

Not that the converse attitude of intellectual conformity is entirely an odious one. There must be broad areas of agreement if society is to possess sufficient cohesiveness to survive; but such agreement is not an unthinking acceptance or acquiescence. The interrelationships within our society require of necessity some sort of mould, but the mould must never become a straightjacket. Conformity in a democratic society is rather a result of active and searching examination of the heritage which has come to us from many times and climes, together with a determination to preserve those aspects of it which are valuable and meaningful to mankind. In this sense, as an intellectual activity, conformity is one of the main concerns of the university, constituting as it does the crucial test of our cultural inheritance. Only someone who has had a close association with the academic crucible can know how astringent, if not acid, a test it can be.

But if our society is held together by broad areas of tacit understandings which form the working basis of our political, social and intellectual existence, it must allow at the same time for the maximum of individual diversity. To you that idea will, of course, be neither new nor paradoxical but rather an expression of enlightened orthodoxy. The landscape of our lives must encompass not just the level sweep of tundra and prairie but also the gently rolling foothills and the spectacular peaks of individual achievements. And it is in pointing the way towards the summits of human endeavour that the university has another and perhaps a more significant role to play.

The conservation of the traditional and at the same time the stimulation of new and creative achievements - surely the nature of the Commonwealth is directly related to these two aspects of the university's function. In this context, it would not be inappropriate I think for me to indulge in some speculation - which is probably well-founded - about the role of the university in the drama of the university in the drama of transforming a great imperial structure into a free association of independent and different nations whose leaders were influenced and shaped by academic discipline in the British Isles. Had the imperial universities been restrained from pursuing the objectives of independent thought, how different the course of history might have been. Instead, the modern Commonwealth has become a vital demonstration of the extent to which the wisdom of the academy has prevailed over the short-term political exigencies of a changing empire.

The transformation of an empire into a free association of states has been one of the most exciting themes in recent history. As new nations emerge, new challenges require new ideas and new solutions. There is little doubt that the university has made a contribution towards meeting these needs, because in the final analysis there can be no fundamental and