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GAINING TRACTION THROUGH POLICY ALLIANCES: THE CALCULATION OF FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

Purpose

- ...to question the process and logic of a canonization which has established these discourses in a position of exemplary authority..... to begin the analysis of the forces and procedures that have placed the *majority of these major* discourses in the *major* position which they have acquired, all the while covering over, reducing, or marginalizing the others, one must pay attention to what the say and what they do. Derrida, J, 1997, *Politics of Friendship*, Verso, London New York. p. 229
- Analysis of the official policy discourses in Dawkins and Nelson eras

Securing the Good



- ... we have realised that, if our industry is to be internationally competitive, it will need a highly skilled workforce not only possessing the skills currently required by employers, but also capable of responding quickly to the demands created by technological and structural change. To achieve a workforce of this calibre will require a more efficient and responsive education and training system which is more closely attuned to the needs of industry (Dawkins, J, OECD 1989).

Securing the Dawkins VET order

- Dominant alliance was business / industry and unions with the government through the Prices and Incomes Accord bringing the interests of capital and labour together
- Co-produced the economic rationale for education
- In education, institutionalised through NTB, NBEET and ANTA within what was termed the tripartite approach

- Institutionalised and further legitimated the good through the sovereignty of Parliament
- Reworking of traditional relationships, confirming ways of knowing of those within the alliance and limiting contests
- Building and shaping ongoing relationships, including the positioning of educators

Educators

- I held the view that there was a kind of discontinuity between education policy and what was then seen as training and labour market programs. That was at a time when, well I don't want to be too unkind to them, but there was a feeling among some of the educationalists that their job of providing education was really something that was unrelated to the real world of work. [Dawkins interview] p.2
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Securing the Nelson Good

- Continued economic good around free market and privatization
- Conservative social order based on individual, nation, and Australian values
- VET and Education broadly within whole of government approach
 - A national approach to governance
 - Furthering privatization and the development of an education market
 - Australian values around hard work and individual responsibility

The abolition of ANTA

- We are bringing together six **delivery agencies** under departmental oversight and moving the responsibilities of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) [.....] **back** to the departments.
- The future of these 11 agencies represents the start of a process of regeneration. It is a process designed to clarify the lines of authority, to establish responsibility for decision making and to enhance ministerial (and secretarial accountability.)
Peter Shergold, Secretary, Department of Prime Minister And Cabinet, June 2005

- Removed imitational alliances
- Removed statutory authorities - ANTA
- Establishment of ministerial corporations under the Corporations Act
 - Erased accountability to Parliament and Judiciary
- Transforming relationships within the traditions of governance
 - Ministerialisation
- Alliances as personal relationships, lobby groups and the media

The conquering of enemies

- State governments
 - Historical arrangement that impeded national interest
 - 'failed to implement necessary changes'
- Teachers
 - 'systematic failure between the classroom and Australian government policy'
 - Quality and performance – an element of the market
- Unions
 - Sponsored failures
- 'fangs of the left' and 'fashionable ideologies'
- Sociology
- Critical literacy

Alliances and Enemies

- The conserving force of producing oppositional relationships that maintain boundaries around the good and limits possibilities of being otherwise – education 'is'
- Are relations of force that inaugurate and secure hierarchies of knowing and knowers
- The emphasis on the 'same' or the 'common' is violent as it erases complexity and difference, ways of knowing otherwise and the unforeseen
- Understanding education policy as a political and ethical force
- The traction provided by establishing a configuration of relations whether they be friends or enemies is momentary while the next formation comes into play