoded and inappropriate (Lowe, 1994: 33). This, he argued, reflected the importation of a ‘market oriented enterprise culture’ (Lowe, 1994: 34) into Australian universities. Similarly, Bessant (1994) identified the penetration of what he refers to as ‘corporate management’ into Australian universities, noting the emergence of a ‘Senior Executive Service’ within Australian universities. Bessant argued that this group – comprising Vice-Chancellors, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Pro-Vice Chancellors, Deans, and other senior administrators – are increasingly ‘set apart by salary, status and location from the rest of the university with the emphasis on the group showing a united front to the university on major policy matters’ (Bessant, 1994: 5). Bessant sees corporate managerialism as a mechanism for implementing an economic rationalist agenda. He argues that its adoption reflects a dominant assumption in Australian universities - that ‘the only form of efficient management is one based on corporate management principles’ (Bessant, 1994: 1, 12).

Bostock (1999) refers to a process of ‘global corporatisation’ in higher education, arguing that corporatised universities are expected to raise a higher proportion of their own funding, relate to students as customers or clients, and tend to remove from their course offerings ‘pure’ disciplines such as classics, humanities and even chemistry, physics and mathematics (Bostock, 1999: 3-4). He suggests that this process undermines collegiality, promotes academic employment insecurity, and encourages forms of administration found in the private sector. Slaughter & Leslie (1997) also analyse changes to academic work within the context of the effects of globalisation. They argue
that recent changes to the higher education sector contribute to the growth of ‘academic capitalism’, which they define as ‘institutional and professorial market or marketlike efforts to secure external moneys’ (Slaughter & Leslie, 1998: 8). Drawing on resource dependency theory, which suggests that ‘organizations deprived of critical revenues will seek new resources’ (Slaughter & Leslie, 1998: 113), they argue that in order to maintain funding levels in the face of declining government support, institutions are behaving in an increasingly market-like fashion. The practices adopted include the recruitment of overseas full fee-paying students, the development of industry partnerships, and the development of products for the market (Slaughter & Leslie, 1998: 114).

Currie & Newson (1998) also focus on globalisation as an important factor in changes in the higher education sector. Their edited volume examines ‘how a globalizing political economy affects the way universities are governed and how the daily lives of academics have been altered by globalization practices’ (Currie, 1998: 1). Currie and Newson describe managerialism in universities as ‘more than the expansion of administrative personnel in universities and more than a style of leadership’. They suggest that it incorporates a whole new way of defining and conducting the business of higher education – conceived of as a business (Currie & Newson, 1998: 142). Other contributors to this volume identify the adoption of business practices, the implementation of more centralised decision-making processes, and a growing gulf between academics and managers in Australian universities (Currie & Vidovich, 1998). In particular, they identify accountability mechanisms, such as performance indicators, as practices that allow academic activities to be scrutinized on ‘other than academic considerations’, thus ‘opening up the possibility of gaining control over the academic work process’ (Polster & Newson, 1998: 175, 178).

Marginson & Considine (2000: 4) argue that we have seen the emergence of the ‘enterprise university’, constituting ‘a new phase in the history of the university’. They suggest that the universities have re-invented themselves as corporate entities, with strong executive modes of control, in which understandings drawn from the market and the corporate world dominate over traditional scholarly goals and modes of governance.
They identify structural changes to university management, which facilitate the implementation of executive power, and a corresponding shift away from discipline-based or collegial forms of authority and decision-making, increased flexibility in resources – including human resources – and a process of budgetary devolution that allows senior management to ‘channel the burden of expectation, and blame for failure, down to their subordinates’ (Marginson & Considine, 2000: 11).

Marginson & Considine acknowledge that others use terms such as ‘academic capitalism’, ‘entrepreneurialism’, and ‘corporatism’ to describe the changes wrought to higher education, but suggest that ‘enterprise’ better captures the emphasis on promoting ‘the prestige and competitiveness of the university as an end in itself’ (Marginson & Considine, 2000: 5). Their research focussed on the institutional level, and drew, in part, on interviews with those engaged in the governance of universities, including Vice-Chancellors, Deputy-Vice Chancellors, Deans and Registrars. These interviews sought to explore the views, attitudes and plans of those who shape university policy, and the term ‘enterprise university’ captures the form of the university that emerges as a result of these visions. However, I use the term ‘managerial university’ throughout this thesis, in order to emphasise the level of analysis employed here – that of the individual ‘grass-roots’ level academic. Academics’ positioning in the institution ensures a very different view of recent changes – one in which the ‘enterprise’ goals of senior managers are remote, and secondary to their own lived experience of being increasingly managed and constrained. For them, the university is increasingly ‘managerial’ in its nature – a term which, while it emphasises the increased role for managers, also encompasses a range of other foci, including the increasingly ‘enterprising’ or ‘capitalist’ nature of the university identified by other analysts of the Australian higher education scene.

Whatever nomenclature or level of analysis is employed, it is clear that recent decades have seen an intensification of challenges to the collegial model of the university, and the rise of a newly dominant organisational model. Universities everywhere have experienced profound changes in these years, in terms of modes of governance, funding arrangements, organisational structures, internal practices, and
social relations (Amaral et al, 2003). In Australia, as elsewhere, such managerially-inspired changes are associated with changes to the funding and management of the public sector during a period of expansion in higher education participation.

The March to Managerialism

The Australian Federal Government assumed sole responsibility for the funding of universities in 1974, and, throughout the 1980s, consistently indicated concern about cost effectiveness in higher education (DEET, 1993: 24). However, the release of a Higher Education Policy Statement in 1988 marked a pivotal point in higher education funding and management. This document not only heralded the demise of the ‘binary’ system of universities and Colleges of Advanced Education, and the creation of a Unified National System, but also indicated that universities would be encouraged to implement ‘strong managerial modes of operation’ and ‘streamlined decision-making processes’ (Dawkins, 1988: 103). In language that challenged many of the established notions of university governance, the Minister referred to Vice-Chancellors as ‘Chief Executive Officers’, and argued the need for ‘strong leadership in meeting the institution’s corporate goals’ (Dawkins, 1988: 102, 103). In some of its provisions, this paper responded to issues raised in the 1986 Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education, undertaken by the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Committee (CTEC). The Committee had been asked to consider issues relating to the monitoring of performance and productivity, the improvement of flexibility and efficiency, and ensuring optimal utilisation of resources (CTEC, 1986: xv). The resulting report expressed concerns over the effectiveness of large governing bodies; noted that there was a lack of management training for those undertaking management roles; suggested that universities were not engaging sufficiently in a process of forward planning; and recommended the establishment of a formal system of performance appraisal for university staff (CTEC, 1986: 16, 180).
The influence of private sector theories and models is apparent in these documents, and in others that followed. A consistent theme throughout is the need for more muscular management structures, and a sustained critique of collegial forms of governance. The 1987 Policy Discussion paper criticised the ‘array of committees’ that were a feature of traditional university governance structures, saying that the associated decision-making processes were ‘often cumbersome and unnecessarily protracted’. The paper also criticised the system of electing Heads of School and Deans, and argued for the ‘development of management skills at the middle and senior levels of management’ (Dawkins, 1987: 50-1). Following the implementation of many of the changes heralded by this document, the 1995 Higher Education Management Review Committee acknowledged that mechanisms such as “managerial” structures ... strategic plans, performance indicators, quality management and budget controls’ had been ‘portrayed as a transplant from the private sector that is in fundamental conflict with the traditional collegial styles of university management’. However, the committee defended corporate management styles and practices as more collegial than those employed in universities. Corporate management approaches were also portrayed as most appropriate in a time of rapid change (Hoare, 1995: 32-3). Similarly, the 1998 Learning for Life report bemoaned the continuation of ‘outdated governance arrangements, which emphasise representation rather than experience and skills in the management of large enterprises’ saying that such arrangements ‘hinder many institutions in pursuing their objectives’ (West, 1998: 20). In 2002, the Higher Education at the Crossroads ministerial discussion paper argued that universities ‘need to recognise that they too are businesses and that they should be subject to similar accountability and productivity measures as other organisations’ (Nelson, 2002: 30).

Underpinning all such exhortations is a belief in the appropriateness, and even the inescapability, of adopting private sector management styles and processes to better ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of universities. Within such documents, issues of traditional importance within the university, such as academic participation, democracy, and autonomy, are clearly secondary to aligning higher education with national wealth creation goals, and the establishment of a leaner, more economical higher education
sector. Education Minister, Brendan Nelson, in a breathtaking example of understatement, has suggested that the ‘transition to a corporate management approach has not ... been without tension’ (Nelson, 2003: 9). The presence of such tension is hardly surprising. As Tilley notes, the enduring debate that emerged in the wake of the 1988 reforms ‘is fundamentally a debate about the nature of the university as an organisation’ (Tilley, 1998: 7).

Elements of Managerialism in Australian Universities

Drawing on the data generated by the interviews undertaken for this study, and on the literature on managerialism in higher education, particular elements of managerialism in universities have been identified as significant for academics in their daily working lives. Other elements, which may have significance for those undertaking senior management roles, such as the formulation of strategic plans, are not discussed here, as they did not appear to loom large in the lived experiences of those academics whose primary tasks were teaching and research, rather than management. In keeping with the ‘grass-roots’ or ground-level approach of this thesis, the background and policy developments associated with the rise of many of the elements of managerialism are somewhat neglected here, in favour of more detailed exploration of academics’ own experiences of the same phenomenon.

The organization of the material presented here draws on the tri-level approach to managerialism discussed above. At the first level, managerialism in higher education may be seen as an ideology, which suggests that higher education is best understood as a business, and that, consequently, management practices drawn from the world of business should be adopted in order to ensure its optimal operation. The model is that of the private corporate sector, and the understandings on which it draws are underpinned by elements of neo-liberal thought, or economic rationalism. The ideology of managerialism in higher education emphasises the increased role of the market in regulating, rewarding and disciplining the higher education sector, and it therefore espouses commercial and
market orientations in the higher education context. Of particular significance for universities with their traditions of collegial forms of governance, this corporate model emphasises the importance of the role of management, and the need for strong managerial modes of control.

As noted above, the questions posed in the research interviews for this study focussed on the techniques and practices associated with the third conceptual level of managerialism. However, many academics in this study offered reflections and observations of managerialism in the university at the first level – that of ideology – often referring to the concept of the university embedded within a managerialist approach. A number noted the adoption of a business model of universities. One argued, ‘we’re conceptualising education in commercial terms’ (Senior Lecturer, Computing), while others argued that universities were increasingly run as if they were producing a commodity like any other. One insisted that university management treats higher education ‘rather like you’re making blancmange or something, or you’re packaging ice cream’ (Associate Lecturer, Economics), while another bemoaned what he regarded as the adoption of ‘a sausage factory mentality’ (Lecturer, Sociology). The ideological dimensions of managerialism were highlighted by one academic who insisted that, ‘so many decisions now are being done on a straight economic rationalist basis ... the university really runs in terms of bums on seats’ (Lecturer, Criminology). Another academic suggested that Vice-Chancellors, ‘give the appearance of having acquiesced in the definition of universities as businesses because they call themselves CEOs, and they have management plans and all the bells and whistles that go with businesses’. He added regretfully, ‘I’m not a member of a scholarly community – just a low-level operative in a business’ (Reader, Biology).

While one academic argued that universities need a strong business model (Senior Lecturer, Tourism), most argued that such an approach was inappropriate. One insisted that, historically and organisationally, the university was ‘a special animal’ which simply didn’t lend itself to a business model (Senior Lecturer, Biomedical Science). Warning of the consequences of adopting a business-oriented approach, another argued that, while
the university was currently 'trying to become a business very hard' [sic], it had traditionally offered 'something the business world isn't offering ... it's offering something academic'. He warned, 'By trying to eradicate this we're not going to create a flourishing business. We're going to create a nothing. We're going to remove ourselves' (Associate Lecturer, French).

At the second level, managerialism in higher education is a collection of theories, models, organizational forms, and processes that promote, support and implement elements of managerial ideology. A number of themes emerged in the interviews, highlighting elements of managerialism at this level of analysis. These reflected the broad themes of managerialism established in Chapter Four, and included: an enhanced role for managers; accountability through various forms of quality assurance; the notion of students as customers; entrepreneurialism; and an increased emphasis on economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The third level – the 'practices, techniques and devices' (Fulton, 2003: 156) – is the actual practical manifestations of these models, theories, and processes, and is the point at which individual academics experience managerialism. These practices are more immediate and tangible than the models and theories identified above, but relate closely to them. In the analysis that follows, a range of managerial theories, models, and processes are explored, along with a number of techniques, practices, and mechanisms, which comprise the third and most detailed level of managerialism in higher education.

An Enhanced Role for Managers

There is nothing new in the notion that academics are experiencing a decline in power and influence, and that university management is enjoying a concurrent increase in its access to power and control. Academics have long resented the intrusion of management in academic affairs. In 1918, Thorstein Veblen railed against the management of American universities by 'business men'. In 1966, Rourke and Brooks argued that a pattern of change was occurring in the US, which amounted to a managerial revolution in
higher education. In the UK, in a paper given in 1975, Fielden posited the ‘decline of the professor and the rise of the registrar’. While Fielden raised this spectre only to dismiss it, in part because he saw the professional university administrator ‘as one disinterested in power’ (Fielden, 1976: 53), at least one of those participating in the discussion provoked by this paper claimed that many younger administrators were already acting as change agents, and promoting management-oriented policies over academic priorities (Fielden, 1976: 55).

There is, then, nothing new about talk of power struggles between academics and administrators or managers. Claims of the ‘decline of donnish dominion’ (Halsey, 1993) have a long history. The traditional collegial mode of governance, in which the university was a ‘guild organisation of masters or students … having a high degree of juridical autonomy, the right to elect its own officers, statutory making powers and a communal seal’ (Cobban, 1975: 32 quoted in Amaral, Fulton & Larsen, 2003: 275), has been challenged and eroded over time. If there ever was a period of ‘pure’ collegialism, it is long since past. However, there can be little doubt that recent changes to the governance and management of universities have brought with them a radical redistribution of power between academics and administrators, and, consequently, changes to social relations between these two groups.

In Australia, successive higher education reports and ministerial policy statements have called for stronger, more streamlined management structures, to replace what have been represented as the unwieldy and time-consuming processes of committee-based collegial governance. In a phrase that is broadly representational of this thrust, the Learning for Life report insisted that, ‘sooner rather than later, universities will need to address the essential incompatibility of a view of the world based on collegial decision making and an alternative view based on executive decision making’ (West, 1998: 23). Recent studies of management structures and processes indicate that the ‘reforms’ advocated by governments have been pursued with vigour, and that university management has been transformed as a result.
Currie & Vidovich’s (1998a, 1998b) study of six universities, including three within Australia, indicated the adoption of more corporate, centralised modes of decision-making, in which the senior executive group and middle management were the most significant players. The Australian component of the Carnegie Foundation survey of the academic profession also indicated that over 41 percent of all academic staff surveyed believed themselves to be ‘not at all’ influential in decision-making at a school level, and that up to 84 percent of respondents suggested they lacked influence at an institutional level (Sheehan & Welch, 1996: 66). In addition, 40 percent of respondents reported that they were not kept informed about the operation of their institution, and only 25 percent felt that communication between academic staff and administration was good (Sheehan & Welch, 1996: 70). Similarly, Meek & Woods’ (1997) survey of 794 senior post-holders in Australian universities suggested that ‘corporate style management practices are being introduced into higher education institutions nearly everywhere’ and that ‘executive management priorities take precedence over collegial decision-making’ (Meek & Woods, 1997: 31). Finally, Marginson & Considine’s study of seventeen Australian universities also provides compelling empirical evidence that decision-making power is increasingly centralised, and vested in those occupying executive management posts. They argue that ‘executive dominance, explicitly corporate in form and substance has become part and parcel of every university’ (Marginson & Considine, 2000: 62).

Australia is not unique in this regard. In France, the Netherlands, and Norway, universities ‘have been reshaped around a command structure with increased powers of executives and clear line management’ (De Boer, 2003: 91). In the UK, Deem and Johnson’s focus groups with those they refer to as a ‘management cadre’ of manager-academics and professional managers, suggested that this group subscribed to a set of beliefs and values which were incompatible with those held by the broader academic community (Deem & Johnson, 2000: 71). This incompatibility of values may explain the growing distance and antagonism between academics and management in universities. Lumby and Tomlinson, commenting on managerialism in the UK Further Education sector, suggest that managerialism ‘essentially describes a developing gulf between lecturers and senior managers, due to the perceived emergence of a climate where it is
argued educational values have been sacrificed to rationalist forms of planning aimed at maximizing income and output’ (Lumby & Tomlinson, 2000: 139). Yet, for Amaral, Fulton and Larsen (2003: 284), the cause of academic resentment towards management is not so much the distance between the two groups, but the growing proximity. They suggest that academics have a sense that:

an increasingly intrusive ‘Big Brother’ is peering over one’s academic shoulder. This feeling of discontent is further aggravated by micro-management techniques that are increasingly used by institutions in order to respond to outside pressures ... The resentment of academics finds obvious targets not only in central administrations, but also in the fast-breeding species of academic administrators.

In Australia, relations between university management and academics has been termed a ‘cool war’ (Coady, 2000: xi), and identified as a major source of angst (NTEU, 2000: 35). Meek (2003b: 179-180) suggests that ‘the governance and management of Australian higher education have increasingly been characterised by deepening conflict and bitterness between the managers and the managed’. He notes that the ‘elite cadre of academic managers’ in Australian universities have assumed many of the trappings of their counterparts in the corporate world, including performance-based pay and bonuses (Meek, 2003b: 185). Applying a class analysis to these developments, Bramble sees senior management in universities as increasingly ‘tightly enmeshed in the ruling class’, while academics’ deteriorating conditions see them ‘pushed “down” the class structure towards and into the working class’ (Bramble, 1996: 10, 9). Apart from the growing sense of elitism associated with university management, there have been claims that university management has become heavy-handed and dictatorial in its approach. For example, Sheehan & Welch’s study indicated that 63 percent of their respondents considered the administration of their universities to be ‘often autocratic’ (Sheehan & Welch, 1996: 68). Baldwin refers to a ‘Rambo style of university management’, which she suggests has been adopted by some senior managers. She notes, ‘it is often accompanied by aggressive language – talk of kicking heads, “fingering” people, colourful threats and curses – which would amaze many outsiders still working with traditional images of academic decorum and gentlemanly converse’ (Baldwin, 1996: 6).
A number of themes emerged in the research interviews for the present study, relating to the enhanced role for managers within the managerial university, and illustrating the ways in which academics experience 'the manager's right to manage', in their working lives. One of these was the distance between academics and management, and the emergence of a sense of hierarchy between the two groups. Many academics spoke of a centralisation of power within their university and a corresponding loss of control by academic staff. One said, 'my experience of my university is that it's extremely hierarchical ... there's no consultation at all ... people feel really disempowered' (Associate Professor, Cultural Studies). There was a widespread perception that decision-making power had become very centralised. This had important implications for social relations within the university, as well as for the ways in which people conceptualised their relationship with the university. An Associate Professor in Economics insisted, 'decision-making is highly centralised on anything of importance whatsoever', noting, 'power is at the centre - real power - from the Deans upwards'. He argued, 'I believe that the more kind of authority, if you like, that moves out of the collegiate sphere and goes to central administration, the more you are just a hireling of the university'.

Another identified 'a massive gap between management on one side ... and us on the other side', saying, 'I'm concerned that [university management] are distancing themselves from the academics' (Associate Lecturer, French). Many interviewees regarded those in senior management as occupying elevated and privileged positions, while academics were relegated to the role of underlings. The sense of a formal hierarchy associated with line management emerges very clearly in a comment made by an Associate Professor in Architecture. She insisted:

The reason that we get all this trouble is there's nowhere left to shaft it to. Once the VC has shafted it down to the Deans' level, and then the Deans have shafted it to the Head of School, and the Head of School shafts it to the disciplines ... I'd like to pass on this bad karma but there's nowhere to pass it ... We are the lowest form of life in universities, now - staff.

The proliferation of senior management positions in Australian universities, documented by Marginson & Considine (2001: 63), was noted by a number of
academics, with one referring to the ‘huge administrative growth – as compared with academics – at nearly every university around this country’ (Lecturer, Tourism). Another defined managerialism as ‘layers of non-producers being put into organisations’ (Lecturer, Sociology). A number of those interviewed clearly resented the money expended on the executive salaries of senior management, noting that it was particularly difficult to countenance given the exhortations to belt-tightening they experienced in their roles as teachers and researchers. One questioned the logic of spending money in this way, saying, ‘it strikes me that what I wouldn’t do, if I was going to restructure my business or whatever in order to save money, would be to employ five Pro Vice-Chancellors at an enormous salary’ (Associate Lecturer, French).

Some felt that this distance between the two groups had resulted in management being increasingly ‘out of touch’. One said, ‘I’m sure that they work very hard, but it just strikes me that what they’re doing and what I’m doing are two different things, and that what I’m doing seems to me to be much more tightly related to what universities are about than what they’re doing’ (Associate Lecturer, French). Another referred to a ‘sort of disjuncture’ between the expectations of administration and reality, especially regarding the potential research and teaching productivity of academics. He argued, ‘it’s like people who don’t really know what we’re on about are in control of things’ (Lecturer, History). A number of academics saw these two groups as broadly oppositional; one academic summed up a common sentiment, saying, ‘it has become a game of us and them it seems’ (Lecturer, History).

Significantly, however, academics rarely regarded Heads of School as one of ‘them’. Marginson & Considine (2000: 64) note the existence of a ‘fault line’, which falls ‘somewhere between Faculty Dean and individual staff members’. They suggest that Heads of School often face divided loyalties – a point which was recognised by a number of those in this study. While the perceived trend has been towards Heads of School being increasingly understood as answerable to, and aligned with, senior management, rather than their staff, this view did not emerge in the research interviews. However, one academic argued, ‘There’s two kinds of managers ... there’s the umbrellas - they deflect
the shit - and there's the funnels [who] just concentrate it down' (Senior Lecturer, Physics). He noted that his Head of Department operated as an 'umbrella' for the academics there. While there were some exceptions, most of the academics in this study regarded their Heads as undertaking an 'umbrella' role, shielding their staff wherever possible from edicts and directives from above, and identifying with their priorities and concerns. Others noted the invidious position in which Heads were placed by their positioning in the managerial university. One academic observed, of his Head of School, 'he's required, I think, to be fairly directorial in his approach to the staff ... I see it as very much line management, and he's expected to manage the school, to tell us what to do, basically' (Reader, Botany).

Academics also commented on the tone of interaction between the two groups. While some academics had little or no contact with those in senior management positions, others were indignant about the contempt with which they felt they were treated by management, noting the strained and deteriorating quality of social relations within the university. One academic complained, 'it's made very clear to us ... that we are employees, that we are expendable. The way the university tends to manage things is on the basis of threat'. She argued that earlier in her career there was 'a certain kind of respect for academics, for their professionalism, and I don't think there is any now' (Associate Professor, Cultural Studies). A Lecturer in Nursing referred bitterly to the 'disgusting, very disrespectful' tone of communication from those at the level of senior management, while a Senior Lecturer in Surgery insisted, 'if you want a one word definition of managerialism, it's a form of bullying, at its most base level'. The cumulative effects of perceived slights, insults and threats had obvious consequences for the ways in which academics related to their universities. A Lecturer in History noted that while he was initially 'very happy to be part of the university and happy to sort of represent the university in all sorts of ways', that feeling had changed over time. 'Now', he said, 'I feel absolutely no loyalty to the university because I know the university has absolutely no loyalty to me and will get rid of me if it's no longer convenient for them to keep me'.
Academics also referred to the proliferation of ‘bright ideas’. This term referred, pejoratively, to management initiatives that were seen to reflect management’s lack of understanding of the ‘realities’ of teaching and researching in universities. ‘Bright ideas’ included the introduction of schemes or programmes that were seen as simultaneously time-consuming and ineffective, or the replacement of existing systems, which were seen to be working, with more centralised or remote schemes, which were deemed unsuccessful. One academic complained that the proliferation of administrative positions and their associated areas of responsibility had meant that the previously ‘very active curriculum committee, who would spend time looking at our curriculum’ had ‘evolved into a teaching and learning committee which spends most of its time responding to initiatives from on high that have damn little to do with the quality of the teaching we deliver’ (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). A Lecturer in Nursing similarly complained that a school-level recruitment programme that she had run for years had been replaced by a less effective scheme, operated by a non-academic department. Referring to the introduction of a scheme which was designed to consider the experiences of first-year students, another academic complained:

It’s people who don’t have to do it on the ground, who don’t know how draining a lot of their bright ideas can be … ‘Let’s talk to all students who fail more than one unit. We’ll contact them and we’ll bring them in for an interview, and maybe we’ll have some focus groups for the end of semester’. And you think, ‘this is an amazing drain on my time’. It’s also rather unrealistic. I mean how many students want to voluntarily come in at the end of semester when they are perhaps preparing for exams, to give a focus group perspective on how they’ve experienced the units. So it just seems to be quite detached from the reality of day-to-day teaching … A lot of the managerial directives, the good ideas you were doing already, and the bad ideas you resent, and they really do take time (Lecturer, Sociology).

In this regard, a number of academics condemned management initiatives for the introduction of a Parents’ Day at their universities. This idea was regarded with horror by all of the academics who mentioned it. Some argued that it was an idea students were equally unlikely to support, saying, ‘you realise pretty quickly that 99 percent of students are going to want to run in the opposite direction screaming’ (Lecturer, Sociology).
However, in most cases the management of the university appeared determined to proceed, against the advice of academic staff.

Academics were irritated by the proliferation of such initiatives, arguing that they added to an already heavy workload. One complained that while his department had been told they couldn’t afford the additional staff required to teach a large first-year course, administrative positions had increased. He said:

We’ve got about three people that we didn’t have two years ago. They’ve got full-time jobs driving us fucking crazy with, ‘Oh, how can you put this on the web, and how can you put this on the net, and what are you doing about this?’ So if they’re here to help us with teaching, they’re hindering us. The time we have to take filling in their … In fact now what you do, you look at your email and as soon as you see their name you dump it, you don’t even read it (Lecturer, Sociology).

Another commented, ‘sometimes I think people design new programmes or do new things just to keep themselves busy’ (Lecturer, Tourism).

These sentiments connect with another theme that emerged, illustrating the ways in which the enhanced role for management is seen to spread beyond the senior management echelon. A number of interviewees indicated tension between academics and those occupying low-level administrative positions. Often this was associated with the proliferation of accountability and quality assurance mechanisms, which lower-level administrative staff were seen to implement and enforce. Thus, administrative staff were seen to impose additional burdens on already heavy workloads, and were often regarded, along with more senior management, as ‘the enemy’. They were seen to be engaged in a process of ‘empire building’, and enjoying increased levels of influence and power, at the same time that academics were experiencing a corresponding loss of control. One academic observed bitterly that his department manager, who he described as ‘virtually like a financial officer’, ‘has more say in how we run the show and develop curriculum than the academics do’ (Lecturer, Tourism). Illustrating the cultural divide between the two groups, another observed:

How are you promoted as an administrator? Not by discovering something in a laboratory, as we do, not by actually manually do something like a
labourer person do [sic], they are promoted by introducing new ways of doing things, a new format, a new form, a new complication of our lives, so unfortunately they are our worst enemy. Instead they should serve us in the running of the university (Senior Lecturer, Biomedical Science).

The sense that this level of administration was adding burdens, instead of lightening them, was common. One academic argued, ‘one of my bones of contention would be that if you’ve got all these admin people, then my admin should be going down … otherwise, when are they going to come over and start teaching my classes and giving me some teaching relief?’ (Associate Lecturer, French). Several academics claimed that it is this level in the administrative structure that causes academics the most grief. An Associate Professor in Architecture repeatedly referred to being exasperated with ‘idiotic’ edicts issuing from ‘the faculty’. She clarified the composition of this group, saying that it included middle managers, but also ‘the secretaries in the faculty office who think they’re implementing the university’s policy’. Another concurred, saying ‘the source of this trouble is in young ambitious middle management people, the secretary, the manager, the administration … they introduce a lot of changes in order to be seen to be doing something … Not professors that have administrative responsibilities, not them, it is their staff’ (Senior Lecturer, Biomedical Science). The hostility between these two groups emerged repeatedly in research interviews, and a number of academics appeared to feel this keenly. One academic argued that, ‘every office in the university is antagonistic to the academics’ (Associate Professor, Cultural Studies). Academics saw administrative staff as encouraging the paperwork associated with accountability requirements ‘because their career aspirations and their future depends on the administrivia’ (Lecturer, Tourism). Summing up the sentiments of many, a Senior Lecturer in Surgery said, ‘we have business managers and all sorts of people who are supposed to be organising things, who, as far as I can see, just contribute to making life more difficult’.

Some academics also reported increased intervention in matters that were previously the prerogative of academics. A number reported that subject outlines had been increasingly standardized over recent years, as a result of directives from university administration. One critiqued the logic behind this development, saying:
The course outline has to be all the same, so that the student will understand them. I say, ‘these are tertiary students, they are not kindergarten or primary school, so they should deal with diversity of material presented to them, you know, they should have enough plasticity in their brain that one lecturer will give the information in the beginning, another halfway through, but it is there, the information, and they find it’. Oh, no, they want us all to be the same (Senior Lecturer, Biomedical Science).

Another complained that what had been ‘literally a world class Honours programme’ in his department was about to be restructured. He said, ‘they’re going to centrally decide how Honours is being run. There was no consultation’ (Senior Lecturer, Physics). A Lecturer in Criminology reported being reprimanded by the head of a student admissions unit for ‘pre-empting his decisions’, by sending out course materials to an enrolling Honours student. The academic was informed that he was not entitled to authorize the student to enrol, despite the fact that he was the Honours Co-ordinator because, ‘it doesn’t fit the university’s quality control procedures’. Of this and similar issues he mused, ‘You are no longer trusted … Somehow, suddenly, overnight, you become incompetent’.

Interviewees also experienced intervention in their prioritising of tasks – traditionally an element of academic autonomy. One academic reported ‘you might get a directive from a Dean, it could be an email, it could be a memo, it could be a conversation … [saying] that you would need to concentrate on proper types of research rather than spend more time teaching better’ (Senior Lecturer, Tourism). Others suggested that the interference was just as real, but experienced less directly, often relating to increasing workloads and the associated pressures on academic priorities. Most academics argued that the requirements imposed by increased accountability mechanisms interfered with their ability to devote sufficient time to their research. One reported that, at her previous post, the university’s prioritising of entrepreneurial off-shore activities interfered with her own academic priorities. She noted, ‘with staff stretched fairly thin, you might be asked to write the curriculum for a tender when you really wanted to spend that particular weekend progressing your research’ (Lecturer, Industrial Relations).
However, a number of academics argued that there was little significant interference with the ways in which they worked, on a day-to-day basis. One academic, in answer to a question regarding erosion of her autonomy, pondered, ‘I don’t feel it particularly ... I know some people do, but I don’t particularly. I don’t know, maybe I’m just ignoring it’ (Associate Professor, Cultural Studies). Another argued:

Most of us – day-to-day – would continue to have remarkable freedom. Yes, there are these intrusions of paperwork for this and that, but for most of us, do we feel that our time is really managed? Oh, absolutely not. There are these things that mostly amount to little more than insults, that don’t really, on the ground, change what we’re doing that much (Senior Lecturer, Psychology).

Echoing this, a Lecturer in History compared his experiences to those of colleagues in the UK, where he regarded managerial practices as much more oppressive. By comparison, he felt that he was not overtly managed, saying, ‘nobody interferes with my academic decisions’, and argued that the requirements of the university were ‘fairly logical, rational procedures’. He qualified this, noting that his short period of academic employment meant that he did not have a reference point with which to compare his present experiences.

A point of comparison, afforded by a lengthy academic career, was also a crucial factor in another theme identified in the interviews. A number of academics noted a loss of involvement in the governance of their institutions. They were almost exclusively older academics, who had served in universities over a long period of time. They felt this loss keenly, associating it with the demise of democratic practice within universities. Effectively they felt disenfranchised within their institutions. Those who had come to the university in recent decades had little sense of this loss. Indeed, the young historian quoted above, who said he had no knowledge of a pre-managerial university, characterised the decision-making process by saying, ‘it’s power consulting down, not a democratic principle anymore. Upset some people. I’ve had no problem with it so far because the people in charge have been good’ (Lecturer, History). In this regard, the
ability or opportunity to make a comparison to collegial decision-making structures and processes appeared vitally important to one's perspective.

Those with long careers in academe noted the dismantling of collegial processes, and associated forums, such as academic boards. One academic said he had observed 'a strong new wave of managerialism, and shaking up all of the structures, and putting in place more management-oriented structures in place of the admittedly slower-to-change collegial structures that were in place' (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). Another said, 'the previous academic structures of the department have been essentially set aside and hierarchical management has been put in its place' (Reader, Botany). Previous decision-making and governance processes and mechanisms were characterized by these older academics as 'more democratic' in nature. They regretted the loss of participatory governing bodies and spoke of the capacity of such bodies to engage in debate, and the ability of all academics to contribute to such debates. One contrasted the two systems in this way:

The faculty boards would meet regularly and would determine the curriculum for the faculty, and everybody would see what was being proposed for the faculty, and have a chance to debate it ... Any lecturer had the right to nominate to be a member of the faculty board, and most people did. Not everybody went to every meeting of the faculty board, but if an item of business came around in which you were interested you could go and you could have as much say as a Professor in whatever was going on. Now that didn't mean to say that you always got your way, but at least you knew what was going on, and you could participate in a debate. And the same happened at academic board. The academic board actually determined many things relating to, I suppose, the teaching functions of the university – the actual business management has always been separate – but the academic functions have been determined by those bodies. The present system vests all the decisions of the faculty in the Executive Dean (Reader, Botany).

Referring to the same transformation, another academic argued, 'we're much less involved in the governance of this place, and much, much, more removed'. As a result, he said:

You just feel more powerless, you feel less involved with the organization. And you almost have the sense that you are an individual worker I think. Yeah, you just come in, you go to your office and you do your work for
the day, and then you go home. And there’s no great involving of you with the organization. People have been cut out of the loop (Lecturer, Criminology).

For some, this aspect of managerialism rendered problematic their relationships with their institutions, which previously had been conceptualised in terms of participation, democracy, and institutional responsibility. The above quotes demonstrate how profoundly this loss was felt.

While many academics acknowledged the continuing existence of the committee system within the managerial university, they noted that such committees had an advisory function only. An academic with an employment history outside of academe noted, ‘sometimes we have some dramas because people don’t understand that your advice is simply that, and the Head can choose to take your advice or not’ (Senior Lecturer, Tourism). Where academic-based governance bodies still existed, academics often saw them as a mere shell, and something of a sham. One suggested that the academic board, ‘has died really, and it just rubber-stamps everything’ (Senior Lecturer, Surgery). Another argued that in addition to assuming a merely consultative function, the academic members of the academic board had become unduly concerned about not opposing the will of the increasing number of those holding ex-officio positions. He said, ‘every time we actually express our opinion – not vote, we don’t vote anymore – [the academic members] are very careful not to disrupt any activity of the administration, [to let them] have their way’ (Senior Lecturer, Biomedical Science). These academics argued that meaningful academic participation in governance had given way to mere lip-service to the notion of consultation. Awareness of this shift had led to disengagement and distancing by some academics. One academic said:

The smart thing about this particular VC is that he has a facade of consultation. He will come into each school or discipline on a regular basis, twice a year, and pretend to listen to all our gripes and problems and sort of nod and then go away and do something entirely different. And the first few times he did that of course, well people came the first few times you see, but after that people like me just refused to go to those meetings anymore (Lecturer, History).
Another suggested that departmental and divisional meetings were now ‘largely formalistic’, saying, ‘substantive debate is discouraged, it’s [seen as] a waste of time’. As a result, he said, ‘the majority of the younger staff don’t turn up to them because they have no memory, collective memory, of anything useful being transacted’ (Associate Professor, History).

Accountability

Interviews also explored the broad area of accountability. Increased emphasis on accountability is recognised as an important element of managerialism in higher education, and has attracted the attention of analysts of higher education in Australia and elsewhere (see especially Vidovich & Currie, 1998; Strathern, 2000; Shore & Wright, 2000; Mears, 2001; Vidovich & Slee, 2001). Indeed, Polster and Newson (1998: 173) argue that accountability was ‘a banner word of higher education policy in the 1990s’. Vidovich & Currie (1998: 194) draw on Berdahl & McConnell (1994) to define accountability as ‘being answerable to various constituencies for responsible performance’. While academics have always been accountable for the appropriate performance of their duties, what is significant about accountability within the managerial university is which ‘constituencies’ are emphasised. Corbett (1996: 197-202) refers to accountability operating in four directions: upward – to superiors; downward – to employees and subordinates; outward – to client groups and stakeholders; and inward – to one’s conscience. To that we may add another – horizontal or sideways accountability, embedded in the academic ethos. The notion of collegiality implies accountability for one’s performance to peers, evident in practices such as peer review of publications, and peer review of students’ grades. Maloney argues that academics have always practiced accountability, ‘within our community, on the grounds that if we were effectively accountable there, we would be accountable everywhere’ (Maloney, 2000: 76). Illustrating Corbett’s notions of outward and downward accountability, Maloney suggests that the form of accountability primarily employed in the pre-managerial university was accountability to one’s students. He notes:
To be accountable to our students was to demand much of ourselves as we tried to stay at the forefront of our discipline in our reading and research, to prepare lectures, to guide students in their reading, to assess their written work with care and to return it to them personally. We knew that we had to demand certain standards of intellectual rigour from our students, in default of which we would betray them, the wider community and ourselves’ (Maloney, 2000: 76).

Inward accountability refers to the application of one’s own professional standards to the assessment of one’s own work. In a profession known for rigorous and exacting standards, and for the sometimes obsessive pursuit of excellence as defined by its members, internal accountability is, arguably, a significant and effective mechanism.

However, the form of accountability emphasised under managerialism is upward accountability, initially to management within one’s institution and ultimately, through the Department of Science, Education and Training, to the Federal Government. The meaning of accountability in a higher education context has thus shifted from ‘a professional process of self-regulation and application of agreed standards and codes of conduct and ethics ... to a managerial process of control and the appropriation of our work to meet organizational needs’ (Hort, http://www.nteu.org.au/debates/hort.html). Similarly, Vidovich & Slee (2001: 431) argue that accountability in higher education has moved ‘from professional and democratic to managerial and market forms’. In the managerial university, accountability is demonstrated through management-sponsored, government-imposed mechanisms that seek to measure academics’ productivity and performance, across a range of areas. This is part of a move towards aligning universities’ practices with government’s desire for more effective and economic use of resources, and re-imagining their role to include a focus on national wealth creation. Accountability mechanisms include performance appraisal schemes, and quality assurance processes relating to teaching and research. They are increasingly geared towards measuring outcomes, rather than inputs and processes. In line with the privileging of market accountability, some of them seek to measure ‘client’ or ‘customer’ satisfaction.

Analysts of higher education note the increased pressures that such accountability requirements places on academics. McInnis (1998a) argues that the proliferation of non-
core tasks, including compliance with accountability requirements, has been a primary factor undermining academics’ satisfaction in their work. Vidovich & Currie’s (1998) study indicated that academics were experiencing increased accountability requirements in the areas of teaching and research, and that they had significant concerns about the validity of some of the mechanisms used. In this regard, one academic in the present study noted that while there is ‘a lot more reporting on the way that you conduct your grants, and how you carry out your research and how you spend your money’, there is little support available for this additional work. She went on to suggest that, ‘the more reporting you do, often the less actual work gets done ... people are continually having to account for themselves to the university, so the university can account for itself to the government’ (Senior Lecturer, Computing).

Mears (2001: 18) notes that managerialism in higher education is part of a broader process, in which previously trusted professionals are required to ‘demonstrate their ability to meet performance targets’, as relations based on trust increasingly move towards explicit contracts. The research interviews suggested that some academics view the introduction of accountability mechanisms as illustrating a decline in their institution’s trust in them. A Senior Lecturer in Computing suggested:

In the last ten years there’s been an increasing sensation that academics are people who are quite peculiar, who really need to be watched. You’ve got to really account for what they do, because if you gave them the slightest sort of leeway at all they would just go off and do their own thing to the detriment of the organization. They would be slack about teaching, they would ignore students, and they would go off and do their research and they wouldn’t care if their research brought any sort of sense of status to the university or whatever else. It’s a feeling that I think academics have, and perception is everything, I suppose.

Two other academics recounted stories relating to accountability, one associated with declaring outside earnings and the other pertaining to documentation of a drawing on her research account. In both cases, the academics involved felt that the tone of communication from within their university was coercive and threatening, and devoid of any indication of trust in them as professionals.
Others drew on the notion of downward accountability, complaining that while academic staff were held accountable, more senior staff were not. One argued, ‘it’s the plebs, who are aspiring to either stay in the system or to move up, who are accountable to everyone’ (Lecturer, Tourism). Two academics applied the notion of downward accountability to issues of financial management in their universities. One, who complained about money being creamed off for initiatives that he felt had little to do with the core business of the university, said, ‘all this crapping on about transparency and accountability ... I can’t find out who gets the money!’ (Lecturer, Sociology). Another compared this lack of downward financial accountability with his experiences in the pre-managerial university, saying, ‘many years ago ... each year a budget was published for the university. I’ve not seen one of those for ten years or more, and where they are published – if they are published – how the money is accounted for, I no longer know’ (Senior Lecturer, Surgery).

The majority of academics interviewed insisted that they had no objection to the notion of accountability as a principle. Indeed, a number argued that as they earned a relatively large salary funded by taxpayers, they should be held accountable for the work they perform. However, many critiqued what they saw as ineffective, even ‘shonky’ accountability mechanisms. One academic said:

I have no problems with accountability but the focus is wrong. It’s all post and reactive, good teacher/bad teacher, over budget/under budget ... There’s no pro-active element to it, no formative assessment of how we might progress from this point. It’s all about ‘are you good or bad, have you met whatever requirement?’ It’s all so negative, there’s no positive (Lecturer, Tourism).

Others argued that accountability mechanisms did not reflect the realities of their work. A Senior Lecturer in Computing said, ‘frequently, when I’m filling in forms about what I did the previous year, I think, “well, nothing on that [form] really reflects what I feel was actually quite valuable about what I did”’. A number of academics argued that accountability was experienced as simply ‘going though the motions’. One argued, ‘the main thing that [accountability systems] measure is that people appear to be doing something ... Without appearing too cynical, the appearance of feedback seems to
matter a lot to systems that are not truly accountable but simply need to appear to be accountable' (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). Therefore, they were often regarded as a waste of time. One argued: 'We have a lot of managerial hoops that we need to jump through, that a shonky academic could easily jump through, and a good academic has to waste time fulfilling' (Lecturer, Sociology). Another suggested that accountability procedures should be initiated and monitored by academic staff, saying, 'if they are being imposed from above then I'm highly suspicious, and it's also the purpose [for which they are used]. I mean anything that's coming out of Nelson's\(^1\) office you've got to be suspicious of' (Senior Lecturer, Sociology).

Academics juxtaposed critiques of the effectiveness of recently introduced accountability mechanisms with comments emphasising the notion of internal and sideways accountability, which they saw as already ensuring appropriate standards. One said, 'there is a willing climate of commitment to hard work here, but it's certainly not driven by managers' (Lecturer, Industrial Relations). Another spoke of the 'internal consistency' created by accountability through her professional body. She said, 'We are held accountable by the Nurses' Registration Board ... so we don't need someone else looking over our shoulder' (Lecturer, Nursing). Invoking notions of sideways, downward and internal accountability, she argued, 'the place is so bloody big and disorganised and disjointed now that nobody would know what we taught. You can teach as little or as much as you want, you can put as much [effort] in or as little as you want, and nobody would know. The people that know are the students, and we know'.

Interestingly, two academics argued that there is still insufficient accountability within universities. One, with a background in the public service, said, 'One of the biggest differences between the public service is the lack of accountability, and I think that's a bad thing at universities'. He argued that 'Heads of Department have little capacity to get staff to do anything' and said he would like to see their power increased (Senior Lecturer, Geography). Another, who claimed – somewhat tongue-in-cheek – to

\(^1\) At the time of the interviews the Minister for the Department of Education, Science and Training in the Australian Federal Government was Dr Brendan Nelson.
be, ‘in favour of public shaming’, argued, ‘I see no reason for fearing accountability if you’re even doing half your job ... I have been given no reason to believe that accountability will do anything other than make those people who aren’t working, work a bit harder ... The more accountable the system gets, the better’ (Senior Lecturer, Philosophy).

**Performance Appraisal**

Performance appraisal or performance review is perhaps the most direct form of accountability for academics’ performance. McInnis et al (1994: 2) suggest that the notion of academic performance appraisal was initially mooted in Australia in the mid-1980s but was ‘firmly placed on the agenda’ by the documents which heralded the Dawkins reforms. The 1987 Higher Education Discussion paper argued that ‘effective methods of staff assessment should be an essential part of operation procedures’, noting, ‘they have the potential to make a significant impact on the efficiency of institutions and must therefore form part of the Government’s considerations on the distribution of limited resources’ (Dawkins, 1987: 58). Just two years later, the 1990 the Federal pay award for Australian academics was made conditional on the implementation of a performance assessment system (Everett & Entrekin, 1994: 219).

However, universities did not rush to implement performance appraisal schemes, and, in 1993, most universities were still in the early stages of implementing them (Piper, 1993: 65). This delay was noted by the 1995 Higher Education Management Review, which recommended that all universities implement a ‘comprehensive approach to performance management’ (Hoare, 1995: 13). The report argued for systems that would provide feedback to staff ‘on the level of their performance and results they should seek or continue to achieve’, and data that would help administration make decisions relating to probation, tenure, and unsatisfactory performance. It also advocated an approach integrating ‘the management of people with the management of the university’ (Hoare, 1995: 11). In 2000, the Federal government announced the establishment of the Workplace Reform Programme, which would allocate up to $259 million over a period of
three years to universities that met criteria in a range of areas, including performance management. In 2002, a discussion paper resulting from the ‘Crossroads’ review of higher education was still arguing for a ‘stronger focus on performance management’, complaining that the system of collective bargaining undermines management performance strategies (DEST, 2002: xi, 37). In 2003, the Australian Universities Quality Agency also argued that performance appraisal was ‘clearly an area for improvement in a number of institutions’. They noted, somewhat bluntly, that several universities they had audited were still ‘in the process of implementing performance management policies, and were urged to get on with it’ (AUQA, 2003: 24, emphasis added). The government has repeatedly made it clear that the issue of performance appraisal is high on its higher education agenda, and that universities cannot drag their feet indefinitely. At the time of writing, the websites of all the universities in this study indicated that they had implemented performance management or performance review schemes, except one, which was operating a pilot programme.

Performance appraisal schemes, in Australian universities, generally involve a performance review form – usually completed by the staff member being appraised – followed by a meeting with the Head of School, or another designated person. Academics are encouraged to set goals for the coming year, in terms of research, conference papers, and publications, and teaching and supervision loads are scrutinized. In some cases the appraisal interview is also used to revisit the previous year’s forecast in order to ascertain which goals have been achieved and which have not. Higher education analysts have considered the significance, meanings, and possible consequences associated with the introduction of formal performance appraisal schemes. Hort notes that the phrase ‘performance management’ has increasingly replaced that of ‘performance review’. She argues that this shift is important, signalling an increasing emphasis on, ‘those outcomes that can be directly observed and measured’. She also notes that the shift to performance management implies a process of behaviour modification using a system of measurable criteria and rewards (Hort, 1996: 5, 4). Appraisal schemes that quantify achievements may also be used to establish normative levels of productivity, which can then be invoked to judge the performance of other academics (Townley, 1993: 232).
Given the circumstances of its introduction, one might expect to see a considerable degree of academic resistance to performance appraisal. Early research suggested that academics viewed the introduction of performance reviews as a threat to their autonomy (Moses, 1988: 29). Moses noted that there was no tradition of performance reviews by superiors in Australian universities, and that ‘evaluation by “superiors” went against the notion of professional autonomy in a collegial academic work setting’ (Moses, 1988: 59). In 1994, McInnis et al reported that one quarter of their respondents regarded appraisal as a waste of time, while 47 percent reported taking it very seriously. However, only 19 percent believed it had helped improve their teaching, only 12 percent believed it had helped improve their research productivity, and only 9 percent believed it had helped improve their administrative work (McInnis et al, 1994: 22). In 1997, Meek and Woods observed that performance appraisal ‘seems concentrated in lower levels’, and noted that ‘it is often maintained that its effective implementation has been blocked by negative staff attitudes’. They noted that these negative attitudes did not appear to be espoused by the senior staff they interviewed and that it would be interesting to seek the views of other staff on this point (Meek & Woods, 1997: 129).

A variety of responses to performance appraisal emerged in the research interviews for this study. Many academics reported that they went through a very low-key performance appraisal process in a fairly mechanistic fashion. One said, ‘I see it as something that has to be done because it’s an expectation of the joint, but it doesn’t add or subtract anything to what I’m doing … It doesn’t really help me or hinder me’ (Senior Lecturer, Engineering). Another said, ‘I’ve never had one that told me anything I didn’t already know’ (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). Two academics, both young, and new to the university, were more supportive of the process. One enthused, ‘I think it’s a great idea … Let’s be honest, I wouldn’t otherwise sit down and appraise how I was going in quite the same way as when I have to sit down and talk it over with the Head of Department’ (Senior Lecturer, Physics). The other argued, ‘it is quite good. You set goals, and you meet with your supervisor a year later to see whether you met them, and it gets people to start reflecting on the future. This is more for the staff who are not, you
know, very dynamic’. However, he argued that he didn’t require this formal process, saying, ‘I am setting goals and moving toward them as it is, so I don’t find it threatening’ (Lecturer, History).

The fact that they were already setting goals and moving toward them was the basis of other academics’ opposition to performance appraisal. In this regard, a Senior Lecturer in Engineering said, ‘you’re supposed to be self-driven, that’s why people get attracted to [academe]’. Another argued, ‘if you are really serious about performance planning, and I am, you don’t need that documentation, ’cause the documentation is a sham’ (Associate Professor, Management). Contrasted with their own sense of professionalism and notions of internal accountability, they saw appraisal schemes as unnecessary, even as insulting. One argued that, ‘the relative formality of a written statement heightens the emotional charge of it – from the collegial feedback mechanism – very dramatically’, and said he found the process ‘somewhat stressful’ (Senior Lecturer, Psychology).

Academics also represented performance appraisal schemes as flawed and ineffective. One academic argued that those who are under-performing are, generally, ‘people who are really good at filling in forms, you know? ... So these forms have absolutely no effect on those people, they know exactly how to fill them out’ (Associate Professor, Cultural Studies). Another critiqued the limited understanding of professional performance and development implicit in performance appraisal schemes, saying, ‘performance appraisals are quite laughable in our university. Every now and then they would give me a note saying, ‘is someone “satisfactory” or not?’ And basically that’s what they thought appraisal was’. He said the current system was designed ‘for people to be able to tick off a series of boxes bureaucratically, but not professionally. I don’t think it’s making us any better, in fact it’s probably making us a lot worse’ (Associate Professor, Management). A Lecturer in Sociology argued that performance appraisal involved the application of ‘dodgy criteria’, saying, ‘the managerial stuff always seems to emphasise things that can be easily quantified ... It’s the “we don’t read ’em, we count
'em’ approach to publications. You’re supposed to guarantee things in advance, which I don’t think you can do if you’re a serious academic’.

Others objected to the surveillance embedded in performance appraisal, and the potential for the system to be used against them. One said:

It’s sold in a very positive way, as a way of getting recognition for what you’ve achieved, and as a way of putting in plans to realise your goals in the future, but I really see it as a form of surveillance. It will probably start in a fairly subtle and low-key way, but these things are being kept on file. For what purposes, we’re not exactly told, but the fact that they are being kept on file concerns me, and yeah, I’m a little bit afraid of the uses to which they might be put down the track (Lecturer, Sociology).

Another academic echoed these sentiments, saying that while an appraisal scheme had been introduced as ‘guidance’, he saw it as ‘the thin edge of the wedge’ and potentially ‘a double-edged sword’, that could be used to ‘bludgeon good hard-working academics’ (Lecturer, Criminology). This potential was highlighted by another academic who said, ‘I’m a bit ambivalent when it comes to things like performance appraisals. I personally have nothing to fear about them but I would hate to see them introduced from above … they might be used in an inappropriate way’ (Senior Lecturer, Sociology). Interestingly, this academic noted that although the introduction of regular performance appraisal was included in the last enterprise bargaining agreement at his university, he had not undergone one since his arrival in 1994, and to his knowledge, no one in his department had either.

One factor of great importance to many academics, related to their assessment of, and relationship with, the person conducting the appraisal interview. A few argued that they would get no useful feedback from their Head of School, because of their personality or skills. Others noted that they did not object to evaluation because they had particular regard or respect for their Head of School or nominated supervisor. One said, ‘it helps that I like the Head of Department and like them immensely … If I’ve got no respect for them I would find it a complete waste of my time’ (Senior Lecturer, Physics). Such views illustrate the ways in which collegial forms of interaction, and respect based
on recognition of expertise, can permeate, and even subvert, a system that is essentially based on notions of hierarchy and managerial prerogative.

Workload Agreements

Performance appraisals are, at some universities, undertaken in conjunction with the completion of a workload agreement. While the introduction of workload agreements for academic staff was a union initiative intended to curtail excessive workloads (Soliman, 1999: 1), it emerged from the interviews that some academics regarded formal workload agreements as an element of managerialism. For example, one academic, when asked about manifestations of managerialism in her university, insisted, ‘Increasing managerialism, I guess, came with the workload agreement, which I think is a huge big joke’ (Lecturer, Nursing). The apparent paradox of a union initiative intended to protect staff being regarded by those same staff as a managerial tool, was explained by a Lecturer in Industrial Relations, who said:

I would always fight to death against a [workloads] model in which you had to document what you did across the areas of teaching, research, administration and community service ... If you’re documenting everything you do that’s a performance management tool for management. If you say, ‘I am not going to be required to do more than x amount of teaching’, well that isn’t a management tool. That is almost a quasi-industrial tool.

One academic noted the apparent contradiction of huge workload expectations in the wake of the introduction of such an agreement, saying, ‘the irony of it is that the workload agreement was designed to control this. But certainly in the time that it’s been working – which is a little over a year – it simply hasn’t worked that way’ (Lecturer, Accounting).

Responses to workload agreements were generally very negative, primarily for two reasons. Firstly, they were seen to impugn academics’ professionalism, signifying a lack of trust by management. In this regard, an academic referred to the ‘residual disagreeableness of a managed workload.’ He noted that, ‘being part of a managerial accounting just rubs the wrong way’ (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). Secondly, the
documentation of workloads was seen as a work of fiction, in that all academics insisted they worked far in excess of the 1725 hours annually, specified in workload agreements. Some also felt that the calculation of workloads did not reflect the actual time required for particular tasks.

Others addressed the issue of ‘what’s counted and what’s not being counted’ in the calculation of workloads (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). One academic argued that the formulas used represented management’s interests, rather than those of academic staff, saying, ‘they’ve used the system, and formulas – be it taxation or whatever – are calculated for the ruling class, in this case the elite within your institution’ (Lecturer, Sociology). Another academic argued that the committee responsible for weighting various aspects of academic work had skewed formulas to benefit themselves. He argued, ‘as with all things, who gets to author, who gets to put the guidelines down has a vested interest in where the train goes … We have a very high weighting on PhD students, and the people who were on the committee were the ones who had all the PhD students, so there was a lot of resentment on how this worked’ (Senior Lecturer, Philosophy).

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance processes are, of course, underpinned by notions of accountability. Universities are expected to ensure, and demonstrate, that they are providing ‘quality’ education and producing ‘quality’ research, and to constantly strive to improve both. This is not a particularly new proposition, nor one to which one would expect academics to object. However, quality has traditionally been assured within universities using internal processes, along with the use of peer review undertaken by representatives from other institutions and external accreditation through professional bodies (DEST, 2001: 253; Brennan & Shah, 2000a: 2). During the 1990s, systematic, formalised quality assurance accountability to government assumed greater prominence.
Quality assurance has been described as ‘inextricably linked’ to new managerialism (Morley, 2003: 47). Like other aspects of managerialism, quality assurance is not a neutral or value-free concept or process. As Morely (2003: 147) suggests, ‘the quality project involves correction and rehabilitation’. Others note that quality assurance processes involve the use of ‘technical, bureaucratic and value elements in ways which give power to some and remove it from others’ (Salter & Tapper, 2000: 66). Aspects of this trend, along with the academic responses it has elicited, have been well-explored, particularly in the UK, where quality assurance mechanisms through external inspection and audit often assume a particularly daunting aspect (see especially Brennan & Shah, 2000a, 2000b; Salter & Tapper, 2000; Newton, 2001, 2002; Morley, 2002, 2003).

Selwyn and Shore (1992: 90), in response to an article suggesting that quality appeared to be a new item on the UK higher education agenda, noted:

There is, of course, a wealth of evidence indicating intense commitment to quality and excellence in British intellectual life. For example, were the stacks of PhD theses in university libraries written by men and women who did not care about quality? Were, and are, the working lives of university teachers consistently marked by a lack of commitment to excellence and quality?

There can be little doubt that quality is, and has always been, an abiding concern for academics. Yet, as Selwyn and Shore add, ‘in the vocabulary of present education “management”, “quality” seems to have become a “new idea”’. For example, Newton suggests, ‘one of the legacies of the 1990s is that quality became a central concern in higher education’ (Newton, 2000: 153). Such comments indicate that the term quality is employed to invoke quite different meanings. In this regard, Vidovich and Currie (1998: 196) suggest that the notion of quality employed in the higher education sector is ‘quality as accountability to stakeholders’, in the place of ‘quality as excellence, which has a more traditional presence in universities’. Other analysts also note the shift in the meanings associated with the term quality, and the contested nature of the term (see especially Newton, 2002; Stephenson, 2004). Barcan suggests, ‘Quality’s mysterious acquisition of an upper-case “Q” marks for me its shift from an adjective to a noun – from attribute to
commodity’ (Barcan, 1996: 134). This shift in meaning may be seen as associated with the importation of management practices common in the private sector, the ‘fads’ in higher education management to which Birnbaum (2000) refers. In this instance the influence of the Total Quality Management school is apparent in the understandings associated with ‘Quality’ in higher education (Shore & Roberts, 1995: 11; see especially Piper, 1993).

These shifts also reflect the government’s growing involvement in higher education quality, and the changing ways in which quality is conceptualised in government higher education quality policies (see especially Vidovich, 2001). While government-sponsored reports indicate a focus on quality from the period of the mid-1980s (Vidovich, 2001: 251), the first official higher education quality policy was announced by the Minister in 1991 (Baldwin, 1991). Subsequently, the Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CQAHE) undertook a series of quality inspections, between 1993 and 1995. These quality rounds were based on a process of self-audit (DEST, 2001: 257), which led to the development of processes and mechanisms by which universities could demonstrate self-assessment, including formal mechanisms for feedback from students and the analysis of progression rates (Pennington, 1998: 263). Vidovich claims that, following the dismantling of the CQAHE in 1995, a ‘quality vacuum’, in terms of ‘publicly visible action’ followed, lasting until 1999 (Vidovich, 2001: 255). She notes, however, the development of the government’s increasingly ‘hard-nosed’ approach to quality in higher education, during this period.

From 1998, all universities have been required to produce Quality Assurance and Improvement plans, which address quality assurance goals and strategies, and provide data on quality outcomes (DEST, 2001: 260). These new requirements include specification of ‘graduate attributes’, a range of generic capabilities ‘that were desirable for all graduates to possess at the end of their university learning experience, irrespective of their field of study of the degree they had been awarded’ (DEST, 2001: 264). In 1999, the Minister launched a new higher education quality policy, and announced the establishment of the Australian Universities Quality Agency, which would undertake
periodic audits of universities’ quality self-assessments. Any institution found to be ‘deficient’ could, after a process of consultation, become ineligible for Commonwealth funding (http://www.detrya.gov.au/archive/ministers/kemp/dec99/ks101299.htm). There is, clearly, a significant incentive for universities’ management to ensure that they are collecting documentation demonstrating their commitment to quality assurance.

While none of those involved dispute the importance of ensuring quality, the ways in which quality assurance is demonstrated within universities has emerged as a point of contention. In the wake of increased government intervention, the emphasis has shifted to quantitative forms of quality measurement, often involving the use of performance indicators (Vidovich, 2001: 256). Birnbaum, examining ‘management fads’ in higher education, argues that ‘most fads emphasize quantification; some go to the extreme of claiming that if something cannot be measured, it cannot be of value’. He adds:

An educational philosopher might claim that those things of greatest value are precisely those things that cannot be measured and, indeed the purpose of higher education is to turn tangible resources into intangible resources. If we cannot measure what is valuable, we will come to value what is measurable, so that passion for measurement can distort organizational efforts by prizing and overproducing what can be measured and neglecting what cannot’ (Birnbaum, 2000: 197).

The use of performance indicators also makes it possible for aspects of academic work to be subject to routine evaluation, as they ‘replace substantive judgments of teaching with formulaic and algorithmic representations’ (Polster & Newson, 1998: 175).

Academics in this study expressed similar concerns regarding quality assurance and assessment. Many critiqued the quantitative approach it commonly employs. Some saw this preoccupation as a feature of contemporary life more generally. One academic noted, ‘there’s a pervasive thing in our society that things you can put numbers on are more important than things you can’t put numbers on ... I would often think the qualitative stuff is more important, but a beautiful set of figures is always going to have more weight’ (Senior Lecturer, Geography). Another argued that a numerical approach
effectively overlooks issues relating to quality, saying, 'I mean our outputs are how many students complete subjects and complete courses. Are we really that interested in how well they are performing or what their learning experience has been like?' (Lecturer, Health Sciences).

Academics often represented performance indicators as blunt, and as favouring that which could be quantified, rather than ensuring genuine quality. This was particularly the case with research productivity. An Associate Professor in Management insisted that awarding ‘points’ for articles, regardless of the prestige associated with the journal in which it is published, meant that, ‘the system ensures that crud equals excellence ... it is measuring that which is measurable and ignoring that which is useful’. Another interviewee argued that the system ‘promotes the instrumental at the expense of the substantive ... It’s about the number of articles that you can do, the number of research grants you can get’ (Lecturer, Sociology). Such approaches meant that traditional scholarly priorities were increasingly challenged by accounting imperatives. One academic insisted, ‘you’ve got people talking about the “minimum publishable unit”, how you’re absolutely crazy to publish a book like I did last year, when it could have been fifteen articles. I was literally asked that question at a promotion process, “Why did you publish a book?”’ (Senior Lecturer, Geography).

Academics often dismissed quality assurance mechanisms as being concerned with appearance over substance. One argued that the maintenance of teaching portfolios did not indicate a commitment to quality teaching, calling them, ‘the greatest instigators of hypocrisy that I can probably imagine’ (Senior Lecturer, Computing). A Lecturer in Sociology concurred, saying, ‘some people are putting the effort into being a good teacher on the ground, other people are putting the effort into putting bells and whistles on their teaching portfolio’. Noting that numbers could be variously interpreted, one academic argued that a possible measure of teaching quality was the pass rate for a given unit. He emphasised the potential for grade inflation in such trends, saying, ‘so if you pass 95 percent of the class then you’re obviously [seen to be] teaching better than if you only pass 30 percent of the class’. Noting that reasonably high failure rates used to

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indicate appropriately rigorous assessment, he said, ‘I think now there’s the notion that you teach so everyone will pass, and I suppose there’s that old proverb about making silk purses out of sow’s ears ... you’re not allowed to say standards are going down’ (Associate Professor, Botany).

Although none of those interviewed in this study had been directly involved in an AUQA audit, there was some objection to external assessment. Two academics noted that their university was anticipating an AUQA visit and felt that it would be largely an exercise in ‘window-dressing’. One noted, ‘the emphasis is on reporting to some external body that’s going to do some kind of quality audit, but it’s not about how do we actually improve our teaching, or how do we improve our research’ (Senior Lecturer, Geography). The other referred to the anticipated visit as ‘the big show’, and indicated that there would be little real quality assessment involved. He said, ‘the data have to indicate that the university is teaching well, by whatever the criteria are. Because we are world class, we have to succeed. We can’t be seen to be doing something other than at the best level’ (Reader, Botany).

The superficial nature of this type of ‘tick box’ quality assurance (Stephenson, 2004: 62) was contrasted with what were seen as effective and meaningful forms of quality assurance, underpinned by notions of collegial accountability. One academic insisted, ‘we do have a culture which disciplines us to have certain standards of student evaluation and standards of student feedback, standards of dealing with student complaint and so on’ (Associate Professor, History). A Physicist argued that the most effective form of quality assurance in his department was immediate reaction of his disciplinary peers to the quality of the department’s graduates. He insisted:

We get judged by the quality of our graduates. It’s immediate, it’s much more immediate than any government feedback or ranking, or anything like that. If we put one crap year out there the word goes round the community, and then people don’t want to play with us anymore ... We know instantly if we’ve dropped the ball, and we hurt instantly if we’ve dropped the ball. So quality is really important (Senior Lecturer, Physics).
A number of academics argued that the existence of a system of quality assurance had assumed more importance than the actual goal of assuring quality. For many in this study, the system had become, to use Newton’s (2000) term, a ‘beast’ to be fed through ritualistic and largely meaningless practices. Indeed, one academic argued that in responding to calls for standardisation and benchmarking, ‘lecturers find their time – which could be going into real teaching and other things – diverted to the paperwork of feeding the system’. He also referred to the system of specifying graduate attributes, acknowledging that it was ‘a sensible idea at a certain level’, but argued that, in practice, the process had become ‘a huge wank’ (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). Another argued that at his university the emphasis seemed to be on the development of particular policies rather than determining whether or not their implementation actually improved quality (Lecturer, Sociology).

Overall, academics’ resistance to ‘quality’ processes reflected their own assessments of the effectiveness of those mechanisms. The most common theme that emerged in the research interviews was that quality assurance mechanisms imposed an additional workload burden, but actually failed to assure quality in any meaningful way. While the academics in this study appeared unreservedly committed to quality research, and quality teaching, they remained unconvinced by the forms of quality assessment employed in their universities. Their attitudes appeared to bear out Vidovich’s claim that, ‘quality construed as “excellent standards” ... would be much less likely to trigger resistance from academics than more explicit forms of accountability, especially quantitative P[erformance] I[ndicators] as developed by bureaucrats’ (Vidovich, 2001: 258). The negative academic responses to quality assurance mechanisms, identified early in the 1990s (McInnis et al, 1994), appear undiminished by the passage of time. Academics’ compliance with such mechanisms reflect the ‘dramaturgical performance’ and ‘impression management’ identified in the UK by Trowler (1998a) and Newton (2001, 2002), rather than any commitment to their validity or usefulness. For the academics in this study, as for Newton’s respondents, they were ‘games’ to be played, which bore little relationship to their notions of quality, and the meanings they associated with the term.
Student Evaluation of Teaching

Interviews also identified student evaluation of teaching as a quality assurance mechanism of concern to many academics. This practice reflects two aspects of managerialism in higher education – emphasis on the student as a customer, and emphasis on accountability through quality assurance of teaching. Student evaluations may be seen as part of a ‘consumer determined perspective of quality’ (Gatfield, Barker & Graham, 1999: 240), which privilege students’ views of teaching quality and seek to measure their satisfaction as client, consumer or customer. In Australia, they are often the primary mechanism utilised to measure teaching quality (Ballantyne, Borthwick & Packer, 2000), reflecting the increasing market-orientation of the higher education sector.

The practice of student evaluation of teaching, generally through questionnaires that elicit both quantitative and qualitative data, is well established in Australian universities. They became widely used in the late 1980s, as part of the move towards quality assurance (Bedggood & Pollard, 1999: 129). In 1996, Sheehan and Welch reported that between 75 and 82 percent of respondents in the Australian component of the Carnegie survey of academic staff believed that student opinion should be surveyed, but that almost 68 percent believed that better methods are required to properly evaluate teaching (Sheehan & Welch, 1996: 36). The reliability and usefulness of student evaluation of teaching has been extensively debated. While the bulk of the literature suggests that, when properly designed, student evaluations can be useful (Chen & Hoshower, 2003: 73), critics point to a number of flaws in the process. In Australia, Bedggood and Pollard (1999) conducted a study of student opinion surveys in eight universities, finding that they frequently did not reflect sound questionnaire design. They found that surveys included ambiguous questions, did not consider the issue of the ordering of questions, and asked questions which students were not qualified to answer (Bedggood & Pollard, 1999: 135).

In addition, the purposes for which such evaluations are used has been the subject of much debate. Marsh, recognised as a leading authority in this area (Johnson, 2000),
argues that student evaluations should be used for formative and diagnostic rather than for summative purposes, and that the least appropriate use of them is as ‘a summative judgement for purposes that might incur potential pecuniary or personal penalty’ (Johnson, 2000: 426). Bedggood and Pollard similarly warn against the summative use of student surveys. They argue that ‘under the guise of quality assurance, the surveys are widely implemented as an agent of change and conformity’, and insist that ‘a tool has been placed in the hands of students which has the potential for damage’ (Bedggood & Pollard, 1999: 137-8). Despite such warnings, student evaluation of teaching has assumed increasing importance over recent years, and the confirmation of probation, tenure, or promotion is often linked to evidence of satisfactory student evaluations. Recent government policy announcements indicate that student evaluation of teaching is likely to assume even greater significance in the future. In April 2004, the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund (LTPF) issues paper announced provisions for making students central to the process of evaluation of teaching, for publishing these evaluations on universities’ websites, and for linking student evaluations to the distribution of LTPF money (Kniest, 2004: 22).

The responses of academics in this study to the issue of student evaluation reflected the ambivalence of the literature on this topic. Almost unanimously, academics were supportive of some of the principles embedded in the student evaluation – especially that of providing students with a ‘voice’, and the notion of responsiveness to student opinion. However, they also identified a number of flaws in the process of student evaluation and expressed many concerns regarding their reliability and their use. As with other accountability and quality assurance mechanisms, interviewees identified alternative means by which student opinion could be sought and practically utilised. Rowland (2002: 57) notes that many university teachers hold discussions with their students in which they encourage them to evaluate the teaching and learning process, but acknowledges that the qualitative nature of this form of evaluation generally results in its marginalization. Similarly, a number of academics in this study saw the ways in which they sought student feedback as superior to the blunt mechanism of the student evaluation questionnaire, but noted that these processes did not conform to the requirements of the
university. One noted, ‘I might sit around and talk with them ... there might be a dozen ways that you do it that would be focussing on your subject. But that sort of thing doesn’t help with accountability’ (Lecturer, Education). An Associate Professor in Architecture argued that the student projects – which were displayed publicly – provided staff with a means by which they could collectively assess the quality of their teaching on a semester-by-semester basis. She added, ‘I always ask students for feedback in other forms aside from the evaluations. I’ll [also] ask them years later because I think it’s just as relevant then. So I think, like everything, you have to use a range of means. Anyone who believes that formal student evaluations are the only way to measure it ... Well I don’t think so’. Another argued that formal evaluations were merely ‘a supplement to constant feedback in class’ (Associate Lecturer, French), while the co-ordinator of a large unit relied heavily on ‘constant feedback from tutors’ (Associate Professor, Cultural Studies). She argued that this process was particularly useful because it identified problems before the end of semester, when evaluations are usually performed. She argued that this process ‘seemed to me more useful than the forms’ but noted that, ‘the kind of thing that the university wants to be able to show a committee at a quality audit is statistical’.

The standard survey process, and the survey instruments used, were often identified as flawed and as having limited usefulness. Many argued that the questions posed in the survey were inappropriate and did not provide the sort of feedback they required, or were ‘irrelevant to the subject that you teach’ (Lecturer, Education). Others echoed this, referring to it as a ‘process of round pegs in square holes’ (Lecturer, Sociology). Two older academics argued that the evaluation instruments had become less helpful over time as the emphasis had shifted from formative to summative. One noted that when he had first used student evaluations, he ‘found them very valuable, because the students pointed out some things that I wasn’t doing well, and I could fix those’. He argued that as their use had become more widespread, ‘the students were getting fed up with filling in all these forms and they were treating them less seriously’ (Reader, Botany). The other academic argued that the ‘thrust of the questionnaires has changed to a much more managerial approach. When they were first designed they were ... I would have said diagnostic – they were actually quite useful to you as an academic ... But
they’ve gone to a much more global style of questions like, “did you enjoy the subject?” (Lecturer, Sociology).

Some academics noted that the system was susceptible to manipulation by either students or staff. A Lecturer in Criminology argued that while she was broadly supportive of the concept, she was concerned that, ‘students use them, if they don’t get the marks that they think they should get … as character assassinations for the lecturer’. Another noted that they were equally open to misuse by staff. She recalled:

I had a colleague who was a really dokey bugger but he knew how to manipulate the system. And he was quite proud of it, and he said, ‘You wait until the second last lecture, and you give them a big talk about basically how to do the exam and they’re all so grateful and then you give them the forms’. And that just made me so cynical about the whole process, because at that stage I was sort of fairly new and totally naïve about all of this (Associate Professor, Cultural Studies).

Other flaws in the process were identified, including the question of how qualified students are to evaluate certain aspects of teaching. One academic argued that student evaluations are, ‘very suspect, because, you know, first-year students haven’t got an informed opinion. Their expectations aren’t mature … they’re in no position to judge an academic’ (Lecturer, History). Another noted, ‘one of the questions on the standard form is “has this lecturer shown that they have a good grasp of the material?” Right? And how is a first-year student going to know that?’ (Associate Professor, Cultural Studies). Others argued that the process of placing the student in the role of evaluator had the potential to encourage soft marking. One noted, ‘often, if you pass the student you get a good report. I mean if you’re noted for being a light marker, that’s known all around the traps’ (Associate Professor, Economics). Another, arguing that the qualitative data that such questionnaires yield were particularly useful, but were not factored into the report that was generated, referred to the quantitative approach as ‘poverty stricken’ (Lecturer, Sociology).

The compulsory nature of student evaluations was also discussed, with some academics noting the potential for control, and erosion of autonomy, embedded in the system. Some academics noted that student evaluation of units was compulsory at their
university, while others suggested that it remained optional but was strongly encouraged. However, almost all noted that confirmation of appointment, tenure, or promotion, was dependent upon evidence of satisfactory student evaluation of teaching. One junior academic noted that while he had more faith in other forms of student feedback, the use of the standard survey instrument was vital for his promotion chances (Associate Lecturer, French). Another noted that while student evaluations were not the only way to demonstrate good teaching, at his university they were effectively the only forms of evidence admitted for confirmation of tenure or promotion (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). In this regard, one academic noted, ‘it virtually becomes another mechanism of control, if you like, as regards promotion’ (Associate Professor, Economics).

Some academics noted that student evaluations were used for a variety of purposes, other than formative feedback to the lecturer. One saw it as ‘literally market research’, especially with regard to the expectations of overseas students (Associate Professor, History). Another argued that he did not support universities using student evaluations as the basis of policy decisions, such as discontinuing units that students might see as irrelevant (Lecturer, Sociology). A Senior Lecturer in Tourism noted, ‘one of our Lecturers has been “invited” to do one of these tertiary education teaching programmes, based on a lousy score’. Most academics saw student evaluations as having value, but many were concerned about the purposes for which they were used. The view that student evaluations should not be used for summative purposes was widespread, and most academics argued that the results should remain confidential. One academic voiced a dissenting opinion, arguing, ‘I’m in favour of people being held accountable for putting the effort into their teaching … I’m in favour of them being published, I’m in favour of them being held up in staff meetings and fingers pointed’ (Senior Lecturer, Philosophy).

Positioning Students as Customers

The positioning of students as judges of academics' teaching performance, embedded within the student evaluation process, is merely one element of a broader trend towards
constructing students as ‘customers’ or ‘clients’. Dill and Sporn (1995, cited in Becher & Trowler, 2001: 8) suggest that one aspect of the marketized higher education system is the ‘increased power of “customers”: students, employers and the government, acting as a core buyer’. Within a managerial approach, members of the public are seen as clients or customers of the public sector. This trend is apparent in higher education, where students are increasingly understood and referred to in these terms (Meek, 2003a: 10). Bostock (1999: 3) argues that this designation follows logically from a view of the university as a business producing and selling (often vocational) knowledge. The notion of student-as-customer also reflects the ways in which universities have moved closer to the market mechanisms of the private sector, with universities increasingly competing for students and industry funding. Studies suggest that academics are generally critical of the adoption of the student-as-customer paradigm, arguing that such a view would lower standards (Bauer & Henkel, 1999: 255). Advocates argue that such an approach is a necessary corrective to the deficiencies of a higher education sector characterised by a ‘centrally controlled, provider driven mentality’ (Schwartz, 2000: 38). Others suggest that it may be useful to think of students as customers in certain situations, and as clients, citizens and subjects in others (Sharrock, 2000: 150).

Whatever position is taken, practical consequences follow from a view of students as customers. As Barcan notes, the commodification of education and the utilisation of a ‘consumer paradigm’ entails the adoption of particular types of behaviour, on the part of both students and academics (Barcan, 1996: 131-3). When students are constructed as ‘discriminating choosers of a quality product or service’ (Barcan, 1996: 132) existing social relations between students and academics are problematised, and academics’ traditional roles are re-defined, to include such activities as recruitment. Power relations between the two groups are also challenged by the adoption of a market-orientation that emphasises the rights of student-as-consumer. Changes in student expectations accompany this shift in discourse, as students increasingly construct themselves as customers and demand ‘value for money’ in terms of their educational ‘product’ (Barcan, 1996: 131).
While only a minority of academics in this study mentioned the construction of students as customers as an aspect of managerialism, those who did so rejected this designation. A number argued that the term ‘student’ implied a richer relationship than that which is implicit in the role of client or customer. Rather than seeing the adoption of such a role as achieving student empowerment, most saw it eroding the pastoral care aspect of their role, resulting in limited and one-dimensional modes of interaction with students. They also identified dangers associated with the conceptualisation of student-as-customer, including ‘soft marking’, and ‘soft’ responses to plagiarism. As with other aspects of managerialism discussed above, an approach that was intended to ensure quality was seen to have effectively undermined it.

Several academics argued vehemently against a view of students as customers, insisting that it was an entirely mistaken view of their role. One argued that the notion of customer was ‘a completely wrong analogy to use for students’, saying:

I think conceptualising a student as a customer indicates that there is a fairly straightforward commercial transaction, that you pay for goods which you have been fairly well informed about, that you receive those goods, and if you’re not happy with them you can in some way get your money back, or you ask for a discount, or repairs or after-sales service or whatever ... It’s completely wrong because a great deal depends on the behaviour of the ‘customer’, as to whether there’s going to be any satisfaction with the ‘product’ that’s delivered (Senior Lecturer, Computing).

A Lecturer in Sociology also argued that the conceptualisation of students as customers was flawed, saying, ‘you don’t evaluate your customers, do you?’ A Senior Lecturer in Tourism, who had a business background, was less offended by the term, saying, ‘I see them as clients, which I think is slightly different to customers ... A client is someone that you might have more of a relationship with’.

However, a number of academics argued that those in senior management had adopted a view of students-as-customers, and insisted that the university also encouraged students to view themselves in this way. An Associate Professor in Architecture argued that a growing consumer orientation on the part of students was ‘encouraged by the view
that the university takes of itself', while another academic argued that his university 'is letting students know loud and clear that students are customers' (Lecturer, Sociology). Several linked this to the introduction of higher education fees. One argued, 'I think also the whole HECS² thing encourages them to think this way' (Lecturer, Criminology), while another posited that such a view was bound to increase, given the current move toward fee-paying places in undergraduate courses (Lecturer, Sociology).

Academics also suggested that students had embraced the new role of customer, and that they were increasingly behaving like consumers, and exhibiting a consumer-orientation to their education. One noted:

I mean I watch them do consumer behaviour. 'I want one of those, I'll buy it. It's on the shelf, I can have it, just like anyone else can. I don't like the colour of the mark you gave me, I'd like to bring it back. How do you know my assignment was worse than someone else's?' There is no implicit regard anymore for the qualities of judgements, at a fine and detailed level, that academics make (Associate Professor, Architecture).

As this quote indicates, the 'customer is always right' view was seen as particularly problematic when related to the issue of marking. One academic noted that the university's insistence that unit outlines include detailed marking criteria had resulted in increasingly instrumental and even litigious student behaviour. He argued that students required more and more information about how their marks were decided, and apportioned their time and effort accordingly, in an effort to maximise their grades. Echoing a general theme on this topic, he saw it as resulting in a relatively limited and impoverished view:

'Do I focus in this assignment in being creative and original or do I focus on wider reading?', 'How much am I getting for my research and how much am I getting for my creativity?' Or, 'I've been criticised for my referencing, how much importance is there on the mechanics of the essay, is that a major part or a smaller'? And in one sense you can see their argument, they're trying to maximise their marks, but from my point of view, doing a piece of work is more than meeting a series of criteria (Lecturer, Education).

² The Higher Education Contributions Scheme was introduced in 1989 to supplement government funding of higher education with student contributions. Under the provisions of the scheme, students may choose to pay their contribution 'up-front' – in which case they receive a discount, or they may opt to pay their HECS debt through the Australian Taxation Office when their earnings reach a certain threshold.
Many academics believed that viewing students as customers was potentially dangerous, as it could undermine academic standards and academic integrity. One also suggested that calling students ‘customers’ de-emphasised their role in the learning process. He argued, ‘they’re buying a product, and then when they fail at the end of the year they say, “well, the product was faulty. Can I take it back please? Can I have a refund?”’ (Associate Lecturer, French). Others gave examples of situations where the student-as-customer paradigm had undermined their role in assessing students’ work and determining grades. One linked this to the payment of fees, noting that a student had communicated this to him on the cover of an essay he submitted. He said, ‘he actually wrote, “Seeing we’re paying fees we expect more”!’ (Lecturer, Sociology). Another academic related a story in which a colleague had failed an essay from an overseas full fee-paying student, after which the student resubmitted the essay with his fee receipt stapled to the front (Lecturer, Sociology). Like others in this study, he noted that a view of student-as-customer encouraged a view of education as a commodity to be bought and sold, saying, ‘it’s like, “I paid my money, I expect my product”’. Another academic felt that the pressure to pass students was applied by members of the university management structure. He noted that, at a marking meeting:

I objected to promoting a certain student. And I was going to suggest that in a class of 80, about ten of them had to repeat that course, if we want to be serious. And the Head of School resisted me. He said, ‘people come here, pay very high fees, this is a professional course’. I say, ‘hey, hey, hey, don’t tell me those things. These people do not know anatomy, absolutely do not know’ (Senior Lecturer, Biomedical Science).

He argued that management was concerned that, if it became known that the university was failing a large number of students, potential students would choose to undertake their studies elsewhere. This view underscores the ways in which universities increasingly compete for market share, needing to represent their academic product as attractive to their potential customers. This imperative exists in tension with the maintenance of academic standards, and problematises the traditional role of academic as assessor and evaluator of students.
Restructuring Academic Departments

While the entire higher education sector has effectively been restructured since the creation of the Unified National System in 1988, individual universities have since engaged in what sometimes seems a continual process of internal restructuring. This often involves merging disciplinary-based departments into larger schools, faculties or divisions, so that the size of the smallest effective organisational unit is increased significantly. While this may appear to be a relatively neutral process, analysts have identified it as an element of the shift toward more muscular management of universities. Marginson and Considine’s study of management trends in Australian universities revealed that, ‘the disciplines, and the collegial structures which sustain them, are often seen as a nuisance by executive managers and outside policy makers’. They argue that moves toward supra-departmental groupings represent an attempt to find a solution to the problem of departmental ‘fiefdoms’ (Marginson & Considine, 2000: 10, 35).

Restructures are significant because academics have traditionally identified with their disciplinary ‘home’ – their department – and this identification is diluted by the incorporation of disciplines into larger units, which, while organizationally convenient, often lack common disciplinary ground. The ‘restructured’ academic loses that sense of membership in a disciplinary based department, which – despite the well-known tendency of departments to house many fractures and long-standing tensions between individuals and factions – is a resource they can drawn upon when mounting resistance to a perceived ‘external’ threat. Restructuring can also be disempowering when the new units that emerge are too large to permit the forms of discussion and interaction that characterised collegial forms of governance. The Head of the new organisational unit is also likely to be seen as having little basis of identification with the whole unit, because s/he will preside over those from disciplines other than their own. Heads of these larger supra-departmental groupings are thus often seen to identify more with management than with their academic staff.
While restructuring announcements are often accompanied by a rubric of encouraging inter-disciplinary synergies and the cross-fertilisation of teaching and research activities, academics in this study argued that the mergers they had experienced reflected financial and managerial – rather than academic – priorities. One argued that the most recent restructure at his university was, ‘to our minds less to do with anything we were doing than with financial policies that the administration adopted to shake things up’ (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). Others also saw increased centralisation of power as an objective of restructuring. A Lecturer in Industrial Relations referred to the amalgamation of six faculties into three mega-divisions as ‘the usual catastrophe’, and insisted that, ‘the restructure was an attempt to make money, to go out and pursue money’. She noted that during the restructure, ‘[the] old style of university governance was replaced with a much more managerialist style in which Heads of School were in a chain of command – very top-down’.

Two older academics argued that an important objective of restructures was the breaking down of disciplinary identification and loyalty, as well as the processes of governance which accompany departmental structures. One argued:

There is this theory in Sociology, whereby there is a critical number beyond which collective decision making is difficult ... 20, 30, something like that ... [Following the restructuring] the average number of academics within the school is more around 40, 50, 60, and even more in some, rather than 20, as the department was before. So we don’t know each other, we lost touch with each other, and a whole level of community, meeting, operating, identifying ourselves, has gone, and I think our administrators like that ... Even relations with your colleagues are more strained now. You tend to be more aggressive, territorial, competitive. And we don’t communicate well any more. It’s because the unit is too big (Senior Lecturer, Biomedical Science).

Another argued that, in a particularly extensive restructure, ‘the culture was literally ploughed up in order to make it possible to manage us’ (Associate Professor, History). This comment reflects this academic’s recognition of what Marginson & Considine refer to as the process of ‘breaking down normal departmental structures, often by breaking down the conventional character of the academic disciplines themselves’ (Marginson & Considine, 2000: 161). As previously noted, such comments also illustrate the ways in
which academics draw upon the understandings, theories and concepts embedded in their disciplinary backgrounds in order to interpret and critique managerialist changes.

Apart from the process of breaking down disciplinary identification, the effect of such restructurings on academic morale is significant. When such restructures are accompanied by a process of ‘downsizing’ departments, and threats of redundancies, the disciplinary effect of this supposedly neutral process is readily apparent. In some disciplines, academics have little likelihood of finding alternative employment, in their field, outside of the university (Stewart, 1997: 39). Academics who had experienced this aspect of restructuring attested to the effect of such a process. One referred to the process as ‘frightful’, noting that it had ‘left scars’ on those who had stayed and on those who had left. He said, ‘there was a process of voluntary redundancy targeting which went on for several years ... I mean the threat was that if it’s not voluntary it will be compulsory’ (Associate Professor, History). Another argued that as a result of the restructuring in his university ‘most academics accepted whatever increased workloads they might have, in being glad that they at least still had a job’ (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). For others, the threat of redundancy was still present. One young academic, who arrived from overseas to take up his first academic post, reported being met at the airport by the Head of School, who had greeted him oddly. He recounted, ‘he didn’t actually say, “hello”’. He came over to me, shook my hand and said, ‘the department’s disappearing’.” This interviewee noted that while the university had said there would be no redundancies, ‘they keep qualifying it by saying, “in the medium term there’ll be no redundancies”. And people don’t know what “medium term” means’ (Associate Lecturer, French).

Budgetary Devolution

Another feature of the managerial university is the designation of academic units as ‘cost centres’ with responsibility for the allocation of a devolved one-line budget. This is an element of managerialism in the public sector more generally, reflecting decreased levels of funding (Pollitt, 1993: 83), and one that has been widely adopted in higher education
institutions. For example, Fulton’s study of sixteen higher education institutions in the UK indicated that ‘all had some form of devolved resource model, with departments and sometimes even individual programmes and research centres being treated as cost centres’ (Fulton, 2003: 170). In Australia, the practice of budgetary devolution to departments began as early as 1988 (Bradley, 1995: 145), and the practice is now common. While the devolution of budgetary responsibility may be represented as offering an increased opportunity for departments and schools to ‘run their own show’, and decide their own priorities, critics suggest that it also operates as a managerial tool, especially in a time of fiscal scarcity in the higher education sector. Devolved budgets also shift the responsibility for ‘tough’ decisions from central university administration to Heads of Schools or departments. Bradley has argued that the process has lead to an increase in political infighting within and between departments, diverting conflict away from the administration (Bradley, 1995: 146). Currie and Vidovich (1998b: 130) also note ‘the divisiveness, the fragmentation, and the bad relationships’ caused by the devolution of ‘tough’ decision-making to schools and departments.

Critics suggest that the process of budgetary devolution has essentially been an exercise in ‘responsibilizing’ departments for the wider funding shortfall in higher education. The ‘tough choices’ made by the cost centre units may include: increased use of casual teaching staff (Mullen, 1995; Bradley, 1995); reduced tutorial hours and even the abolition of tutorials; increased tutorial sizes; increased allocation of teaching to academic staff; reduced levels of conference support; and, in some departments, the disappearance of essentials such as writing paper. The significance of budgetary devolution as a managerial tool is that these decisions are seen to be the prerogative and ‘choice’ of the department or school; within a devolved budgetary model they are ‘free’ to allocate their funds however, and wherever, they wish.

This aspect of budgetary devolution was not lost on a number of the academics in this study. One, in particular, appeared to have given the matter a great deal of thought, saying:
You give people their own budget, and you say ‘this is all about the devolution of responsibility. You are now responsible for managing your own budget.’ But you always give them an inadequate budget to manage. I mean it’s just a way of making them responsible for the inadequacies ... It’s as old as the hills, that trick, I can tell you … I’m sure Machiavelli would have recommended it (Senior Lecturer, Surgery).

He also noted the ‘choices’ his department had made, saying, ‘our budget every year goes down and down … We have more students, we have a more intensive course, we have less budget and therefore less staff. I mean that’s largely been achieved by staff not being replaced or staff going onto fractional contracts’. Another academic insisted:

The shit shovelling stuff has been devolved onto us … On the surface it looks as though more and more decisions are being devolved down to our level. And there’s no doubt about it, more and more we’re having to make small budgetary decisions at the school level … Can we afford casuals? How much photocopying can we afford? How many phone calls can postgraduates have? (Senior Lecturer, Sociology).

He argued that this trend actually masked an increasing centralisation of power within his university. This accords with Currie and Vidovich’s suggestion that the form of devolution commonly employed in universities could be termed ‘managerial devolution’ as it reduces significant forms of collegial decision-making, leaving only trivial decisions to be made by academics (Currie & Vidovich, 1998b: 129). Another academic noted that the budget had become central to determining what activities departments undertake, saying, ‘that is the most important thing, everything has to be arranged so that the budget balances’ (Reader, Botany).

Others noted that in the climate of perpetual funding shortfalls, devolved budgeting ensured that departments would compete for additional funding. This funding might be secured through meeting operational performance targets or through compliance with other strategic initiatives of the university. One likened this use of strategic funds to bribery, saying that senior management with budgetary discretion could, effectively, ‘buy the obedience of people by dangling in front of them the dollar and saying, “well, I have the dollar, you need something, you be obedient!”’ (Senior Lecturer, Biomedical Science). Another noted that operational performance targets could include having all staff
undertake student evaluation of teaching, referring to such funding as ‘a carrot shaped stick, or a stick shaped carrot’ (Associate Professor, Architecture).

**Entrepreneurial Activities**

The preoccupation with the ever-diminishing ‘bottom line’ has resulted in the adoption of two broad strategies. Cost centre departments and schools seek to either increase their income and/or to reduce their costs. In relation to the former option, external sources of funding have become increasingly vital to universities. In 1982, the Commonwealth government provided 90 percent of universities’ total funding, while in 2002 the figure had fallen to just 50 percent (DEST, 2002: 39). As Bostock notes, the corporatised university is expected to secure a greater proportion of its own funding through various market-like activities (Bostock, 1999: 3). Entrepreneurial or commercial activities intended to secure additional funding generally fall into three categories – consulting work, sponsored research, and fee-paying students (Prosser, 1993: 3).

Opportunity to generate the first two sources of income varies between disciplinary fields, with areas such as Business and Technology better placed, for example, than the Humanities and the Social Sciences. Slaughter and Leslie have demonstrated the scale of funds raised through entrepreneurialism or ‘academic capitalism’. They note that in the two Australian universities they studied, in the departments of Applied Science, Agriculture, and Engineering, such funds amounted to as much as 50 percent of their total revenue (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997: 117). In terms of teaching activities, overseas full fee-paying students and offshore teaching programmes have assumed increasing importance in recent years. Kayrooz et al’s report on social scientists’ views and experiences of commercialisation in universities indicated that many respondents were concerned that the emphasis on fee-paying courses was undermining academic standards. The suggestion from some was that ‘students’ ability to pay was more important than their ability to pass’ (Kayrooz et al, 2001: 38). Their respondents also reported increased emphasis on fee-paying vocational courses, which they perceived
universities to value over those which were speculative or critical in nature (Kayrooz et al, 2001: 37). Adams suggests that academic staff involved with offshore teaching activities gave a ‘pessimistic picture of the quality of teaching, but felt pressured to participate’ (Adams, 2002: 117). She reports concerns relating to workloads and resources, as well as concerns over the quality and appropriateness of these activities.

A number of academics in the present study noted increased pressure to secure external funding, through research grants, consultancies and courses that attracted full fee-paying students. Concerns were voiced most often in the area of full fee-paying students. One academic insisted, ‘that’s really the key objective in the university, to increase their full fee-paying students. At the same time we’re expected to spend less time actually talking to students’ (Reader, Botany). He argued that this was a real problem, especially with overseas students who, he said, ‘usually require more effort than local students’. In relation to the university’s approach to overseas students he said:

There’s a sort of apocryphal story, which came to me by way of a Head of School who was on a promotional visit in Singapore this year. He was with the Dean of another faculty, and they were looking to sign up full fee-paying students. And this Head of School sort of said to the Dean that he was a bit concerned about some of the people that they were talking to, because he didn’t know that they had the language skills to cope with the programme here. And the Dean said, ‘Don’t worry, if they’ve got a pulse and a cheque book, sign them up’.

Another academic noted that the subject of what would make a new course ‘desirable’ was discussed at a staff meeting. He said, ‘one of the things that would make a new course desirable was, could you find non-grant students, non-HECS students. Now, that’s, in my opinion, not what education is about’ (Lecturer, Criminology). A Lecturer in Industrial Relations referred to the offshore programmes at her previous university as, ‘offshore entrepreneurial crap’, arguing, ‘that university would badge and franchise anything, anywhere in the world’. She noted that she was ‘very distressed about the way we’re treating international students as cash cows’, and cited her concerns as one of the reasons she had resigned from that post. She had declined to be involved in the provision of this offshore teaching herself, but had discovered that some of her material had been given, without her permission, to an offshore sub-contractor.
The importance of securing fee-paying students was also linked to the issue of falling academic standards. Even academics who did not teach full fee-paying students reported that they were experiencing pressure ‘not to fail too many students, because failing students means losing money’ (Lecturer, Sociology). This academic noted that, at his previous university, ‘there were times when we would fail students by substantial amounts to find that their marks had been bumped up and they had been given conceded passes by faceless committees higher up’. He argued that, ‘there is a danger that those who are higher up in management will buy into the notion that there are managerial solutions to what are effectively massive funding problems’. As a consequence, he said, ‘the whole system is being driven by values that I think are external to its original project’. Academics thus emphasised the potential problems associated with a heavy emphasis on the generation of income through full fee-paying students. They argued that notions of academic excellence were often sacrificed to the profit imperative, citing soft-marking and poor quality programmes as examples.

Others spoke of pressure to attract funding through research grants and other external research funding. Representing a common position, one academic said, ‘I’m doing a lot of research, but if it’s not bringing in money, you’re considered to be non-productive as far as research is concerned ... The university considers that form of research and money-grabbing as more important than teaching’ (Senior Lecturer, Sociology). Another complained that academics are expected to apply for research grants even when they do not need them for some types of research (Associate Lecturer, French). The motives for this type of research ‘support’ were frequently questioned, and traditional academic attitudes towards the purpose of research were contrasted with managerial approaches. One academic noted:

I think with most Heads of School, they know where the money comes from, they know the flexible part of the budget, so there is a great deal of emphasis on grants. There is a great deal of emphasis upon recognised publications, and I think that’s being driven by the desire to increase revenue rather than to increase knowledge (Lecturer, Sociology).
The emphasis on research funding meant that many academics in this study saw teaching as a relatively marginalized activity. They argued that research was often conducted at the expense of teaching, and that research ‘stars’ occupied a privileged position within the university. However, the realities of the funding shortfall meant that this situation was sometimes accepted, if not applauded. One academic noted, ‘I still think that up and down the corridor there are still a few people who spend far too much time on their own independent research and try and do as little teaching as possible. But they would argue - and they’ve got a case - that they’re bringing in money. It’s probably important’ (Senior Lecturer, Sociology). Another said ‘I certainly know of academics who are total bastards and I try to keep them away from the students, but they are fantastic researchers and the university isn’t going to touch them because they’re bringing in external funds, so that’s the reality’ (Senior Lecturer, Physics).

Two early-career academics in this study mentioned that they had been instrumental in obtaining large sums of money for their university, one through a large donation, and the other through securing over $2 million in research funding over a period of three years. Neither was naïve regarding the ways in which this had enhanced their position within their university. The former noted that it had helped to secure a tenured position for her when her contract position drew to an end, saying, ‘the VC knew about that, so I think it definitely worked in my favour’ (Senior Lecturer, History). The other academic was acutely aware of funding shortfalls and traced most of his negative experiences in academe to a lack of money. He said, ‘it’s all to do with money. Frankly, if we had enough money I wouldn’t care if we were collegiate or managerial, because when there’s plenty of money there’s no stress on the system. It’s only when there’s stress on the system that you start seeing the bad parts’ (Senior Lecturer, Physics). In such an environment he was acutely aware of the importance of his contribution to his department, and the consequences this had for his career, saying, ‘as for autonomy, I’ve been lucky in that that I’ve managed to bring in more than $2 million worth of research funds in the three years since I’ve got here.’ Noting that this had afforded him a degree of protection from interference, he said, ‘if they ever push, I’ll walk’. Clearly
entrepreneurial capacity has significant implications for power and status within the managerial university.

Cost-Cutting

The other half of the perennial struggle to balance the school or departmental budget involves reducing expenditure and introducing economies wherever possible. Fulton, in his study of sixteen UK higher education institutions, reports that 'the efficiency drive' has 'permeated higher education very significantly. Financial considerations, and doing more with less, were, if not a constant preoccupation, the backdrop and rationale for much of daily practice' (Fulton, 2003: 172). In Australia, moves towards greater efficiencies and cost-cutting have also been a prominent feature of the higher education landscape. As salaries accounted for 58 percent of universities' total costs in 2001 (Nelson, 2003: 46), they are an obvious target for cost-cutting activities.

In an effort to reduce this component of expenditure, university management have adopted a range of strategies. They include natural attrition through not replacing retiring academics, redundancies – both voluntary and involuntary – and the increased use of short-term contract and casual staff. The proportion of casual academic staff employed in university teaching and assessment doubled between 1992 and 2002, and in 2002 this group made up about a quarter of the academic workforce (Anderson et al, 2002: 30). The use of casual and short-term contract staff is seen to offer the advantage of 'flexibility' as well as significant salary savings. Bradley's study indicates that, a decade ago, university administrators were already well aware that substantial savings could be achieved in this manner (Bradley, 1995). Critics of this trend suggest that increased reliance on casual staff may lead to a decline in teaching quality, as casual teaching staff are often relatively inexperienced, are not properly integrated into academic departments, and are often not available to provide student consultation (see especially Anderson et al, 2002: 30-35). Others have pointed to the exploitation embedded in the practice of casual academic employment (Bradley, 1995). Other teaching-related attempts to reduce
expenditure involve reducing hours of face-to-face contact with students, either by shortening tutorial times or by eliminating tutorials altogether. Increasing tutorial sizes is another strategy, which results in increased workloads for academics through a heavier marking load. Exhortations to use online delivery are also often aimed at cost-reduction, despite evidence that good online education is often not a cheaper option (Ryan, 1998; Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee, 2001: 172).

Cost-cutting has also been achieved by reducing support staff, including administrative and secretarial staff. Academics’ conference support has also been reduced, and, in a number of universities, study leave is allocated through competitive mechanisms. Significantly, only two academics in this study had not personally experienced the effects of cost-cutting in their universities. Both were aware that their universities were well-placed economically, compared to others. One noted, ‘it’s a rich university’, acknowledging her relatively light teaching load, ample support for conference funding, and a generous system of faculty grants (Lecturer, Industrial Relations). The other noted that while he was aware that ‘budgets are tight’ he had never been denied anything on the basis of insufficient funding (Lecturer, Sociology). However, this was a rare experience. All others were acutely aware of funding shortfalls and the measures taken to accommodate them. Typical of this position, one referred to ‘constantly escalating expectations and the continually retracting resources’, saying, ‘we’re required to be world class, and we’re required to do it on half the money that was available ten years ago’ (Reader, Botany). Another said, ‘the Arts faculty is permanently in debt, we’re sort of in crisis half the time’ (Lecturer, History).

All academics saw the drive towards cost reduction as resulting in reduced quality. They argued that academic standards were sacrificed to the financial bottom line, and that they could only maintain quality in such an environment by assuming unsustainably heavy workloads. The majority of concerns associated with cost-cutting related to teaching, and what academics regarded as the associated reduction in teaching quality. One academic referred to the loss of good academic contract staff, who were
being released rather than renewed because of funding shortfalls. He argued, ‘these people will attract good graduates or undergraduates and we’re throwing them out the door’ (Lecturer, Tourism). Others cited increased tutorial sizes and reduced contact hours as responses to funding shortfalls. All felt that this had deleterious effects, both in terms of teaching and learning, and pastoral care. One argued, ‘students have much less contact with an academic staff member ... First-year students I think are terribly at risk’ (Senior Lecturer, Computing). Another noted that, as a result of reduced contact hours, ‘students are expected to do more for themselves, which they don’t of course ... We fail more than we probably should ... I know that some of these students would have done better with more resources’ (Associate Professor, Architecture). One academic noted that members of his department had complained about such reductions, but had been told that the department would ‘go broke’ if they continued to offer the same level of tutorial support (Reader, Botany). Others noted that units that could not demonstrate their ability to pay their own way were automatically discontinued, regardless of their disciplinary importance.

Two academics at a university with a high distance-education profile complained that there were insufficient resources to enable them to rewrite their distance education packages as frequently as they felt was required. One insisted, ‘what’s the point of offering a subject if it’s out of date in terms of the research? That’s just ridiculous!’ (Lecturer, Criminology). The other noted that residential schools had been discontinued at his university as a cost-cutting measure (Lecturer, Public Health). A number of academics engaged in face-to-face teaching noted increased pressure to put units online as a response to funding shortages. One argued, ‘I think it’s part of the economic rationalist drive that we can get more out of our academics if they don’t have to go and stand in front of classes all the time, or sit with classes in a tutorial and debate things and so on’ (Lecturer, Criminology). Another critiqued the logic involved in this ‘e’ imperative, saying, ‘the suggestion is we should put all of our classes on the internet, stop wasting time and resources having lectures, because that’s inefficient. Well, it may be, but if we’re doing that, why have this institution? Why not send everybody to Harvard to do an external degree from the best university that they can find?’ (Reader, Botany).
However, two academics argued that while they had experienced major restructuring of teaching in their departments as a response to budgetary constraints, the result had been a strengthened teaching programme. A Senior Lecturer in Engineering said:

Because we’ve lost a lot of technicians to run these things we’ve turned things around and cut things to a point where the students can actually work hands-on on things, unsupervised. And it means that the learning experience is actually much better because they can get involved in what we call ‘discovery learning’, where they can play with things and change the parameters and bits and pieces, and learn a lot by it. So actually the loss of funding has spurred us to come up with a better solution.

He did note, however, that this enhancement of student learning had come at a cost, as it had taken staff a great deal of time to redesign the course in such a way that students were not disadvantaged. A Historian in a department that had been drastically reduced in size also felt that the course they offered was more coherent and integrated as a result of having to rethink subject offerings (Senior Lecturer, History).

Some noted the loss of sabbatical funding and conference funding, and insufficient funding to hire tutors. For others the problems related to shortages of equipment. A Senior Lecturer in Geography referred to ‘making do with old equipment that’s running down, fax machines that don’t work or photocopy machines that don’t work, or having computer facilities that are worse than the students had at their schools and things. They’re the kind of things that bring home how poorly resourced universities are’. Two others referred to inadequate teaching-related equipment in their respective areas of Computing and Physics. In addition, cuts had been experienced in the areas of secretarial support. A number suggested that their secretarial or administrative support had been halved over a short period of time, and that duties formerly undertaken by such staff had been assumed by academics.

Many of the cost-cutting measures identified above had workload implications. Almost all of the academics in this study described their workloads as oppressive. One academic referred to his workload as ‘insane’, and described the distribution of his time
as, ‘80 percent research, 80 percent teaching and 40 percent service’ (Senior Lecturer, Physics). Others noted the increase in productivity expectations over their own career span. One noted that, 25 years earlier, ‘we were expected to deal with about 50 or 60 students a semester. Now it’s 100, pushing 110’ (Lecturer, Criminology). Another academic argued that management had cajoled academic staff into assuming heavier teaching loads as a response to reduced funding levels, asking them to reduce tutorial times to accommodate a ‘temporary funding crisis’ (Lecturer, Industrial Relations). The consequences of increasing workloads were serious. One academic noted that four out of ten staff members were on stress-related sick leave, saying, ‘yeah, families suffer, health is suffering’ (Senior Lecturer, Geography). Increased time spent on teaching and administrative responsibilities also meant less time for research. One interviewee noted,

The last few weekends I haven’t had a day off, because the research – which is meant to be thirty percent of my time, ha, ha! – has to be done on the weekends, because I don’t have time to do it. And if I don’t do it, then I’m not doing my job properly. So my job, therefore, has to be a seven day-a-week job (Associate Lecturer, French).

Young and very new to the job, this academic was able to remain relatively cheerful. Others had given up. One academic, who was about to retire, had, in the previous semester, had a face-to-face workload of 25 hours a week. He said, ‘one of the reasons that I decided to leave was that I was just exhausted … at the end of last year I was a bit of a mess. I couldn’t really prepare anything, I just had to pull stuff out of the cupboard and present it’ (Reader, Botany). As a Senior Lecturer in Physics put it, ‘the popping sound recently has been academics burning out, and it’s not sustainable’.

‘Administrivia’

Academics are increasingly called upon to perform ‘non-core’ work – tasks related to accountability and quality assurance mechanisms, marketing of courses, and pursuing research funding – in addition to their traditional work of teaching and research (McInnis, 1998a). McInnis notes that the workload that is generated by these tasks is significant, but that the addition of these tasks also causes a fragmentation of work time, resulting in
frustration, and undermining the satisfaction academics derive from their work. Some call this work ‘administrivia’, distinguishing it from the traditional academic task of administering the university through a committee system. Vidovich and Currie (1998: 206) note the response of academics increasingly engaged in accountability ‘form-filling’, which they see as a distraction from the ‘main game’ of teaching and research. Elsewhere, Currie (1996: 106) notes that the imposition of these tasks means that academics ‘experience themselves as losing that internal rhythm to their lives which allows them to be creative and reflective about ideas’. The loss of administrative support through cost-cutting measures has meant that academics have found their workloads increased by what is essentially clerical work. Academics now routinely word-process their own unit outlines, do their own photocopying, and undertake other clerical tasks, in addition to their academic duties.

Some academics in this study suggested that there had been an increase in administrative positions at their university, while others referred to a reduction in this area, especially in those positions involving secretarial duties. However, where there had been an increase in administration, these positions had a directive rather than a supportive function. In short, academics felt there were more administrative staff telling them how to do their job, and fewer helping them do it. Academics said that they ‘do all of the stuff that used to be done by departmental administrators and secretaries’ (Senior Lecturer, Physics). They insisted, ‘all that administrative role has actually been given to the academics. We do everything, we do it all’ (Lecturer, Tourism). Others noted changes associated with processes such as the awarding of grades, many of which were increasingly time-consuming. Referring to the procedures for awarding a ‘grade pending’ grade, one academic noted:

The paperwork shifted from being relatively straightforward to something that was more onerous – an A4 form was developed that had a huge amount of redundant information. Student number, student name, course name, course number, each subject has a control number. If it is delivered internally, by distance, off-shore, it has a different control number, different session, whatever. We had an A4 sheet of information and some of it wasn’t readily available to the academic (Lecturer, Public Health).
Many academics acknowledged that these administrative requirements caused irritation. However, they were more irritated by the amount of time that was diverted away from research by the demands of administrivia. One academic insisted:

What I feel is that we now spend much more time on administration and we've got much less time for research than I have ever had before in my life. And the administration that we do is not stuff that is related to us and our performance ... It's clerical work. It's something that I feel was probably done by administrative staff years ago. You lose at least a day a week on that, at least, and probably more (Associate Lecturer, Cultural Studies).

This chapter has explored the ideologies, processes, and practices associated with managerialism in the contemporary Australian university. It has drawn on the voices of the academics in this study as they detail their experiences, assessments, and critiques of aspects of managerial change, and the mechanisms that implement it. In their accounts we see again the production of discursive resistance, underpinned by the values embedded in traditional academic discourses. In the following chapter, I explore the ways in which this discursive resistance articulates with other forms of resistance, informing, shaping and sustaining the resistant practices of academics in the managerial university.
Chapter Seven

MAPPING ACADEMIC RESISTANCE TO MANAGERIALISM

'We need a fuller and richer cartography of the spaces between total compliance and resistance, one which, in preventing these from functioning as polar opposites, will allow, in Geertz's terms, a 'thicker' description of the complex flows of culture which results from its inscription in differentiated and uneven relations of power. This entails, as a second condition, accepting that resistance need not all be of the same kind but, depending on the particular circumstances that generate them and the particular disposition of the cultural flows in which they are inscribed, may assume different forms with quite different political implications' (Bennett, 1998: 169).

Introduction

This chapter extends the account and analysis of academic resistance to managerialism that emerged in this study. In exploring and mapping the range of responses to managerialism it attempts to develop the ‘fuller and richer cartography of the spaces between total compliance and resistance’ (Bennett, 1998: 169) and the more ‘nuanced vocabulary’ (Butsch, 2001: 76) that critics argue is required to adequately differentiate between different forms and levels of resistance. Building on the ideas and data presented in earlier chapters, it also seeks to provide the ‘adequate sociological and historical description’ of everyday forms of resistance, within ‘specific social milieux’ (Bennett, 1998: 174). That is, it does not purport to be a general description or analysis of resistance per se, but reflects the specific historical, social, cultural, organizational, economic and ideological circumstances which together constitute the Australian university in the early years of the new millennium, and situates academic resistance to managerialism within that particular conjunction of forces.

Previous studies suggest that academic responses to managerial change are varied, complex, and often contradictory. Miller (1991: 109), for example, has suggested that
they include ‘co-operation and defiance as well as a routine or ritualised performance of tasks’. He also notes that academics may focus on their academic work in ways that insulate them from hostile work environments, or may choose to leave academic employment entirely. All of these responses were identified in this study. They were supplemented by others that reflected the importance of the resources provided by academics’ take-up of the discursive positions offered within shared understandings of traditional academic culture. The nature of the resistance that emerged in the research interviews underscores a point made earlier in this thesis – that the surfacing of these resistant discourses and acts relies upon ‘close up’ methods of research. Such resistance is often subtle or subterranean in nature. It cannot be properly understood without reference to the meanings and interpretations assigned to resistant acts by those engaged in them. The complexity of such responses defies easy categorisation, but this chapter attempts to map the resistance that emerged in this study through the development of a number of broad categories. These categories include the development of discursive resistance – which ultimately underpins all of the resistant acts described here – through to public protest and ‘everyday’ acts of resistance.

**Discursive Resistance and the Development of the ‘Hidden Transcript’**

Recent work emphasises the importance of the production of discursive resistance (Thomas & Davies, 2002; Thomas & Davis, forthcoming; Thomas et al, 2004). Thomas & Davies (forthcoming: 1, 2) argue that much existing work is deficient because it rests on a conceptualisation of resistance as a ‘set of actions and behaviours’, rather than a broader formulation of resistance ‘at the level of identities and subjectivities’. They argue for an understanding of the generative aspect of resistance, and how individuals come to challenge the ways in which their subjectivities are constituted within managerialist discourses. Within such a formulation:

Resistance is understood as a constant process of adaptation, subversion and reinscription of dominant discourses. This takes place as individuals confront and reflect on their own identity performance, recognizing contradictions and tensions and in doing so pervert and subtly shift
meanings and understandings. This is an on-going process arising from the
desire to gain the security and comfort that resides in knowing ourselves,
dealing with the tensions and discord that arises from these contradictions
(Thomas & Davies, forthcoming: 8).

They suggest that the professionals they interviewed drew upon ‘alternative subject
positions to assert, deny and rewrite the subject positions’ offered by and within the
dominant New Public Management discourse (Thomas & Davies, forthcoming: 31).
These alternate subject positions facilitate the development and articulation of a critique
of managerialism, which may ultimately allow for the contestation of managerial power
through micro-forms of resistance (Thomas & Davies, forthcoming: 32-3).

The previous two chapters have – *inter alia* – detailed the discursive resistance to
managerialism that emerged in this study. The comments of the academics, presented
there, vividly illustrate the extent and scope of this discursive resistance, and the depth of
feeling associated with it. In their description, assessment, critique, and refutation of
managerial discourses – and their associated practices – we witness the refusal of
academics to take up subject positions within this discourse. In developing this discursive
resistance, the alternate subject positions taken up by academics in this study were
primarily related to the discourse of traditional academic culture, and the development
and articulation of analysis and critique associated with these understandings. The
importance of autonomy within traditional academic discourses was invoked much less
often. That is, objection to the erosion of autonomy was not generally represented as the
basis of opposition to managerialist practices. Instead, most resistance in this study was
underpinned by the development of a robust critique, based on notions of professional
academic judgement. Academics’ capacity – and even perceived responsibility – to
assess, analyse, and criticize most often formed the basis of resistance to managerialist
practices, which were seen as inefficient, ineffective, and as compromising academic
standards of quality and excellence.

This was particularly apparent in the critique of quality assurance mechanisms
mounted by academics in this study, discussed in the previous chapter. In developing this
critique, academics drew on notions of quality as understood within traditional academic
discourses of excellence in scholarly endeavour. These were contrasted with meanings embedded in Total Quality Management discourses, where quality is understood as compliance with minimum standards. In this process, academics drew directly on the subject positions offered within the traditional scholarly discourse, in order to resist the imperialising discourses of managerialism and quality assurance. For them, assuring quality involved resisting Quality Assurance mechanisms. They regarded Quality Assurance as undermining academic notions of quality as excellence, and threatening to replace them with notions of Quality, which were seen as instrumental, minimalist and mediocre. For some academics, this resistance involved replacing or supplementing standard student evaluation processes with practices perceived as more attuned to the genuine assurance and improvement of quality teaching. Thus, discursively constructed resistance underpinned the enactment of micro-resistance.

The discursive production of resistance and the ways in which it articulates with more ostensible forms of resistance invokes Scott’s notion of the ‘hidden transcript’ – the discourse of a subordinated group that ‘represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant’ (Scott, 1990: xii), discussed in Chapter One. Scott tells us that this hidden transcript must be understood as enacted in the ‘low-profile stratagems’, the ‘infrapolitics’ of subordinated groups. The hidden transcript and the enactment of resistance should be understood as ‘mutually sustaining practices’ (Scott, 1990: 183-191). In her inaugural lecture at Sheffield Hallam University, Professor Sue Clegg directly applied this Scottian concept to the responses of academics to managerialism, referring to the ‘everyday talk’ of academics in universities as a hidden – and sometimes not so hidden – transcript (Clegg, 2001: 13). This hidden transcript was rehearsed in the research interviews undertaken for this study, as academics articulated their critique of managerial power and the practices and mechanisms through which this power circulated. These interviews provided an ‘off-stage social site’ (Scott, 1990: 119), in which the hidden transcript was disseminated – sometimes in hushed tones – to one understood as a fellow subordinate. However, as Scott tells us, the hidden transcript does not always remain hidden.
'Speaking Truth to Power’ - The Hidden Transcript goes Public

Throughout his text, Scott refers to Mrs Poyser’s denunciation of Squire Donnithorne in George Elliot’s novel Adam Bede. Mrs Poyser, the wife of a tenant farmer, finally gives utterance to the speeches she has often mentally rehearsed, giving the landlord ‘a piece of her mind’. This was a dangerous act, as it endangers her family’s continuing residence at the farm. However, it gives such relief to Mrs Poyser’s ‘corked up’ feelings of resentment and misuse that she declares ‘I’ve had my say out, and I shall be easier for’t all my life’ (Eliot in Scott, 1990: 9). In his final chapter, Scott discusses at length the process by which the hidden transcript – which normally finds an audience only in the safety of a trusted group of fellow subordinates – is publicly articulated in the presence of the powerful, and thereby ‘crosses the threshold to open resistance’ (Scott, 1990: 207). He notes that such public acts of insubordination can provide the resister with a sense of release, pride and recovered dignity, but that they can also be experienced as a loss of control, as an essentially involuntary outburst of temper or anger (Scott, 1990: 218). Scott suggests that such ‘saturnalias of power’ result from either an increase in the indignities to which subordinated groups are exposed, or from a weakening of the power of dominant groups (Scott, 1990: 219).

The public utterance of the private transcript is important in so far as it is experienced as representative of the feelings of the subordinated group – constituting a shared transcript of shared subjugation. It is experienced by both the speaker, and those who share the speaker’s experiences, as ‘a moment in which truth is finally spoken in the place of equivocation and lies’. When so experienced, Scott suggests that it can be the point at which it is possible for the collective hidden transcript to break into more overt forms of resistance and protest. He suggests that the moment when ‘the hidden transcript crosses the threshold to open resistance is always a politically charged occasion’ (Scott, 1990: 208).
Protesting Managerialism

For the academics in this study, the hidden transcript ‘went public’ on a number of politically charged occasions. Significantly, the result was less gratifying for them than it was for Mrs Poyser, for reasons explored below. A number of academics reported having openly protested aspects of managerialism, in a variety of ways. The most obviously ‘political’ – to use a narrow rendering of that term – was one academic’s submission to the ‘Crossroads’ enquiry into higher education, established by the Minister for Education, Dr Brendan Nelson. In it he protests the ‘incessant and ever-increasing demands for greater productivity and better quality of output with continually contracting resources’, and notes that he was about to retire ‘exhausted and disillusioned’ after thirty years as a university lecturer. His submission presents a reasoned, logical, well-structured, empirically supported argument against the under-funding of universities and the over-emphasis on efficiency at the expense of sound outcomes. This form of resistance reflects valued aspects of the academic identity, specifically the capacity to engage in analysis, critique, and argument, as part of the scholarly endeavour. The level of public engagement involved in this resistant act also illustrates the role of academic as public intellectual or ‘critic and conscience’ of society. A number of polemical books deploving the advent of managerialism in Australian universities (Crowley, 2000; Coady, 2000; Biggs & Davis, 2002; Cooper, Hinkson & Sharp, 2002; James, 2000) also reflect this mode of protest. Such forms of resistance illustrate academics’ capacity to transcend the normal boundaries of worker resistance, as they utilise their skills in preparing and disseminating reasoned and empirically supported arguments in order to protest managerialism’s effects.

Other protests were less overtly political, and slightly less public, taking place within the confines of academics’ own institutions. Two academics protested to senior university administrators, in semi-public settings, about the introduction of a ‘virtual university’ model within their university. In one instance an academic challenged his Pro Vice-Chancellor, during a forum, over the economic rationalist and entrepreneurial values underpinning some proposed courses. He reported that his protest ‘didn’t go down
too well’, and suggested that other academics attending the forum were embarrassed by his actions (Lecturer, History). Another academic at the same university reported speaking to the Vice-Chancellor at a meeting, and expressing his concerns about the focus on online delivery of teaching. He argued that this approach risked losing ‘the human side’ to education. This academic saw his protest as ultimately fruitless, saying, ‘he didn’t get angry with me, I wouldn’t mind if he got angry with me and shouted at me and told me why it was important that we did this, but he just looked glazed, as if to say, “well who are you anyway?” ... You feel erased’ (Lecturer, French). Both of these academics drew on the ‘otherworldliness’ of the academic culture, discussed in Chapter Five, in mounting these protests, contrasting ‘business’ models of the university with those understandings embedded in traditional academic culture. Both felt that they had been marginalized as a consequence.

A Lecturer in Public Health noted that when his university cancelled a residential school scheme for distance education students, staff and students had ‘lobbied long and hard’ in protest. Despite their efforts, he said, ‘it fell on deaf ears. Didn’t make any difference’. Another example of this form of semi-public protest occurred when another university began moves to de-accession library books that had not been borrowed in recent years. The Historian who related this story was horrified by the potential loss of valuable resources, and returned early from his study leave in order to resist what he referred to as ‘managerialism by the book’. Initially, he approached the issue strategically, highlighting the time and expense involved in the proposed system of de-accessioning, but found himself ‘really squashed’ by his Head of Division. He then raised the issue in a divisional meeting. This meant raising a ‘politically charged matter’ in what had become a ‘purely procedural forum’. This academic suggested that the majority of his colleagues were embarrassed by his violation of protocol in this regard. Using an interesting metaphor, he noted that Antarctic penguins flock together for warmth, and that the ones that get cold on the outside of the pack are rotated into the middle to warm up again. He said that after the meeting he felt very much like a frozen penguin that had been pushed to the edge of the group (Associate Professor, History).
Almost all of those academics in this study who had made semi-public protests reported feeling this ‘frozen penguin’ effect, to some extent. They felt dismissed, erased, and reminded of their disempowerment. They felt that their protests were fruitless and pointless, and somewhat embarrassing, to their colleagues, and to themselves. These protests were concerned with broad, often whole-of-university issues, where an organized, collective protest was likely to be more effective than those of isolated individuals. However, such an organized response was generally not forthcoming, and, as noted above, those academics who did protest reported feeling rejected by their colleagues. This underscores the individual nature of academic work as the norm within academic culture, and the antagonism and ‘hyperindividuality’ that Damrosch (1995: 7) and others have identified within the academy.

Indeed, the vast majority of resistance identified in this study was individual in nature, reflecting academics’ attachment to independent modes of work. This form of resistance can be problematic. As Clegg (1994: 291) notes, ‘isolation often leads to resistance that is personalistic and easily subject to organizational treatment as individually deviant’. Taylor notes that failure to secure a collective response can make dissent appear, ‘very much like the protest of isolated individuals, who, as a result, tended to be regarded as “difficult”’ (Taylor, 1999a: 45). Three late-career academics suggested that they were inclined to pursue resistance to the managerial agenda through union activities – a form of resistance beyond the scope of this thesis. Another two explicitly rejected the model of collective, organized, industrial resistance as being inconsistent with their ideas of what it meant to be a professional and an academic.

The ‘frozen penguin’ effect also illustrates a point that Davies and Bendix Petersen make about resisting neo-liberalism in universities. They suggest that those who articulate such critiques are positioned as fools, and as ‘archaic curiosities’, and that academics feel a sense of foolishness and helplessness in mounting them. They refer to ‘constant proofs that our and others’ critiques of neo-liberalism are inconsequential’, and note that decision-making processes within universities are unaffected by such critiques (Davies & Bendix Petersen, forthcoming: 4-5). The proponents of managerial discourses
dismiss such protests as foolish and irrelevant in ways that effectively belittle the protestor. In addition, public protests have the potential for victimisation and retaliation: some of those who have voiced condemnation of the managerialist agenda have been disciplined by their universities (see Patience, 1999; Ellingsen, 1999).

Others reported another level of protest, which was less public, and more focussed. This consisted of one-to-one direct protests about specific aspects of managerialism, mounted in response to particular incidents. An academic who sat on a teaching and learning committee at his university, reported that he sometimes responds to managerial initiatives, by ‘giving them more feedback than the people upstairs wanted’. This additional feedback included questioning the resource implications of particular initiatives, including costing the time that committees spend considering suggestions from ‘on high’. He argued ‘when people on high do offensive things they need to be offended. Not personally, but to be aware that offence has been taken here’ (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). A similar form of protest was mounted by an Associate Lecturer in French who responded to a twenty-page, 360-degree survey at his university by writing a letter explaining why he would not fill it out. He argued that the survey was too long to be effective, that many of the questions it posed were foolish and irrelevant, and that he found it ‘slightly insulting’ that administration would ‘think that I have time to sit down and fill this thing out.’ Again, in these forms of protest we see the importance of analysis and critique to the academic subjectivity, and a determination to voice the criticisms to which this gives rise. Another academic had asked that she not be expected to participate in a workload agreement interview. This reflected her response to the introduction of workload agreements, which she regarded as impugning her professional integrity and illustrating the university’s lack of trust in its academic staff. In all these instances the intention of the protest was to demonstrate that a managerial practice had caused offence, and to highlight the weaknesses in such practices.

In two similar cases academics protested against surveillance which they saw as casting doubt upon their professionalism, and challenging their right to determine their place and time of work. In these protests we see academic resistance to the ‘manager's
right to manage', as well as a determined defence of academic autonomy. In one instance, an Associate Professor in Management received an email from a Deputy Vice-Chancellor, in which she expressed concern that some academics were not in their offices during working hours. This academic sent an email back saying that if he was in his office he was not doing his job, adding that he had rung the Vice-Chancellor’s office twice, and had not found her in her office either. Another academic received a phone call at home on a day when she was packing to go overseas. The administrator who called her asked if she was working, and suggested that she complete a leave form for that day if she was not. The academic took revenge at a later date, phoning the administrator at home at 2am. She related that she opened the phone call by saying:

‘I just thought I’d let you know that I’m marking papers because I have to get the results in on Tuesday, and I just happened to wonder what you were doing right now. Are you awake doing work, are you?’ And then he said to me, ‘What’s your point?’ and I said, ‘Well, you rang me up one day when I was at home, don’t you recall? And since this is what I am doing and I would actually not get these papers marked unless I worked like this, I just thought I’d ring up and find out whether you are doing something similar’ (Senior Lecturer, Computing).

Others reported sending abusive emails to those who were ‘pestering’ them with requests they considered inappropriate. The extreme nature of such protests illustrates the extent to which such surveillance outrages the attachment to autonomy that is so central to the academic identity. They also indicate the poisoned state of relations between some academics and some administrators. However, those who mounted such protests did so primarily to vent their feelings, and did not believe that such protests would achieve anything concrete or positive.

Others noted that they voiced their protests about managerialism in universities to their students. In this regard they focused on the under-funding of universities, and on the efficiency imperative to ‘do more with less’. A number of academics noted that they employed this form of protest, seeking to engage with students in responding to this aspect of managerialism. They talked to students in lectures, tutorials, and other forums, about reduced funding, reduced resources, reduced contact hours, and increased tutorial sizes. One academic reflected on this form of resistance, saying:
I guess that’s an act of subversion, but it’s not an act of subversion against my managers here, it’s an act of subversion against the government. And I wouldn’t be brave enough to do that if I didn’t have tenure, I suspect ... You know I might have the daughter of a Minister, for all I know, in my classes (Senior Lecturer, Geography).

Other academics used the classroom setting as an arena for protest about other aspects of managerialism. One suggested that, in his discussions with students, he challenged the narrowly vocational view of education prominent in the managerial model of the university (Associate Lecturer, French). Two others used this forum to combat the ‘student-as-customer’ model. One noted, ‘I will address that and explain why it is helpful to regard themselves as students, and me as a lecturer who is available to them, rather than a seller of what they’re buying’ (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). This form of protest underlines the ways in which academics employ methods drawing on traditional academic practices and skills, to resist the managerial discourse and agenda. In this instance the pedagogical aspect of the academic’s role is enlarged to encompass acts of resistance.

Refusal

Refusal constitutes a less public, and, sometimes, a less confrontational form of academic resistance to managerialism, one that a number of academics in this study found to be effective and even gratifying. It should be noted that refusal may take a range of forms, from overt defiance to more pragmatic representations of what is effectively the same response. What may be represented by academics as ‘I forgot’, may in effect be understood, by them, as ‘I won’t’. This section considers the more explicit forms of refusal, while the more concealed or disguised forms are discussed below. This form of resistance is elicited by particular managerialist requirements, and illustrates the micro-forms of resistance to which the exercise of the micro-physics of power gives rise.

A number of academics reported employing a ‘just say no’, or ‘just don’t do it’ response to elements of managerialism that they saw as inappropriate or intrusive. One
academic argued that he had been able to refuse a number of managerial requirements, without any negative consequences. One example he offered was a requirement to provide information to administration in an electronic format, which he saw as time-consuming and unnecessary. He explained:

I send them my file, which is clean, nice word processing and say, ‘You put it on. You wanted it, you put it on. I don’t consider it necessary’. And then [in] the discussion we normally have on this occasion, he normally says, ‘Ah, but if you put in a proforma we give to you, then they’re all the same. But if you do it your way you might have one piece of information on the third line, instead of the fifth line …’ and I say, ‘Yeah, okay, but we’re intellectuals, you know, we can cope with that’ (Senior Lecturer, Biomedical Science).

In this way, refusal was justified by reference to the intellectual nature of the academic endeavour, against which the administrative imperative of consistency was measured and found wanting.

Two other academics told stories of refusing to participate in student evaluations. One reported having ‘thrown out’ of his classroom, students who attempted to distribute student evaluation forms. He said, ‘I mean they were sent there by the administration, and they hadn’t warned me that they were coming’ (Lecturer, History). Apart from objecting to the infringement of his autonomy – insofar as he had not been informed in advance – this academic also mounted a critique of the evaluation instrument, arguing that they ‘weren’t a particularly constructive way of pointing to parts of your teaching that could be improved’ and that he ‘found the exercise fairly uninformative’. The other academic’s refusal was also based on her critique of the student evaluation forms. These forms contained a mistake, which academics had been warned might result in some inconsistencies. She argued, ‘well, I’m not going to be evaluated using an inconsistency! … They’re going to have to get their act together … What I am going to do is become non-compliant and not do it until such times as they come up with a format that works’ (Lecturer, Nursing). In another instance of refusal an academic noted that, as Acting Deputy Head of School, she had been required to complete a complicated report, for which considerable time would be required to extract all the necessary data. Her delaying was met with ‘increasingly irritable emails’ from the administrative staff who required it,
until the academic demanded to know what would happen if she did not complete the form. She was told that the school could lose $1800 in funding. Her response? ‘I said, “forget it”, you know what I mean? This is not worth my time’ (Senior Lecturer, Computing). Again, all of these refusals were underpinned by a critique of the processes being resisted. They were seen as inefficient, time consuming and flawed, and were refused on that basis.

Two other academics found that the professional bodies that accredited their courses could be usefully invoked in a less confrontational form of refusal. For these academics, the university’s suggestions that they decrease the number of contact hours or the content of their courses could be refused with reference to the requirements of these bodies. An Associate Professor in Architecture chuckled, ‘one of the most powerful tools we have … is to say, “oh, I’m sorry, we’ve got an accreditation requirement … [if] we do that we’ll be struck off”, and they run a mile! … Oh it’s great.’ A Senior Lecturer in Engineering suggested that the requirements of his professional body could act as ‘a little bit of a weapon’, but that it was one that could ‘only be taken so far’, because of the funding realities within his university.

The two examples mentioned above move the analysis down from the level of overt refusal to more subterranean and everyday forms of resistance. Within this category we see the ‘weapons of the weak’ (Scott, 1985), the guerrilla ‘tactics’ of the people (de Certeau, 1988), and the ‘off-kilter resistance’ which ‘productively circumvent[s] power, rather than actively opposing it’ (Butz & Ripmeester, 1999: 1). These everyday, often concealed forms of resistance may be ‘safer’ than more overt acts of protest and refusal. As Scott notes, ‘patterns of domination can, in fact, accommodate a reasonably high degree of practical resistance so long as that resistance is not publicly and unambiguously acknowledged’ (Scott, 1990: 57). However, these forms of resistance were also ideally suited to the task of subverting the everyday exercise of managerial power. For many of the academics in this study this more immediate task included retaining an emotional and intellectual space in which to critique managerialist practices, protecting an already
shrinking area of autonomy, and shielding precious research time from the incursions of ‘administrivia’.

Everyday Resistance: Weapons of the Weak and Artifices of the Academic

Prichard and Willmott (1997: 312) have argued that academics are poorly prepared to argue publicly against the ‘imperialising discourse’ of managerialism, and that the tendency, therefore, is to ‘resort to a variety of local tactics to evade and subvert as well as to accommodate and appease’ managerialist demands. This section discusses the ‘local tactics’ that emerged in the research interviews undertaken for this study. These tactics included ‘feigned ignorance’ and ‘footdragging’ (Scott, 1985), ‘forgetting’ (Prichard, 2000: 158), avoidance, and compliance that was partial, reluctant or superficial. This form of resistance is often pejoratively termed ‘passive resistance’, a phrase used by at least three academics in this study. It should be emphasised, however, that such resistance is often creative, effective, and accomplished with humorous reflexivity. It embodies a pragmatic recognition and acknowledgement, on the part of the resistors, of what is possible and achievable, and what constitutes fruitless and ultimately pointless resistance.

As Scott notes, with reference to peasant resistance:

The parameters of resistance are also set by the institutions of repression. To the extent that such institutions do their ‘work’ effectively, they may all but preclude any forms of resistance other than the individual, the informal, and the clandestine. Thus it is perfectly legitimate – even important – to distinguish between levels and forms of resistance: formal-informal, individual-collective, public-anonymous, those which challenge the system of domination – those which aim at marginal gains. But it should, at the same time, be made crystal clear that what we may actually be measuring in this enterprise is the level of repression which structures the options which are available (Scott, 1986: 28).

Importantly, the level of repression achieved by the institution may include the amount of time and energy that academics can justify devoting to more active forms of resistance. In this regard, the increased workloads of academics can act to repress resistance as effectively as more overtly coercive practices.
Avoidance

While some academics protested and refused particular managerial requirements, avoidance was practiced by a far greater number. Indeed, it is likely that this is the most common form of resistance to managerialism practiced within the contemporary Australian university. It is facilitated by elements of the traditional academic culture—including individualistic work practices, a disinclination to actively manage others, a shared distaste for clerical work, and an interpretation of collegiality that rests upon respect for difference. Avoidance as a resistant technique also effectively addresses the problem of increasing workloads. Less energy is expended avoiding particular managerial practices than in protesting them. In addition, the managerial practice that is being avoided is often one that requires time from the academic, and, therefore, avoiding the practice limits this erosion of time.

For many academics in this study, resistance through avoidance meant ignoring particular managerial communications and requests. Two early-career academics used this process to work out what it was possible to ignore and what was actually unavoidable, during their first year of appointment. Using almost identical tactics, they stockpiled all communication from the university that did not appear to be immediately important, and, after a period of time, threw away anything that had not been followed up with a subsequent request. One said that this process meant that he had ‘absolutely calibrated what was important and what I could ignore’ (Senior Lecturer, Physics). The other argued that he had found that:

If I took all of the managerial stuff seriously it created angst, it took a lot of time and it never seemed to lead anywhere. So now rather than confronting things, rather than co-operating with things, I just tend to bracket things. Sometimes they come back and need to be addressed, often it just seems to dissolve into nothing’ (Lecturer, Sociology).

An older academic had taken longer to refine this ‘final demand administration’ approach. He said that he had always responded to reminders from administration in the past, but in the previous year had decided not to. Final demands often did not eventuate, prompting him to comment, ‘I wish that I’d worked that out earlier!’ (Senior Lecturer, Psychology).
Other academics used avoidance rather than refusal when responding to student evaluation processes. Two academics, who referred to this practice, initially said that they had not participated in student evaluations because they had been ‘snowed under with work’, and had forgotten to submit the required forms. However, both went on to qualify this claim, with one reflecting, ‘I suppose it’s because of my own bias’ [against the use of student evaluation processes] (Lecturer, Criminology). The other argued, ‘I just feel really pissed off. It is a form of resistance, that I just feel, you know, what are these numbers doing?’ (Senior Lecturer, Cultural Studies). Another academic noted that his university required academics to include a comment in their unit outlines, detailing what changes had been made to the unit as a result of previous student feedback. He said, ‘I don’t know if anybody does it … I’ve always been interested in seeing who would be the first academic sacked for not putting in a two line note in their outline. In the end, like a lot of requirements, they’re requirements in name only’ (Lecturer, Education). Another academic acknowledged using what Scott refers to as ‘feigned ignorance’ in order to avoid particular clerical requirements. He said, ‘I tend to rely on having been here so long that you can sort of bluff and say, “oh, the rules must have changed recently”’. Laughing, he added, ‘perhaps it helps to have so much grey hair and so on. I just play dumb and say, “oh, I’m not up to date on the latest regulation”’ (Lecturer, Criminology). Avoidance through feigned ignorance and ‘forgetting’ draws on the image of the absent-minded academic, or the notion of scholarly unworldliness in order to construct a form of resistance that can be both non-confrontational and effective.

Other academics reported ignoring institutional requirements to publish regularly, to complete workload agreement forms and surveys, and to participate in performance appraisal interviews. In most cases, avoidance was justified by invoking notions of internal accountability, and professional academic standards and judgement. For example, an academic who said that he ignored institutional requirements to publish, noted that he published when he had something to say, thus upholding scholarly and professional norms rather than managerial imperatives. Demonstrating his sense that these were understandings he shared with more senior academics he said, ‘it’s not a
worry to people who are in positions where they should be getting me to publish more’ (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). Invoking notions of internal accountability, a Senior Lecturer in Computing argued that she will ignore a request for a report ‘if I think it has no function for me and it’s not something that ethically I feel required to do’.

Some academics argued that they avoided particular requirements because they believed that they achieved nothing. In this regard, a Senior Lecturer in History reported having avoided completing her workload agreement because her Head of School had lost it the previous year, and because she felt that such forms ultimately had little effect on what she regarded as the inequitable distribution of teaching and administrative loads. Similarly, another academic noted that there had been a very low response rate to an internal university staff survey. He noted that a previous survey had demonstrated that staff did not feel valued by their institution, and yet nothing had been done in the interim to address this situation. He insisted, ‘there was not much point in the first survey because nothing much has happened, and so what’s the point of doing the second survey?’ (Senior Lecturer, Engineering). Others referred to unreasonable workloads as a reason for avoiding managerial requirements. One argued, ‘the bottom line is I’ve got more than enough to do without doing these sorts of tasks, and I do think a lot of them are not worth the time and effort’ (Lecturer, Sociology).

Avoidance of performance appraisal was facilitated through the co-operation of senior academics acting as ‘umbrellas’, shielding their staff from managerial edicts wherever possible. This resistant practice emerges in a number of studies, particularly in the UK, where senior academics have interpreted their role as involving ‘buffering and protecting their staff from what they see as the demands of managerialism’ (Prichard, 2000: 129). These studies suggest that the requirement to undertake performance appraisal is often ignored by supervisors who see the process as ‘a joke’, and ‘worthless’ (Benmore, 2002: 53; see also Barry et al, 2001: 92). Where appraisals are undertaken, studies have shown that commonly they become ‘a chat between colleagues over a cup of coffee’, effectively subverting the managerial intention of the practice (Prichard & Willmott, 1997: 296).
This scenario appeared repeatedly in the research interviews. Academics argued that there was a significant disjunction between performance appraisal as policy, and performance appraisal in action. Heads of School were usually seen as fellow conspirators in this act of subversion and resistance. The ‘chat over a cup of coffee’ characterisation emerged a number of times, with the process characterised as ‘very informal’ (Senior Lecturer, Surgery), and ‘a bit of a joke’ (Associate Professor, Economics). One academic characterised it as ‘a game, with a certain set of rules’, which must be played accordingly (Lecturer, Sociology). Generally, those involved in the interview process understood, and could negotiate their way through these rules, but one instance was cited in which an academic, acting as an ‘umbrella’ fell a foul of managerial expectations. A Senior Lecturer in Psychology noted that a senior colleague who was noted for ‘ignoring the [management] fools if they’re being foolish’ was delegated to undertake performance reviews of his more junior colleagues. He carried out this process in a ‘very, very nominal’ fashion and had subsequently been removed from the list of appraisers. His colleague suggested that:

He was not feeding the system as much as the system would like to be fed … I am sure that it would have been a relief to be taken out of the loop. My understanding is he did not ask to be taken out of the loop. And there was no fuss made of it, it was just that the next year the list of people who could do it did not include him.

Others noted that they were not required to participate in performance appraisal, either because their supervisor informally allowed them to avoid it, or because it was not entrenched in the culture of their school. In either case the attitude of the Head of School was seen as a determining factor.

Heads of School were also seen to act as ‘umbrellas’ with reference to other managerial practices. An academic in a department that had been subject to radical downsizing suggested that the Head of School who had presided over this process had ‘totally refused to act on management pressure to arm-twist people’ (Associate Professor, History). He argued that this Head’s collegial behaviour meant that ‘some heat went out of the situation’ which he characterised as otherwise ‘frightful’. Some academics in this
study who held senior positions or were undertaking committee work saw their role in the terms Prichard and others identify. A Senior Lecturer in Psychology suggested that ‘part of my role [on a research review committee] is to try to keep the impact on individuals from being utterly blown away by the detailed paperwork’. He noted colleagues on another committee were also ‘adopting this role as a form of resistance, protecting ourselves and our collegial system’, rather than acting ‘as a passive or active conduit for whatever comes from above’. He argued that this was a role that older academics tended to assume, saying that it reflected the approach employed by the Head of School, who managed to support and shield staff while still responding adequately to managerial requirements. An early-career academic also assumed this umbrella role, protecting students who he saw as suffering from a lack of equipment caused by chronic under-funding. He and his colleagues would ‘accidentally over-order stuff and then kick it down to the undergraduate labs’. He said this practice was ‘technically illegal’ but that, ‘I figure it’s easier to beg for forgiveness than permission’ (Senior Lecturer, Physics).

Qualified Compliance

Where avoidance was not possible, academics in this study often complied with managerialist demands, but in minimal, pragmatic, and sometimes strategic ways. This did not signal that academics supported the practices with which they complied. As Scott (1985: 325) notes, ‘compliance can flow either from grudging resistance or from active ideological support’. Much of the compliance that emerged in this category was reluctant, grudging, and only resorted to when no other alternatives were deemed possible. One academic summed up his approach to resisting managerial practices, illustrating the ways in which the categories of response discussed in this chapter are not discrete alternatives, but may be drawn upon serially as academics explore the possibilities available to them. He said:

I’ll avoid, then resist in subtle ways on the ground, and if I have to confront it, I’ll confront it. It doesn’t mean that I’ll swallow my tongue completely, I might let it be known that it’s a questionable enterprise and that it does make demands on your already full schedule, but when push
comes to shove, I'll toe the line. Like with the [Performance] Development and Review process, I am concerned about it industrially, not for me, but for academics on the whole. I do think it's a large amount of money with questionable outcomes, but I'm not going to refuse to fill it out or really draw the battle lines. I'll just sort of co-operate and hope that it goes away later (Lecturer, Sociology).

Similarly, an academic responded to the proposed introduction of performance appraisal schemes at his university, saying, 'if that kind of system is introduced here I will be extremely reluctant to co-operate and will only co-operate as far as I have to, basically' (Lecturer, History).

Academics also complied with managerial requirements in a minimalist fashion. Whether referring to student evaluation processes, requirements to standardise unit outlines, or paperwork generally, a number of academics noted that they complied minimally, preferring to 'put real effort into real things, and appropriate effort into other things' (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). They were sanguine about the success of this strategy. One academic suggested that he did not think he would get his 'knuckles rapped' for avoiding the university's requirement that unit outlines include details of particular policies, by directing students to the university handbook instead. Another noted that although he was less than meticulous in filling out all the details on particular forms, 'nobody's ever come back to me and said you haven't completed this form in its entirety ... so what's the point?' (Lecturer, Public Health). He also noted that partial or minimal compliance was a strategy that could be used to 'sort of test the boundaries of what is and isn't acceptable'.

Minimal compliance often effectively subverted the managerial agenda, by complying with the letter, but not the spirit, of the particular practice or requirement. In this regard, an academic who taught policing students referred to her Dean as 'very mindful of the police as customers', and noted that she had been instructed to consult with the police in putting together a new subject. She complied with this request, but found the meeting unproductive. As a result she was, 'just going to do [her] own thing' regarding the content of the unit (Lecturer, Criminology). Another academic had
minimally complied with requests from his university to provide detailed figures about student enrolment in units in his school. He delegated the task to a casual tutor, who supplied the university with the figures, but figures that the academic believed were quite fictitious. He explained this form of resistance thus:

It's easier. Rather than complaining and saying you haven't given us enough time to do this and your admin people should be doing this, we just give them a number ... It shuts them up, and it would take me longer to argue with the university ... Lots of academics were complaining about this and telling the university that we can't do this, and instead, we just gave them a number ... I've got no idea where it came from to be perfectly honest. I've got no idea where it came from nor how accurate it is. I suspect it is totally inaccurate and I don't care, and I don't think the university particularly cares. As long as some clerk has got a number they are happy. If they were really serious about doing it properly, they would do it properly themselves (Associate Professor, Management).

He applied the same approach to the completion of his workload agreement, a process that he referred to as a 'bizarre exercise' and 'a sham'. He explained, 'I just wrote down everything I had to do and then, through a series of algorithms, worked out what would fit in so that it balanced the silly 1725 hours and gave it to them'. A Lecturer in Sociology noted that he had been required by his university to supply 'ridiculously detailed itineraries' of proposed research trips, which were, ultimately, 'a work of fiction'. He argued that research often did not unfold as one expected, and that providing such itineraries was a time-consuming and pointless exercise that undermined the trust required by the nature of academic work.

Some of the compliance that emerged in research interviews could be seen as strategic and even instrumental in nature. Academics complied with particular requirements at particular times, when they perceived that there was an advantage to them in doing so. This strategic compliance was employed particularly in responding to university requirements to undertake student evaluation of teaching. A number of academics had serious reservations about the usefulness of student evaluations, but were aware that evidence of participation in these schemes was crucial when applying for promotion. Therefore, they tended to comply with these requirements when there was advantage to be gained, and to avoid them when there was not. Academics also noted that
they participated in student evaluation in units in which they were confident they would score highly. In this regard a number of academics again described the process as ‘a game’ – a characterisation that is explored below.

Some academics also employed a strategic approach to the process of performance appraisal. This was particularly the case for those younger academics to whom performance appraisal loomed as a significant factor in the confirmation of their appointment, or their prospects for promotion. Several noted that while the exercise required them to predict their research output over the coming year, they would only commit to producing publications if the article or paper was already written. One noted that this effectively subverted the intention of performance appraisal, saying ‘although it’s supposed to be forward-looking, it’s almost surreptitiously retrospective’ (Lecturer, Sociology). In this regard, an older academic recalled the ‘umbrella’-like input of a senior colleague at her previous university. She noted that this colleague, charged with the duty of conducting appraisals, ensured that the information they contained could not be used against staff, and urged them not to set any goal for the coming year unless they were certain it would be achieved. In addition, while the meeting gave staff an opportunity to discuss any problems they were experiencing, he ensured that this type of information was not recorded. She concluded, ‘I mean [the appraisals] certainly weren’t done in a sort of naïve way’ (Associate Professor, Cultural Studies).

Using Time and Space in Resistance¹

One form of resistance that surfaced in this study involved the use of time and space in ways that seem, at first glance, to indicate the capture of hearts and minds through Foucauldian-style processes, rather than constituting resistance. Through their use of time and space, academics developed strategies that were intended to resist the potential of managerial demands to erode valued aspects of academic life. The additional demands on their time, associated with accountability mechanisms and other managerial mechanisms, directly reduced the time available for other aspects of academic work. In particular,

¹ The ideas and some of the data in this section appear elsewhere (Anderson, forthcoming).
academics acted to protect periods of time for what they generally referred to as their 'own' research. The centrality of research to the academic identity – discussed in Chapter Five – is an enduring and prominent element of academic culture. The resistant strategy that academics employed to protect time for research was to appropriate time that would normally be considered 'leisure time' – evenings, weekends and leave periods. In Chapter Five it was argued that the tendency for academics to blur the distinction between work-time and leisure time was an established feature of academic work. As such it provides a readily available cultural resource with which to resist the encroachments of managerial control.

To that end, academics in this study used 'their own' time in order to resist the erosion of time for their research. One was about to take a year's maternity leave, but planned to spend half of it editing a book. Another was on long-service leave when she participated in an interview, but had no plans to take a holiday. Instead, she was spending the time on her research, acknowledging that this was, 'kind of ridiculous', and saying 'that's the sort of situation you end up in ... if I was working I wouldn't be able to do it' (Associate Professor, Cultural Studies). At another university, an academic suggested that a common strategy there was to take long-service leave if study leave was not available. He suggested that many people in his university who were refused study leave 'are so senior ... that they can say "Well to hell with you, we'll take our long-service leave"' (Associate Professor, History). Comments like this illustrate the ways in which these academics understand and intend this as a resistant strategy, however counter-intuitive this use of time might initially appear. Drawing on a tradition of mixing academic work with leisure time, they used their 'own' time as a resource with which to resist managerial erosion of valued research opportunities.

Sometimes the use of personal time was invoked as a resistant strategy to protect other values within academic culture, such as a commitment to adequately supporting students. One academic was informed that the distance education students she taught could not have an exam because the cost of invigilation was too high. Arguing that distance education students were already disadvantaged by their mode of study, she
insisted that the exam go ahead, and invigilated it in her own time. Another academic met with me during his annual leave to participate in a research interview for this study. After our meeting he was going on to his university to meet with post-graduate students who had been left without supervisors in the wake of staff cuts at his university. In the evening, he was planning to attend graduation ceremonies. Thus, both of these academics used their own time to resist what they saw as managerialism’s deleterious effects on the quality of the student experience.

The use of space was also an element in academics’ resistant strategies. While the opportunity to work from home has been a feature of academic work practices, it is also one that academics invoke as a defensive mechanism. Knights and Trowler (2000: 110) note that academics in the UK are more inclined to work at home and are spending less time at their universities, a trend which may also be observed in Australian universities. Interviews suggested that academics in this study were increasingly forsaking their academic offices in order to work at home, often using this practice as a resistant strategy against the demands of managerialism. One academic suggested that working from home was one of the primary forms of resistance that she observed at her university, where, she said, ‘the departments are just dead’. Noting that constant interruptions associated with additional paperwork limit her time for research, she had made the decision ‘to take myself out of that environment’ (Associate Professor, Cultural Studies). Thus the use of time and space intersect as an effective and widely used resistance strategy.

The most creative and imaginative use of time and space as a resistance strategy came from a Senior Lecturer in Computing. She used her long-service leave to write a novel that she referred to as a ‘metaphorical analogy of managerialism’. In the previous year she had been involved in a situation in which she felt ethically compromised by directives from ‘quite high in the university’ and resigned her position as Acting Head of School in protest. Infuriated by the incident, she decided to write a science-fiction, fantasy novel that, for her, mirrored the ethical dilemma in which she felt placed. She characterized the experience as ‘very therapeutic’, saying ‘all this rage came out on the page’. As well as illustrating resistant uses of time and space, this form of resistance also
reflects, quite directly, discursive resistance, which relates to the production of meaning. While the academic noted that others reading her novel might not make the connection to the situation that inspired her to write it, she had succeeded in making meaning in ways which she saw as therapeutic and gratifying. Acts such as these remind us that resistance may take a variety of forms, many of them only available to researchers through close-up forms of research. Working longer hours, working from home, and writing a novel do not look very much like resistant acts from a distance. It is only when we engage with the meanings and motives attributed to such acts, by those undertaking them, that we understand such acts as resistance.

**Escape Routes**

Hirschman (1970) has suggested that three broad categories of response are available to those who experience decline in organizational and other settings – exit, voice and loyalty. Some who participated in this study argued that exit was likely to be their response to increased managerialism in Australian universities. For some this simply meant retiring a year or so early, while for others it meant contemplating a whole new career path, or a move to another country. Two early-career academics were preparing escape routes, based on their assessment of trends in Australian higher education. Both were concerned about chronic funding shortages and the gradual erosion of their autonomy within the managerial university. One argued, ‘I can’t see myself where I am for much longer, I’m being recruited now from overseas, so it’s just a matter of time until I find a programme I like, and then I’m out of here’ (Lecturer, Tourism). The other had enrolled in a course of study designed to provide him with an alternate profession because of what he regarded as deteriorating conditions in the university sector. He noted:

> It has got me concerned to the point where I am looking to get another qualification that opens up another career ... It does have a lot to do with changes that have taken place over recent years. If I multiply those sorts of changes by two or three, looking into the future, it wouldn’t be worth being here. That’s how I see it (Lecturer, Sociology).
Some older academics saw retirement as an escape from the demands of the managerial university, although not from academic work per se. One suggested that his exhaustion after carrying a particularly heavy teaching load in the previous year had prompted his decision to retire. Another academic on the eve of retirement felt that many colleagues envied him, and noted that one in particular had opted to retire early, despite the significant financial loss he incurred, saying, 'he's not bothered, he just wants out' (Associate Professor, Economics).

Embracing the Managerial Discourse?

While numerous studies suggest that academics oppose many elements of the managerial agenda, it is obvious that such a response will not be universal. Indeed, one of the aims of this research was to explore the extent, as well as the nature of academic resistance to managerialism. Unsurprisingly, there was a small group of academics in this study for whom resistance to managerialism was not an issue, and who identified themselves as broadly in sympathy with many of its aims. The most important factor contributing to such a response appeared to be the relatively short time they had been employed in universities. Those who indicated that they did not regard managerialism as a problem were generally in the earlier stages of their academic careers. Some were younger academics, and others were newer recruits to academe from the public or private sector. They provided a contrast to other academics who railed against the imposition of managerialism, accepting, and in some cases championing, the managerialist changes of recent decades, and the mechanisms and practices they entail.

Often interviewees in this group prefaced or contextualised their comments by noting that they had known nothing but the managerial university, and that they therefore lacked a reference point from which to compare their experiences. One said, 'I’m post-Dawkins, okay? … What I know as a teacher about what the system’s like is what I’ve always had. So it’s difficult to look back' (Senior Lecturer, Sociology). Another responded to my use of the term managerialism saying:
Yeah, it’s a term that’s thrown around, but I’m not quite sure concretely what it means because I don’t know what it was like beforehand. That’s why I said I’m not quite sure if I’m the best person to interview, because I can’t give you a before-and-after scenario. I just sort of walked into a situation and accepted that as the given (Lecturer, History).

Another explained, ‘look, I don’t know any other culture ... There hasn’t been this glorious pastoral time of the university. I’ve never had [that]’ (Senior Lecturer, History). The absence of first-hand experience of the pre-managerial university was thus acknowledged as significant in influencing their assessment of, and response to, those aspects of managerialism that were explored in the research interviews.

Interestingly, however, the positive evaluation of managerialism by some of these academics was underpinned by a critique of the pre-managerial university. While disavowing first-hand knowledge of this culture, they critiqued the work practices associated with this cultural and historical period in the university. One referred to part of her department as a ‘white man’s graveyard’ and suggested that hers was, ‘the department that Dawkins stumbled upon, because it was exactly why he wrote the White Paper, because there were people here who only held classes between five and seven on Friday nights’ (Senior Lecturer, History). She saw the majority of the older academics in her department as ‘incredibly lazy’, inefficient, and resistant to any kind of change. An academic at another university similarly suggested that, in the pre-managerial university, senior staff had not undertaken their share of teaching, saying, ‘they were coming in and getting their salaries but for all intents and purposes [they] were just the walking dead’ (Senior Lecturer, Philosophy). An academic who had previously worked in the public service argued that universities were still insufficiently accountable, particularly in terms of their teaching, and that managers were powerless to effect changes because they had no real authority. He compared this to the public service saying, ‘you did what you were told or you were out’ (Senior Lecturer, Geography).

Academics who mounted these critiques saw elements of managerial change as conferring positive and beneficial change, acting as a discipline with which to combat inefficient work practices. For example, the Senior Lecturer in Philosophy, quoted above,
welcomed his school's publication of academics' workloads. While the practice had since been abandoned, he advocated making such figures available to all staff, saying, 'I'm in favour of public shaming'. The academic who saw her colleagues as lazy argued that while management could be intrusive at times, sometimes it acted to 'shake things up' and 'drag procedures into the 21st century'. She suggested that staff cuts in her department had actually improved the quality of their teaching programme 'because people are not teaching their one-semester course once every two years and then pissing off'. She argued that, 'there are reasons why management are trying to make departments more productive', and suggested that there was a 'real need for performance indicators', insisting, 'people should be held responsible for getting Professorial salaries and not doing any teaching'. Similarly, a Lecturer in History praised the 'top-down whole-of-administration perspective', which acted to 'integrate different departments, and units and even people into coherent research directions'. He saw this as a significant improvement on the previous 'feudal' system, in which 'people didn't talk to each other'. He also saw performance appraisal procedures as useful in stimulating those who were not particularly 'dynamic' to 'start thinking forward and meeting goals', and suggested that he was 'more or less in sync with [university management's] priorities' (Lecturer, History). For these academics, managerialism was seen as a necessary and useful corrective to a university system that tolerated and even encouraged wasteful and inefficient practices. In their utterances it is difficult to miss the echo of the New Right critique that diagnosed the ills, and prescribed the remedies, for the bloated, wasteful and inefficient public sector.

These academics also argued that elements of managerial change were inevitable and unavoidable. To that end, resistance was often represented as a waste of time and effort. Referring to the way in which universities were increasingly forced to apply the logic of the market in determining their offerings, one academic said, 'in my view there is no way we can change this, academics have no power in this at all. You just have to play the game – you can't resist these things' (Lecturer, History). Another, condemning her colleagues' resistance to the requirement that they write a strategic plan for a community outreach programme, insisted, 'we have to do this ... there's no way we
can escape and actually there’s good things about doing it … we can’t just see it as a negative waste of time’ (Senior Lecturer, History). Arguing that, ‘if we don’t [write the strategic plan] we just look like fuckwits’, she censured the ‘petty, passive aggressive resistance’ of her colleagues, saying, ‘they’ll piss and moan but they don’t actually ever do anything’. While this academic argued that she would resist when she felt strongly about something, she also suggested that she had used many managerial changes to her own advantage. She said, for example, ‘I really like the kind of challenges that new kinds of teaching techniques have offered me, like getting courses on the web’. She also argued that she had used the system to her own advantage in terms of the university’s research requirements, obtaining teaching relief associated with external research grants. Others also argued that the new managerial agenda could be turned to one’s individual advantage. A Lecturer in History said:

If they want me to apply for grants, okay I’ll apply for grants and get lots of money. If I’m teaching too much, well I’ll use the grants to buy out my teaching … You have a new situation and you just manipulate it for your own benefit…. It’s a game! And you just play the rules and don’t resist the rules, because you can’t, productively, you’ll just fall out of the system and lose.

Thus a discourse of inevitability became intertwined with arguments about individual advantage, and even those of market-based competition. Complaining that senior academics would not co-operate in the process of gathering information for a forthcoming AUQA review, a Senior Lecturer in History suggested:

Younger members of staff recognize that if we don’t participate in some way, we just get regarded as a hostile department and we get no help from administration. And also I think that in lots of ways, we do need help, and unless we talk about that, no one is going to know. And we also have good things to tell people, so we’ve got to sell ourselves [emphasis added].

In these comments it is possible to trace the taking up of subject positions offered within managerial discourses, as well as a sustained critique of elements of traditional academic culture. This discourse renders suspect the autonomous and individualistic nature of academic work. At the same time, however, there is an emphasis on individualism and individual advantage, which may be contrasted with the emphasis on collegiality, within the traditional academic discourse.
Within this critique, those who resisted managerialist changes were sometimes characterised as whingers, and as unrealistic, but also as taking up subject positions that were seen as unhealthy and ultimately self-defeating. One academic suggested that the academics in her department have ‘got this poor bastard syndrome [in which], you know, everything was great in the past and now senior academics feel they’ve been incredibly victimised by management’ (Senior Lecturer, History). An academic with a long career in the university suggested that many academics were all too willing to construct themselves as victims of change, saying, ‘I think that’s a worthless thing, I mean, I think that paralyses people’ (Associate Professor, Architecture). Taking up what Clarke and Newman identify as one of the five narrative forms that justify the imperative of managerialist change – change as a natural process of growth and development (Clarke & Newman, 1997: 40) – she argued, ‘change is an inherently normal part of human existence’. When asked if she would characterise the changes as primarily positive or negative, she responded, ‘well, I’m not even prepared to judge them, because I just think that to say they’re negative means that you would put yourself in a position of defence, and you would be fighting change, which is a worthless pastime, in my view.’ She argued that the real problems were academics’ failure to accept that change was normal, their inability to adjust to changes, and their belief that they could have no effect on the changes in train. Rejecting a model of passive resistance, she said, ‘I mean we can’t just stop, gaze at our navels and wish things were the way they were’.

Another young academic, who was not otherwise supportive of much of the managerialist agenda, suggested that some older academics are too willing to construct themselves as ‘noble failures’, or victims of managerial change in the university. Pondering his own future, he argued that he did not want to write a ‘tragic kind of narrative’ in which he ‘organized his psychology’ around why he had not been promoted while others had. Acknowledging the demands associated with managerial changes, he said, ‘the structure says these are the hoops I have to jump through, and you’re crazy to ignore that but you don’t want to completely sell out to it.’ Invoking the notion of structure versus agency, he said, ‘I mean as an individual you find yourself within a
structural context. The key task for me is to try and negotiate that context in a way which means I’m relatively successful but I can live with myself’ (Lecturer, Sociology). In this way he sought to reconcile the imperatives of the managerial agenda with those of the traditional academic culture, in order to reduce the level of internal conflict he experienced as he located himself within these generally oppositional discourses. Like others in this study, he drew upon understandings generated within his own discipline in order to do so.

A number of academics in this study recognised the different perspectives and emergent tensions between early-career and later-career academics over the issue of managerialism. Some older academics argued that their senior status afforded them a measure of protection from managerialist incursions on their autonomy, and acknowledged that this was not the case for their more junior colleagues. In addition, several older academics suggested that newer academics, who have not experienced the pre-managerial university, are likely to have a different perspective than those who were employed in universities during the 1970s and 1980s. One argued that junior academics ‘will come into the system as it is, and believe that it is a legitimate system that they must comply with’ (Associate Professor, Management), while another suggested that younger academics may not be enthusiastic about some managerial initiatives ‘but will take the view “Okay, it’s a job, we’ll do whatever they tell us to”’ (Senior Lecturer, Psychology). This academic also argued that younger colleagues who were seen to be ‘very tuned to the managerial reward structure, do so at risk of disapproval from colleagues’, and noted that this tendency was combated by a process of informal mentoring, in which collegial ways of relating were emphasised. By contrast, the Senior Lecturer in History who critiqued the work practices of her senior colleagues argued, ‘I would like to feel that there were people who could mentor me ... we don’t get that from senior academics at all. They’re just so disgruntled and pissed off.’

In many respects the response to managerialism of these generally early-career academics is hardly surprising. As they themselves emphasised, they have known nothing but the managerial university. Other studies acknowledge the importance of a reference
point in shaping responses. In 1999, McInnis noted that the early-career academics in his study were ‘much more satisfied with their jobs and much less negative about future prospects’. He went on to suggest that it was likely that, ‘their perceptions are less influenced by contrasts with the past era that many older academics clearly regard as better days’ (McInnis, 1999: 61). Similarly Anderson et al note that while older academics tend to ‘look back fondly’ to the pre-Dawkins days, newer academics ‘have never known that more relaxed environment and regard the present situation, for better or worse, as normal’ (Anderson et al, 2002: 3). Younger academics are also seen as having a ‘more sophisticated understanding of the demands of an academic career and the skills and knowledge required to be successful’ in the contemporary university. They have been represented as more ambitious, determined, and focused, and more efficient in their use of time (Henkel, 2000: 265). It has been suggested that ambitious young academics, many of whom do not have family responsibilities, will be those most likely to be co-opted into ‘the new performance culture’ associated with the managerial university (Thomas & Davies, 2002: 390). And yet, McInnis et al, writing in 1994, were sceptical that the next generation of academics would ‘embrace the values of the quality culture’. They suggested that the academy had a ‘powerful socialising role’ in shaping the values of new members (McInnis et al, 1994: 23-4). In this regard the level of mentoring that occurs appears vitally important, as demonstrated by the comments made above.

While the socialising role of the academic profession is no doubt a significant factor in shaping responses to managerialism, it is not the only one. The pervasiveness of neo-liberal, managerial discourses is also influential in this regard. Davies and Bendix Petersen (2005; forthcoming) note the ways in which such neo-liberal discourses make meaning in ways that are seductive and insidious. Drawing on Foucault’s notion of governmentality, they explore the ways in which these discourses are taken up by subjects, saying:

Such subjects ... are each embedded in history, in the discourses through which the world is being spoken and written into existence, and through which it is made meaningful, through which practices are understood and valued. We can never stand outside history, outside discourse, and rationally choose how we will take up this or that aspect of it as if we were not already embedded in it, already establishing and re-establishing history
through constituting ourselves within it (Davies & Bendix Petersen, 2005: 52).

While the attitudes and expectations of the older academics were shaped, in part, by their experiences of the post-war welfare state, those of the younger academics must be understood within the context of its dismemberment. While the norms and values of the academy may be important in developing shared understandings, the research interviews also revealed enormous differences, reflecting major attitudinal shifts implicit in the ascendancy of neo-liberalism. As managerialism is underpinned by neo-liberal understandings, it was more palatable to those who — while by no means advocates of its tenets — are, nonetheless, shaped in important ways by their embeddedness in its historical development. This positioning is reflected by the take-up, by some younger academics, of some aspects of the New Right characterization of the public sector as inefficient and wasteful. This means that when exploring the responses of academics to managerialism, we see an ideological struggle over ‘facts and their meanings, over what has happened and who is to blame, over how the present situation is to be defined and interpreted’ (Scott, 1985: 178). Scott used these words to describe the struggle over meaning associated with the redistribution of wealth in the Malay village of Sedaka, but they are no less true of the ideological struggle surrounding managerialism. In this struggle, as in Sedaka, ‘assessing the present forcibly involves a re-evaluation of what has gone before. Thus the ideological struggle to define the present is a struggle to define the past as well’. Scott suggests that those villagers who gained least from the changes he chronicles had ‘collectively created a remembered village and a remembered economy that served as an effective ideological backdrop against which to deplore the present’ (Scott, 1985: 178). For some early-career academics, there is no backdrop, no remembered village. Others espouse a view of a ‘deplorable’ past in universities against which to contrast the more efficient managerial present.
The Difficulty of Resistance

A number of those in this study who *did* object to the managerial agenda, including those who acknowledged engaging in resistance to it, pointed to the difficulties implicit in this process. A number noted the time and energy which could be consumed in undertaking high profile or overt resistance – time which academics increasingly report is in short supply in the managerial university. Currie argues that questioning managerial practices requires a ‘marathon effort’, in the face of existing obligations to teach and research (Currie, 1998: 6). One academic in this study explained that she had left her previous university post rather than contest an issue relating to the quality of off-shore teaching programmes. She said, ‘I would have had to work a lot harder ... I thought “I’ve only got a few years left in the work force, I don’t want to spend it contesting this offshore stuff”. I wanted to do my own research and it’s going to be one or the other, [because] this is going to be a big fight’ (Lecturer, Industrial Relations). Another academic, despite mounting a spirited critique of university managerialism in the research interview, contended that resistance ‘isn’t worth the candle. I think it would take too much of my effort to try and cause changes’ (Associate Professor, Management). Thus, the time and effort required to resist managerialism was offset and balanced against the time and energy needed for that activity so central to the academic identity – research.

One early-career academic was particularly honest about his fears that overt resistance to managerialism might see him labelled as a troublemaker, noting, ‘my faculty is not huge, it is pretty easy to get a reputation, and I don’t want to get the reputation as an obstructionist given the current stage of my career’ (Lecturer, Sociology). This may be contrasted with the comments made by later-career academics about their capacity to ‘get away’ with non-compliance with managerial edicts. In this regard, an Associate Professor in Economics chuckled, ‘well, they leave me alone because the Aspro is like the whore of the university ... you can get away with practically what you like.’ It appears likely, therefore, that stage-of-career is an important factor not only in shaping academics attitudes towards managerialism, but also affecting their estimation of the dangers inherent in resisting it.
Several academics mentioned the difficulty of resisting managerialism at what they saw as the appropriate level. In this regard two academics mentioned that academic resistance to managerialism was often misdirected at clerical staff charged with gathering information required for accountability mechanisms. They suggested that this was understandable but unfair to the clerical staff involved. Others argued that resisting managerialism at the level of an individual university’s management was effectively ‘shooting the messenger’ (Senior Lecturer, Geography). One suggested that, ‘a lot of the managerial edicts are coming from so far away’, and argued that those in university management ‘are dealing with a lot of difficult problems, that are largely beyond their control’ (Lecturer, Sociology). Others suggested that managerialism should be resisted ‘at a political level’ (Senior Lecturer, Sociology), but that this was not easily attempted. One argued, ‘it’s very difficult to do anything about it isn’t it? I mean it’s like people who are made redundant from global market forces, well, where exactly do you corner them? You know it’s like the forces are at a level of reality that you can barely perceive, let alone influence’ (Lecturer, Sociology). Another echoed this sense of powerlessness, saying:

You can’t actually put any pressure back on the Department or the Minister or a government that’s not sympathetic to universities. So your only outlet is pressure against the university administrators. So it’s kind of deferred, it’s a deferred sort of aggression, and it’s sort of shooting the messenger in quite a classic way ... So I mean I’d like to do more broadly, politically, but I guess I feel powerless in terms of influencing the processes at that level (Senior Lecturer, Geography).

Thus, managerialism, as a broad phenomenon, was seen as beyond contestation, overwhelming, and effectively irresistible. This view makes the individualised forms of everyday resistance employed by those in this study especially appropriate weapons with which to combat its effects, in a piecemeal, reactive and defensive way. Scott (1990: 220) argues that this response reflects ‘the conquest of inevitability’, saying, ‘so long as a structure of domination is viewed as inevitable and irreversible then all “rational” opposition will take the form of infrapolitics’. Yet, while managerialism was regarded as inevitable and irreversible by the academics in this study, they continued to mount
opposition and resistance to it. In this regard Clarke and Newman's comments about the effects of the managerial discourse are particularly apposite. They argue:

We would want to make a distinction between being subjected by a discourse and being subjected to it. 'Subjected by' points to what might be called the ideal effects of discourses – the production of new subjects who identify with it and enact it in their practices. By contrast, 'subjected to' suggests the experience of being regulated by and disciplined through a discourse without it engaging beliefs, enthusiasms or identification. Rather than enacting it from commitment, such subjects enact the discourse of change conditionally, because 'there is no alternative'. It is recognized, more or less enthusiastically, as the new rules of the game which produce compliance rather than commitment (Clarke & Newman, 1997: 54, emphasis added).

A number of academics in this study – subjected to, rather than subjected by the discourse of managerialism - saw managerial change in precisely these terms.

'Playing Their Game'²

One metaphor dominated academics' characterisation of managerial mechanisms and practices, and their responses to them. Repeatedly, academics referred to managerial initiatives and requirements, and their own compliance with them, as 'a game'. The notion of the game also captures the sense of cynicism, but also playfulness and good humour, that characterised some of the resistance that emerged in this study. A number of academics simply refused to respond seriously to that which they perceived to be ridiculous. Instead, their response reflected their assessment of the degree of gravity that these practices merited. However, what ultimately emerged in this regard was the existence of two 'games', and two sets of rules, in simultaneous operation within the managerial university.

Firstly, there was the managerial game, which many in this study regarded as superficial, artificial, and largely meaningless. They argued that the goals of the managerial game failed to adequately reflect those of the scholarly endeavour in which

² Some of the data and ideas that appear in this section have been published elsewhere (Anderson, 2003).
they were engaged. The ‘rules’ associated with the managerial game were also subject to critique and found wanting. In this regard, academics argued that managerial mechanisms and practices did not deliver on their promises, failing to improve quality, performance, efficiency and effectiveness. The managerial game was, therefore, often dismissed with parody, ridicule or critique, as long as it did not threaten or impinge on the imperatives of academic work. Academics in this study also indicated that they understood the rules of this game, and that they negotiated their way through them and around them, without internalising the priorities that underpinned them. Thus, treating managerialism as a game meant that academics could achieve ‘cynical distance’ from its ‘encroaching logic’ (Fleming & Spicer, 2003: 157, 160). The game was held at arm’s length, and participation and compliance were the conscious acts of social actors who ‘saw through’ managerialism, but played by its the rules for reasons of pragmatism and survival.

Similarly, academics’ responses to managerial mechanisms were often represented as a consciously played game. One academic reported that his school had assigned to a senior academic the task of ‘playing the managerial game’, with the goal of improving the school’s ranking in the ‘managerial scales’ employed by the university. This task consisted largely of ensuring that all the ‘managerial paperwork’ was completed. The academic noted that as a result, his school had moved from its ranking at the bottom of the faculty, to one at the top. However, while applauding the result, he critiqued the logic embedded in the process, saying, ‘it’s just a game ... it’s a complete fuckin’ waste of his time’ (Lecturer, Physics). Elsewhere an academic noted that the process of applying for grants was a game that everyone was required to play. Arguing that, ‘they never give you what you ask for’, he said, ‘I’ll just ask them for $20 000 and if I come away with $5000 I’ll be happy’. This game-playing could even be rather gratifying for some academics, as with the Associate Professor of Management who supplied his university with fictitious figures on enrolments. He noted, ‘that’s what happens in this game. We sign off things and say that we’ve done this and that, but we actually don’t’. Thus, what was ostensibly compliance, was, in the understanding of the academics themselves, resistance through game-playing.
Academics contrasted the managerial game with the ‘main game’ - the traditional academic pursuit of excellence in the areas of research and teaching. This academic game was regarded as the real game by the academics in this study. It too had its rules, and many of these were also critiqued as foolish or outdated. However, it was generally regarded as the legitimate alternative to the managerial game. For some, it was a case of choosing which game to play. As one academic put it, ‘you can play the game that makes you look good through the eyes of the managerial system, or you can play the game which led you to academia in the first place, and they seem to be two entirely different things’ (Lecturer, Sociology). Others noted that they observed those managerial rules of the game that worked to their advantage, and, wherever possible, worked around those that did not. In this regard, one academic noted that he was not broadly supportive of the student evaluation process, but said, ‘I’m coming up for promotion this year, so I’m happy to play the game, and show student evaluation forms for those reasons’ (Lecturer, History). Another suggested that academics had to ‘just play [management’s] game a bit too, and then you’ll get what you want’ (Lecturer, History).

Often, however, academics struggled with the tensions inherent in reconciling the aims of these two games. One academic referred to pressure to publish articles in order to boost the university’s publication ‘points’, and, thereby, its’ income, saying, ‘it’s a game, it’s a great big game’ (Lecturer, Nursing). She argued that this managerial game compromised the quality of publications, because the emphasis was seen to be on quantity rather than quality. She insisted that, as a consequence, many articles amounted to little more than literature reviews. Interestingly, she attempted to reconcile the objects of both the managerial and the academic ‘games’, arguing that she could, and would ‘play that game too’, while still insisting that, ‘anything my name goes on is going to be worthwhile writing’. Others also regarded the imperative to publish quantities of journal articles as a game, one that they were prepared to play so long as they could also play by the rules of the academic game, which emphasise the importance of publishing quality research. In this regard one academic said, ‘you just play their [managerial] game for

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3 Annually, universities submit details of research published by their academics to the Department of Education, Science, and Training’s Higher Education Research Data Collection. These figures are used to determine funding allocations under performance based funding schemes.
management], and then you play the other [academic] game for promotion. In other words you try to publish as many journal articles as you can, \textit{and} in the best journals (Lecturer, History). Another noted that the university’s ‘game corresponds to what I want at the moment’, which was to write short ‘punchy articles that address very specific points’ (Lecturer, French). This academic argued that he did not invest very much of himself in these articles, but that he enjoyed writing them. Here, we can see the ways in which academics engage in a struggle to play the managerial game without internalising its rules. Issues of subjectivity emerge as academics implicitly recognise managerialism’s colonising logic, and struggle to maintain their sense of themselves as being outside its reach. Clearly, attempting to play both games simultaneously requires some complex identity work.

Despite such tensions, the most common form of everyday resistance employed by the academics in this study, was to ostensibly play the managerial game, minimally complying with its requirements in ways that kept managerialism’s logic at arm’s length. At the same time these academics quietly got on with the main game, \textit{their} game, the ‘game that brought them to academe in the first place’. Thus, they played games back, while giving the appearance of taking the managerial game seriously, in order to retain control over their work. Their compliance was thus often simply another game, intended to placate or dupe management, in order to maintain a degree of autonomy within the managerial university. They gave the impression of ‘going along’ with managerialism, letting it wash over them or ignoring it whenever possible, regarding it as a game that ought not to be taken too seriously. For some there even seemed to be a sense that it was a ‘fad’ that could not touch the essence of the \textit{real} academic game. Game-playing thus became one of the most effective forms of resistance that academics could employ. Pragmatically, it was less time consuming and less dangerous than other forms of resistance. Importantly, it also enabled them to maintain forms of subjectivity that reflected the distinction between being ‘\textit{subject to}’ managerial discourse and ‘\textit{subjected by}’ it. While the academics knew that particular managerial mechanisms and processes (the rules of the managerial game) must be acknowledged, and at least minimally obeyed,
game playing allowed them to do so while still resisting the values and logic which underpinned them.
CONCLUSIONS

To return to the analogy that began this thesis, if academics may be said to crouch behind the ramparts, they are also returning fire whenever possible. Their response, at times, might resemble an unpredictable volley of assorted home-made missiles, rather than a disciplined and co-ordinated counter-attack, but the besieged use whatever weapons are available to them. Indeed, this study suggests that while academics’ modes of resistance may be low-key, idiosyncratic, and even, at times, counter-intuitive, they are by no means ineffective. They may be insufficient to comprehensively rout ‘the enemy’, but they are often successful in keeping it at bay.

This thesis began with the assumption that, given evidence of widespread academic opposition to many elements of the managerial agenda, academics are likely to resist the mechanisms that seek to implement it. The research design employed in the study reflected the view that such resistance could only be uncovered through the use of ‘close-up’, fine-grained research methods (Prichard & Trowler, 2003), which privilege the understandings of those engaged in resistance. The results indicate that the academics involved in this study were, indeed, undertaking such resistance.

Academics’ resistance took a range of forms, which have been described, explored, mapped and analysed in previous chapters. Much of this resistance was subtle and subterranean in nature, and, therefore, not easily identified by university management. Such resistance, if widespread, has the potential to disrupt, subvert and delay the managerial agenda. Further research in this area would be valuable in identifying the extent of academic resistance, and exploring its consequences. For example, a number of those in this study suggested that they continued to ‘play’ the academic ‘game’, while management played by quite different rules, with quite different goals. If this view is widely-held, then it is likely that universities will
continue to be the site of a ‘cool war’ (Coady, 2000: xi) between managers and academics.

The findings of this study also suggest that this resistance was most often underpinned and shaped by understandings embedded in traditional academic culture. Academics framed their opposition and resistance to managerialism with reference to particular elements of this valued component of their self-identity or subjectivity. They contrasted what they perceived as the limited or flawed understandings and perspectives of managerialism with those of their own shared academic culture – the ‘world’ of academe. Academics thus represented their resistance as based on oppositional values. Many of their comments and perspectives reflected a railing against the imposition of a newly dominant and foreign culture, with alien practices, values and norms, which they often found abhorrent. Their discursive resistance involved attempts to limit the process of colonisation implicit in the managerial project, not simply attempts to resist the tangible effects of the practices associated with the managerial discourse. Thus, their resistance involved taking up discursive positions offered by and within academic discourses, as a means to combat the discursive positioning of managerialism. This finding accords with recent work on the importance of alternate subject positions as discursive resources that may be drawn upon in mounting resistance, across a range of settings.

The academics in this study who were located in vocationally-oriented disciplines, such as Nursing, Computing, and Management, were no more supportive of the managerial agenda than those in the ‘purer’ disciplines of History, Sociology and Physics. Similarly, there appeared to be little significant difference between the responses of those located in ‘Sandstone’ universities and those working in the ‘New’ universities that emerged from the Unified National System of 1988. The female academics in this study voiced their opposition to managerialism as forcefully as did the men, and reported enacting resistance in similar ways, underpinned by similar understandings.
In so far as it was possible, within such a small sample, to identify factors that might predispose academics to resist – or alternatively to retard the likelihood that they would do so – length of service appeared to be the only significant factor. As described in Chapter Seven, those academics who had obtained employment in universities in more recent years were more likely to identify with elements of the managerial agenda. This was by no means a response common to all early-career academics. However, within this study it appeared that those in more senior positions – and especially those who had extensive experience of the pre-managerial university - were more often at odds with the managerial agenda, and were more often actively resisting managerial techniques and practices.

Further research that seeks to explore the different ways in which early- and late-career academics perceive and respond to managerialism would be a valuable contribution to this field of study. Given the aging profile of Australian academics (Anderson et al, 2002) the collective attitudes of early-career academics will be a vital factor in determining the ways in which the managerial agenda will be received and implemented in coming years. The neo-liberal discourse that underpins managerialism appeared to be a powerful element in shaping the subjectivities of some early-career academics in this study. Yet it is only one element. Where mentoring occurs, the traditional academic discourse may be transmitted to early-career academics, providing newer members of the academic community with other forms of subjectivity, and the discursive tools with which to critique and resist managerialism.

However, for now, this study suggests that academic resistance to managerialism may be a force with which university management must reckon. The intention of managerial practices is routinely subverted by the resistant practices deployed by academics. Moreover, none of the academics in this study who were engaging in resistance had any immediate intention of climbing down from the battlements with a white flag in their hand. Instead, they continue to deploy the
‘weapons of the weak’ and the ‘guerrilla tactics’ of the dispossessed. Academics are, as Trowler (1998: 55) notes, ‘clever people’, skilled in rebellion and innovation. They are furnished with a cultural armoury that provides shared understandings and discursive repertoires to be drawn upon in mounting this resistance. Their resistance may be seen as limited insofar as it acts to ameliorate – rather than to overthrow – managerialism, but it is strong in terms of its ideological underpinnings. The extent to which it weakens or diminishes over time will depend upon the views of those who have recently entered, or have yet to enter the academy. Whether they continue the resistance of their senior colleagues, or embrace the managerial discourse is, for now, an open question. Only time – and more research – will tell.
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