I think that the wide breadth of subjects available fits with the enormous variety of personalities. I found it amazing to be tested on my acting ability in Drama, and my critical thinking in History Extension. For this reason, Australian education is not exactly “standardised” in that we can choose our subjects to explore our options.

Cooper Forsyth: I do not think that the problem really lies in education at all. Most of my teachers were fantastic, and almost always put in extraordinary amounts of passionate work, long outside of school hours. As I said before, the problem is not what is being taught either. Rethinking exams to make the work less contrived, as Christina suggested, is certainly important, but I think that the core issue is not the education system, but the system that it appears to be for: capitalism. As long as market pressures continue to increase the anxiety to invest in one’s human capital, it becomes harder and harder to see education as being for anything else; and unrealistic to expect anything better. It is essentially a hyperproletarianisation of learning, so tweaking the school system is unlikely to solve the problem.

Conclusions for the history of education

This reading of Malcolm Harris’s *Kids These Days* helps point to some emergent pathways that historians of education might further explore. Striking themes include parallels between school and work, and the possibility of including schooling among our historical explorations of children’s labour in the history of capitalism. Our reading of the book also reveals relationships between pedagogical and economic structures that deserve a more detailed historical analysis. And finally, observations about the ways that young people are neither persuaded by every piece of advice, policy development nor examination system points to a need to continue to develop theories and methodologies that better acknowledge student agency in the history of education.

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The Good University: what Universities Actually do and why it’s Time for Radical Change

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Raewyn Connell's work needs no introduction to readers of *History of Education Review*. The development of class consciousness among school children was one of Connell's first – and remarkably resilient – contributions to the field, published in *Ruling Class, Ruling Culture* in 1977. There have been many related contributions since and these, alongside Connell's innovations in establishing, with colleagues, the Free University in 1968 make her an important historical figure, as well as influential author, in the history of education.

It was a delight then, to read Connell's new book "The Good University". In each chapter I had that rare and slightly painful sense of longing associated with the sentiment "Oh, how I wish I could have written *this*". The book draws on Connell's significant research experience in education and sociology and her experiences as a union member and activist. It is a product of both hard work and a long career, and is imbued with Connell's characteristic intelligence combined with her commitment to our shared well-being.

Connell's introduction establishes the impressively international scope of "The Good University", positioning the book against the literature offered by university managers from Harvard's Derek Bok to Melbourne's Glyn Davis whose "relentless cheerfulness", she suggests, seeks to "out-Bok Bok" (p. 3). By contrast to the pronouncements from above by these established senior elites, Connell draws case studies and inspiration from a truly global perspective which, in keeping with her argument posited in the influential monograph "Southern Theory", actively privileges the global south. Universities in South Africa, India, South America and the Pacific are accorded as much a place in Connell's history of universities as those in the metropole. More, in fact.

Connell consistently places university workers at the centre of the good university – and not just academics. Cleaning staff, grounds people, caterers, admissions centre staff and clerical officers are as central to the running of these places as the scholars whose research and teaching are its core business. Work, Connell argues, is central to understanding the university. It is, moreover, core to its reform.

In positioning work as the central thing to be understood, Connell's first chapters focus on what research is (and should be), what teaching is (and could be) and the experiences of university workers (and how that ought to change). These chapters take the tasks that university workers perform seriously. They are impressively historicised, but the narrative of the book looks to contemporary reform, grounded in collective action by university workers.

"The Good University" is deeply critical of the university from several perspectives: its production of privilege, its role in imperial power, its exploitation of university workers and the growing power of university managers. And yet Connell remains inexorably optimistic about the important changes that a good university system could accomplish in shaping a better the world. The middle three chapters recount the extractive process by which the intellectual metropole (Harvard, Cambridge, Oxford etc.) was established, the unfair privileges that a university education has conferred and the consequences of the neoliberal university for job security, work performance and worker satisfaction. Some of these arguments will be familiar to those with prior knowledge of Connell's earlier work, though it is wonderful to have it all clustered here, specifically focused on the modern university.

The chapter "Universities of Hope", like "Southern Theory", scours the history of the university for case studies of hope, especially in the global south. This excellent chapter does not offer any of these as one-size-fits-all models to fix the modern university's malaise, however. Each solution, Connell points out, was specific to its context. The work of reforming the university must be done by us all collectively, in our specific places.

This is not to suggest that Connell is short on universal frameworks with which to evaluate a good university. In fact, she offers explicit criteria which, upon reading, seem so

obvious it is hard to understand why we have not been using these before. A good university is democratic in its purpose and management; engaged with communities and students; truthful in its teaching, research and (contrary to the growing managerialist lies increasingly associated with university marketing) its presentation of the purpose and value of the institution itself; nourishing of the conditions for creativity in the production of knowledge, for both students and researchers; and sustainable over the long run – and looks to the very long run – organisationally, environmentally and economically. These things ought not be controversial nor, indeed, hard to attain.

"The Good University", for all its relevance and usefulness to educational historians, is not really intended for us. It has been written for university workers, who will no doubt love it. The book captures their experience without whinging about it, it takes their work seriously, without romanticising it, and it makes sensible, achievable recommendations on the future of the university. While I would wish that university managers will read it and take Connell's advice to heart, Connell does not address them. Instead, the task of university reform is ours collectively – and it is in our collective work that hope for the future of the university properly resides.

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