

*Postgraduate Studies in the Humanities in Australia.* By Sir Keith Hancock, P. H. Partridge, R. W. V. Elliott. Occasional Paper Number II, Australian Humanities Research Council, Sydney University Press, 1967.

THIS group of three papers might be useful as required reading for members of Arts faculties. It represents the kind of thinking-aloud often performed but very rarely published in New Zealand. It touches on very many problems facing teachers of the humanities — including social sciences — here as elsewhere.

Professor Elliott of Flinders University expresses in a rather old-fashioned way rather old-fashioned views on the dangers of premature post-graduate research and pressure on scholars to publish. Both he and Professor Partridge of the A.N.U. ask how the master's degree can be rescued from downgrading or disrespect as the Ph.D. comes to supersede it as the principal post-graduate research degree. In Australia, as in New Zealand, most post-graduate research, especially in history, was until recently performed in preparation for writing a master's thesis. Professor Partridge suggests the need for a master's degree not wholly consisting of 'original' and specialised research. He raises other questions which concern New Zealand, too, such as whether our students should take their doctorates at home or abroad. His paper offers the balanced views of a philosopher and administrator.

Sir Keith Hancock, now University Fellow, A.N.U., republishes his paper, 'Ordeal by Thesis'. He has always been sceptical about doctorates but here, while retaining an ironic attitude towards the 'exhaustive and exhausting exposition of next to nothing' in theses, he concedes the necessity of training in techniques. He recognises the value of inter-disciplinary seminars, such as those he himself directed at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, in widening the horizons of researchers. Above all he stresses the need for research to spring from imagination as well as theoretical resources. Who does not dread the myopic researcher who has found some unused papers and is about to proffer a new 'contribution' to our knowledge of trivia? He asks whether our students' love of music or painting may not replace the civilising and imaginative stimulus of knowledge of Aeschylus in Greek or the Bible in English.

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