> ***My earliest recollection I can now date as having taken place in May 1917. I can see the scene. I am standing in the drawing room just inside one of the glass doors... My mother comes in from the hall at the other side of the room. She says, ' The news from the front is very bad ". I know that "the front" means the war, where the fighting is. I am taken away into the kitchen where the housekeeper tells me that my mother is very upset. I don't want to recognise this. I want to pretend the scene hadn't happened. I wish the housekeeper had not put the situation into words*** (MDM, 1992, unpub. family history).

The writer of this anecdote was Margaret D. Mackie. At the time of this memory, she was two years seven months old. A dear friend of her parents had just been killed in the war. This was near the beginning of a childhood that was framed by the Great War and the Depression.

When Annie B.Mackie gave birth to Margaret, a ' plain' girl, in Neutral Bay, Sydney, Australia, on 12th November, 1914, her disappointment was obvious.

> ***I suspect that if I had been male the family would have stopped then. My mother, who had not wanted children at all, had hoped for a boy and regretted that she could not exchange me for the doctor's new son as he had wanted a daughter*** (MDM, 1992, unpub. family history).

Annie continued her interest in the doctor's son throughout Margaret's childhood and young adulthood by monitoring his examination results and his marriage. It was quite clear to Margaret that her advent had been unwelcome, and less welcome because of her sex. Any awareness of possible damage to a child's self-esteem was foreign to child-rearing practices of the time; it was thought that to bring up children well, it was necessary to "break their will " (MDM, 1996, pers.comm.19/6). Margaret's defence against some of these discourses was to discern and privately hold to her own truth; in others she concurred with the family story.

Her brother John was born when Margaret was three, on
August 25, 1917.

> ***Now I was to hear repeatedly the story of my father's replying to the suggestion that he might as well go to bed now that the baby was born [in a Killara hospital] " I go to bed! And I've a son!"*** (MDM, unpub., A Wahroonga Childhood.)

Duty rather than spontaneous affection ruled Annie's child rearing practice. To the shock and resentment she felt at Margaret's conception and birth was added disappointment that the role of a professor's wife was not a series of interesting

intellectual occasions, as she had imagined, but a dull round of hard physical labour and child care.Even when visiting educators were entertained, her role as a hostess was confined to conversations about gardening and children with the other wives.

In 1912, one year before her marriage to Alexander Mackie, Annie Burnett Duncan's studio portrait was taken by the distinguished photographer Harold Cazneaux of the new Australian Pictorialist school.

Dressed in exquisite clothing hand made by her Scottish mother, Annie gazed directly from the photograph with a lively and intelligent gaze, assuredly a beauty, with graceful neck and shoulders. In a photograph of her taken nine years later a wife and mother, the hope and promise of the earlier portrait is replaced by a look of careworn anxiety.

Annie B.Mackie, 1921.

In a record kept of the children's development, Annie recorded the following interchange when Margaret was nine:

> ***12.11.23 [MDM's 9th birthday]. JLM recited a verse he had made coming along the passage when he arrived at lunch..."good as Tennyson," remarked Margaret,"They'll be celebrating your birthday with a procession next year." I remarked that when I was little I always had the idea that I should like to be an author. John said "But how could that be - how could a woman be a famous writer or a poet or anything? She has her housework to do always." JLM 6 yrs 3 months.*** (Mackie, A. B., unpub., developmental record.)

John, at six, accepted women's role as given, but remarked to Margaret six years later, that he had never realised until that time that his father had ever achieved anything remarkable in an academic way; the children had been told only of their mother's triumphs (MDM,1996, pers.comm. 9/6). Academic success was the principal measure of worth in the family. Recognising his mother's frustration as the source of some of her aberrant behaviour, he made Margaret promise never to relinquish her 'intellectual interests'.

> ***Culture...defines and limits the number of repertoires available to an individual and consequently sets the parameters as to 'what is possible' in any concrete situation.***(Melluish,Gregory,1995, p.12.)

In those times Mrs Mackie, as a married woman, would have had to overcome obstacles even to envisage continuing her career as a linguist after bearing two children. Her plain duty was to attend personally to their upbringing.

Margaret, like many lonely children, invented an imaginary companion 'Boy Blue' who was duly recorded in the developmental record kept by her parents. She was 'reading ' the ***Sydney Morning Herald*** one day and when asked what the news said, she related 'Boy Blue says the war's very bad.' This was just after the war had ended. The sense of threat occasioned by the war to a young child was to last long after it was over.

John was a beautiful baby with curly auburn hair.

> ***I "always" knew that John was specially intelligent and that people were more interested in him than in me. I attributed this to a preference for smaller children. I was ...too big at three to be interesting. I am not, however, aware of any jealousy. I was proud of my clever brother*** (MDM, 1992, unpub., family history).

The record shows, however, that there was some normal sibling rivalry.

> ***28.11.19 [Story written down at M's request] Once there was a little girl and a naughty little boy. At Xmas he did not hang his stocking up and thought that he would get some presents and the little girl wouldn't... A big policeman came on Xmas day and took him away...*** (Mackie, A.B., unpub., developmental record.)

Margaret believed that in teaching John, she first discovered her own gift as a teacher. Intended as an anecdote to illustrate John's intelligence, the following story surely indicates an advanced ability on the part of a four-year-old girl to enter into the thought process of a younger person and into the family discourse of his exceptional intelligence.

> ***One day before John could speak he was playing with the sliding glass door between the hall and the drawing room... He found that he could fit a book over one of the panes, push the door into its groove, and pull it out again to retrieve the book. This worked the first time, but when he repeated the process, the book fell inside the wall and is presumably still there*** (MDM, 1992. unpub., family history).

Margaret's memory of the thoughts she had, at four, on losing her book, were that it was unintentional on John's part and that he had shown great intelligence to invent the game.

The family lived at 'Drumgrain' in Woonona St, Wahroonga . The firm of W. Hardy Wilson designed and built the house in 1915, the same year as the architect's own controversial house , 'Purulia', was being built not far away. The controversy about 'Purulia' rose from the simplicity of design, modelled on early Australian colonial architecture, and the absence of provision for servants. Neighbours predicted a fall in property values. ' Hardy Wilson saw beauty in shapes and colours, light and shade ' (Ramage, 1991,p. 53).

'Drumgrain', named after a Scottish farm , faces North with a broad tiled terrace. Glass doors lead from the terrace into the drawing room, which in Margaret's time had dark polished wood floors and a Turkish rug. The choice of this architect is an indicator of the family's membership of a small, forward thinking cultural and intellectual elite. ' Drumgrain' did have a maid's room which was occupied in later years by Margaret.

> *To-day, Wahroonga is a garden suburb.The good soil and the plentiful rainfall... were responsible for attracting the early settlers, the timber getters. They sought the tall, straight [Blackbutts and the Sydney Blue Gums] which [flourished] in the [shale] soil which is capable of supporting more luxuriant growth than the Hawkesbury sandstone* (Ramage,1991, p.5).

The rich natural resources of Wahroonga were in the process of becoming a suburb for the privileged few. In Australia Alexander Mackie 's intelligence and hard work enabled him to aspire to that privilege where in Scotland hereditary aristocrats owned the land.Wahroonga's original inhabitants, the Guringai, Garingal, Bayimai, Cameraigal, Walumeda, Buruburongal, Dharuk and Comenarra, had been displaced a generation before by white settlers, a mixture of ex- convicts and police.

Alexander Mackie's family was representative of a wave of 'gentrification' in an area that remained semi-wild till the mid nineteen-forties (Ramage,1991, p. 37). Alexander Mackie had developed a love of his adopted Australian landscape.

> ***My father was interested in Australian plants and we learned the names of many on our walks...The garden produced fruit, vegetables and flowers,including cultivated native flowers. A Davidsonia which he planted without realising the size to which it would grow still towers in the now diminished garden of 3 Woonona Avenue.*** (MDM, 1992, unpub., family history.)

'Women have no wilderness in them,/They are provident instead,/Content in the tight hot cell of their hearts, to eat dusty bread.' (Rogan, 1920's in Heilbrun, Carolyn G, 1988, p.71.)

Frustrated in her intellectual ambitions, Annie B.Mackie turned her brilliance to the exercise of a meticulous health and safety routine for the children and to the running of a household that included a daily housekeeper as well as the family. Housekeeping in those days entailed a lot of heavy physical labour. The wooden kitchen table was daily scrubbed to whiteness, the dark wooden floors polished, heavy oak furniture and Chinese vases dusted. Meat shopping was done daily, as the ice box was not considered enough refrigeration to keep the meat safe.

> ***I was usually sent to do the messages, in particular to buy the meat...I was sent with the money...I was very much afraid of getting it wrong, and repeated over and over to myself on the way "A pound and a half of topside" or "two pounds of stewing chops". John was not sent to do messages after an occasion on which he... forgot what he was sent for and returned empty handed and distressed .***
>
> ***The principle that John could not be sent to do the shopping because it would upset him was still operating when he was seventeen. I was sent on a message though I was struggling with Beowulf for a university examination, because of the danger to John's feelings.*** (MDM, unpub., A Wahroonga Childhood.)

Mrs Mackie's careful health regime included two main meals a day, one in the middle of the day to ensure that the children's nutrition was adequate and one in the evening, presumably to cater for the breadwinner. Oddly, because of her concern to supervise the children's diet strictly, they were prohibited from picking and eating the fruit their father grew in the garden.

In old age, Annie B.Duncan's dutiful care of her daughter was reciprocated:

'...in duty the individual finds his liberation... In duty the individual acquires his substantive feeling.' (Hegel, Philosophy of Right, quoted by MDM,1980, in a series of notes on Hegel's philosophy .)

Far from espousing conscious sexism, Alexander Mackie held the Platonist belief that the education of elite girls should parallel that of boys. It was John, however, who developed manual dexterity and Margaret who developed nurturing and teaching skills along with the mathematical and literary interests common to both. Alexander's liberal educational ideas were imperfectly translated into practice in a household where Annie's dealings with her daughter were skewed by her frustration at the limitations of her own role. There was a conspiracy of silence about this between the children, whose joy at their father's return in the afternoons was magnified by its signalling a temporary relief from the emotional abuse suffered by Margaret and witnessed by John. Alexander Mackie seemed to remain unaware of the home atmosphere that applied in his absence, possibly because he genuinely enjoyed teaching young children and could not imagine that Annie did not.

Like many a child of privilege, much of Margaret's need for affection was met by servants. A person important to her in very early childhood was the housekeeper, ' Toby' .

I have very clear memories of the housekeeper we had at this time, Mrs Turmousheysen, a South African Dutch woman. I could not pronounce her name and called her "Toby ", not without some confusion of images with the 'Toby Jug' we owned... For "Toby " I had great affection. She was with us before and after my brother's birth, and had much of the responsibility for looking after me. I had been very shy and ... ['Toby'] helped me when we had visitors by seating me at my little table, facing the wall, with something to play with, and telling me that when I felt ready to do so, I could turn around. I think I felt I was safely concealed from the visitors so long as I could not see them... I was often embarrassed by the amusement of strangers... I learned gradually to protect myself

from adult ridicule to some extent by deliberately provoking laughter. I remember her at that time more clearly than I do my parents... as a kind, reliable person on whom at an impressionable time in my life my world was founded.

'Toby' was replaced by a young Catholic 'daily' maid, Annie Denehy.

... to whom I was much attached,though she made no secret of her preference for John, who was her "Monday best boy", a phrase devised on the analogy of "Sunday best", " but I don't come in Sunday." (MDM, unpub., A Wahroonga Childhood).

From attending to the servants, Margaret began her understanding of a 'multicultural' society.

Annie told me the crucifixion story and I proceeded to act this scene using two boards laid on the lawn. Annie was horrified and said that God would strike me dead if I continued this performance. I 'knew' this could not be so. My parents continually reminded me about minor dangers such as getting one's feet wet. If there were any danger of being struck dead for acting they would, I thought, have told me so (MDM, unpub., A Wahroonga Childhood).

Annie Denehy, who was not fond of walking, sat and taught Margaret her letters from a rag book which she would produce when she and the children were out of sight of the house on their daily 'walks'. On principle, although education was important, Alexander Mackie was not concerned to introduce formal skills at this stage.

When I was very young my father...told stories to me , in which he incorporated what I had been doing during the day on which they were told. My doings were objectified as those of a little girl called Charlotte (MDM, unpub., A Wahroonga Childhood).

Alexander and Annie Mackie kept careful records of both children's vocabulary and intellectual development. At twenty months Margaret was using two-word sentences: and by her second birthday five and six word sentences were common, within normal range for a child of an educated family. Despite the fact that this record almost exactly paralleled John's, the family persistently reinforced the story of John's intellectual superiority, a telling example of the power of discursive practices of gender. Margaret's sense of being judged and found wanting was reinforced by her limited capabilities in the 'feminine' accomplishments like sewing (in which her grandmother excelled) and singing (her mother had been a member of a madrigal group). Adjudged 'plain', Margaret was neither shaping up well as a 'beauty ' like her mother nor 'sensible' like her grandmother. But at four she was showing the bent for realism that would lead

Professor John Anderson in 1933 to confide to her mother that she was the best logician in the Sydney University Philosophy 1 class (MDM, 1996, pers. comm.19/6).

On my reading Margaret a small poem called "Fireland" in which a little boy describes what he sees in the fire, she remarked that he couldn't really see all those things. I said that he at least imagined he saw them and I thought it made a pretty story. M. however was not satisfied. "I think stories should be about real things" she remarked. "There is a story in one of my books about B......, a very ugly doll. Well, mother, there are no ugly dolls, are there? Have you ever seen an ugly doll? I haven't." July 13,1919. (Mackie, A.B.,unpub., developmental record.)

Sixty years later, in 1979, M.D. Mackie wrote an essay on aesthetics, expressing much the same sentiments, entitled 'Bad Art is a Lie About the World' (quote from Iris Murdoch).

> ***When I was five I began attending Sunday School. I loved the procedure, the little chairs and tables, the counting of the collection, the birthday ceremony with a ribbon on the chair. I remember... the lovely crunchy feel of the little flag sticks as one pushed them into the sand, the number corresponding to the years in the child's age...*** (MDM, unpub., A Wahroonga Childhood.)

This memory is one of the few where M.D. Mackie has recorded a vivid kinaesthetic sensation from early childhood; most of her memories from a very early age appear to be of conceptual insights rather than of physical experiences, the consequence perhaps of a lack of physical affection. One of the misconceptions she carried was that adults did not need to go to the toilet and that children's need to do so was one of the reasons they were 'so much trouble' (MDM, pers. comm.1996,19/6). Like other children of her generation she experienced a punitive toilet training regime leaving a residue of shame about bodily functions. This combined with the rejection she felt from her mother and the style of interaction favoured in the family : reasoned , dispassionate discussion rather than warm physical closeness. Margaret Mackie never saw her parents kiss. A sense of 'disembodiment , a detachment from the physical and mechanical, may have dated from this early time. Although there was never any fuss made about child nudity and the children were given accurate information about human reproduction this was done in the 'objective' spirit of scientific progressivism without any reference to the emotional dimension.

> ***I think it was at my first attendance [at Sunday School] that we were told the story of Adam and Eve. I informed the group... that my father said men are descended from monkeys. I believe I did my father an injustice, as it is much more likely that what he in fact said was that Mr Darwin had said this. The teacher, in shocked tones, told me I must not say these t things in Sunday School. This surprised me, and was another step in my understanding of the multi-cultural nature of society...it was something I must not say at Sunday School. It seemed that it was acceptable to say it somewhere else*** (MDM, 1992, unpub., family history).

This may have been Margaret's first, but certainly was not the last, act of speaking an unwelcome ' truth' to an unreceptive audience. The habit of plain speaking may well have a cultural origin from her Scottish forebears and was to terrorise school inspectors many years later in the Teachers' College staffroom.

From her grandfather in Scotland:

'St Bernard's'
Albert Terrace
Huntly [24.9.1915].

Dear Annie,
I am still here but I am now almost at the end. It has been a pleasant time. The weather has been so fine and Autumn is very beautiful. The corn will soon be all cut and put in the stackyard. Yesterday we had three fine plums from our own tree in the garden. They are not all ripe but soon will be. I expect your garden will be in good order by this time. I find something to do in the forenoon and enjoy my long walk in the afternoon. I hope Margaret is keeping well and yourself. With love from all here. Affectionately,
Wm.Mackie.

Gentle William Mackie had welcomed the daughter-in-law and grandchildren he had never seen into the family, discovering with Annie a common interest in gardening. He sent frequent postcards. Margaret, who knew how to write single letters, composed letters in reply when she was four:

30.11.19. At her own request wrote a letter to her grandfather..."the buddleia tree is out ... but the butterflies have not come yet" written... letter by letter as dictated by her mother. (From the developmental record, Alexander Mackie's handwriting.)

In 1921 the whole family prepared to travel to Scotland to meet their grandfather. 'While we were in North Sydney,our house having been let, awaiting our departure for Scotland, my grandfather in Edinburgh died' (MDM, 1992, unpub., family history).

Margaret was nearly six and John three.

I was apprehensive of the coming trip... I knew that ships were sunk during the war, and was not inwardly convinced that the war was over... On the voyage there was a children's sports day... it was announced there would be a tug-of-war... I expected the arrival of a hostile vessel ... From the beginning of the visit things began to go wrong between my mother and my aunt... Aunt Maggie had expected a family with two small children would be better off in a flat than a hotel and instead of booking us in as requested, worked hard to have my late grandfather's flat ready for us. My parents could hardly refuse (MDM, 1992, unpub., family history). ***My mother was very disappointed to find that she was expected, during her "holiday", to keep house*** (MDM, unpub., A Wahroonga Childhood). ***Aunt Maggie, knowing nothing of this, happily greeted us on arrival...***

Various long-lasting family differences emerged... my aunt... also... commented on people "coming back with their professor-ways " (MDM, 1992, unpub., family history).

Childless Aunt Maggie, left in charge of the children while Alexander and Annie attended an educational conference, dressed John in a kilt and took him out. He caught a cold and his mother was summoned from London to care for him.

Neither my aunt or great-aunt had much experience of children, whereas my mother was determined to maintain her high standard of child care, on which she believed our lives, particularly John's, depended... My great-aunt, Aunt Jim [Jemima Mackie] lived all her life in Huntly, in a cottage with two attic bedrooms, a fuel stove and unplumbed bathroom fittings... My father, on leave in 1911, had given his aunt her bathroom... Jemima, apparently regarding the whole scheme as an unnecessary extravagance, took no action...my parents were disappointed to find that the bathroom did not function.
Aunt Jim would not allow us to have books or toys on Sundays, and was shocked at our calling out in loud voices on the Sabbath. We were taken fishing... and I caught my first [trout] in Huntly.

My father , with his recollections of youthful experiences, evidently loved this area. [He pointed] out to my mother the "beautiful undulating country." I wondered what "dulating" country would be...either flat or mountainous...

A happy memory of Huntly is of seeing in a shop window a little fawn hat, with ribbons, which I somehow realised was "my" hat...the hat was bought. I was pleased to note that it conformed to the style mentioned in a "poem" I became familiar with at this time:
"My Sunday hat with little bows
And ribbons hanging down."
I was pleased to find that, for once, I had acquired something which fitted into the pattern of what "everybody" did (MDM, 1992, unpub., family history).

On the Edinburgh railway station Aunt Maggie, apparently regretting the disagreements and misunderstandings that had marred the stay, thrust into Annie's hands as she was leaving, the family Georgian silver teaspoons, c.1870. Annie, unreconciled privately complained about having to carry them on the voyage home.

I do not remember there being any further communication with Aunt Maggie until my twenty-first birthday , when a substantial gift arrived... One result of these disagreements was that my mother "discovered"... that I had a "nasty nature" like my aunt and great-aunt. For many years I believed that I could have inherited this trait from Maggie and Jim...A Mackie family friend [in Edinburgh had] commented to my mother that "the Mackies become easier to get on with as they grow older . "
I think this must have come as a surprise to my mother... in Sydney we associated with people who admired my father, who was popular with his staff and had good friends at the university...the notion of his being a fit subject for criticism had [not] occurred to her (MDM, 1992, unpub., family history).

When Margaret turned seven(the legal school age in NSW) and while they were in Hove, awaiting a boat home, her father (because her mother was ill) began giving her lessons. She could, at this stage, both read and write, and had started to teach her brother John (4) to do so .

This was one of many occasions on which, while recognising that my parents' way of doing something was better in certain respects than the usual one, I wished they could see their way to conforming to the ordinary procedures.

Alexander Mackie taught Margaret the multiplication tables :

I did not learn these tables week by week with much repetition, but was confronted with them in rapid succession... and understood them... My basic number sense had been established earlier with the help of Montessori rods... as a result...I still sometimes, when I need to add, see the process in linear units (MDM, 1992, unpub., family history).

Miss Skillen and the mathematics lecturer, Maggie Campbell, had visited Italy the previous year and observed the Montessori method of education in its country of origin (letter from Miss Skillen to Alexander Mackie, 1920, 7/7).

On the journey back to Australia the family travelled through France and Spain. Margaret had by this time positioned herself in the family constellation as John's mentor and chief companion, although at times her latent hostility at his favoured treatment surfaced:

> ***One evening , when we were in the Carcassonne, my parents went out , leaving us in the care of the French chambermaid. We spoke no French and she no English... I somehow embarked on telling my brother a story to the effect that our parents had been run over and would never return. This tale, begun as an obvious fiction, worked us both into what must have been at first simulated anxiety, but ended in real distress. My parents returned to be told by the worried maid .. that both the children were crying... I think this is an illustration of William James' theory that we can make ourselves unhappy by acting as if we were unhappy... we explained to my mother that we believed she had met with an accident.." I love you a bathful... two bathfulls..." nobody but ourselves knew what had happened*** (MDM, unpub., A Wahroonga Childhood).

Margaret continued to tell John bedtime stories into their teens.

> ***1923... October 24th... recorded by my mother in "The Sayings of John"... Margaret, who is in the habit of telling John a story at bedtime, to ward off unhappy ideas, asked him what had happened last night when she had refused to tell him one. "Oh, I was frightened to death", he replied., "and was unconscious all night."...J.L.M. 6yrs 2 months; M.D.M. 8yrs 11 months. (from the developmental record.)***

On the Orvieto on the way home, Margaret easily read and attempted sections of Cyril Burt's Mental and Scholastic Tests, though without the time checks needed to work out mental age.

> ***I felt it was an achievement to be able to do tests for ages beyond my own at all, even if my method of doing them did not really " count "*** (MDM,unpub., A Wahroonga Childhood).

Her I.Q., measured by a different test later, identified her as a 'highly gifted' child at 145 (www, 1998).

> ***... by the time we reached Australia after the U.K. trip I was reading fluently. My father kept us supplied with books. I was happy with those in the Nelson's Library for Children series, depicting, of course, aspects of English upper and middle class life. I was especially fond of a book in this series called <u>Nellie O'Neill ,</u> in which***

> ***a pale bereaved girl comes from India to stay (or perhaps to live) with the O'Neill family... poor black-clad cousin Lil ...really appealed to my sympathies*** (MDM, 1992, unpub., family history).

From this time on Margaret also read portions of her father's education books as they came into the house; her interest in teaching her brother was reinforced by familiarity with theories of education. She knew (as her mother apparently did not) of theories that learning ought to be fun and could be based on the child's own interests and capabilities.

> ***When we returned to Wahroonga lessons from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. began for me. My mother did not sit with me during lesson time. She gave me whatever she wanted me to do that day and went on with her housework. Usually the lessons for one day were in one subject. I might be doing "sums", or writing a story, or learning history*** (MDM, unpub., A Wahroonga Childhood).

Alexander had supplied Annie with copies of the school syllabus. The formal texts were supported by historical fiction, e.g.***The Cave Twins*** and ***The Children of the New Forest*** (set in the time of the English civil war). Australian history and geography were graphically represented by a black map showing a gradually increasing area of yellow (enlightenment?) as white settlement proceeded. Geography included a world map with red areas representing the British Empire, on which the sun never set, and a collection of books entitled ***People of Many Lands.*** Margaret had covered the entire Intermediate Mathematics syllabus, for children up to fifteen, except for 'compound interest', before she was nine.

The written record fails to record the consequences if Margaret did make a mistake; anger and impatience and on at least one occasion, a blow to the head (MDM, 1996, pers.comm. 19/6).

> ***I told my father I wanted to go to school and he replied that I did not need to do so as I was having lessons at home. I did not care whether I had lessons or not. I wanted to go to school, like everybody else. My father then wrote 'Drumgrain School' on my lesson work book. I still do not know whether my father genuinely did not realise that I wanted to do what other people did, that I wanted to be part of a group, that I wanted to mix with other children...Though I was keenly convinced of a lack of logic in the ... reasoning underlying my parents' decision I knew it was useless to resist... I gave up all hope of getting to school... In fairness to my parents, ... I now realise something of what they had in mind. I had none of the dislike of lessons common among school children. I read eagerly, and I wrote,outside of lesson time, little "poems" and stories...***
> ***At school I would almost certainly have... acquired the usual belief that lessons are dull*** (MDM, unpub., A Wahroonga Childhood).
> ***After 11 a.m. there were no more lessons for the day. My time was spent largely in reading and playing in the garden with my brother. Many of our play activities were of an educational kind, though we did not think of them in***

this way. For instance I at one time made a "museum" of natural objects...We made various branch and log houses, and devised imaginative role-playing to fit our occupancy of these. We played hide and seek, counting by twos, threes and fours... There were various attempts at making "gardens" in small plots dug for us by our father... We had a swing - a boat called the Swallow. We played ball games ....Indoors, I played with dolls, but never became expert at dressing them. My grandmother... told me that as a a child her main pleasure had been in making clothes for her dolls. I lacked both the patience and manual dexterity to follow her example. Writing was practised in composition of some kind, not as a separate skill, and this may have militated against my developing any reliable control of pencil or pen.

John learned to read largely by reading Margaret's books upside-down from the opposite side of the table or floor :

a point came up in conversation with visitors which could be confirmed from The Seven Champions of Christendom [one of his favourite books] ...I sat down with it on my knee and found the relevant page. John, kneeling in front of me, proceeded to read from this page. One of the visitors... exclaimed " He's reading upside down." Both of us could read upside down as readily as the other way... Part of my education... was the poetry readings which my father sometimes conducted in the evenings... We would go into the study, leaving mother in the drawing room... each of us, my father, John and I, had a poetry book and chose what to read. 'Poetry' writing, and reading aloud, were part of our staple occupation... Our writing activities were supported by our parents in that they listened with interest when we announced that we had produced another "poem" or story, or, occasionally, play... When Miss Skillen visited us, as she often did... we usually offered to read any "poem" recently written and we were sure of an appreciative audience... When I was four my father recorded a 'poem' I had composed:

The happy winds are blowing
The fairies are asleep
Every moon is coming out
And every star does peep.

At no time did I have any difficulty in recognising metre and rhyme... I continued, up to my university years, to regard myself as a poet... By churning out conventional thinking I was able to keep my own [thoughts] to myself. [Miss Skillen] much later... asked whether I ever had a thought I did not express ... I did not wish the ridicule and rejection to which I believed I would be subjected if I did reveal my real thinking (MDM, 1992, unpub.,family history).

In summer Annie took the children to Balmoral Beach to have swimming lessons with Major Cook- Russell, the Physical Education lecturer at Sydney Teachers' College. The same

gentleman installed at ' Drumgrain', (where he was not often invited, on the grounds that he bounced on the sofa) an overhead ladder and a board 'trampoline' on which the children were to skip backwards. These exercises were designed to develop the chest; T.B. was a very present danger and several friends of the family had died or were to die from this disease, including Annie's friend of picnicking days, Miss Campbell.

By this time Margaret had fully accepted and was supporting the family perception that John's intelligence was superior to her own. He was 'reading more advanced books' (MDM, unpub., A Wahroonga Childhood). He had had a teacher in Margaret from the beginning and was not subjected to a barrage of negative criticism. If intelligence was the main currency of approval, Margaret could hardly have been seen to be lacking. As a girl, there was an agenda for her that was absent for John. She had failed at being ornamental, clever with a needle and accomplished, despite her lessons in piano and Dalcroze eurythmics ' to make the pupils more rhythmical, to develop in them a more intelligent appreciation of music...' (Eurythmics brochure, in MDM, unpub., A Wahroonga Childhood).

> ***A young woman who is the child of a miserable marriage will respond in one of two ways: either she will assure herself that her marriage will be different...or she will avoid marriage.altogether*** (Heilbrun,1988,p.82).

Asked many years later why she decided against marriage, Margaret Mackie pointed out that in her family the institution received a bad press, while all around her were role models of single women who seemed happy with their professions . Miss Skillen was the chief of these (MDM, 1996, pers.comm. 19/6).

To Margaret's great joy, her isolation was broken in 1923 when she was nine and she started school at Abbotsleigh, a private school conducted by Miss Murray, within walking distance of her home.

Abbotsleigh, at first a private then a church school, catered both for a social and intellectual elite in an elite suburb . Jill Ker Conway s experience of the school was similar, twenty years later:

> ***Abbotsleigh... had given me a secure and orderly environment in which to grow, and adults to admire who took it for granted that women would achieve. Moreover, it had been a haven of sorts from the pressures of home*** (Ker Conway 1989, p.144).

Margaret continued to read her father's education books at home, including the works of A.S. Neill, who espoused the principles of Freudian psychoanalysis (Neill, A.S.,1921, p.16) and the books Alexander Mackie was using to support his public call for scientific measurement of intelligence and the evaluation of teaching methods(Barcan, Alan,1965, p.237). She was developing skills at what she already regarded as her chosen profession of teaching ,as a Sunday School teacher at the Presbyterian church, despite her growing religious doubts (MDM, pers. comm. 10/6/95).

Margaret in Abbotsleigh uniform with her father, c. 1930.

Some of the penalties of upholding an unpopular principled stand became evident to the children as they matured and became more aware of their father's stress in the continuing dispute with S.H.Smith, who had become Peter Board's assistant and then Director of Education in 1922, following Board's resignation in protest against the introduction of fees for secondary schooling (Barcan, 1965, p. 226). When Margaret was ten her father had a brief 'seizure', witnessed only by her, during a rough and tumble game in the garden . Her father's illness may have been a result of stress: the college had finally moved into a new building only to be beleagured by a regime of educational conservatism and interference culminating in Mackie's brief suspension as Principal of

the Teachers' College in 1927, as a result of a dispute with Smith, who was sensitive about his own lack of formal qualifications.

> ***The relationship continued an embittered one throughout Smith's directorship. In November 1927 came the most explosive episode. Smith made one of his rare visits to the college and rebuked a lecturer for unpunctuality*** (Turney,1983, p.111).

Margaret later discussed this controversy with D.H. Drummond, the Member for Armidale, who told her her father had 'taunted' S.H. Smith about his lack of a University degree (MDM, 1992, pers. comm. 19/6). This estimate was accurate if Drummond was referring to Mackie's memo to the Director:

> ***It had never been the custom for college lecturers to be inspected and that if such inspections were to be conducted this "could only be done competently by a person with the necessary qualifications"...during this same period Mackie was excluded on a technicality from participation in the New South Wales Superannuation Fund. In 1927 the Public Service Board suddenly discovered a clause in the State Superannuation Act excluding Professors of the University of Sydney from participating... Despite legal action Mackie was refused reinstatement. Mackie's successor was spared this treatment by a minor amendment to the Act*** (Turney, 1983, p. 111).

Witnessing this savage retribution may have influenced Margaret's attitude to conflict later in her career: her attitude to authority may have been irreverent but was never combative. At school, excelling in English and Mathematics, she continued her interest in reading and writing poetry. In senior school she was editor of the school literary magazine and a member of its debating team.

> ***It was unusual for girls to go to the university. You see, everybody knew that girls didn't need exams. Most girls from my school left after the Intermediate*** (MDM, 1995, pers. comm. 10/6).

In 1933 she gained a University Exhibition.Her father's position would have ensured her a place at reduced fees, but in the Scottish values of the family it was understood that she had to earn her place. Her headmistress, Miss L A. Greenwood, wrote to her mother (1933, Mackie Papers, Armidale):

> ***Dear Mrs Mackie,***
> ***As one who has had some share in Margaret's education I should like to say how very pleased I was to hear yesterday of her further success. She has brought honour to her home, her school and herself, and I rejoice with you over her fine achievement...L.A. Greenwood.***

> ***When I was small I...was going to be headmistress of a school and have ten children. Then when I was at college I looked up a medical book and this seemed to indicate that it was inadvisable for me to have children. I would have gone to see the doctor about [it] ,if I only had the right vocabulary... so I changed my plans; there didn't seem to be much point in having to put up with a man around the house if there wouldn't be any children. The women in my family didn't think very highly of husbands*** (MDM, 1995, pers. comm. 10/6).

In this way Margaret Mackie neatly shelved issues of sex and marriage that, had she been more conventional, might have occupied a good deal of her time and attention. Margaret chose to regard her decision as one of liberation rather than constraint. Her women neighbours in Wahroonga largely lived vapid lives centred on games: ' [Those] who weren't playing bridge and golf were... poor and had to go out doing domestic work' (MDM, 1995, pers. comm. 10/6). Someone who followed a similar intellectual path twenty years later, Jill Ker Conway, experienced incomprehension from her Wahroonga neighbours :

> ***My... school friends agreed that I was "brainy." This was a bad thing to be in Australia... Australians mocked anyone with "big ideas" and found them specially laughable in a woman. . [to become] too interested in... studies... was to become a "bluestocking", a comically dull and unfeminine person*** (Ker Conway, J, 1989, p.146).

Margaret Mackie's home life, unlike that of Jill Ker Conway, was one in which a life of the mind was a familiar and valid life choice, but she was faced with the same anti-intellectualism from her neighbours. 'Difference was OK as long as it was better' (MDM, 1995, pers. comm. 10/6) was the attitude she had learned from her parents, whose non-conformity had often embarrassed her as a child, while at the same time she was able to appreciate the superior reasoning behind their actions (MDM, 1995, pers. comm., 10/6).

Margaret's singularity, already evident at this age, a mixture of shyness and arrogance coupled with a complete inability to engage in 'small talk', probably assisted her choice not to marry and once at University there was a further justification: it was 'not possible to conduct satisfactory sexual relationships under capitalism' (MDM , university notebook 1936). Margaret chose to 'live in' at the Women's College of Sydney University. 'I thought it was a great luxury to have a room of my own that

nobody else could go into' (MDM, 1995, pers. comm., 10/6). It must also have been a substantial financial commitment for Alexander Mackie who, while relatively privileged, like other University staff had accepted voluntary salary reductions during the Depression.

> ***one's first vision of Sydney University from the main gate was a graceful sweep of lawn curving up a gentle incline to the point on the brow of the hill where the nineteenth-century Gothic quadrangle and Great hall commanded the surroundings... the tranquil golden stone...reflected the Australian sunlight... The Quad... was an architectural statement about a heritage from Europe that was completely satisfying*** (Ker Conway, J., 1989).

Sydney University was marginally less hostile to higher education for women than the English institutions on which it had been modelled: the women's college had been founded from within the University and with the assistance of male allies (Hole, V, and Treweeke, A., 1953, p.vi).

Margaret studied English, French, Philosophy and Botany, which was replaced in second year with Economic History. She knew only two female academics, Gladys Marks in French and Camilla Wedgewood, a distinguished anthropologist who was the Principal of the Women's College. The person who had by far the most influence of her was John Anderson, the Challis Professor of Philosophy who had been appointed in 1926 and had become a controversial figure for his public statements on religion and politics. The Mackie family had neighbourly relations with the Andersons; Margaret had 'baby-sat' their son Sandy.

Margaret had read Plato's ***Phaedo*** at her father's suggestion, unaware that he was an Edinburgh University medalist in philosophy (she and John had been told only of their mother's achievements). She had gained some acquaintance with the territory but had no idea of Anderson's views until she became his student. She quickly became one of the devotees who conversed with John Anderson in the quad and were invited for afternoon teas at Sargent's tea room (Mackie, 1995, pers. comm., 10/6).

Anderson's approach differed from that of other philosophers of his time and since, in that he had a generalist rather than a differentiationist approach (Passmore in Anderson, 1962, p.xiv). This led him to make public statements in areas that were controversial and considered by supporters of the status quo to be outside the realm of the academy. At the time Margaret Mackie entered the university he had already made

statements that attacked religion:

> ***we should do well to consider how much sense there is in these doctrines. It is claimed for them that they are something more than scientific, but examination may show that they are something less (Heraclitus*** 33, p. 2).

He publicly opposed censorship: 'a disfranchisement of our collective intellect' (***The Union Recorder,*** 1930, in ***Heraclitus*** 43, p.10) and believed nationalism was a mistaken solidarist view of a society which was in fact made up of opposing forces. Calls for his dismissal had been made in the Legislative Assembly and in the press (Fowler, 1993, p. 3). His criticism in 1931 of linking religious ceremonies to war memorials as' fetishes for the purpose of blocking discussion' led to his being censured by the University Senate (Kennedy 1995, p. 98). Anderson's political allegiances shifted over time: In 1933 he was a Trotskyist. His outspokenness on controversial matters sprang from his belief in education as the 'cultivation of free inquiry.'

'As a student in Glasgow John Anderson had begun formulating the realist position that was to become the basis of his "realism" in philosophy, and psychology, "objectivism" in ethics and "modernism" in aesthetics' (Kennedy 1995, p.52). The fundamental contentions of this position were that 'there is one order of reality, that all things are infinitely complex and that they enter into relations with each other in a logical way' (Fowler, 1995, p.1). ' The distinguishing mark of empiricism as a philosophy (as distinct from rationalism)' Anderson wrote 'is that it... maintains there is only one way of being' (1962, p. 3). This statement contained in it a denial of anything supernatural and of any way of knowing facts other than by apprehending them directly, by striving with their complexity and our own. Furthermore, there were no degrees of truth: ' every statement that we make, every belief that we hold is a proposition... [that] can be asserted or denied, questioned, proved or disproved' (Anderson, 1962, p.5). That is, reality was intrinsically logical and once we had made the ***a priori*** assumption that something was so, scientific inquiry via observation and logic could deduce the connections with and distinctions from other facts. There was no ultimate agency and no ultimate standards. It was the infinite complexity of things that made them difficult to understand, not that there was some supernatural order of reality beyond our understanding.

In ethics, Anderson held that certain sorts of experiences and activities were

intrinsically good, that goodness was a ' quality of certain human activities' and that goods such as love, co-operation and inquiry communicated with other goods and assisted their operations, were progressive and free, exhibiting the spirit of enterprise. Ethics, then was ' a distinct and positive inquiry' (Anderson, 1962, p. 263- 267). Although we might not be able to define 'good' or even be conscious of good, there was such a class of things independent of whether they were valued or not. That there was a natural quality such as good did not imply any imperative to act in that way rather than in any other way. There was a distinction between ethics (what is good) and morals (what people value according to the customs of their society).

In aesthetics his position was that a good work of art was 'a real thing worked out in its real phases' (MDM 1995, pers. comm. 19/6).

In logic , Anderson developed from traditional Aristotelian formal logic a radical questioning of many of its own assumptions and rules.

> ***I think it was early in 1933 that I was present when John Anderson stated that there is no purpose' in the universe. Though I had till then regarded such purpose as central to my life I at once abandoned this belief. In this of course I was acting without intelligence, nor as, I think, [he] would have wished. I simply accepted his 'authority'*** (MDM, in ***Heraclitus*** 1996, p. 12).

Margaret's conditioning was to accept male authority; her father was a benevolent figure whose wisdom was backed by the discourses of gender. In any case the austerity of the Andersonian viewpoint,which denied itself the comfort of religion, the sensuality of purely decorative or romantic art or the moral superiority of patriotism, had parallels with the Calvinist Scottish tradition from which both Anderson and Margaret Mackie had sprung. Perhaps his reasoning found resonances in a character already partially formed by a similar background. Both preferred to see things ' by the light of common day, without the lamp of faith' Eliot, 1887, p. 257 in Booth, 1992, p. 112.).

Margaret, like many of Anderson's students, felt instantly liberated from her 'false beliefs' by his ideas. This salutary experience was felt by many of Anderson's students throughout his career (e.g. Kitson, J., 1996: ' I experienced a sensation akin to the shifting of tectonic plates'). In Margaret's case, unlike that of Ruth Walker a year later,whose relationship with Anderson became sexual, there was never a suggestion of sexual attraction on Anderson's part: ' I think I regarded him as I might have done an

uncle.' (MDM, in ***Heraclitus,*** 1995, p. 12). Her infatuation was with ideas, as was that of Jill Ker Conway:

> ***I was intoxicated by the pleasure of abstract ideas,by the company of others who shared my interests, and by the notion that one could get beneath the appearances of events to understand the property and class relationships which constituted the stuff of politics and culture*** (Ker Conway, Jill, 1989, p. 170).

Notwithstanding the serious nature of Margaret's interests and concerns, she was enjoying herself enormously.

> ***I thought I was so enlightened and the rest of us in the Freethought Society were this little band of elite... we had a mission to enlighten the world*** (MDM, 1995, pers. comm.,10/6).

She seemed to have some awareness of the contradictions inherent in being a rather conscientious student from a privileged background while advocating violent revolution. Her facetious letters to her brother addressed him as 'Comrade' and were signed 'Pomponius'. Her self-deprecating humour was evident, as was her relative lack of social sophistication, in a letter she wrote to her mother in the university vacation while staying with a rich friend in a fashionable suburb:

> ***Vaucluse***
> ***18.2.34***
>
> ***Dear Mother,***
> ***I am surviving the capitalist atmosphere quite well. The maid is about x10 as good as Miss Steer [the Mackie's current household 'help']... We have breakfasted in bed the last two mornings....Mrs Smith I take it can't bear breakfast in bed. Sheila and I manage to bear it quite well... The whole place was new a couple of years ago... furnished... all very new and I should think expensive... They tell the tradesmen that they cannot pay them for three weeks till Mrs Smith arrives home. cf. "Vanity Fair"-'How to live well on nothing a year.'***
> (Mackie papers, Armidale.)

For a revolutionary, she was also very well behaved, as the following interview material shows:

> ***You might be interested to know that I was pointed out to visitors as the student who never broke a rule'... K: You were going to overturn the whole of society. M: Yes, but that was in order to liberate the oppressed proletariat*** (MDM, 1995, pers. comm. 19/6).

Margaret Mackie adopted Anderson's views wholesale:

> ***I rapidly came to the belief that John Anderson had supplied us with solutions to a wide variety of social***

> ***problems.Marx and Freud seemed to have supplied answers. Armed by this knowledge I confidently undertook to read papers at discussion groups in the Freethought and Literary Societies.*** (MDM, 1995, pers. comm.,19/6)

Margaret later referred to this period as her 'omniscient' phase. Her conscientisation led to a personal response of writing and thinking, not of philanthropy. While others of her class might have taken up working in the University Settlement, she believed like John Anderson that all such activity was mere social service functioning to keep the population servile in the interests of capitalism.

She applied Andersonian principles to papers for the Literary Society criticising Romantic and Victorian eras in literature as a 'literature of escape' which employed sentimentality and false idealism based on a spurious unity of nature, beauty and morality to maintain rather than criticise or offer solutions to oppressive social conditions: 'The Victorians made the mistake of ignoring the evils of their civilisation' (MDM, 1936, in ***Heraclitus 38, p. 9***).

She also wrote for the Public Questions Society on economic theory,social problems, legal issues and revolution.She had reluctantly conceded the necessity for violence in overthrowing capitalism 'As it is, the machinery of capitalism treats human life and happiness as a secondary matter' (MDM, 1936, University notebook). The theme of all her theoretical writings was that no progress in human affairs was possible under capitalism.

Her first writing on education occurred in this context and echoed the general theme. State education as it was 'provide[d] a semi-skilled labour pool that [was] submissive to authority'. a truly socialist education would encourage self-reliance, independence and critical thinking. Teachers who encourage these risk dismissal' (MDM, 1934, University notebook). By this time Margaret had absorbed enough of her father's troubles with an unsympathetic administration to appreciate this point.

> ***We believed there was going to be a revolution. I wasn't terribly happy about the revolution,... I didn't really fancy myself at the business end of a machine gun, but... if all went well, then Socialism would be inaugurated and all the weaknesses of Capitalisn would disappear*** (MDM, 1995, pers. comm., 19/6).

With the great optimism and certainty of a twenty-year-old, Margaret was sure that correct information would solve all society's problems, which were caused by capitalism and cured by removing it, and individual problems, which were caused by

psychology and curable by analysis.

Amongst the social, political and aesthetic thinking she was doing she continued to harbour ambitions as a poet and fiction writer; in her notebooks are several outlines for stories and plays in a 'realist' mode and 'psychoanalytic' attempts to analyse her dreams. A comment by John Passmore, newly appointed to the Philosophy staff, that writing poetry was a phenomenon of adolescence, was a strong factor in her temporarily abandoning it, shortly after writing the following:

> ***There is a curse upon this generation***
> ***A generation that is not sinful above the common***
> ***A generation not self-seeking***
> ***Nor self-loving***
> ***Beyond the normal way of man***
> ***A curse has descended on this generation***
> ***Not of its own making.***
> ***The savour has gone out of life***
> ***Profit has become unprofitable***
> ***All becomes stale and weary***
> ***We must escape from the world.***
>
> ***Therefore our generation turns from reality***
> ***To a clutter of meaningless words***
> ***And unsatisfying sounds***
> ***And pleasures [grown] wearisome.***
>
> ***I am afraid for this generation***
> ***In search of new sensations***
> ***I am afraid for this generation***
> ***To whom the drum and the trumpet are new sounds.***
> (MDM, 1935, 21/9).

This poem shows both an enlarged social concern and an elitist attitude to the pursuits of ordinary people. As 'realist' literature it fails on the first line with its supernatural figure of a 'curse'. It shows a clear prescience and indicates that the fear of war had become real enough to Margaret to trigger a serious attempt at activism.

On the international scene, Hitler and Mussolini had come to power; Italy was prosecuting the imperialist Abyssinian war and Germany was rearming, having repudiated the military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. Public opinion was on the side of the League of Nations as a peace-maker, but John Anderson had pointed out that this body was simply papering up the cracks between opposing forces (Fowler, 1993, p. 2). The Freethought Society joined with other university groups to open up discussion on the possibility of war.

Margaret's concern led her to a higher level of activism before or since.

> ***There was an invitation from some sort of left wing organisation for someone to go down and speak off the back of a lorry in Moore Park on Labour Day... Dr Walker said he really didn't think it was appropriate for him to do this, ... so I went and talked to vast quantities of the proletariat off the back of a lorry... I told them the capitalists were brewing up a war.***

The text of Margaret's speech was far more moderate than her own perception of it; the experience must have been a heady one, offering an element of risk given her social position: ' I now think it was fairly remarkable for my father, who was a Professor at the university, [to allow me to] go rampaging around and saying these things at the top of my voice, because they were very unpopular things to say' (MDM 1995, pers. comm., 19/6).

> ***I am representing Sydney University Joint Committee for Peace [comprising representatives of six University Societies: The Student Christian Movement, The Socialist Club, The International Pacifists (Teachers' College), the Freethought Society, the League of Nations Union and the Public Questions Society. These societies have, of course, widely differing views as to how the problem of war should be approached.***
> ***We are agreed, however, in opposing war, and it is of our methods of doing so that I am to speak... Our general aim is... to cultivate an intelligent University opinion on the subject of war, by means of discussion... We consider that the only way of preventing war is to form a strong public opinion against it in time of peace, and it is to this end that our addresses, discussions and Peace ballot have been held.*** (MDM, 1934, University notebook).

Her speech was such a success she was invited to speak again at a rally in North Sydney:

> ***They quite liked me when I was speaking off the back of a lorry,but when I was speaking at North Sydney, I felt impelled to put forward the Trotskyist position espoused by John Anderson, as against the Stalinist position that was espoused by the organisation that had invited me to speak, so the result of my speaking there was to break up the meeting in disorder*** (MDM, 1995, pers. comm., 19/6).

The experience seemed to have put an end to direct political activism. Besides, it was time to think seriously about her career. Now, if she was to do it, was the time to break out of the mould.

> ***I was going to be a teacher... [it] wasn't much of an occupation,especially if you were teaching in state***

> ***schools, and... I wasn't going to teach the people who were privileged already. My mother... felt I was a bit of a failure, quite a considerable flop, going back to teaching, which I could have done without all this education that they'd given me.I think she was finally reconciled after my books started being published*** (MDM, 1995, pers. comm., 19/6).

Annie B. Mackie was exhibiting the phenomenon of a parent, who having been deprived of opportunity herself, was envious of its being extended to her child.

Other career options Margaret briefly considered were medicine, journalism and the Diplomatic Service.

> ***When I discussed my future occupation with John Anderson, he commented 'You don't need to do something that no-one else could do. All you need is to do something that no one else is doing.' I was much impressed by this and felt it was his support for taking up school teaching, which is what I enjoyed. I doubt now that he meant it that way. When I did begin teaching he commented that I had 'found my level'. I had thought that the Andersonian concern for the proletariat would extend to proletarian education and that this took place largely in state schools ... it seemed to me that I had lost status with him and Ruth [Walker]. I now think he was interested in his students as students, but understandably, lost rapport when they ceased to regard him as a mentor*** (MDM, 1996, ***Heraclitus,*** p. 12).

Margaret graduated B.A. on Saturday, May 8th, 1937 with First Class Honours in English and Philosophy Ruth Walker had edged ahead of her to gain the university Medal. Ruth was appointed to the Philosophy Department the following year (Kennedy , 1995, p. 124). After some discussion whether it was an appropriate opportunity to offer a girl, her parents asked Margaret if she wanted to go to Oxford.

> ***I rather ungratefully said that I would like to go to Oxford if I could go to Somerville College... I had read books by Vera Brittain... and knew that there were Somerville novelists... St Hugh's wrote and said they were glad to offer me a place and I didn't accept, and my father said ' Do you want to go or don't you?' I said 'I'm waiting for Somerville to answer. I want to go to Somerville.'... I had to do an entrance exam*** MDM, 1995, pers. comm., 10/6).

Somerville, academically the most prestigious of Oxford women's colleges, gave no advanced standing for a first class honours degree from a colonial university. Camilla Wedgewood was incensed by their requirements and supervised the exam by leaving Margaret in her own office surrounded by books.

It was at John Anderson's instigation that I decided, without hesitation, to do Philosophy, Politics and Economics (P.P.E.) at Oxford (MDM, 1995, pers. comm., 10/6).

Margaret Mackie at 20 (12/11/34).

Margaret left behind an Andersonian colleague, Oliver Somerville, who considered her his fiancee, and on the journey to England met a tea planter from Colombo who was attracted by her fresh good looks and evident intelligence. She refused his proposal by informing him that she was a Communist and an atheist, not at all a suitable wife.

When she reached England she was met with consideration for her physical needs but with rather too little respect for her academic record, her nationality and her gender. She was put in a new centrally heated building out of consideration for the fact that she came from a hot climate. At first she was overawed.

> ***I didn't dare to ask how I'd got there until after I'd left... [My tutor] got two impressions from my essay and my general paper: one was that I was enormously tall and the other was that I could argue: the second of these what what was required...I thought, seeing how wrong you were on the first one it seemed to be just good luck that the second one had any approximation to the truth*** (MDM, 1995, pers. comm., 10/6).

Margaret's tutor was Lucy Sutherland, an economic historian of stature who became Dame Lucy and Oxford University's first woman pro-vice-chancellor in 1960, having been awarded in her career, a D. Litt., Oxford's highest honour, and six Honorary Doctorates from other universities. Her obituary (she died in 1980) referred to her 'immense intellectual and physical energy', 'wisdom and farsightedness', 'deep humanity and unflinching courage' (***London Times,*** 1980, 21/8). There was an instant rapport and on leaving Oxford Margaret remained close friends with her, both by correspondence and personal visits, for the rest of Lucy's life. They had in common a colonial background (Lucy was born in Australia and educated in South Africa) and a Scottish father.

Lucy Sutherland's influence on Margaret was in some ways diametrically opposed to that of John Anderson. Besides being a regular churchgoer her politics were conservative. Her power as a scholar lay in an understanding of the intersection of business, law and politics in eighteenth century England, backed up by meticulous references to original sources.She was also a gifted administrator (Bromley, 1981, in Lea [ed] p. 8-9). John Anderson had recognised Margaret Mackie's ability to reason; Lucy Sutherland was to convey to her the importance of evidence.

Margaret, whose task was to condense three years' work into two, was required to write one and sometimes two essays a week for Miss Sutherland, who was her tutor for Economic History as well as her 'moral tutor'. Success or failure at Oxford often depended on the quality of the teaching offered by its unique tutorial system,and Margaret was lucky to have been allocated a scholar of such distinction. A colleague evaluating Miss Sutherland's teaching described it as follows:

> ***She did not teach or impart knowledge in a conventional sense. Rather she outlined possible answers to problems, assessed the likely strengths and weaknesses of such answers and discussed the available evidence*** (Marshall, 1981, in Lea [ed], p.29).

Margaret Mackie's subsequent teaching methods owed far more to this discussion model than to the exposition style favoured by John Anderson.

'Perhaps the most important [experience], in leading ultimately to self-knowledge and the best use of my own talents was my learning, once and for all, what is meant by scholarship... what was given, in my case, did not add up to the potential of a real scholar' wrote Kathleen Fitzpatrick (1983, p. 201), a distinguished Australian historian and Margaret's precursor by eleven years at Somerville. In evaluating this self-assessment, which accords with Margaret's own, it is important to allow both for Oxford's misogyny and its disposition to devalue academic achievement from the colonies. Both women were subsequently honoured in Australia for their educational contribution. But Margaret at this stage had a lot to learn.

> ***Lucy... knocked [my omniscience] on the head with my first essay... You had to go in and read your essay aloud, which was a dreadful thing to do... Lucy said "You evidently write rather well... with regard to the content, your thesis... would have been rather more convincing if you could give even one example." That brought me down to earth with a thud, because in those articles... I'd written, I hadn't had to give examples... I learned a lot from [that] first remark .. Ever afterwards, as far as I possibly could I illustrated everything with... a real example. In fact, I'm regarded as a pioneer in the exemplification method of presenting [educational] material*** (MDM, 1995, pers. comm., 10/6).

The Principal of Somerville Helen Darbishire, made a welcoming speech to the students of Margaret's incoming year that recognised the oppressed position of women at Oxford, quoting from a North American slave: ' You were born free, I by my efforts will obtain freedom' (MDM, 1995, pers. comm., 10/6). The numbers of women

undergraduates were limited by law so that the proportion to men was one in five, regardless of academic considerations. The previous generation of women had not been awarded degrees until 1920 (Adams, 1996, p. 150) and had been required to take chaperones to tutorials.

In 1937 the remnants of sex discrimination could still exert a great deal of power. Margaret played a role in a Junior Common Room controversy concerning a woman who was 'sent down' (expelled) for staying after 10 p.m. in a male undergraduate's room,

> ***An attempt to organise a petition from other Somervillians prepared to admit to equal guilt foundered on the understandable reluctance of many of the potential signatories to commit their names to paper*** (Adams, 1996, p. 220).

Margaret was apparently regarded by her peers as above suspicion: 'I thought privately, do they really think this doesn't happen in the colonies?' (MDM, 1995, pers. comm., 10/6.) The move to have the woman reinstated was defeated. Margaret wrote home, an abbreviated version for her parents and a detailed account to John. Because he was away, his parents sought his permission to open and read his letter.

> ***John said that they were very concerned that I might be believed to be a bad girl...as far as he could make out, nobody seemed to be in the slightest degree concerned whether I was a bad girl or not*** (MDM, 1995, pers. comm., 10/6).

Margaret wrote to John about her encounters with the Oxford Labour Club: 'They would not print the article I wrote for them - said it didn't represent their point of view' (MDM, 1937, to J. L. Mackie). She wrote about Oxford philosophy:

> ***I don't know precisely what label the Philos at Oxford has but most of them (the lecturers) seem to believe in indubitable sense-data. A bit like Bertrand Russell. If you want to know what their ethics is like get hold of an article on "Duty and Interest [?] " in The Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society... by a man Pritchard. The man Ross (The Right and the Good) is also Oxford. His ethics seems to be in their general line too. We have lectures from a Prof. Paton who believes in Kant*** (MDM, 1937, to J. L. Mackie, 30/12).

'I thought [my fellow students] were all innocent and uninstructed -...quite unfairly, of course, because one of them was Indira Gandhi, who politically was miles

and miles ahead of us' (MDM, 1995, pers.comm., 10/6). Somerville was, in fact, in a phase of social responsibility: the college was caring for a Spanish Civil War refugee, students had been involved in the Bermondsey and Jarrow Marches (to do with labour issues) and some Quakers were already smuggling Jews out of Germany (MDM, 1995, pers. comm., 10/6).

Margaret's letters home to John, however, revealed a facet of her character which had evidently been unable to expand fully under the eye of her family. Once she had found her feet academically and had relinquished the effort to gain recognition in the Labour Club or to convince her philosophy tutor of the invalidity of the categories 'synthetic' and 'analytic' in respect of propositions, she developed carefree and relatively frivolous friendships with her peers. Her home and family life in some way had inhibited, during her school years, the so-called 'feminine' interests and a sense of physical confidence. that radiate from her letters home to John in a way that is atypical of any other period of her life.

> ***... Dorothy's aunt and Enid's family were up for the weekend. We took the former punting on Sunday morning. I came back roasted to a nice red colour by the sun. The aunt said to Dorothy that I was looking very hearty. Anything less apt as a description of my peculiar style of beauty I cannot imagine. Enid's family said I was looking very nice. My hair, you recollect is done a l'ange. Just look at almost anyone and you'll see what I mean. Everyone's doing it. I can punt relatively straight now - no collisions on Sunday... Tell Mother the river is not more than 40 feet across and there are boats everywhere so I couldn't get drowned unless I jumped in at night with a heavy weight attached to me*** (MDM, 1938, to J.L. Mackie, 23/5).

She was also finding her stride as a scholar:

> ***I have been reading Dorothy Sayers' 'Leave His Carcass' in the intervals of Peel and Gladstone... The secret of writing essays for Miss Sutherland is to find a deep significance of some kind in the subject- the right opening is - ' the career of Peel (Canning, Pitt, Burke, Queen Victoria) is determined not only, or even largely, by his (her) personal characteristics, but more particularly by the general social and economic forces of the time. Beginning his (her) career as a Conservative (Tory, Liberal, Radical) the circumstances of the time so shaped his (her) actions that... ' You would think she'd see through it after a while, especially as my only information about these general economic and social movements of the time is gleaned from my study of the careers of the individuals. However Miss Sutherland thinks I'm getting my bearings...*** (MDM, 1938, to J. L Mackie, 29/4).

Margaret, rather oddly for an atheist, had written to John Anderson from Oxford that he had shown her 'a new heaven and a new earth'. She retained his technique of cutting through obscurantism and her political convictions, but the clay feet of the idol were crumbling and when the Andersons visited her at Oxford there was some disaffection. Margaret attributes this to his objection to the elitism of the surroundings (MDM, 1996, ***Heraclitus,*** p.13), but Anderson wrote to Ruth Walker 'She and I are at loggerheads at present', attributing the coolness to his failure 'to stir up in Margaret a new interest in philosophy.' (Weblin, 1996.) This rift was never healed.

In 1938 Margaret's entire family arrived in Oxford to install John, who had gained three Firsts in his Sydney University degree, at Oriel College, to study 'Greats', the classical education of which Oxford led centuries of tradition. Margaret, in 'big sister' mode, had already written with advice intended to protect him from the initial difficulties she had experienced regarding dress, specialised Oxford terminology, her Australian accent, the vagaries of the Labour Club: ' seems composed of Communists with ancestral estates' (MDM, 1938, to J.L Mackie, 29/4) and the difficulties of espousing 'Sydney realism'in a milieu which had heard little of it and was indifferent to its virtues.

John and Margaret were youth hostelling together in the Trossachs at the time of the Munich crisis. 'It was very disappointing. When the war broke out, we thought that the unions were going to refuse to co-operate and they didn't do so. There wasn't nearly as much protest as was expected' (MDM, 1995, pers. comm., 10/6).

In the interval between the Munich crisis, Margaret sat for her final examinations and prepared to return home to Australia in a leisurely way when they were complete.

Immediately before Margaret's Economics exam her father became ill. She entered the examination room knowing there was something seriously wrong.

> ***He arrived at breakfast one morning with one half of his face paralysed and they insisted on saying that it was only Bell's Palsy... it had all the other symptoms of a stroke; he obviously mentally affected: from being cheerful, energetic and competent he had become very shaky and depressed and non-confident and behaving quite differently*** (MDM, 1995, pers. comm., 10/6).

Lucy Sutherland had told Margaret that her chances of a First in Economics would be dependent on her performance in the 'viva' (MDM, 1997, pers. comm., 7/10). In the event, in family solidarity, Margaret spent the day immediately preceding

this important test travelling around London chasing a visa so that she could travel immediately home. She gained a second class degree. Given her father's illness and the impending war, she accepted this estimate of calibre with comparative equanimity, returning home to complete her teacher training.

She landed in Australia the day war was declared. Her brother completed his degree and then enlisted in the British Army. Asked if it was a reversal of the ideals they both espoused in the Public Questions Society, she commented in the words of C.Day Lewis (c. 1940):

> ***It is the logic of our times***
> ***No subject for immortal verse***
> ***That we who lived by honest dreams***
> ***Defend the bad against the worse.***

On her parents' return from Europe, several months after Margaret, she was completing her last Dip. Ed. exam at Sydney Teachers' College when she intuited from the supervisors' activity that their ship had landed. She left the exam room to meet them. The Deputy Principal greeted her father as 'Professor Mackie'. He replied 'I was Professor Mackie. It's just a shell' (MDM, 1997, pers. comm., 10/4).

> ***It was all very tragic. He'd been on top of the world and managing everything... my mother wasn't able to work... there were no married women teachers and lecturers, that was still in force, and my brother overseas and the war on, so I was the only member of the family earning*** (MDM, 1995, pers. comm., 10/6).

Margaret's reaction was to constitute herself the mainstay, even the breadwinner, of the family Her childhood house in Wahroonga was sold and her parents settled in reduced circumstances in the Duncan family house at Wahroonga.

On John's safe return from the war in 1945 he and his sister penned a poem about their time in Oxford.

> ***We will not go Again***
> ***In August they hold the fair of Saint Giles.***
> ***When I first went to Oxford there were tents***
> ***And music***
> ***And a noisy credulous crowd***
> ***Under the trees.***
> ***We managed to find rooms***
> ***In Saint James' Street***
> ***Seven years ago.***
>
> ***Dons debates " Collections" dinners in Hall***
> ***Notre Dame Thermopylae the Stratford Avon***

Lee Bay the Eights the choristers
On Magdalen Tower one fresh May morning

Czechoslovakia Poland
A global war
Egypt and Italy
Filled those seven years.
    "The Last Supper"
    Has sustained serious damage.
    We went rowing one Sunday
    On the Bay of Naples.
Now it is August again.
I am leaving for Sydney.
It is the fin de siecle

This packing of books and ending of a chapter.
Saunders went to India.
I don't see much of Telford these days.
Under the chestnut by the Lamb and Flag
I saw
Two miniature race horses and the "biggest Saint Bernard dog
In the world."
It is August again...
                Heraclitus and I
Can never step
Into the same river
Twice.

(MDM and JLM, August - October, 1945.)

The title is from a poem of Chesterton's:
"My friends, we will not go again;
and ape an ancient rage
Or stretch the folly of our youth to be the shame of age."
(MDM, 1945.)