

Australia's Distinctiveness in a Globalizing World: Towards a New Area Studies

Michael Jacques
[Faculty of Foreign Studies, Sophia University]

Allan Patience
[School of Social Science, Victoria University (Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, University of Tokyo,
April 2002- March 2003)]

Stimulated by Martha C. Nussbaum's book, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* (1997), we propose a revitalization of area studies programs in universities, to encourage them to respond to the profound academic challenges now being thrown up by globalization. The paper sketches a critique of conventional area studies in favor of the kinds of 'internationalizing' curricula advocated by Professor Nussbaum - and by many others, including some leading scholars in Asia - e.g., Singapore's Professor Wang Gungwu.

In the light of Nussbaum's recommendations, we outline a new approach to Australian Studies in Japanese universities. This approach is based on what we identify as Australia's distinctiveness in a globalizing world.

We suggest that this distinctiveness has three core components:

- (1) Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians;
- (2) Australian multiculturalism (e.g., as a micro-model for global citizenship);
- (3) Australia's European cultural heritage in proximity to Asia (e.g., modeling the politics of recognition).

We propose that Australian Studies programs in Japanese universities are justified on two important grounds - viz.,

- (A) Acknowledging that the Japan-Australia relationship can (and should) be broadened and deepened,

and by

- (B) Integrating Australian Studies in Japan into a renewed area studies framework.