Arts Policy Bodies and Arts Values in the Face of Change

The world culture in phase transition

The media present us with a picture of extraordinary change across the world.

There is a snowballing economic change in virtually the entire Asian region. Given that its population is double that of the "First World", this up-ends the world economic balance. Competition from these low wage and increasingly sophisticated economies, along with their own adoption of new technologies, is creating in the advanced economies major redistributions of wealth, and restructuring of the labour market and the nature of work.

The Cold War has disappeared as the main organising force of world geopolitics. With it have gone the centrally organised economies of Eastern bloc and the credibility of that economic model. Democracies emerge from overthrown tyrannies, but their power over their own affairs is compromised by ineptitude and inheritance. National autonomy generally is threatened by domineering transnational companies, a world market in money and goods, and international media and communications systems which can elude national regulation. 47 of the world's 100 largest economies are transnational corporations. Philip Morris is bigger than New Zealand.

Science and technology advance with ever greater speed, and are utilised more and more broadly. Nothing is untouched. Medical advances extend the average life-span but abet an increase in world population which crowds the ecosystem and causes civil violence and species extinction. Computers extend powers of understanding and control. Through robotics they increase productive efficiency and extinction of unskilled labour...

The point does not need to be elaborated further. These are matters of common knowledge.

In the terms of complexity theory, this seems to be a world of phase transitions and emergence phenomena. That is to say that there is more here than rapid and pervasive linear change. Some new structures have the character of emergence; they are more than simply the sum of their constituents, and alter radically the sector of the culture of which they are a part.

Complexity theory offers some tools to test this characterisation. The phenomena of phase transition and emergence at the edge of chaos, the drift of punctuations of an evolutionary equilibrium capped by a gateway event, and the operation of power laws, seem to be of the same family. Power laws are empirical laws (i.e. observed regularities so far lacking explanation) describing mathematically some proportionality among members of a class. So, the power of earthquakes has been shown to be in an inverse proportion to their frequency. If a steady drizzle of falling sand builds a sand pile, the sides eventually become unstable and small avalanches break away. There will be many small avalanches and occasional big ones, and the frequency will vary inversely with the size. Many systems in nature organise themselves in this way in response to a steady input of energy. "They become a mass of intricately interlocking subsystems just barely on the edge of criticality - with breakdowns of all sizes ripping through and rearranging things just often enough to keep them poised on the edge." (Wardrop, p.305).

In a cultural system, evidence of the operation of a power law might indicate change of a profound kind. It might even have some predictive quality: a building series of small changes in a particular field might lead one to expect a dramatic gateway event, the emergence of something huge and unexpected.

The greenhouse effect might be seen as an emergence phenomenon, an unexpected consequence of a myriad of supposedly positive adaptations of the human race to its earthly dilemmas. It may turn out to be a gateway event of an unwelcome kind with outcomes disastrous to the biosphere, retroactively redefining those industrial inventions as maladaptations at the planetary level. The transnational corporations seek for themselves new and higher levels of order, but for governments they create disorder, and in due course we might expect governmental counterplays of a new kind to mitigate the

"chaos". The European Union might be seen as a new form of government impelled in part by the incremental changes in corporate ecology and the rising power of transnational corporations. Incremental discoveries in digital communications technologies have led to the convergence of the media, computer and telecommunications industries, creating new types of organisational structure in which previously separate skills and spheres of interest combine at a new, higher level. It is in the nature of this industry that there is intense prognostication about its future development, but we can be sure that many of the present predictions will turn out to be dramatically wrong because this level of technological, industrial and societal change must produce emergence phenomena which are not predictable.

In popular music there is a curious situation where interest in the main rock genre has diminished and there is a fracturing of popular taste to include jazz, world music styles and so on. Over the past forty years there has been an increasing intrusion of electronic and computer technology into the production of popular music, with incremental effects on sound and musical content. Among the styles now claiming an audience is a music produced mainly by computer which inverts many of the givens of popular music. It is not primarily vocal. Instead of the three-minute track, it can go on for hours unbroken. Some of the sounds are quite abstract - i.e. they cannot be identified with a particular type of source such as a musical instrument, they don't form part of a tune; they are a bit like an element of an abstract painting. There is a sort of emergence phenomenon here - a new, coherent style with a character going beyond that of the small changes which led to it. Whether it is a "gateway" event in the context of popular music perhaps depends on how popular it becomes and what it leads to. It might be another small step in the direction of some so far unimagined popular music.

With this level of change and instability, there is a greater possibility for small incidents to have disproportionately large effects. Whether that is a danger or an opportunity depends perhaps on one's viewpoint as winner or victim. The opportunity is to gain dominance in aspects of new power or technological arrangements and "lock in" protocols of special unilateral benefit.

What can be said about the effect of all this change on the individual?

The cultural, political, social, economic change at base is driven by technological change. That change is driven by small advances in thousands of technological specialties.

Recalling the various concepts of the first chapter: e.g. the complex adaptive system's necessity to discover pattern and regularity in its environment, evolution to ever higher, ever more complex levels, the drive towards that special zone between order and disorder called the edge of chaos, and just plain common sense, one can see that the people with specialist skills who are involved in scientific research and technological innovation are motivated to add order to the world. They confront the buzzing confusion on the chaotic side of the edge of chaos, discover pattern and regularity, develop laws and invent human uses.

While each of these advances adds order to the subjective world of its maker, the cumulative effect for the rest of us is very mixed. The improved operation of something familiar is easy to accept: push-button digitized telephone dialling saves time, and wear on the index finger. The advent of computerised accounting is a joy for accountants, a cause for unease among older people who are not so far disadvantaged but do not understand computers, and the direct source of distress among bank clerks who have lost their jobs as a result.

These small, orderly changes do not simply have an additive effect. They interact, both in expected and surprising ways, and from their sum new wholes appear. If such a whole displays emergent properties, by definition the populace has something quite new and strange to get used to. So the cumulative effect of all these small changes, orderly in themselves, paradoxically must be to induce in a populace which does not understand them a sense of turmoil, of change run riot. The world has lurched towards what is perceived as chaos and the motivation must be to pull back towards order.

The individual response is a matter of personality and circumstances. The push-button phone is easy to comprehend and use and was incorporated without difficulty into ordinary living. Some innovations are more difficult but motivate people to make an effort of understanding because of the special benefit they bring. The French say that the success of the Minitel interactive communications system resulted in part from the willingness of many Frenchmen to set aside their technophobia in order to access the (unplanned) pornography listings

If survival requires coming to terms with some aspect of the new technologies, then people are forced to a choice. The bold may welcome it; many will fear it. But given the flood of change, where people retain discretion it would not be surprising to discover avoidance or withdrawal to the old and familiar.

In attempting to anticipate the influences on the arts to the year 2010, we therefore might expect that the artists who are engaged with new technologies will push ahead with their specialties, moving towards greater complexity, creating new conceptual building blocks and incorporating them in new more artistic theories and practices. At the same time, we might expect that the general populace will find much of this innovation utterly baffling and without interest except where it is brought back to be incorporated painlessly in something familiar.

For the general population, arts consumption is one of the few aspects of life in which choices are totally a matter of personal prerogative and taste and are made only for the purpose of personal satisfaction. If the populace feels a sense of optimism and control of its place in the world, it has a basis for daring and experimentation in the arts, as was the case in the 1960s. If it is overwhelmed by change and perceived chaos and disorder in the world at large, in its arts consumption it can compensate by withdrawal to safe territory.

Does this explain why Australian popular radio stations are presenting a diet of hit tunes from past decades, and why living bands complain that they cannot gain any radio exposure? Does it explain the taste for simple solutions in ever more violent popular movies, where hostile forces are subdued by fantasy versions of the technology that in real life is as likely to subjugate the audience? Does it partly explain the return to old forms in post-modernism, with the theoretical explanations sometimes seeming an almost embarrassed justification for withdrawing from the front line of innovation?

Probably over the next fifteen years the general populace's inclination towards innovation will be sated by new and more spectacular deliveries of entertainment, easily accommodated, and other less palatable developments which must be absorbed for survival. While for a minority technology is a friend, the general desire for artistic innovation per se may well be subdued.

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We have had a rather lengthy prologue, looking at some theories of causality that might be suited to speculation about the future of the arts. Then, a few pages to set the stage.

ACT ONE.. The world. A time of change and upheaval.

Them: No option now but to see whether there's a proper play to put on it.

Me: What's really at stake in this play?

The assignment is to provide information and insight that will assist in planning for the arts in the medium term.

Sounds gripping. Why should we want to plan for the arts? Why can't the arts look after themselves?

They've been saying for decades that they cannot survive from the market alone, without surrendering their standards and integrity and any hope for innovation. We bought the story and gave government support. It seems to have helped them.

But *planning* for the arts? We don't need a bunch of bureaucrats taking over the shop.

There's only so much money, and it will have to be given to some artists and not others. We need to know the best way to do it. You can't be suggesting that the more ignorant you keep us the better we will do our job?

With the world in such upheaval, the pressure for change in the arts must be inexorable. Aren't planning authorities a bit redundant?

Perhaps it's not inexorable. You just finished telling us how most of the population is listening to old tunes. We want to know what we're facing over the next few years. What will happen generally in the arts and specifically in the different art forms? Will there be new art forms? What do we do about them? Who are the audiences and where? What will have to be done about arts education? What will be the effect of the new media and the communications revolution? What can we expect from

governments? How do we play our hand internationally? What is the best possible way for policy and funding bodies to help? Above all, do you want this gig or not?!

I guess...

Fine. We'll expect the first draft next week.

I might have to skip some bits...

The people whose interests you left out will call us. They'll want to have a conversation. We'll give them your number.

Yes. Very organic, I'm sure...

The subject matter of the rest of the book.

This chapter will elaborate a number of propositions concerning issues which will arise for arts planning and/or funding bodies as a result of changes characterised at the beginning of the chapter.

The next chapter will present a view of the conditions for the development of the arts based on the theory of complex adaptive systems and especially its treatment of evolution and learning.

Subsequent chapters deal more conventionally with the influence of a number of factors on the probable circumstances of the arts:

- some possible effects of changing Australian demographics on the supply of and demand for the arts;

- the nature of the communications highway, and how it could affect the dissemination of the arts and engender new art forms;

- influences of some new technologies on arts practice and philosophy;

- prospects for Australian arts internationally through tourism and export, and a proposal for a special institute to assist Australia and some Asian countries to find an accommodation with each other;

- finally, the responsibility for arts planners in addressing threats to the biosphere.

Propositions in this chapter

This chapter could be summarised briefly in the following propositions.

- That in order to deal effectively with rapid change in the arts, a policy body must seek grounding in agreements about fundamental arts values by which innovations are assessed. These could then be the basis for enquiry about the nature of unfamiliar, unconventional or propagandised artifacts, avoiding stereotyping and unexamined acceptance or dismissal.

- That generational change will put heritage arts at risk, leading possibly to official advocacy of the heritage arts as threatened forms.

- That generational change might put at risk the continuation of fundamental arts values in new art.

- That policy bodies might consider encouraging the development of forms based on the popular arts, so that transmission of fundamental values continues and reaches a large part of the community whether or not heritage forms survive

- That a new policy emphasis on developing the arts as an industry will favour commercial values over arts values, so putting the latter at risk.

- That an S-curve analysis might demonstrate that this is more than passing fashion, and that therefore policy bodies might be advised to find ways to manoeuvre so that necessary accommodations are made and the arts take advantage of the larger policy directions of government, but that arts values are compromised as little as possible in the process.

- That policy bodies will be faced with many other dilemmas, resulting for example from the population shifts to regions, the increasing electronic vs. live dissemination of the arts, resourcing and choosing between conflicting paths in arts education, and equity issues concerning provision for an ageing population, for an unemployed underclass, for multicultural arts, Aboriginal artists and, perhaps but perhaps not, women.

- That policy bodies will need to review their internal preparedness to deal with change.

- That the most worthwhile objectives for an arts funding body go beyond a case by case sponsorship of particular arts outcomes to a larger view of what it is that we want the arts to do for us; it is especially important that in a time of rapid change this purpose is understood and the means to achieving it are agreed.

Arts policy bodies and arts values in the face of change

Old agreements about the qualities of artistic excellence have fractured

Arts planning and funding bodies have to allocate scarce resources among competing artistic uses. With changing values in the population engendered by radical change in many social and economic structures, claims of artistic validity from hundreds of directions - from the comic strip to the country and western song to circus gymnastics to Shakespeare, and new, emergent art forms based on technological innovations and radical aesthetic creeds, what are the qualities on which they will base these decisions?

Thirty years ago in Australia, there would have been general agreement that Western classical music was at the top of a hierarchy of musical styles in the depth and range of its expression and the sophistication and complexity of its methods. Even musicians in other Western styles subscribed to that view. Assessments of musical merit were simplified conceptually by reference to classical music as the standard, the most advanced form of the supposedly "universal language" of music. Further, there was a prevailing notion of progress in the arts, a sort of linear evolution which saw a developmental line running through the Germanic composers - the Bachs, Beethoven, Brahms, Strauss, Schonberg, for instance - and into the present with post-WW2 modernism. The place of classical music was therefore assured into the future. A commitment to this construction tended to accommodate inconveniences such as impressionism or neo-classicism as departures from the true faith or of peripheral interest.

One can see a resemblance to the linearity of classical economics, where the concept of decreasing returns sees aberrations from a norm as temporary disturbances which will fade into a restored balance and equilibrium. It was consistent also with the assimilationist approach to migration and culture; it was the duty of migrants to give up their inherited culture in favour of a dominant (mono)culture of their new country. And programs of cultural advancement for the poor were based on the proposition that they should be given an opportunity to experience the fine art works preferred by those more fortunate in wealth and education.

While probably there are still adherents of the concept of linear progress among contemporary classical musicians, the hegemony of modernism has fractured and there are now contending or, at least, co-existing, styles descending from the classical tradition. But no-one could believe any longer in music as a universal language, nor that Western classical music is the sole or finest repository of the musical virtues. We know about the complex musics of India, Indonesia, Africa. We also know about the folk musics of everywhere. And in congruence with the ascendancy of pluralism in the politico/social world, we know that these musics can better be understood according to their own criteria in their own contexts. Criteria of "excellence" have been adapted accordingly.

The community arts movement commits itself to the view that the delivery of professional arts to a passively consuming audience at the community level is not only not enough; it is almost beside the point. Community members, as many of them as possible, must be producers of art. In making this art, their task is to express, in their own ways, their personal and community circumstances. This, says the movement, is the true art of Australia. Value is attached to such content, sometimes alongside, sometimes instead of the received values of artistic excellence.

The popular arts press their case. Pop music is reviewed in the daily press in similar terms to classical music and jazz. There is a sort of impulse towards gentrification as popular art forms - music, pulp fiction, comic strips, even television commercials - seek approbation as art.

Add to these incursions into the comfortable certainties of thirty years ago the new artistic forms based on new technologies? In what do the artistic qualities reside in a highly crafted interactive CDI which is completed by some sort of contribution from the amateur player? Is this form art or entertainment? Is it education because of the amateur involvement? If it is art, by what criteria is it *good* art? Is this an art *form*? How do we compare its merits with those of a more established form?

Is it *our* responsibility to fund this form? What is the appropriate arts policy and funding response to all of these changes?

The confusion has not been fully addressed at the policy level

Let us briefly look at the application of some Australia Council policies that respond to the advent of competing arts values. The Council has had a requirement that a percentage of grant funds should be assigned to "multicultural" projects, i.e. projects supporting the official policy of multiculturalism, usually involving one ethnic art form. In music, this translates into assistance, for instance, of performances of Indian music, or commissions for compositions in the Greek style. The criteria for assessment are, as the writer understands it, contextual. Is this performance of Indian music a good one by the standards of the style? However, given that there is a task here of assigning scarce funds between competing applicants, what is the artistic basis for a decision between funding this performance of Indian music against that performance of Macedonian music? Or, for instance, how to decide between an excellent performance in an impoverised folk music style or an ephemeral popular style and a poor performance in a high art style from yet another culture? To my knowledge there is no engagement with this issue.

If the funding policy is primarily about equity objectives, then such an engagement is obviated by giving money equally or proportionately to art form representatives of ethnic population groups. But if it truly is about excellence, doesn't there have to be some consideration of the relative merits of styles? There is no universal language of music, and the power of a musical utterance ultimately cannot exceed the resources of the language it uses. Would it not be extraordinary if the tale of *Hamlet* could be told as powerfully in Pidgin, even Pidgin transcended, as in Shakespearian English?

Not to pretend that this question is easy to answer, or answerable at all. But ironically, the forces for democratisation press in to forbid it being asked. It is acceptable for reviews of popular music to quote with admiration lyrics which in a poetic context would be worse than doggerel. (There's a word we don't see much these days.) It is very risky to question publicly the claims to artistic seriousness of an exploitative lowest common denominator art of whatever form; that would be elitist.

And yet, from another stance, popular music is music, pulp fiction is an exercise of the imagination: they therefore are art. While in some of its funding activities the Australia Council decisions can be seen to be governed by exclusionary value-based criteria, when it assembles statistics on Australian cultural activity, any musician is included regardless of musical style. Any actor is included, whether employed in a theatre or a soap opera. The Australian Bureau of Statistics, which had assistance from the Australia Council in formulating its protocols, casts an even wider net. Publishing/writing employment, for instance, includes journalists and editors. Television employment includes everyone involved in the operation of television stations or provision of product to them.

There was a general perception in arts circles that the arts were missing from television - even from the government networks, with their official mission to support Australian culture. Recent Australian Broadcasting Authority figures show that in 1990-92 the number of hours of broadcasting of the arts by the commercial channels collectively was - zero. (The ABA proposes to take care of the problem by dropping the requirement.) The Australia Council developed various strategies to have the arts included in television programming.

But by its other inclusive criteria, isn't all television programming "the arts"? Or at least all programming excepting news, current affairs, sport and chat? (and many would be willing to argue that point!). All the music and drama, including the films and soaps, must be art, and they take up a very large percentage of program time. What is the arts programming that should be added? (Perhaps we know it is art if it is subsidised?)

In sum, the eligibility of an activity or object to be accepted as "art" might depend on more or less traditional criteria of excellence, or on a political argument, or on a similarity to activities traditionally defined as art but with issues of quality considered only in narrow context, or on a desire to make the arts industry appear as large and consequential as possible. There seems to be great confusion abroad, with the possibility that policy decisions are made in response to political pressures without adequate consideration of artistic issues, and important aspects of the discussion off-limits due to concerns about political correctness.

Why am I trailing my foot in these piranha-infested waters?

Proposition: dealing effectively with change requires an agreement about fundamental arts values

A world in phase transition will present arts policy and funding bodies with continuing change and ever-widening diversity. Existing mainstream art forms can be expected to take unexpected turns. Popular forms will continue to agitate for support, and the traditional reasons for refusing it may have less and less agreement from the political establishment. Ethnically based forms will claim interest, perhaps not only for artistic or political reasons but because of the new wealth of Asian neighbours. The avant garde may not grow directly from current traditions, and will pop up in unanticipated places in forms for which there are no agreed criteria of excellence.

Of course, there are strong arguments for making funding decisions on equity or political or other grounds. Fund the use of the arts as an alternative to drug addiction because of the obvious benefits to society and the individuals involved. (But in such a program, success can be counted every time you can get an addict to pick up a guitar or a paint-brush instead of a needle. It really doesn't matter what he plays on the guitar, or paints.) Fund an ethnic art form, good, bad or indifferent, because it is important to its community. We will return later to such issues.

In the world hypothesised here, funding bodies they will be confronted with a succession of novel actualities and possibilities, and concerning funding, if not policy, will have to make choices in a zero sum game. They cannot afford to hang on inappropriately to criteria particular to traditional forms, or even familiar innovations. They will have to be far-sighted and extremely flexible.

But if they are primarily responsible for *arts* development, then their responses must centre upon arts values. In the circumstance, they must be able to plant their feet firmly on some bedrock assumptions about the nature of the arts. *They probably have to engage with the most fundamental questions of the nature, purpose and value of the arts,* and so be able to assess whether and how these manifest in the many instances presented for support..

The challenge to heritage arts: generational change could drastically reduce the audience and put the art at risk

We have noted earlier that given a situation where change floods society as a whole and its members as individuals, whether they want it or no, it is easy to imagine that in an area of their lives in which they have choice - viz. of that which they will consume - they will opt for the familiar and comfortable. In the arts, this could mean *inter alia* a new surge of support for heritage arts.

On the other hand, there are trends which could lead to the extinction of the heritage arts. There are those who complain already that most people in the population do not have any depth of knowledge about the European cultural origins of our mainstream culture. There are other Australians of non-European origin who fear that their young people have lost contact with the culture of their former homelands.

Consider a scenario in which this loss could be exacerbated as the nature of contemporary culture becomes increasingly discontinuous with traditions, often in effect displacing them. If I may give an example from music again: the popular music of forty years ago - Frank Sinatra with the Nelson Riddle Orchestra, for instance - was continuous in many ways with the classical music most often heard at the time. The instrumentation of the Nelson Riddle orchestra was not unlike that used for orchestral performances of Tchaikowsky. The melodic and harmonic structures, although more complex and extended for classical music, were of the same family. Indeed, every so often a theme from a classical work would be simplified and regularised and become a hit parade success. If a young person had heard nothing but popular music all his or her life, and then was confronted with a performance of Tchaikowsky, there were sufficient common elements to allow a fairly easy leap of understanding.

Compare this with the situation now. A young person raised on rock music, or the current dance music which might be totally of electronic origin, lives in a world mostly made up of electronically manipulated voice, guitar, saxophone, drum, and synthesizer sound. The harmonic syntax is different, musical structures are different, instruments, timbres, volume levels are different. A first exposure to classical music could seem like a trip to another planet, or even more distant, the world of his or her parents. Add to that the difference in ambience between the classical concert hall and its norms of behaviour and performance presentation, and the pub or the "secret" warehouse dance party, not to mention the peer support in one situation and its absence in the other: it would not be surprising if such a young person could not even conceive of an interest in the musical heritage.

These disjunctions could grow wider. For instance, it seems that a lot of the customary teenage enthusiasm for music is being transferred to video games. The phase transitions of the future might see the growing edge of popular culture shift not just to a new ordering of the building blocks within an art form but to as yet unconceived forms outside it altogether. Who, in community arts, or literature for that matter, would only a few years ago have foreseen the situation today where amateur writers in different countries work collectively and virtually simultaneously on Internet in writing fictional works?

It is easy to envisage that as these changes gather pace, the lovers of heritage art and the defenders of cultural origins and traditions come to fear their demise. Indeed, whereas now the practitioners of artistic innovation see the heritage arts - the major galleries, the opera companies, the orchestras, the large theatre companies - as secure in the establishment, and taking more than their share of arts funding, in 2010 the situation might have reversed. New complex art forms may have arisen from popular arts owing little to the heritage. A population which grew up with the current popular forms would by then be taking control of the society but could be estranged from its artistic heritage. The preservation of heritage arts could become a cause fought with the same passion and from the same fear of exclusion that we now see in the innovators. The Australia Council might find itself arguing for support to these threatened older forms with the same commitment that it now gives to the icon-breakers.

The challenge to the survival of fundamental arts values: popular artists don't know them; the high art innovators know them but lose their audience

The writer is looking through a computer games catalogue. Here are the first titles:

Aces Over Europe."Experience the intensity of aerial combat in WWII..."

Alone in the Dark. "Private detective Edward Carnby's terrifying investigation into the macabre..."

Blake Stone. "Venture into space on a desperate mission to stop a madman and his army of mutants..."

Carriers at War 11. "...offers more tension, more excitement, tougher opponents, and more dramatic Carrier Battles..."

Commanche Maximum Overkill... Etc. Etc.

Such titles make up most of the catalogue, although there are some "edutainment" games in which violence is not mandatory. Some, but only some. Take *Math Blaster*, for instance...

Are these games art? There is visual imagery; there is always a soundscape or soundtrack. In most the content is emotionally and intellectually primitive. In a few (e.g. *Myst*) there are elaborately structured scenarios which must have required great skill and effort to conceive and realise. It seems reasonable to regard video games as a new popular art form involving craft and technological expertise on the part of the creators, and expert if not artistic participation on the part of the ... I was going to say audience, but that's inappropriate ... the users. (At last: an art form which goes some way to bridge the gap between active creators and formerly passive consumers. Haven't we wanted that for a long time?) But it would be possible to produce these games without any knowledge of or reference to the artistic heritage. The same can be said of many other current popular forms.

While these relatively empty calorie forms rise with the support of the popular audience, the high vitamin arts may be headed for trouble, not only because of generational changes but because of alienation of their own natural audiences.

The repertoire that is most sought by the audience for Western classical music, and therefore most offered by its presenters, was composed mostly in the 18c and 19c. The music written in the last seventy years, and certainly the modernist music which has been seen by many composers and music theorists as the centre of musical gravitas, has not made a strong connection with the existing, ageing audience, or worse, the young audience which is the orchestra's future. In the past decade, composers have begun to break from modernism and some have found warm approval from the audience. Nevertheless, there is a sense of foreboding among some orchestral people - perhaps especially the managers - who believe that the survival of orchestral music could be in question. (See Chapter Seven) One manager said to the writer that he believes that there is a crisis which must be resolved by a renewal of the repertoire.

To dramatise the problem, let us take a year 2010 worst case scenario: the new "classical" repertoire does not manifest itself, the disjunction between popular and classical music grows, the young audience of 2010 is almost totally immersed in the currently popular styles. *Imagine* that such is the

grip of the commercial owners of popular music that not much else is available to the public, and what they present is vacuous, ignorant of broader arts values and endlessly manipulated for commercial success. Classical music as the carrier of fundamental arts values - say, for argument's sake, beauty, complexity, extension, flexibility, breadth of style and expression, spirituality - is lost. The popular musicians are caught in this web because there is no structure in which they can effectively present an alternative. How could an arts policy body intervene in the interests of rebuilding values comparable in depth to those of the old classical tradition?

An intervention into popular art

It could seek to restore the classical tradition. That would be worth doing. But also, it could encourage the development of a music built upon and departing from the popular forms. This has the advantage that there would be plenty of musicians and their technical supporters who would love to grasp that opportunity if there were a way to break free from the iron grip of commercialism, and also that from the enormous audience base for popular music there would be a substantial number of musically astute listeners who would follow the musicians in a coevolutionary partnership. The method of the funding body would be essentially to protect the venture with subsidy, just as it has with contemporary classical composition. The particulars would depend on a gut-level understanding of context. (This opportunity exists now. The writer's intuition suggests that the result could be accomplished most effectively through support to the establishment of special venues.)

The above scenario is extreme and over-simplified in the interests of presenting the case. The actual circumstances in any art form in the next fifteen years probably would not be as polarised. It may be that artistically interesting work will develop spontaneously out of popular music and other popular arts, as happened with jazz earlier this century. (This is the case now, although at a more subterranean level.) Perhaps a lot of that sort of creativity will find its outlet on the Internet. But it could also happen that commercial forces have such a grip on popular culture that it is very difficult to build any momentum for an artist-led break-out.

In times of such rapid and radical change, it must be expected that the heritage will come under threat. Some genres could be extinguished. This would be regretted by their adherents, but has plenty of historical precedent. What is most important is not the continuity of particular heritage forms, but the survival of the profound values expressed over centuries in the arts and the promulgation of the experience of these values as widely as possible. There is a possible role for an arts policy and funding body in supporting the artistic potential in artistically under-developed forms with a mass following.

New official policies of arts-as-industry may challenge arts values

At a recent conference, the chairman of a peak organisation for a sector of the commercial arts industry commented that the old model of subsidy for the arts was very tired and everybody was fed up with it. There was little point in pushing for more support through the subsidy mechanism. Well naturally, one might think, an arts industry sector motivated mainly by profit and so excluded from subsidy could be expected to be dismissive of its supplicant cousins. But...

A week earlier, the national Department for the Arts presented a symposium titled *Creating Culture. The New Growth Industries.* The organiser was, more exactly, a section of the Australian Cultural Development Office (ACDO) of the Department of Arts and Communications, called the Industry Development Branch, which administers the Cultural Industry Development Program "established in 1993 to expand industry development assistance to the cultural industries". Here are the titles of some characteristic presentations.

Keynote speech: *The business of culture* (delivered by the GM of the Australia Council, the main conduit of subsidy to artists on the model here under challenge)

Employment in the cultural industries

Culture in context - the economy, growth and the cultural industries

How can Australia's cultural industries compete in the world market?

Television programs and Australian film financing strategies - export potential.

Competitive advantage - the economics of multiculturalism.

Compare and contrast with the functions of the Australia Council as defined in the Act. They begin:

To promote excellence in the arts

To provide, and encourage the provision of, opportunities for persons to practise the arts

To promote the appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the arts

To promote the general application of the arts in the community.

To foster the epxression of a national identity by means of the arts

To uphold and promote the right of persons to freedom in the practice of the arts

To promote incentives for, and recognition of, achievement in the practice of the arts...

At the conference, the Minister for the Arts spoke twice, both times making a point of reassuring the audience that the emphasis of this symposium on the arts as industry should not be taken to indicate any weakening of the government's support of the arts as arts via subsidies through the Australia Council. To indicate my less than even-handed position, I should say my apprehension rose each time.

To be fair, in the government's subsequent *Creative Nation* cultural policy statement, which purportedly was comprehensive, some initiatives were not commercially driven: a small increased subsidy through the Australia Council for the support of individual artists, quality-based funding to the Sydney Symphony and an Academy of Music, increased support for touring, the heritage, and so on.

Nevertheless, new requirements on the Australia Council, ark of excellence, pushed very strongly towards the marketing side. For instance: "The Commonwealth believes that the Council, as a matter of some urgency, has to turn its attention away from the 'supply' side of the arts equation to the creation of a higher level of demand from arts consumers." Also, "The Government will fund the Council's development of an international marketing strategy."

This new philosophy is not unique to Australia. I spoke in late 1994 with the director of international programs in music and dance for the French Ministry of Culture, Danuta Dubois. The French give such lavish support to their cultural sector that earned income is hardly a factor in the calculations of the major institutions. (The reasons are explored in Chapter Eight.) She remarked that many regional symphony orchestras had grown up around the availability of trained musicians and their need for an outlet, rather than as a response to demands from the market. Audiences had been small, and the apparent public benefit hardly justified the public expenditure. Some probably would be disbanded.

Mavor Moore, former Chair of the Canada Council, has said "It is amazing how quickly, under pressure, our...arts organisations and educational institutions...have swallowed the line that the marketplace is the high court of civilization, with its mantra that only aggressive marketing will save us. Hell, if anything of ours lasts it will not be what friend Joh Meisel calls "airport art". I'm reminded of the immortal words of a newly-appointed minister of culture...when asked if he'd ever been to the theatre. "Well no", he replied, "I was never marketed to go!" It's like Nero blaming the Christians for failing to convert him."

In its pamphlet, *Cultural Industry Development Program*, which merits analytical reading, the ACDO describes itself as having been "set up in 1993 to support our vigorous and increasingly self-reliant cultural sector. Already the cultural industry sits among our top ten industries, with a total value to our economy of about $13 billion.

"The broad goals of ACDO are not only concerned with promoting excellence and encouraging greater participation by all Australians, but also fostering sustainable cultural industries.

"ACDO is committed to the diversity of Australia's creative life, supporting the whole spectrum from 'high art' to craft and design. Increasingly cultural development is about ensuring that employment, training and industry policies provide a vast pool of talented workers with sustainable employment and the opportunity to achieve their economic and creative potential."

To posit a phase transition might be to overstate the situation. However, there is fairly clearly a change in the ethos of arts support in Australia, and indeed in the European countries whose funding programs were the models for aspects of the Australia Council and the state arts ministries.

Since my prejudice is showing, I should state it clearly. One can have no objection to the application of the best possible management to arts activities, nor to artists having sustained and

properly rewarded employment, nor to the use of effective marketing to reach as large an audience as possible. On the other hand, the fascination of *Hamlet* is not in whether it made a profit(loss).

Is this a passing fad? S-curve theory might suggest that the arts-as-industry paradigm will have a decades-long life-span

Theodore Modis claims that phenomena such as the shortening of product life cycles, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the unification of the EEC and the recent extended recession can be explained by a particular pattern of natural growth. This is a sort of empirical power law, reminiscent of aspects of complexity theory. (Theodore Modis: "Life Cycles. Forecasting the Rise and Fall of Almost Anything." In *The Futurist*, Bethseda, Maryland, USA, September-October 1994, pp. 20-25.)

"Survival of the fittest dictates that the filling (or the emptying) of a niche in a competitive environment proceeds along the S-shaped pattern of natural growth. That means that the rate of growth - whether it is world population, the spread of communism, or sales of the latest computer - is greatest in the middle of the life-cycle, tapering off as growth reaches saturation level....A niche in nature rarely remains partially full (or empty), so one should expect a natural-growth phenomenon to proceed to completion, thus making the evolution of the process predictable.

"There are limits to natural growth, and the *rate* of growth slows down as the population of a product or species nears its limit. If you put two rabbits in a meadow, you can watch their population go through an exponential-growth pattern at first, but slow down later as it approaches a ceiling - the capacity of the ecological niche. Over time, the rabbit population traces a trajectory that is S-shaped. The *rate* of growth traces a curve that is bell-shaped and peaks when half the niche is filled."

Modis was initially able to demonstrate the applicability of the S-curve to the sales patterns of a number of products and families of products such as the VAX 11/750 micro-computer. "If the growth mechanism is a multiplication process - situations in which one unit brings forth another - the overall pattern of growth is symmetric. It is this symmetry that endows S-curves with predictive power; when you are halfway through the process], you know how the other half will be."

Natural growth is characteristically a series of overlapping S-curves, with a new process beginning as the old one falters and is nearly finished. (The growth *rate* falls before rising again.) So, for instance, sales of vinyl records declined rapidly in their last few years, to be replaced by increasing sales of CDs. There was a typical flat period where the increase in the latter was not sufficient to overcome the failure of the former, and then a high growth period as CD sales entered the sharp ascendancy of the middle of the S-curve. Modis claims that during this low-growth overlap period, *chaotic oscillations* become evident [a punctuated equilibrium? The rate of change of character is greatest when the rate of change of growth is lowest?].

A succession or "cascade" of S-curves can together form a larger S-curve, describing a larger growth process. There is a quasi-fractal character to the larger curve. Typically, life-cycles of its constituent S-curves are longer during the high-growth period of the meta-curve. This presents another tool for prediction exercises, since shortening life-cycles of the constituent curves can indicate the approaching exhaustion of the meta-curve.

Modis offers a couple of rules of thumb. When a faltering S-curve has achieved 90% of its growth, the oncoming S-curve will have achieved only about 1% of its eventual growth. And - "the duration of the chaos is likely to be comparable to the duration of the boom" - the high growth phase of the S-curve.

Depending upon the research objectives and one's view of the credibility of the procedure, S-curve analysis could be applied to many aspects of government support to the arts, the financial history of particular arts organisations, or the arts economy more generally. It might even be applied in such a way as to measure the swing of the political pendulum as revealed by aspects of funding behaviour - perhaps Mayor Guiliani's pronouncement could be found to have some equal and opposite twenty years before. One is struck by the echoes in the S-curve theory of some of the phenomena described in the first chapter - similar discoveries, perhaps, reached from another starting point. I wonder whether the pendulum might be thought of as swinging across the edge of chaos, first to disorder, then back to order. There are possible conjectures or research for another place.

Given the apparent changes in the funding ethos, does the funding made available to/through funding bodies exhibit any S-curve characteristics?

A difficulty in applying the S-curve theory is to decide what exactly it is that is being measured and how it will be measured. Widget sales are clear enough. You know a widget when you see one, and a sale is a sale. The brute figures for governmental support for the arts could be totalled easily enough, but when there is an attempt to account for them in terms of some cause or set of causes, their significance becomes very blurred. For instance, the figures given below are in nominal dollars and show an S-curve. If they are translated into real dollars, the S-curve disappears. Which curve truly represents the arts philosophy of the government?

With several such reservations, and for what it is worth, we show this set of figures supplied by the Australia Council. They show funding by the Commonwealth government to the Council for the years 1974-1994, calculated after removing the effects of the loss of various clients over the years - the Film, Radio and TV Board, the Public Lending Right program, the Australian Opera and the former AETT Orchestras. Plotted graphically, the figures do indeed show an S-curve moving into the latter stage of its life.

What has been common to the funding ethos post-WW2 is this concept: the arts have a special value to society which goes beyond the material, for various reasons they cannot be financially viable (more recently accounted for as "market failure"), and we are willing to support them with grant funds to ensure that they can exist in our society, achieve the highest possible excellence, and be accessible to as many people as possible.

Under this regime the arts have indeed flourished. As a consequence, the demand for subsidy grew faster than the subsidies available. The focus on artistic excellence and access began to be qualified by the need for more efficient management of funds and greater self-reliance. This internal change was soon overtaken by the development in government circles of the ethos of economic rationalism, for which any notion of subsidy to anything would appear to be anathema. The response in arts circles has been partly fear and loathing, partly a move towards greater commercial viability. But it is not until the 1994 ACDO symposium that an arm of government has so forthrightly promoted a concept of the arts overall as commercial enterprise which could benefit from some variants of the assistance available to the footwear or mining industries.

Is this a new S-curve? If so, according to Theodore Modis (a) it will be fruitless to wish it away and (b) its life span is just beginning and it will be with us for some time to come. Indeed, it could be that we would wish it to last as long as possible in the interests of the meta-S of government commitment to the arts.

Accommodating to arts-as-industry and maintaining fundamental arts values

Rather, if the new ethos overcomes the old instead of co-existing with it, the task might again be to ensure that fundamental values of the arts are sustained. Given its values of financial self-reliance or commercial success, some ingenuity will be needed to maintain the existence of experimental arts or arts practices which by their nature are simply incapable of either. It is not clear to me how that might be achieved.

More generally there might be some benefit in finding common ground between the two philosophies. For instance, there are values in the Australia Council charter that have some partial congruence with a more commercial approach: certain forms of excellence as a basis for sales; the provision of employment to artists with benefit to the economy and the welfare bill; audience building as source of financial viability as well as evidence of wider appreciation of the arts; the use of the arts as a means to build national identity and so forestall imports; development of exports as source of funds as well as cultural projection or enlarging the opportunities for Australian artists. The invocation to the Australia Council in *Creative Nation* to give some attention to building the demand side of the arts, rather than almost exclusively the supply side, seems reasonable. However, the very distortions of the real intent of the Australia Council objectives show the dangers. The question is whether, having found some mutuality, there is a gradual amnesia about the arts values and that other earth which resists the mattock of commercial enterprise.

There might be something to be learned from the film world, where funds are invested and profits potentially could be used to cross-subsidise. The Australia Council has ventured in this direction. The

counter-argument is that funds can as easily be lost in such ventures. Although one might say that they would have been lost anyway if awarded as grants, they probably would not have been given to projects evaluated mainly on their commercial potential. One is reminded of the beginning of the end for the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust through its loss making investments in *Something or Other on Ice* and similar froth and froufrou. Is there point to subsidy of arts activity for which the main recommendation is its commercial promise? If such investment became routine for arts funding bodies, what would be the effect on their general values and priorities?

In sum, while the industrial objectives proposed for the arts may be desirable in a context where basic arts values dominate, there is a potential for the arts establishment to give away too much in the process of reaching an accommodation. Arts policy bodies must find a way to take advantage of the larger policy directions of the government while ensuring that arts values are compromised as little as possible.

Other aspects of change

The various circumstances described so far might be characterised as issues related to changing arts values. Change can be expected in a multitude of other concerns, a few of which are taken up in later chapters. Here are some examples.

The communications highway will give a further impetus to the electronic dissemination, and to some extent the electronic creation, of the arts. In Australia, the bodies most literally and broadly assigned to arts planning and support have as their main concern the live arts. Film and television are handled elsewhere. *Creative Nation* urged the Australia Council to become involved in support to interactive multimedia content production for the highway, but channeled all the considerable new funds through other instrumentalities. Do arts planning bodies retire to familiar turf, or do they attempt to produce a vision that includes both live and electronic creation and dissemination? (See Chapter 6)

Arts planning bodies per se are not given responsibility for arts education. On the other hand, if there is one opinion that unites the arts community, it is the importance of arts education in building an attuned and knowledgeable audience. This could hardly be more pertinent in the face of the changes anticipated earlier in the chapter. But the planning and the power are in the educational bureaucracy, not the arts community. The educators have to make the decisions about the balance between subject areas, and there is not much that the arts sector can do other than lobby and argue. It might have more to say about the allocation of time among the arts, but that also brings new problems.

In the schools, with the explosion of knowledge and the increasing complexity of society and the world of work, there are demands for a more and more diverse curriculum. Proponents of a hundred subject specialties push their special claims. The arts compete against non-arts disciplines to maintain such status as they have won. As more arts disciplines gain a footing, they also compete with each other. Students must be given a solid grounding in the visual arts. And theatre. And music. And dance. And creative literature. But this is impossible. Is the preferred choice a nibble across the smorgasbord or a deeper insight into one form? Then there is the increasing pluralism within the arts subject areas. Dance is more than ballet. Visual arts are more than pots and paintings. Music is more than folk music and Beethoven. The national competency standards are intended to recognise this pluralism by allowing flexibility in content provided stipulated outcomes are achieved. There is a furore over these proposals, their relevance to the arts, the concerns over the loss of (prescribed) content and fears about a collapse of quality. These matters are of vital interest to the arts, and it might be argued that benign neglect is not an adequate response from the arts community or planners.

It is possible that a good number of Australian regional centres will reach a size where on grounds of equity they can claim the right to government support for the establishment and maintenance of substantial arts institutions. But arts practice, arts subsidies and arts assessment tend to be concentrated in the capital cities. A redistribution of funds will impoverish city institutions. A continuation of current practice will deny the potential elsewhere. (See Chapter Four)

Arguments recur in favour of supporting new young artists, even at the expense of established middle-age or older artists. The funds are not sufficient to do both. We can't support those older artists indefinitely, says this argument. If they are any good, they should be able to earn their own way by now. At the same time, a high value is put on innovation, so that many of the artists supported are those who have managed to maintain some originality or experimental edge and therefore are not favoured by the

market-place. This problem is about to be exacerbated with a major expansion of the number of aged, their health, wealth and leisure time. Millions will enter a new youth in their old age, and expect to be productive and to be serviced. What is the priority for funding? (See Chapter 5)

What is the role of the arts if, as seems likely, we are unable to avoid the emergence of unemployed, underskilled underclass? The proposition, advanced idealistically perhaps by some in the arts community, that there is here an opportunity for great community arts participation programs seems unlikely to be more than marginally appealing to a group that would prefer a real place in the actual materialist culture. That situation needs some thinking through.

Multicultural arts are unlikely to be happy to be relegated indefinitely to social welfare status. Fortunately, one sees some emergence of these arts and artists at a professional level. Such successes may well bring pressure for much more action. (See Chapter Eight) The advances of Aboriginal arts in the last decade have been almost astonishing. I imagine that it is in the arts area that Aborigines have most solved the equity problem. Mainly, however, it has been in the creation and presentation of Aboriginal arts by Aborigines. There seem still to be barriers to Aboriginal participation in aspects of European arts.

I wonder whether one might predict that gender equity issues will fade over the next fifteen years. I waited once in the office of a California furniture store. On the walls was a series of long group photographs of the staff. In the thirties, the entire staff of around 30 were men, except one - presumably the boss's secretary. After World War II began, there was a sudden increase in the number of women's faces, and this continued after the war. By the sixties, women and men were more or less in balance. There seemed to be a process underway that required a couple of decades for its completion.

Of course, look at the annual photographs of the Boards of Directors of Australia's great companies, and discover that the process has not even begun. They appear not even to have heard of *tokenism*! Come on, you Blokes! On the other hand, the heads of three of the six ABC orchestras are women, and two of the state opera companies, the Australian Ballet and the National Gallery*, inter alia.* So far as I know, the Vienna Philharmonic is still an all-male orchestra, but what an absolutely ludicrous idea that now seems. Australian orchestras, once largely male, may now have a majority of female members. The pop music industry? - well, goodness knows what happens there. Presumably if the teenage audience will pay for female bands, there will be thousands of them. Maybe young girls like their musicians male. Nevertheless, generally there is evidence of a process underway which, with continuing pressure, will see the end of the glass ceiling (pane?) in the arts.

The internal preparedness of policy bodies

What do the Australia Council and the other arts support bodies need to do to place themselves in a position to deal with these issues?

Let us take the Australia Council as a specific example of an arts policy and funding body. People are chosen for the Australia Council because of their great achievement in some aspect of artistic life. They have very special skills in specific art form contexts. They have a great commitment to their personal work and the well-being of their art form. Naturally, they bring this to the Council. That is why they were invited.

The inherent difficulty in this situation is that there is a circularity. A membership of high accomplishment is chosen, and it can speak with assurance based upon its expertise. It will deliver convincing positions based upon its world view, a composite of the individual views of those present. Within the limitations of members' time and resources, it may well seek to broaden that view beyond the one the members collectively have brought. But inescapably, it is a particular view which arises from the identity of the members.

With a different membership and history, the Australia Council could have found good reasons to commit most of its funds to rock music and soap operas, or Shakespeare productions and purchases of the finest European art for our galleries. If it had a membership of anarchical experimental artists, and survived it, the policies would again be quite different. But once a membership of a particular character is set up, there is a tendency for that character to be perpetuated and for the general policy directions to lock in. Recall the QWERTY keyboard.

The policies and decisions result from the choice of members, and from the choice of the chooser of members, who can be expected to choose them because of a comfort in their known agreement with his or her policy inclinations. In normal circumstances the prospects of escaping from the circularity by broadening the collective vision are fairly marginal.

It does no harm to recognise these things, and consider what adjustments such a council might make in order to deal with the issues proposed here as about to confront us. In particular, should it consider inclusion in its membership of people with different skills and affiliations, to match the new types of issue which will arise? Should it articulate some objectives designed to ensure that these matters are not lost in the urgencies of current problems? Should it undertake special programs to ensure that its members are knowledgable about alternative futures? What structure or process could it put in place to continue to intercept the problem?

As a matter of individual personality, some council members will seek stability and equilibrium in our arts world in the face of the changes that are upon us. Others will enjoy the state of flux, and look to ride the changes and push them further. These personal proclivities will affect a council's collective response to change.

Conceiving the larger purpose and role for arts policy and support bodies

The procedures of classical economics - and business planning and accountancy etc - are, as noted already, developed from the linear cause and effect model of Newtonian physics. The procedures of funding bodies, and of their clients in meeting funding body requirements, also have this colour. We take a particular action to get a particular result. Although understanding that the artistic process is a holistic, non-linear, right-brain dreaming, a funding body requires grantees to produce a specific result in return for a specific amount of grant funding. Of course, this is useful in causing people to think about what they are doing, and in clarifying goals and expectations. And it would be difficult to argue that a public funding body should not have such requirements in order to account for the funds it distributes.

The science of complexity suggests that this approach is best suited to limited, well-defined situations. The necessity for accountability aside, perhaps it may not be necessarily even the most effective in some small scale situations. For instance (and I suggest this without any idea of what it would reveal), it would be interesting to compare the outcome of investment in the Keating Fellows, who are relatively free to create in whatever way they wish, with that from the very specific goal-oriented funding to others of similar standing.

The outcomes of conventional funding can be assessed against the objectives advanced in the applications: we get X because we paid for it. But this is in a way a trivial result. Surely the most important objectives are much wider. What is the unpaid result, the accelerator, the phase transition?

How to conceive of these larger goals? The Australia Council deals with them fragmentarily through its equity and social action initiatives such as those of the Community Cultural Development Board. Community arts people are likely to keep broader social goals in the foreground, sometimes with arts as a means to an end rather than ends sufficient to themselves. Arts form people on the other hand, while sometimes engaged with these issues, tend to be preoccupied with the particulars of the art and its practitioners, with the larger society viewed through the box office window or as the subject of an art production.

These thoughts are stimulated by the discussion of the complexity theory. Of course, it tells us that we cannot effectively produce a culture or any other complex phenomenon from the top down. But the Australia Council with a $60 million budget is hardly in a position to do so. Considering the whole of Australian society (or world society!) it must work from the bottom up. On the other hand, complexity theory and chaos theory both tell us that at the edge of chaos, small events can have enormously disproportionate effects. Arts policy and funding bodies certainly are in a position to have a part in those.

New economics practitioner Brian Arthur offers three approaches to policy making. (Wardrop, ibid, p.332)

1) Cost-benefit analysis: quantify the costs and benefits of an initiative, and determine the optimum balance between them. There is a place for this, he says. "It does force you to think through the

alternatives ... The trouble is that this approach generally assumes that the problems are well-defined, and that the political wherewithal is there, so that the analyst's job is simply to put numbers on the costs and benefits of each alternative... Unfortunately... the real world is almost never that well defined... All too often, the apparent objectivity of cost-benefit analyses is the result of slapping arbitrary numbers on subjective judgements, and then assigning the value of zero to the things that nobody knows how to evaluate." The results then are spurious.

This obviously is a comfortable approach for those with a commercial or managerial orientation to arts development. It is consistent with the various attempts over the years to tighten the management and accountability of arts organisations or arts funding. There have been various analyses of the contribution of the arts to regional economies - e.g. *The Arts as an Industry: Their Economic Importance to the New York - New Jersey Metropolitan Region* (The Port Authority of NY and NJ, and others, October 1993), or the various estimates of benefit to Melbourne or Sydney from staging the mega-musicals, or Adelaide from its festival. These usually incorporate multiplier effects (now with a bit more caution than a decade ago, when the purchase of a matinee ticket in Melbourne could be demonstrated to have enriched a Fitzroy taxidermist), and are used by the non-profit sector as arguments for greater arts subsidy.

There is a danger for arts policy bodies in this approach, especially in an arts-as-industry climate. Arthur's optimum balance between cost and benefit can be taken to mean greatest benefit for lowest cost. Funding bodies might be tempted accordingly to present their success in terms of the ratio of the dollar value of activity generated to the dollar value of subsidy. That sort of success can best be achieved through investment in Kylie Minogue or *Phantom of the Opera*. The purpose of arts subsidy is not profit, but those other benefits that score zero because "nobody knows how to evaluate" them.

2) Full institutional/political analysis. Who are the players, what are they doing and why? The political system does not stand *outside* of the game - it is a *part* of the game in its alliances and coalitions. The analysis figures out what is at stake, what alliances are likely to form, and from this ideas can emerge as to possible points of intervention. Some people in the game of arts politics must depend on intuitive analyses of this sort, and occasionally a relevant book appears such as Philip Parsons' *Shooting the Pianist* (Currency Press, 1987) or Tim Rowse's *Arguing the Arts* (Penguin 1985). One is not aware of any thorough-going analysis at the level of representative arts organisations or policy bodies.

3) At this level of analysis we can look at two different world views: "the standard equilibrium point of view that we have inherited from the Enlightenment - the idea that there's a duality between man and nature, and that there's a natural equilibrium between them that's optimal for man. And if you believe this view, then you can talk about 'the optimisation of policy decisions concerning environmental resources'" [for instance].

"The other viewpoint is complexity, in which there is basically no duality between man and nature...We are part of nature ourselves...part of this interlocking network." If you drop the duality, the questions change. The concept of optimisation becomes meaningless; instead we have to think in terms of accommodation and coadaptation.

"How do you manoeuvre in a world like that?...you want to keep as many options open as possible. You go for viability...rather than what's 'optimal' ... (This) puts a premium on becoming aware of nonlinear relationships and causal pathways as best we can ... If you have a truly complex system then the exact patterns are not repeatable. And yet there are themes that are recognisable - ('revolutions', for instance) even though one revolution might be quite different from another. So we assign metaphors. .. an awful lot of policy making has to do with finding the appropriate metaphor... for example, it might not be appropriate to think about a drug 'war', with guns and assaults."

To finish this chapter, let's play with that idea. What would be the right metaphor to foster Australian arts development?

"Australian arts flagships conquer the world!" is in the minds of some.

"We only fund geniuses" is another version of tip of the pyramid, heard especially from some artists who believe they would be eligible.

"Funding for success." The positive construction on this slogan is that the funding body faces up to the actual costs involved in realising a project successfully, rather than offering half the necessary

funds and expecting the project to proceed. The artists also must know these costs. However, this is about mechanism. It answers no fundamental questions. Perhaps it carries an implicit value that things are only worth doing if done well. In the arts-as-industry climate, it could take on a different meaning: fund for commercial success.

This then would be quite antithetical to the slogan *"Permission to fail":* we won't beat you around the head if you take an artistic risk and do not succeed. In fact, we would rather you take the risk than play safe.

"Every Australian an artist" comes up when young artists first visit Bali.

"The Australian identity will emerge through the arts." The Community Cultural Development people and the art form people apply different meanings. .

"Arts as research and development" has been heard from the Australia Council. It seems to be similar to *"Economics is the physics of money movement"* or some such, intended to give the arts weight in the minds of economic rationalist-inclined politicians. A difficulty can arise if *artists* take the concept seriously, as will be seen in the next chapter in the discussion of modernist composition. There is also a political difficulty if the metaphor is taken to mean that the arts, or the Australia Council's arts, are only about innovation, because politicians like other ordinary folks don't like innovative arts and could see the Australia Council as identified with a dispensable, elitist appendage to the mainstream.

"Excellence in the arts". Code for support to the arts of the ruling class, say the community arts people.

"Arts as the expression of community". Code for basketweaving, say the art form people. They also have their reservations about *"Equity and participation in the arts"*: in the Coalition's terminology, code for funding on "non-arts criteria".

"Arts for Australians". Does that mean *"High arts for top Australians"? "Any art for everyone"*? What art and which Australians?

Which all goes to show there is nothing like a slogan to clarify and mobilise people's objections.

If there is a right slogan, it is a distillation from a gut-level understanding of what it is that we want the arts to do for us. The real job is to get that understanding, and agreement to it. The slogan producing exercise could be trivial, or profoundly illuminating.