

PATTERNS OF SCHOOLING IN AUSTRALIA: TOWARD A HISTORICAL MATERIALIST EXPLANATION

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Since colonisation, schooling in Australia has developed from patterns of partial and elite provision. These patterns were initially made available at an elementary level and have today grown to levels of mass participation in both primary and secondary schooling. By drawing on distinctive institutional and policy shifts in the historical emergence of mass schooling, this article puts forward an historical materialist explanation that is both retrospective as well as prospective. The intention is to critically appreciate the changing patterns and forms of schooling in ways that reveal their class character. This is done by focusing on the theorisation of the mental and manual division of labour in Marx's historical materialist theory.

Institutionally, schooling in colonial Australia operated largely through church organisations with moral imperatives. For the middle-classes this was manifest in the necessary formation of character and for other classes this involved a civilising strategy. The pressures of industrial capitalist expansion at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century involved the development of technical education. Technical education meant that the emerging working-class had access to formal schooling where 'scientific knowledge' and its associated skills were understood as important in the industrial development of the nation. By the mid twentieth century the role of education, and schooling more generally, began to be recognised as imperative to improving social participation and cohesion. This period was characterized as the 'great expansion' (Hannan, 2007) and occurred alongside the growth of an Australian middle-class. Movements toward more comprehensive patterns of schooling were premised upon ideals of 'inclusion', and were supported by a corporatising State.

In contemporary post-industrial times education and schooling has been transformed through 'markets'. These historical phases in the development of schooling in Australia provide a material basis to the changing patterns of schooling premised upon moral, industrial, public and positional imperatives. It is these aspects of the changing patterns of schooling that provide a basis for appreciating an historical materialist explanation of Australian schooling.

These distinctive phases in patterns of schooling have involved a shift in emphasis: from the moral to the industrial and from citizenry to that of the consumer or customer. These changes have not involved an abandonment of prior organising logics. The remaking of patterns of schooling provision through time represents the continuing repurposing of schooling. These purposes have involved changes to the sorts and types of knowledge offered through schooling over time. An historical materialist account of patterns of schooling enables the recognition of the classed aspects inherent to the institutionalisation of knowledge through schooling. As always with Marx and his social theory, there is a future-oriented dimension to historical materialism. By looking back upon schooling patterns in Australia it can be recognised that what now exists is related to earlier classed forms of schooling. Historical materialist explanations provide a basis to more accurately consider what is likely to persist in the continuing class-divided patterns of schooling in Australia.

The article will first outline the implications of historical materialism for *knowing* and its relations to patterns of schooling. Historical materialism as theorised by Marx in *The German Ideology*, co-authored with Friedrich Engels provides a way of understanding its key conceptual aspects. Marx's historical materialist theory when read alongside and against Alfred Sohn-Rethel's historical materialist critique of knowledge provides an explanation of the changing form of knowledge in capitalist commodity production. Sohn-Rethel's critique of knowledge underlines the affinity of 'thought-form' with 'commodity form' (Sohn-Rethel, 1965, 1978). Such a theorization provides a useful way of understanding and explaining the shifts in emphasis in knowledge and its character as made available through changes in patterns of schooling in Australia. Using historical materialism and Sohn-Rethel's critique of knowledge, a discussion of the relationship between knowledge and education is then foregrounded in the remainder of the article.

Historical Materialism and the Currency of Knowledge

Historical materialism connects peoples' experiences to the organisation of production, and thus to their material contexts, thereby circumventing idealist or speculative accounts of the conditions that affect peoples lives and circumstances. Marx, with Engels, maintained in *The German Ideology* that:

there exists a materialist connection of men with one another, which is determined by their needs and their mode of production, and which is as old as men themselves. This connection is ever taking on new forms and thus presents a 'history' independently of the existence of any political or religious nonsense which in addition may hold men together (Marx, 1977: 166).

The significance of their theorisation of bourgeois society is that it sought to reveal all previous social forms, and even in its present form and distinctive features, as made possible through modes of production.

Central to historical materialist explanations are different forms of ownership associated with the various stages in the development of the division of labour. So when Marx proclaimed that the 'division of labour only becomes truly such from the moment when a division of material and mental labour appears' (Marx, 1977: 167) he was conceptualising a 'primordial situation', namely the coming of *state society*. Modern state society came into being in direct contrast to 'archaic' forms of society characterised by a natural division of labour. For Marx the advent of state society as the new dynamic force in the form of class-structured society is the beginning of the historical process of which, it was theorised, capitalism would come to represent the conclusion.

The continuing development of the division of labour and the productive forces, Marx argued, leads to wider social divisions and more pronounced conflicts of interest. The separation of mental and manual labour according to Marx not only pre-empt the possibilities for true consciousness but more importantly this division signals the birth of class society essential to commodity production in capitalism. Additionally and more significantly for Marx this division also represents the beginnings of antagonistic society; antagonism premised upon differences that are made, exploited and naturalised through just these divisions between the material and manual labour.

The power relations shaped through knowledge and ideas can be understood and apprehended by paying attention to the hierarchies and dissonances associated with the mental and the material or manual division of labour. It is in the primordial situation of the emergence and formation of state society that according to Marx, 'the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas' (Marx, 1977: 176). This means that the ruling classes actively produce social forms through power and control concentrated around knowledge production and what comes to be known and owned as science and legitimate knowledge. Who has knowledge and who can have knowledge is therefore made through the divisions inherent to and characteristic of class society.

Historical materialism provides a basis for appreciating that the way one makes sense of the world cannot transcend the mode of production. It is this point that enabled Marx to claim that 'when we conceive things thus, as they really are and happened [that] every profound philosophical problem is resolved' (Marx, 1977: 174). Materialist conceptions for Marx are not abstract but concrete. Historical materialism underlines the contradictions and distortions of what is taken to be knowledge or science. This is especially the case in Marx and in Marxist theorisations of consciousness and ideology. However Marx did not entirely attend to or develop a theory of knowledge per se. This is evident in the misrecognition of the abstraction associated with money, where it is at the same time both material and 'sublime'. Knowledge in this sense, ontologically and epistemology was side stepped by Marx. Rather, Marx emphasised an appreciation of knowledge premised upon the primacy of understandings and assumptions about material and sensuous activity and nature.

Alfred Sohn-Rethel (1969, 1973, 1978), associated with the critical theory of the Frankfurt school, used historical materialism to critique knowledge. Through a historical materialist critique of knowledge, Sohn-Rethel revealed the epistemological implications of money and its association with abstractions of value. For Sohn-Rethel it was very much the case that money as 'physical matter has visibly become a mere carrier of its social function' (Sohn-Rethel, 1978: 59). It was through monetary exchange that Sohn-Rethel identified the 'real abstraction' where a manual or material action is given the form of thought. For capitalist production to be possible commodities have to be fetishised. This fetishisation occurs at the level of exchange where property changes status, when value is given, and a price is paid. In contrast, use value in

Sohn-Rethel's rendering is concerned only and entirely with the 'sense impressions' thus leaving the material nature of the object intact. Through exchange relations the material nature of the object takes on different status and is given value monetarily. Such exchange relations include action that is given the form of thought; hence exchange value. For Sohn-Rethel money as pure or 'real abstraction' points to the socialisation of independent thought or mental labour in capitalist commodity production.

Through his historical materialist critique of knowledge, Sohn-Rethel argued that the antithesis between mental and manual labour is a fundamental trait of all forms of class society. The different values attached to different knowledge, intellectual and manual, is for Sohn-Rethel connected to the fetishisation of commodities through exchange relations. Sohn-Rethel, by analysing the pure abstraction at the level of exchange, critiques scientific knowledge. For Sohn-Rethel:

the independent intellect arises as socialised thinking divided from individualised labour. It can neither prevent nor remedy man's [sic] loss of control, over the social process incurred on consequence of commodity production. On the contrary, it is the very corollary of a blind society. Society as ruled by economic law and by the emergence of independent thinking are both effects of the same cause. They are linked, not only in time, but causally. The rationality of the independent intellect can never be more than the 'indispensable light to enable man [sic] to live in a world plunged in darkness (Sohn-Rethel, 1973: 35).

Sohn-Rethel's theorisation of science and knowledge is embedded in an appreciation of commodity production in capitalist relations being premised upon the 'desocialisation' of manual labour. This desocialisation of manual labour occurs through a 'logic of appropriation' inherent to capitalist commodity production. The world is thus plunged into darkness because other ways of knowing, principally material and manual are obfuscated. Commodity exchange and production as a result become relations between strangers.

For Sohn-Rethel only when manual labour becomes re-socialised in the same ways as independent intellect and thinking can the division between the mental (head) and the manual (hand) be resolved. Resocialising manual labour involves collective forms of working in Sohn-Rethel's historically materialist theorisation of knowledge.

Exchange becomes the basis of society although not in the fetishised form of commodity production that characterises capitalist arrangements. Through such a resocialisation the truth of being, overcomes the truth of thinking in a historical materialist sense, where people's social existence more accurately is known to shape their consciousness. A resocialisation of manual labour would involve the dissolution of the mental and material division of labour thus overcoming hierarchies and distortions in knowing.

Historical materialism offers up an appreciation of the relationship between the material conditions that shape peoples lives and the connections to how people come to know the world and make sense of their lives. That ruling ideas are associated with the power of ruling class is further elaborated by Sohn-Rethel. Sohn-Rethel's critique underlines the 'logic of appropriation' that characterises capitalist commodity production and exchange. This logic exists as a consequence of the desocialisation of manual labour. Knowledge and capitalism involve contradictions and distortions where independent intellect, though socialised, is done so at the expense of the manual and material bases of knowing. Subsequently the offer of knowledge through education and schooling falls prey to these logics of appropriation and the associated patterns of power associated with intellectual knowing and its associated academicism.

Knowing in Education

The value of knowledge, and its worth socially, culturally and politically is mediated by what counts and is made to count. Nowhere is this more contested than in school education. The struggles for access to the opportunities made available through formal education and schooling are sites where knowledge and its value and worth are legitimated. British cultural studies research into 'really useful knowledge' (Johnson, 1981, 1983), has resonances with Sohn-Rethel's consideration of the division between intellectual and manual labour. 'Really useful knowledge' provides an important case in point about knowledge, subjective experience and the objective conditions that shape peoples access to, and the value they attach to different types of knowing and knowledge.

The development of 'really useful knowledge' in the nineteenth century was constructed by radical educationalists and the working-class

themselves in opposition to ruling class ideas of ‘useful knowledge’. Useful knowledge was knowledge ordained by the ruling classes as necessary for the civilising and socialising of the lower classes. Useful knowledge was what the ruling-classes wanted the ‘lesser’ classes to know and learn. Radicals and working-class educationalists opposed this notion of ‘useful knowledge’ by insisting on a notion of ‘really useful knowledge’. The ‘Really Useful Knowledge’ movement and the ideas associated with it provided a material basis for rethinking the value of knowledge and its purposes socially and politically. ‘Really useful knowledge involved...a range of resources for overcoming daily difficulties. It involved self-respect and self-confidence, which came from seeing your oppressions were systematic and were shared. It included practical skills but not just those wanted by employers’ (Johnston, 1983: 22). Really useful knowledge was derived directly from working-class experiences and culture, and from their lived experiences and their deep suspicion of ‘provided education’. There was recognition by radicals and the working-class alike that ‘provided education’ threatened subjection and represented the interests of the bosses, the factory owners, the church and the state.

Notions of knowledge associated with ‘Really Useful Knowledge’ were egalitarian in their conceptualisation of intelligence and ignorance. As one such radical of those times William Cobbett claimed that ‘men are not to be called ignorant merely because they cannot make upon paper certain marks with a pen, or because they do not know the meaning of such marks when made by others (quoted in Johnson, 1981: 13). The practical and utilitarian aspects of working-class education were understood as ‘unintellectualist’ or ‘unacademic’ where informality and oppositionality were important characteristics in such patterns of education. Johnson (1983) identified informality and practicality as key defining features of nineteenth century working-class education. This form of working-class education challenged the relations of knowledge as controlled by the ruling-class through ‘provided’ social relations of learning. These social relations of learning routinely read the actions, interactions and knowledge attached to and connected with the working-classes as having lesser or no value. Recently researchers of class and education have argued that debasements of ‘other’ ways of knowing are ‘premised upon the framing and the distribution of knowledge associated with the working-classes as a sophisticated defence of deficit theory (*i.e.*,

the limited capacities of lower-class and other subordinated groups)' (Livingstone and Sawchuk, 2004: 49).

What people come to learn and know and the knowledge they produce and exchange through schooling was, and continues to be refracted through a division of mental and manual labour. A social division of labour that not only founds class society, but structures and produces social inequalities and power (Brown, 1996). These structural inequalities are evidenced in the historically changing and multiple patterns of schooling. The remainder of this article explores just how the historical formation of mass schooling in Australia emerged through and is implicated in the differences and politics where some and not other knowledge is given value and credence. As a consequence some people and not 'others' are deemed as knowledgeable and intelligent. These 'others' who are consigned as unintelligent and ignorant are therefore made dependent upon those who apparently know better. Yet the working-classes who routinely have failure fixed on them by unjust education patterns and arrangements know best the limitations and exclusions inherent in the knowledge valued and exchanged through these patterns of schooling.

Patterns of Schooling

The emergence of secondary education in Australia occurred slowly in the first part of the twentieth century. Access to, and participation in elementary (primary) schooling was beginning to be cemented by the beginning of the century. Yet secondary schooling at this stage was still an exclusive experience for the elite and well resourced (Bessant, 1983; Barcan, 1980; Murray-Smith and Dare, 1987). The gradual expansion of secondary schooling would not become a reality for the many until the decades following the second-world war (Hannan, 2009). Changes in patterns of schooling toward mass secondary schooling are connected to shifts in Australia's social economic arrangements. Patterns of schooling shifted and changed and as this occurred changes to the types of knowledge on offer in secondary schooling were also made.

The relationship between church and state characterised elite early patterns of secondary schooling in Australia. Faith based schooling predominated in the early forms of secondary schooling. The relationship between faith and education was premised upon notions of moral

proprietary and the moral training of young people. Government continuing (secondary) schools were established more slowly. Church run secondary schools were in the majority (Selleck, 1982). Initially they were concerned to provide education to students who would enter universities. Establishing public government secondary schooling for all was fiercely opposed by the elite private schools that deplored secular education and viewed an increase in the provision secondary schooling as a threat and as 'socialist' (Barcan, 1980).

These early patterns of secondary schooling were also characterised by sectarian differences. Secondary schooling in this elite pattern of provision was organized by the Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Methodist, Church of England and the Catholic Church. These schools were to prepare the 'upper classes' as future Australian leaders. Overwhelmingly it was the children of the wealthy and socially prestigious who would matriculate. The creation of public secondary schooling more generally through state government high schools occurred much later because of the perceived threat they represented by those who controlled the elite denominational secondary schools. It was as a result of these prejudices that in many instances government secondary schools were initially established in country areas so as not to compete with metropolitan based denominational secondary schools (Selleck, 1982: 187).

From 1905 the establishment of a system of state secondary schools was premised upon a need to grow the industrial and agricultural strength of the Empire (Bessant, 1983: 55). The first state high schools were to emulate the 'private' schools, so that Melbourne Continuation School later to be renamed Melbourne High School began with an elite tone. This situation varies in degree from state to state in Australia. Yet the first state high schools like Sydney and Adelaide took on the moral and intellectual character of the elite denominational schools. This emulation can be seen as inevitable in an age where 'education for all' represented an ideal.

Despite the elite patterns of secondary schooling provision, in the first two decades of the twentieth century there was less opposition to technical education and the establishment of Technical Schools. The curriculum in these schools was to be distinct from the liberal education of the private and government secondary schools. Technical education in the form of Junior Technical Schools cemented the divisions between intellectual and manual knowing in secondary schooling. This divide

between those deemed to be worthy of intellectual scholarship and those afforded the opportunities of technical education persisted through much of the twentieth century.

For the first three decades of the twentieth century technical schools represented the major secondary schooling option available to working-people and their children. The expansion of secondary technical schooling occurred rapidly before the Second World War. The manual focus of secondary technical schools was understood as useful to industrial, economic and national growth. Technical schools also ensured the formation of ‘good workers’ (Rushbrook, 2010) necessary for industrial capitalist expansion. The knowledge made and exchanged through these schools was viewed as inferior to the knowledge on offer through elite schools.

After the Second World War secondary schooling dramatically expanded in terms of both student populations and the formation of government secondary suburban high schools. More often than not, this occurred initially through topping up primary schools. This ‘great expansion’ (Hannan, 2009) represented a curious historical irony. After the second world the emerging sizeable Australian middle-classes wanted secondary high schooling but the state didn't provide them and was then slow to do so. This is in direct contrast to the situation at the start of the twentieth century where the state sought to provide secondary education but was prevented by a combination of upper class interests and working-class suspicion of state sponsored and ‘provided’ schooling. The expansion of secondary schooling gained pace throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

Throughout the large part of twentieth century high schools and technical schools, along with the elite school system were the major institutional forms of secondary schooling (Bessant, 1983; Murray-Smith, 1987). This stratification picked up pace after the second world war with the opening of even more secondary high schools and technical schools. These moves would eventuate in the gradual accession from elite patterns of schooling to the mass levels that characterise secondary schooling in Australia today.

In the last few decades of the twentieth century the institutionalisation of comprehensive forms of schooling, premised upon notions of a common schooling experience that spoke more broadly to diverse social groups and identities, progressed. The idea of the comprehensive secondary

school from the 1970s on came to represent the ‘wave of the future’ (Campbell and Sherington, 2006).

Comprehensive schooling sought to overturn distinctions in knowing technically and generally. More importantly it was thought that in using education to prepare people for a changing economy comprehensive schooling offered a better arrangement. As one policy reformer of the day argued:

existing high and technical schools should be amalgamated to give all students access to a more comprehensive curriculum and to broaden the opportunities of students in technical schools. The workforce structure to which technical schools originally related no longer exists (Blackburn, 1985:51).

Reforms that brought about comprehensive patterns of schooling involved changes to the form and content of school curriculum. Comprehensive schooling emerged as a strategy in making possible ‘schooling for all’ (Hannan, 2008; Campbell and Sherington, 2006). It was argued that the purposes of technical schooling in preparing people for employment in factories and manufacturing was no longer needed given that these jobs would disappear. The formation of comprehensive secondary colleges occurred through the merging of secondary technical schools and public high schools and changed the knowledge on offer in secondary schooling.

The implementation and reinforcement of comprehensive patterns of schooling occurred in response to changes to the Australian economy and were enabled through industry restructuring. It was also at this time that the role of the secondary school in a young person’s life was being eclipsed by other cultural offerings. By the end of the twentieth century comprehensive secondary schooling saw increased levels of retention due to a changing labour market. The collapse of the youth labour market in the 1970 and 1980s directly resulted in increased school retention. It was also in these two decades that ‘youth culture’ emerged to differentiate generations and further challenge fixed notions of culture that would bear down on the way secondary schooling would be experienced.

Notions of the ‘new worker’ with ‘soft skills’ able to negotiate precarious employment situations abounds in the forms and patterns of schooling today. Comprehensive schools are now operating in and alongside and

within the emergence of international education markets. Young people in secondary schools today are routinely tested, learn about leadership and experience a variety of curriculum choices that shape how and what they can learn. Yet advantage continues to be repeated in patterns of schooling where some schools not all hoard the opportunities made available through schooling. The prizes of schooling continue to be concentrated in schools where privilege is the norm; in schools that are elite educationally, economically and socially and politically.

Schooling Historically and Materially

The social relations of schooling have emerged through a history where the church, the state, and now the 'market' affect divisions in the patterns of knowing that concentrate advantage and enable opportunities to be monopolised. In the relatively recent colonial past where schooling was an exclusive and elite experience, to today where schooling has become compulsory and provided at mass levels, educational inequalities persist through differentiated institutional forms and different schooling experiences shaped through the privileging and de-privileging of different forms and types of knowledge. Capitalism in Australia changed from an agrarian base to an industrial base and has more recently globalised financially. Patterns of schooling in Australia have changed in character alongside these changes.

Initially secondary schooling was characterised by an emphasis on moral training. The vast majority of convicts and settlers did not have access to schooling at this stage. Australia as a colony of the British Empire was a pastoral and agricultural economy. Knowing your place, morally and colonially was the focus of the schooling. The 'upper-classes' had access to secondary schools whereas elementary (primary) schooling was made available although not in any consistent manner for 'the rest'. This pattern of schooling was premised upon strong relations between the church and the state. Although church run, these schools received government assistance yet the role of state at this stage was minimal in education.

Federation saw the creation of the Australian nation-state as a member of the British Commonwealth. Along with this, state involvement in education increased. Schooling grew to become an important institutional form in the preparation of a working-class. This was especially the case

in technical schools. Governments across the new nation-state recognised the need for continuing education and technical education was the preliminary form of secondary schooling because it did not impinge upon the arrangements of elite secondary schooling. In 1901 in Victoria 66,000 people were employed in factories, this number almost doubled in 1912 to 116,000 (Bessant, 1983). Australia was transforming into an industrial and commercial economy where mining, manufacturing and commerce were developing at a rapid rate. Knowing for work, as instituted in technical schools for the working-classes, was premised upon a division of thinking from practical and manual work. The technical and general education division was made manifest through an economic commitment to schooling people in the different types of knowledge required for industrial development and expansion.

The expansion of secondary schooling increased rapidly after the Second World War. Throughout the twentieth century the building of a secondary schooling system was an important nation-building exercise. The creation of technical and high schools at the secondary level persisted into the late twentieth century and represented not only class differences premised upon differences in knowledge made available through different schools. These distinct forms of preparation made available in technical and high schools were tied to different education missions associated with different school institutions. Technical schooling could be described as 'learning by doing' (Crawford, 2009). The pedagogies underpinning technical schooling were premised upon approaches of 'making as thinking' (Sennett, 2008). Often the knowledge learned and exchanged in technical schools was discounted and meant students attending these schools were denied access to tertiary study at university.

The economy of the Australian nation-state in the twentieth century was a 'mixed economy' with state owned enterprises operating alongside private corporations. Government schools, technical and high schools operated alongside private and elite schools. This pattern was further reflected in the economy where state owned banks, power and telecommunication companies operated alongside private corporations and companies. In the latter part of the twentieth century changes to the secondary school curriculum in all Australian states resulted in the institutionalisation of comprehensive patterns of schooling. The common curriculum was central to remaking a secondary schooling no longer premised upon a distinction between technical and high schools but rather refashioned through a comprehensive approach. The emergence of

comprehensive secondary schooling was linked with new or ‘future’ oriented ways of conceptualising general education. A common schooling experience was linked to the ideas that the school system is the key to building a knowing social body where differences are useful for preparing people for life after school.

Comprehensive schooling was understood as a necessity for an economy that was changing. These changes involved deindustrialization where the jobs that technical schools prepared people for were unlikely to exist. The pedagogic value of educating people in secondary technical schooling through practice, craft and making things gave way to classroom-oriented learning. The formation of comprehensive schooling can now be seen as a precondition to the eventual marketisation of schooling. Comprehensive schooling was presented through discourses of access, and the opening up education opportunities through processes of inclusion.

Along with the emergence of comprehensive secondary schooling large scale national economic restructuring in the Australian economy and society commenced. Privatisation, deregulation and award restructuring radically reformed Australia from an industrial to a post-industrial economy. Globalisation economically has resulted in changes to the cultural and social landscapes of Australia. So much so that today schooling and education have become part of an industry, where education markets abound. Even in the free, secular and compulsory government system of schools. Fee paying international students in secondary schools attest to this market logic. From patterns of church and state involvement in schools, the state eclipsed church control to give way today to ‘market control’. This market is international, resulting in schools in country or urban Australia being measured and compared to schools on other parts of the planet. Rankings and measures developed elsewhere now shape and affect patterns of schooling in Australia.

Yet these patterns of schooling, from elite, to streamed technical and high schooling to comprehensive schools failed in their own ways to deliver on what many people want for their communities and their relatives and friends, that is, ‘really useful knowledge’. This is especially the case in terms of the knowledge made available and provided in schools, be they ‘good schools’ or not so good schools. While elite schooling was restrictive in its selectivity with regard to admission the culture of schooling manifested therein impacted greatly on how mass schooling

emerged in Australia. These elite schools together with a small number of select public schools have been at the forefront of the commodification of schooling and the proliferation of ideologies about what constitutes a ‘good school’.

Conclusion

Like the eighteenth and nineteenth century struggle over useful knowledge and really useful knowledge schooling today in Australia is premised upon some people learning and knowing entitlement with the vast majority of school students learning to acquiesce and submit to general boredom or to alternatively refuse and resist the mediocrities of mass secondary schooling. This article has sought to reveal through a historical materialist explanation how changing patterns of schooling in Australia continue to ensure the advantage of some and not all by a politics where some knowledge and not others is given credence. This is done by discounting knowledges associated with the working-classes while privileging knowledges deemed worthy by the privileged.

Having or not having an education has nothing much in common with having a good or mediocre schooling for young people in the twenty first century. Schooling has fast become an alien experience to the everyday contexts and conditions that young people find themselves living through in spite of being a mass experience required of them on a compulsory basis. Marx explained in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* that, ‘science is only real science when it starts from sense-experience in the dual form of sense perception and sensuous need, in other words when it starts from nature’ (Marx, 1977, p.94).

Schooling today if it were to operate in times and spaces from the sense perceptions and sensuous needs of young people as they are, not as consumers in an education market who encounter a world mediated through virtual contexts and endless flows of information would make it really useful. With the Internet, information is free yet in secondary schooling some knowledges and not others exacts a high price. It is only really useful knowledge that will prepare young people to discern what is real, actual and necessary for their collective freedom. This knowledge is necessarily intellectual and manual. Socialising mental and manual ways of knowing is central to a repurposing of schooling for contemporary times. Until intellectual and manual forms of knowing are made available

to all students the idea that full participation in secondary schooling will benefit all people and society will remain an ideology. A market one at that.

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