

Preface

The themes of this book reflect a career which started as an undergraduate in science and inevitably moved to the social sciences – anthropology and political science – and which also saw scholarship supplant and then slowly but surely replace environmental activism, an activism which saw me contest an election for the neo-Malthusian New Zealand Values Party, the first national ‘green’ party in the world. The inevitability of conservatism increasing with age aside, I would like to think that my basic values and desires for a decent environment have not changed, but my concern then, as now, was based upon the best possible scientific knowledge.

I no longer think that is the case. A career that has alternated between posts in environmental studies departments and political science departments has led me to the conclusion that far too much – though not all – environmental science is shot through with values, and that far too many political science analyses rather naively take on trust the fact that this is not the case. This book was motivated by a belief that, collectively, we deserve better than that.

In many ways, it is an homage to Jim Flynn, my professor at the University of Otago and supervisor (with Tony Wood) of my first piece of academic research. It is not just the quality of his teaching in political ethics, which included a detailed reading of Plato’s *Parmenides* (perhaps the ultimate example of subjecting one’s own work to sceptical scrutiny), but the research project that by then was beginning to consume him (and on which he generously employed me – albeit briefly – between completion of my dissertation and my first academic post).

Jim cared intensely about racism. During *his* first academic job at the University of Eastern Kentucky during the civil rights era he was imprisoned for those beliefs. But he also believed intensely in the need to produce reason and evidence to argue for political causes, and that normative beliefs alone were not enough. Jim was writing a book on the justification of humane ideals, and wanted in a few pages to provide a brief critique of the views on race and intelligence advanced by Arthur Jensen. Turning to the literature, he found there was no decent critique; instead there were numerous *ad hominem* attacks on Jensen and dismissals of his research because it had racist implications.

Jim being Jim, he wrote his own critique, published as *Race, IQ and Jensen*, at the beginning of a 20-year diversion from his book on justifying

humane ideals. In the process, he not only provided the missing reasoned critique on racial differences in intelligence testing, but discovered the phenomenon, missed by the educational psychology discipline, that is now known as the 'Flynn Effect': that unstandardized IQ test results showed a steady improvement in the course of the twentieth century. (Because the psychologists were used to dealing with standardized data, they had failed to notice what an enthusiastic 'amateur' did; there are resonances in this book with the Hockey Stick case, later). For me, Jim is the paragon of what scholarship should be: important and relevant to the things we care about, but to the least extent we can manage, uncontaminated by them.

Ironically, this book was commenced while I was back at Otago on sabbatical on an Edward Wilson Fellowship, resident at St Margaret's College, and it owes much to Otago both then and in my days as a student, both to Jim and his colleagues in the Department of Political Studies, including Marian Simms, who now holds the chair and with whom I was supposed to be working on interest groups, but to those in the Philosophy Department under Alan Musgrave. For many years the Otago philosophers provided not just interesting discussions of the philosophy of science, but also a constant stream of interesting visitors (including Karl Popper). Particular thanks go to John Norris, Warden of St Margaret's, and his residents for taking an expat New Zealander into their bosom during the fellowship, and to the University of Otago for its support. Similarly, I am indebted to the University of Tasmania for supporting the sabbatical, and especially to my colleagues in the School of Government for enduring several seminars where I first explored the subject matter of the first three chapters. Others, from outside the School provided useful comments, including scientists in the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems Cooperative Research Centre, and the School of Zoology, especially Randy Rose. Rob Hall and Marcus Haward (both ACE CRC and School of Government) read drafts and provided assistance in many ways, and Ted Lefroy read and commented on the entire manuscript and suggested many improvements. Ian Castles, subject of part of the book, also provided many useful details and read some early fragments, providing invaluable comments. Other useful comments, too numerous to catalogue individually, were received on fragments of the argument at two National Academies Forums and an Australian Academy of Science annual symposium in Canberra. Finally, John Adams has for many years proved a wonderful source of knowledge and inspiration on all matters related to risk and the policy uses of science, and Ted Lowi gets yet another citation in one of my books. (Somehow, wherever my scholarship leads me, Ted has been there and left at least some slight footprints!) As always, any errors are mine.

And, as always, Julie and Maddy have tolerated the long hours with my nose buried in what has proven to be the false promise of the paperless office. Julie has been burdened with enthusiastic descriptions of various points to an extent that would try the patience of a saint, while Maddy is still too young to be harangued. But it is to her, in the hope that she will inherit a world in which there is both beauty in truth, and truth in beauty, that this book is dedicated.