ACADEMICS NO LONGER THINK: HOW THE NEOLIBERALIZATION OF

ACADEMIA LEADS TO THOUGHTLESSNESS

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Thoughtlessness

In my dissertation, I argue that the neoliberalization of higher education results in

the university becoming less and less a place of wonder, self-cultivation and thinking and

instead more and more a place to specialize, strategize and produce. This is a result of the

volatile infusion and mixing of the logic of calculative rationality at work in consumer

capitalism with the logic of scientific instrumental rationality already hegemonic in

academia. This adds to the demands of the academic world of production the demands of

the world of consumption. Now the academic (and also the student) is interpellated not

only as a producer of knowledge but also as an object of consumption (to be consumed

by others). These new pressures, previously kept at a distance from academia,

explosively accelerate the already rapid process of rationalization of which science is

already a key part and increasingly structure higher education as a field of strategic action

in which students no longer have the time to think and to develop good judgment.

I worry this undermines the opportunity for students to develop into good citizens

that can truly think critically and judge carefully. Thinking and judgment are, according

to Arendt, the only things that can save us if the powerful machines of science or

capitalism begin to work in ways they should not. Arendt saw Nazi Germany use the

newest science and the best economic management to systematically kill six million

Jews. She saw the disturbing inability of the populace and the intellectuals to capably

resist the Nazi machine once it got rolling. I argue than unless checked, neoliberalization

threatens to turn the university into a place that discourages thinking and the development

of judgment in favor of hyperspecialization and strategic action.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> "Nobody knows the use of the useless"
> – Zhuangzi

> "Thinking doesn't bring knowledge as do the sciences.
> Thinking does not produce useable practical wisdom.
> Thinking does not solve the riddles of the universe.
> Thinking does not endow us directly with the power to act."
> - Heidegger

Academics No Longer Think

"I will do anything for another line in my CV."
My colleague says this with his eyebrows raised in a way that further communicates that while he knows this is absurd and it hurts him to admit it, but what else can he do now that this is the game he is playing?
His partner leans over and raises her eyebrows in a similar way. "He will. Seriously. He will do anything." Her look expresses both pity and humor but also a bit of alarm. The job market is around the corner and the closer it gets the more frantic he feels.

Universities across the US have committed to a process of neoliberalization that is radically altering higher education. As a result, the university is becoming less and less a place of wonder, self-cultivation and thinking and instead is becoming more and more a place to specialize, strategize, produce and profit. The Neoliberal University has become an institution to baptize students into the waters of efficiency, to initiate them into the massive modern machinery of production, to teach them not only how to come out ahead but to love the competition. Sink or swim, publish or perish, triumph and win: there is no longer time to think and to wonder.

This changes the entire atmosphere of the university. Students are increasingly finding themselves *in a field of strategic action* in which they are challenged to rise above the competition. Neoliberal business values encourage this brave new world of

frenzied production and reward those who thrive in it. As more students enter

undergraduate and graduate programs, the competition for entry becomes more intense:

GPAs must be better, SAT and GRE scores must be higher, resumes must have more

impressive extracurricular activities, and all this must be done faster because schools are

raising tuition and student loans are piling up. This means, of course, that the students

have a divided gaze—one eye to their grades and their resume, one eye to the material

they learn. Those who do not act strategically risk falling behind in the race. The pressure

is immense. Those who learn to invest their souls in the game and thrive in the

competition rise to the top.

I am invoking contradictory language here on purpose. On the one hand, the

neoliberal university is constantly seeking for ways to ratchet up the speed of academia:

more efficiency, more production, more competition, better results. This creates immense

and potentially crushing pressures on both students and faculty. But neoliberalism also

rearticulates these pressures as the demands of a fulfilling and self-affirming career and

rewards those who can find meaning, purpose and freedom in the battles of capitalism.

Neoliberalism doesn't just reward production, it rewards those who love to produce. This

creates an odd situation in which students and faculty have ever more work placed upon

them, but are simultaneously encouraged to see these pressures as enabling, stimulating

and even freeing. While my concern is about how these pressures result in a pervasive

and disturbing thoughtlessness and thus I will stress the danger of these changes, for

many immersed in these new competitive games these changes are not dangerous but

progress! There is thus a double danger: the depth of the danger is hidden in the rhetoric

of progress, profit and freedom. I will attempt as I write to preserve a sense for the deep

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tension between the potentially crushing pressures of neoliberal academia and the self-affirming rewards for those that can thrive under these pressures.

The strategies for academic success are legion and omnipresent. There are books and expensive courses that teach the strategies that guarantee higher scores on standardized tests. There are classes on time management. There are counselors that can help you plan coursework and create an efficient timeline. There are presentations on how to succeed in college. Students learn to economize: how to maximize their scores on papers and tests they may or may not have had enough time to write or study for. How to multitask. Which professors grade easier and which grade harder. Which are the most demanding classes and which not so much. Which websites have good summaries of texts and clear explanations of concepts. Which websites have the best essay writing services? These strategies vary depending on circumstance and discipline and the kinds of hoops that must be jumped through. Some strategies are more obvious and known to most. Others are less obvious. Some, such as BSing through test questions that one does not know, are so common they are expected (and often funny when wrong). Others are less known and perhaps even dishonest. Some students may not pay attention to all the potential strategies, but they are everywhere nonetheless, so much so that one runs into them just being about on campus. For example, recently while walking across campus between classes I overheard a student giving a friend advice as they walked in front of me about how to succeed in a humanities course. The secret, he confided, was to produce the best paper possible on the first paper assignment. If the teacher was impressed by this first assignment, this impression would color the grading of all the assignments that followed. Thus, once this original good impression has been managed, less effort can be

given on future papers while still obtaining the needed returns. The student then added that because the humanities are not "objective" one can take advantage of the "subjectivity" of the teachers and materials.

While this is disingenuous and manipulative, it is not cheating. It is not in violation of any policies of academic honesty. It is a strategic action, aimed at efficiently and effectively maximizing one's grade, while minimizing one's effort.

Key to all such strategies is impression management. No one likes to know they are being manipulated. No one likes being the target of a strategy. Thus the strategizer must also be a good actor. The more academia becomes saturated with strategies the more all the academic world becomes a stage.

Since the strategizer is at risk of being revealed as disingenuous if exposed, it is rare to see behind the scenes. In one of the graduate programs I attended, circumstances enabled just such a look backstage. The other students in my cohort and myself all had open cubicles in a large room together. Not surprisingly we all got to know each other well and became very comfortable with each other. We also had to take the same set of core classes together and these classes took place in the room next to our shared room. This led to a remarkable situation in which our shared office room served as a kind of backstage to the stage that was our classroom. What made this remarkable was that everyone had grown so comfortable that some students started revealing the strategies they used in their classes. One student would skim the text until they found a key point they knew they could talk about in class and then ignore the rest. Sure enough, when on the stage this student talked competently about that point giving the impression that he knew the material very well. Another student admitted to rarely doing the reading at all,

but was so clever that he could shrewdly follow the discussion in class and actively participate by piggy backing on other's comments, while never having read the material. Yet another student wrote an email to our professor praising how much he had learned in class from her and how it was one of the best classes he had ever taken and then had us all gather around and read it before he sent it to her. Others remained aloof from such cheap tactics and instead simply allied themselves with faculty members. Instead of employing strategies on the professors they asked professors for the strategies academics used to succeed in academia. By aligning themselves with specific faculty members they were able to learn to play the academic game. This structure of the backstage communal room and the stage of our classes made for a surreal experience that had a double layer: on one level the normal classroom as many students experience it, and on another level the site of complex strategic maneuvering on the part of some students which was apparent to us all thanks to the frankness of these actors backstage.

When I asked one of these students if they thought what they were doing was dishonest, he hesitated and then said while he understood how it could be seen this way, that he was just playing the game, working the system, trying to get ahead. Besides, this is how things work, he said, you either do whatever is necessary or you get left behind.

I take this kind of duplicitous disingenuity to be strategic action pushed to an unhealthy extreme. While these manipulative strategies manifest a lack of integrity they often do not technically violate academic honesty. Obviously, not all students go to these extremes. Enough do however that it changes not only how students and teachers relate to each other, but also how students relate to each other. These relations can become stained with a veneer of mistrust. All assignments must be submitted to Safe Assign which

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compares all papers ever submitted with each other and with content on the internet. Professors may need to collect tests instead of handing them back lest they be kept on file, sold or distributed by students. Essay assignments must be changed each year as they may be uploaded to websites which charge to write the essays for students. No cell phones can be used during a test lest students text answers to each other.

The entire tone of education changes when this degree of strategic action becomes expected, commonplace and rewarded. As the university becomes more competitive, more expensive and increasingly run by business interests it will increasingly appear as a field of strategic action in which students will need to act calculatively to survive. Instead of a place to learn, grow and think, the university becomes predominately a place to compete, strategize, produce resume-able results and construct a certain commodified self that will be attractive to potential employers or graduate schools. It is hard to imagine this frantic space providing a home for thinkers and citizens.

But this is a problem that applies not only to students but to professors also. This quickly becomes clear to graduate students who are grimly informed of how difficult it is to get tenure and how rough the market is. Publish or perish. A responsible graduate program provides training in the strategic approaches to publishing, networking, CV creation, interviewing, grant writing, etc. Students are invited to strategy sessions to discuss what approaches to take to get accepted into prestigious but difficult-to-be-accepted conferences. Students attend presentations from professors about strategic tips to use when writing papers and dealing with editors (I was once advised about how to look like one is in conversations with famous professors about their forthcoming works).

In some disciplines it is common for professors to work with graduate students on projects which result in publications with multiple authors. Thus there are both professors and graduate students looking at each other as resources to publish more (and the politics of first author vs second authors can arise). At its extremes, this can result in situations like one I witnessed in which a grad student was asked to mindlessly run endless statistical analysis until some sort of interesting, statistically significant results were found (the professor encouraged the student to "play with the numbers" until something interesting was found).

In many disciplines, journals are quantitatively ranked and given a multiplier such that the highest journals are worth many more points than lower ranked journals or journals considered outside the discipline. This forces the academic to funnel their efforts into strategically publishing in certain venues and this in turn has produced such intense competition for top tier journals that some like the American Economic Review have started creating multiple sub-versions of their journals which still carry the all important brand name to deal with the sheer volume of quality material they receive (in the case of the AER they created four new journals, AER: Applied Economics, AER: Economic Policy, AER: Microecnomics and AER: Macroeconomics[1]). This hypercompetitive atmosphere can be damaging to scientific practice, which, as it is traditionally understood is meant to be fundamentally cooperative but is increasingly about outracing competitors.[2] The need to publish sexy results faster than others can lead to strategic shortcuts and shoddy research.[3]

And then there is the money. Academics in the social sciences and even more so the hard sciences are often dealing with research that can be very profitable for

businesses and/or very informative for governments. Businesses and governments are increasingly providing funding for research projects[4]. Often this money does not come without strings attached. Businesses provide funding for projects that are relevant to their interests. They may be looking for the prestige of endorsement by academics. They may be looking to develop products. Universities are increasingly discovering they need to worry about the questions of copyrights for new discoveries. There is good reason to worry about how research can be warped by the high stakes world of money. But universities themselves take a cut of research funding, which they label as overhead or indirect costs[5]. Harvard takes 69% out of federal research grants. Yale takes 66%. Berkeley and Michigan take 55.5%. This is often taxpayer money. As the university embraces the logic of business, researchers are increasingly judged by how much funding they can bring in[6]. This creates a level of pressure to act strategically that is unheard of in the humanities. Millions of dollars are at stake. The academic cannot only be a good researcher—she must be a tactician, a strategizer, business savvy, cunning, calculative and perhaps even vicious. Those who come out of top have the pleasure of knowing they are the best of the best.

As I have mentioned, this increasingly frantic, strategically charged atmosphere is a result of the American University undergoing a process of neoliberalization. Above all this process involves the embracing of business values previously kept at least somewhat at a distance from the university.[7] It also coincides with the rise of large bureaucratic administrations which attempt to wrestle authority and control from faculties.[8] This process has been called the "McDonaldization of the University,"[9] the "Unmaking of the Public University,"[10] and the "corporate corruption of higher education."[11] At stake in

this shift is the autonomy of the university and faculty, the role of the academic in society, and the purpose of higher education.

I argue that the neoliberalization of higher education should also be understood as the volatile infusion and mixing of the logic of calculative rationality at work in consumer capitalism with the logic of scientific instrumental rationality already hegemonic in academia. This adds to the demands of the academic world of production the demands of the world of consumption. Now the academic (and also the student) is interpellated not only as a producer of knowledge, but also as an object of consumption (to be consumed by others). As I have mentioned, it may seem at first that this would not sit well with academics to have the pressures on them ratcheted up, but, as we will see, the genius of neoliberalism is to rebrand capitalism as a great, self-affirming adventure. Unlike earlier forms of capitalism which were often accused of alienating and exploiting humans, forcing them to submit to the economic machinery, neoliberalism has found ways to rearticulate capitalism such that it is seen as something that enables, empowers and affirms human aspirations. I don't just work at American Eagle, I am a part of an exciting team that is seeking to creatively find ways to succeed. I am not just working on an academic problem, I am giving a part of myself to an important conversation and pushing the boundaries of knowledge. Neoliberalism thus harnesses human desire and funnels it into economically productive activities. This creates the expectation that each of us will pour our souls into our work and means that employers come to expect employees will love their work, be happy to do it and be deeply invested in it. No longer is it enough to produce, but now one must have the exuberant enthusiasm and rosy flush of someone who loves their life and their work. This in turn means that ratcheting up the

pressure for results is not an imposition but encouragement to help you be the best you can be. Exploitation is now encouragement. Alienation is now a bad attitude.

These new pressures, previously generally kept at a distance from academia, explosively accelerate the rapid process of rationalization of which science is already a key part and increasingly structure higher education as a field of strategic action. Like Weber, Heidegger and Horkheimer, I worry that this results in highly efficient systems which encourage strategic action instead of thinking.[12] While I think Heidegger and Horkheimer were very prescient about the direction of the West, they could not have fully anticipated the way neoliberal consumer capitalism has incorporated many of the criticisms made of the protestant ethic, instrumental rationality and producer capitalism and emerged even stronger.[13] They did not anticipate how consumer capitalism could find ways to affirm human desire and freedom by tying them to a self-affirming career. Unfortunately, although capitalism has changed in fundamental ways, many critics have not adequately taken these changes into account and continue to fight an earlier version of capitalism.[14] There is a great need to reexamine these important concepts in the neoliberal context. In what follows I attempt to take these changes into account and I claim that when we do so, what we see in an educational setting is that when the machine of science is combined with the machine of consumer capitalism, the space for thinking and judging is foreclosed. Thus, with Hannah Arendt, I will argue that the most problematic result of this ever-accelerating rationalization is thoughtlessness.

The project of modernity, of which the university is a key part, has an antipathy to both thinking and human judgment. Thinking, for Arendt, is akin to wondering and is not productive. When there are plans to be implemented, projects to move forward, and

society to improve, what is needed is calculation and will, not the endless pondering of thinkers. Capitalism is especially antithetical to thinking. Similarly, human judgment—knowing what is right in a specific situation—is too fickle to be trusted. What is needed is the careful, methodological, empirically verified study of a rigorously scientific community. Science is especially antithetical to human judgment: Method replaces it.[15]

While thinking and judgment are inefficient and imprecise, they are, according to Arendt, the only things that can save us if the powerful machines of science or capitalism begin to work in ways they should not. Arendt saw Nazi Germany use the newest science and the best economic management to systematically kill six million Jews. She saw the disturbing inability of the populace and the intellectuals to capably resist the Nazi machine once it got rolling.[16] Her studies of Adolf Eichmann are important for seeing how the lack of thinking and judgment, paradigmatically with Eichmann but extending to the populaces and intellectuals of many European countries of the time, led to so little resistance and so much complicity with Nazi Germany.

Using an Arendtian lens, I propose to study how science tends toward a kind of thoughtlessness, how the business world tends toward a kind of thoughtlessness and how together they are undermining the development of judgment and replacing thinking with calculation. This involves examining the ways the structure of the university and the construction of the academic encourage calculative approaches. Academia currently functions under the hegemony of science. The university is structured in ways that take the scientist engaged in "normal science" as the standard by which the activities of academics are to be articulated, judged, disciplined, and rewarded.[17] This is the result not only of the problematic emulation of the hard sciences by the social sciences and the

humanities (which still continues), but also because of the ways it makes the academic visible as an object capable of being measured, weighed and evaluated by the university (and other scientists).[18] What this produces is the need for the academic to "play the game."[19] Whether this is the scientist playing the games that scientists play, or the non-scientist forced to play a similar game to prove her worth to the academy, it is the way the academic can get sucked into these games and the ways these games encourage strategic action that I suggest leads to thoughtlessness.[20] I agree with critics of the hegemony of science who have argued the ideals, assumptions and methods of the hard sciences do not work well in the social sciences and the humanities—especially insofar as they lead to instrumental approaches and strategic action that impede the development of the kinds of skills, "methods" and practical judgment that are needed in social sciences and humanities.[21] In other words, the non-sciences need time and space to think and to develop judgment, something I think they cannot do well under pressures to act like a scientist or prove their worth in a system structured on the model of science.

All this is greatly exacerbated when you add to the mix the calculative rationality of capitalism. As the pressures to play the game and be strategic increase, the time for thinking and developing judgment shrinks even more.

I begin in Chapter II with the historical origins of the modern research university. While it was initially a project of the romantics designed to influence German character and education, by midcentury the modern research university had become suffused with positivism. Positivists essentially argued that science was the means to true knowledge and that all disciplines can and should function like science. It was with this embrace of

positivist science that the modern university came to exist in the form we now recognize it. The highly rationalized research university affirmed not only the dreams of scientists however, but also those of politicians and businessmen who saw how useful and profitable the information being produced could be for their own endeavors. The state saw modern research as a means for social control (and used it to justify and improve colonial efforts). Entrepreneurs and companies saw new potential technologies and products that could bring big money. This meant that the modern research university was from its inception fraught with tension: the demand to be scientific required objectivity and disinterestedness, but the outside demands of politicians and companies aimed at producing useful information and products. The academic needed space free of "interestedness" in order to claim to be objective and to follow where their studies led them without undue bias, but the funding the academic needed most often came from outside sources with very specific interests and a keen desire for results.

Despite the tensions this creates for modern research, these three logics—the positivist logic working internally in the university, the external political disciplinary logic and the external economic logic—are related in two ways: their commitment to instrumental rationality and their commitment to what I will call an aesthetics of order. Both of these features tend to work in the background and are not often articulated, but help to explain how the modern research university seemed to be the culmination of aesthetic, ethical, political and economic dreams of modernity.

The German research university was a hyper-productive, efficient machine in comparison with American colleges, which quickly realized the Germans were on to something and modernized and professionalized by imitating the German model. In the

late 1800s many American students traveled to Germany to learn from the best and when they returned the German model was transposed to the United States.

About the same time the German model of the research university was being copied by the Americans some strong critiques of positivism were being voiced in Germany. Thinkers like Weber, Lukacs, Horkheimer, Adorno, Jasper and Heidegger attacked not only positivism but also the instrumental rationality that bolstered it, the modern state and producer capitalism. They rejected the proposed hegemony of science, worried about the brutish efficiency of the machinery being erected by the state and its alliance with the economy, and lamented what they took to be the loss of judgment and thinking with these changes. I examine some of these concerns to finish the chapter and lead into Chapter III.

In Chapter III I use Hannah Arendt to develop the conceptual lens I later use to critique the positivist university and the neoliberal university. The key concepts are thinking, thoughtlessness and judgment. The chapter is divided into three sections: 1. Thoughtless Cognition, 2. The Degeneration of Action into Strategic Action and 3. The Power of Thinking.

In the first section I introduce the term "thoughtless cognition" to help clarify Arendt's distinction between thinking and cognition. "Thinking" as it is used in everyday speech describes a variety of mental activities. Close phenomenological attention to what we are doing when we think however helps us to recognize that there are indeed different activities that are all called thinking and to begin to distinguish them more clearly. The key distinction for Arendt is between thinking, which is an activity akin to wondering and

pondering, and cognition which is a form of problem solving. Thinking, according to Arendt, produces nothing and deals with irresolvable questions of meaning. Cognition produces solutions to problems in the form of knowledge. When I am struck by a beautiful sunset and sit back to wonder about the meaning of life, I am thinking. When I travel in a new country and see new social practices that cause me to question the norms I am accustomed to, I am thinking. For Arendt, Socrates is the exemplar of thinking. The kind of thinking involved in these types of activities is very different from thinking as cognition, which I use when I attempt to discover the molecular structure of a chemical or figure out how to build a new shed. By separating out these different forms of mental activity, Arendt is able to show that cognition can be thoughtless. This is the most important and underappreciated distinction in Arendt's later work because it allows her to make the devastating claim that modern society, which is so highly productive and busy cognizing its way along and accumulating ever more knowledge, is too often, in this very same process, completely thoughtless. We are not thinking what we are doing. This is the central claim I apply to the modern university: plenty of brain power seeking knowledge, not much thinking about what we are doing.

The second section further illustrates this predicament by tracing the degeneration of "action" into "strategic action". "Action" for Arendt is the political activity *par excellence* of acting and speaking in and among a plurality of free human beings and, she thinks, it has been largely forgotten in western modernity. This is because since Plato, much of Western thought has been consumed with the quest for knowledge which originally aimed precisely at overcoming unpredictability and plurality with the Truth. Arendt argues that Plato was disillusioned by the fickle actions of the Greek polis whose

members were swayed to condemn Socrates to death and wanted to find the kind of thing, Truth, which would have prevented such an outcome. Instead of creating spaces of free debate and action like the Greek polis, Arendt argues that the West has, following in Plato's footsteps, sought to manage human interactions and diminish human plurality in order to mitigate the uncertainty, unpredictability and chaos of free human beings acting together. This managerial approach becomes ubiquitous—all the way from the level of the state attempting to efficiently manage the populace down to the level of interpersonal relations and even relations of one to oneself. Not surprisingly this instrumental and calculative approach can turn into the kind of manipulative strategic action with which I started this introduction. Like cognition, strategic action can be completely thoughtless. For Arendt, Adolf Eichmann is the frightening epitome of an individual so immersed in the petty strategic maneuverings of his career that he seemed to have lost the ability to think. She worries that modernity is also thoughtless in many ways.

The thoughtless but highly competent bureaucrat Eichmann leads me to the final section in Chapter III on the importance of thinking. Arendt suggests that while thinking is not productive and is therefore useless, it has the accidental effect of developing a conscience and judgment. This startling possibility rests on the claim that thinking establishes what she calls the "2-in-1" which is essentially an inner dialogue with oneself. As seen with Socrates, this "other" voice won't let him be a peace if he were to act, speak or reason disingenuously. Because it protests easy shortcuts and demands honest attention to particulars, this 2-in-1 is also key to developing judgment which is precisely for Arendt about knowing how to respond to a particular situation without subsuming it under easy general rules. According to Arendt, since Eichmann did not think he had no

inner struggle with a conscience and thus had no qualms about being disingenuous nor about helping to send millions to their death.

If Arendt is right about the relation of thinking to the development of a conscience and judgment, then her claim that modernity is a thoughtless hyperproductive machine is all the more disturbing. It allows us to see how the combination of the instrumental disposition inculcated by science with the frantic strategic action demanded in hyper competitive capitalism results in a deadly thoughtlessness which is all the more stunning since it emanates from the place, the university, which claims to be the center for thinking!

With this threat articulated, I return, in Chapter IV, to the modern research university to examine the positivist hegemony of science and the kinds of thoughtlessness that result. I have chosen to examine academic activity as a game—a game modeled on the scientist engaged in normal science. I do so because I take this to be what graduate students experience: each discipline or subdiscipline is a complicated game with specific rules that the graduate student must master as quickly as possible. While academic disciplines have different games, most, if not all, orient themselves to some version of a model of the scientist working in a positivist institution. I therefore examine the scientist as the standard academic model to see in what ways it tends to produce thoughtlessness.

My analysis of the games academics play begins with Thomas Kuhn's classic treatment of normalized science in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. I supplement this with Gadamer's critique of the hegemony of science in *Truth and Method*. Together Kuhn and Gadamer help to reveal how the denigration of judgment in favor of method,

the massive division of labor that results and the lack of reflexivity that results from hyper-specialization combine to lead to a disturbing thoughtlessness about academic practices. Everyone is busy cognizing their way through problems, few are taking the time to think.

What results is a quantified cosmos in which quantification is not only normalized but enshrined as the ideal for all. Perhaps surprisingly there are spiritual and aesthetic resources that come to accrue to quantification and lend it an aura of vast superiority. This has proved disastrous for the non-sciences however as the social sciences struggle to adapt to these ideals and the humanities are ostracized for lacking the transparent and profitable knowledge that can be gained through quantification.

I finish the chapter attempting to show the danger that this largely unreflexive quantitative cosmos may lead to a technocracy of very smart, thoughtless academics. My claim therefore is that the seeds of contemporary academic thoughtlessness are already omnipresent in the positivist research institution. The neoliberalization of the university exacerbates conditions that were already present in the university.

In Chapter V, I argue that thoughtlessness is exacerbated by the neoliberalization of the research university. This allows for an influx of the calculative rationality of business into a university already suffused with the instrumental rationality of science and makes an already competitive environment hypercompetitive. Not surprisingly, this only further diminishes the spaces for thinking.

I begin by returning to the critiques of the producer capitalism of the late 1800s and early 1900s that I examine in Chapter II. Following Zygmunt Bauman and Boltanski

and Chapello I observe how these criticisms of capitalism were recognized and incorporated by capitalism after the 1960s. Claims that capitalism was alienating and stultifying played an important part in the revolutions of the 1960s and innovative capitalists attempted to figure out how to restructure work so that, instead of the drudgery and alienation that were being the subject of complaint, work could be transformed into a desirable and self-affirming career. Many of the ideals that had been marshalled against capitalism, were now being incorporated into the business world. The very words that were invoked to defy monotonous industrial society, words like "creativity," "freedom" and "flexibility," were increasingly used to describe and create new forms of labor. Jobs became careers that were being articulated as key parts of self-realization. This is not to say the factory jobs were gone. Just that they were either exported or packaged differently (the Subway fast food worker is identified as a "sandwich artist") when necessary. Above this substrate of menial labor and factory work, new forms of work emerged that encouraged creativity, freedom and flexibility. The coopting of the critiques of capitalism and assimilation of the language of freedom was augmented with renewed neoliberal efforts to cut down social safety nets and eliminate government controls on markets. This very same language of freedom and flexibility is now turned against the state and invoked in support of free markets.

Bauman argues that this represents a radically new period of capitalism and a new form of social organization. The producer society at the turn of the century has been replaced by a consumer society. Instead of being interpellated primarily as workers, we are interpellated primarily as consumers. Tasks like self-realization that were are now *required* and become part of a process of self-commodification. Employers want

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employees that see their work as an integral part of their identity. Flexibility, once a dream to escape the constraints of capitalism, is now a requirement (move locations and change careers rapidly if needed). This coopting of the critique of producer capitalism complicates contemporary criticisms of capitalism which, I argue, too often fall back on these old critiques and completely miss the new situation.

Chapter IV uses Bauman and other critical theorists to examine this new situation and how these changes affect the academic and ultimately increase the hypercompetitive and frenetic atmosphere of the university.

If my analysis is correct then the modern research university is not a place where adequate thinking occurs. As universities neoliberalize, the demand to be productive and strategize increases and crowds out time and space that previously had been spent thinking. Academics that value thinking will increasingly be forced out of academia and students who want to think will increasing have to find ways to do so outside of their university experience, which is now primarily meant to incorporate them into the job market. Publish or perish: no time to think

Notes

[1] http://www.aeaweb.org/aer/index.php.

[2] http://www.theguardian.com/science/2013/dec/09/nobel-winner-boycott-science-journals.

[3] One example of this is the infamous p-hacking. See http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/science-isnt-broken/.

[4] Gould, Eric. The University in a Corporate Culture (Newhaven, CN: Yale University Press, 2003).

[5] http://www.bostonglobe.com/news/nation/2013/03/17/harvard-mit-and-other-research-schools-thwart-obama-administration-effort-cap-overhead-payments/Nk5PT0Mc8MQZihFVNs5gNK/story.html.

[6] Tuchmann, Gaye. *Wannabe U: Inside the Corporate University*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

[7] Tuchmann, Gaye. *Wannabe U: Inside the Corporate University*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Gould, Eric. The University in a Corporate Culture (Newhaven, CN: Yale University Press, 2003).

[8] Ginsberg, Benjamin. *The Fall of the Faculty: The Rise of the All-Administrative University and Why it Matters*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[9] Ritzer, George. The McDonalization of Society. (New York: Sage Publications, 2010).

[10] Newfield, Christopher. *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty Year Assault on the Middle Class*. (Boston,MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

[11]Washburn, Jennifer. *University Inc.: The Corporate Corruption of Higher Education*. (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2006).

[12] Weber, Max. *Economy and Society*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978); Heidegger, Martin. *Discourse on Thinking*. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1969); Horkheimer, Max. *Eclipse of Reason*. (New York: Continuum, 2004).

[13] Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Modernity*. (New York: Polity, 2000); Boltanski, Luc and Eve Chiapello. *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Verso, 2007); Gilder, George. *Wealth and Poverty* (New York: Basic Books, 1981).

[14] Fraser, Nancy. Feminism, Capitalism and the Cunning of History. (New Left Review 56, 2009), 97.

[15] See especially: Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. (New York: Continuum, 1996).

[16] Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. (New York: Penguin Classics, 2006).

[17] Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[18] Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. (New York: Continuum, 1996). Foucault is especially good on this point too.

[19] Sindermann, Cark J. *Winning the Games scientists Play*. (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

[20] My interest here is not in game theory. In other words, I am not planning on using game theory to analyze the actions of the players. I am interested in how particular situations are constructed as sites for games to be played—how it comes to be that one would even consider developing game theory. I am especially interested in games as metaphors and how this shapes what academics consider themselves to be doing.

[21] Scott, James C. *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1998); Bernstein, Richard J. *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory*. (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978); Mills, C. Wright Mills. *The Sociological Imagination*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959); Bellah, Robert. "Social Science as Practical Reason," in Callahan, Daniel and Bruce Jennings, eds., *Ethics, the Social Sciences and Policy Analysis*. (New York: Plenum Press, 1983).

CHAPTER II

THE RISE OF THE MODERN RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

"ENCYCLOPÉDIE, f. n. (Philosophy). This word means *interrelation of all knowledge*; it is made up of the Greek prefix *en*, in, and the nouns *kyklos*, circle, and *paideia*, instruction, science, knowledge. In truth, the aim of an *encyclopédie* is to collect all the knowledge scattered over the face of the earth, to present its general outlines and structure to the men with whom we live, and to transmit this to those who will come after us, so that the work of past centuries may be useful to the following centuries, that our children, by becoming more educated, may at the same time become more virtuous and happy…"
-Diderot's entry for the word *encyclopédie* (as quoted in The Portable Enlightenment reader, 17)

"…In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied and the Cartographers Guild struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it."
- Borges, On Exactitude in Science, 325

"*Paideia* is the lifeblood of democracy. I should be translated "general education," but it is more than that. It is less than expert training, because it will not prepare a citizen to compete with an expert in her field. But *paideia* should give a citizen the wisdom to judge what he is told by people who do claim to be experts. So we could call it "super-expert education." If citizens do not have the good judgment that *paideia* is supposed to develop, what good can they do in discussion? And how will they be competent to judge a debate? But without useful debate and discussion the people cannot rule well."
Paul Woodruff, First Democracy, 192

Introduction

In this Chapter I examine the rise of the research university and its connection

with the political projects and producer capitalism of its time. What we now think of as

the research university was a German invention that spread to the United States in the late

1800s. I will argue that the German model of a research university was so quickly

embraced in the United States because it seemed to answer the fundamental concerns of

three separate logics of the late 19th century: First, the epistemological demands for improved, better organized (disciplined) and methodologically rigorous research. I treat this as an impulse internal to the university itself. In other words, the German model seemed to affirm the desires of many academics who wanted a comprehensive, organized university that would help normalize and spread scientific practice. Second, the German model of the research university promised to be useful as a source of knowledge and experts for governments that were engaged in their own disciplinary projects of consolidating and managing their own nations (and their colonial efforts abroad). Third, the German model of the research university also promised new information, new technologies, new methods and new products for the producer capitalism of the late 1800s. Entrepreneurs and businessmen were keenly aware of how these new technologies could radically affect the creation and distribution of material goods.

Examining the rise of the university in its socio-political and economic contexts allows us to see some of the tensions acting within and on the university. The internal logic of the university demands disinterestedness for the sake of objectivity, but the outside logics of the political and economic spheres were willing to pay for results. Thus academics in the new research university were torn between the demands to be productive and useful and the need to be disinterested and objective. These tensions should not cover over what these different logic have in common however. I argue we can also see important commonalities that link the academic, political and economic spheres. I will examine two: first, instrumental rationality and, second, what James C Scott calls the "high modern aesthetic". [1]

Lastly, I will finish this chapter with a discussion of various criticisms of the positivism that drove the rise of the modern research university. At roughly the same moment this model was being transported to the United States a whole series of important criticisms of the philosophical underpinnings at work in these social changes were being voiced in Germany. These criticisms are important to my project not only because of how powerful they are but also because they inform Hannah Arendt, the philosopher I rely on in Chapter III to develop the critical lens I will then turn on contemporary academia. They therefore form a bridge between this and the next chapter.

Before beginning, let me make two notes: the first is methodological. There is no such thing as *the* University. Different countries have different models for their university systems. France is different from Germany which is different from England which is different from the US. In the United States alone, where I am writing, there are private universities, public universities, research universities, teaching universities, community colleges, private colleges, online colleges, etc. Not surprisingly, seeing such contemporary diversity, the university as an institution has a long and convoluted history. The Walter Rűegg edited *A History of the University in Europe* alone is four massive volumes.[2]

Nonetheless there are woven into this complex history important patterns or trends. This dissertation concerns two of the most recent shifts: 1. the rise of the modern research university with its scientific logic and 2. the current inundation of the research institution by neoliberal logic. This chapter concerns the former. My approach or method, if you will, is similar to that of Max Weber, who wanted to recognize the immense

complexity of large scale social change, but not shrink from attempting to understand and draw conclusions from these processes.[3] One way Weber attempted to do so it through the construction of ideal types. Take Weber's famous discussion of the rise of capitalism in Europe as an example of how he used ideal types. Weber knew that Protestantism was made up of a wide variety of religions and movements, but he wanted to claim that certain commonalities between these groups are important for understanding the rise of modern capitalism. He therefore elaborated and worked with an ideal type he calls "the protestant ethic". An ideal type is not real. No specific individual or religion perfectly embodies the protestant ethic. It is a certain constructed image that is meant to help us be able to both articulate commonalities and differentiate crucial dissimilarities. In my own project I am working with two main ideal types: the research university and the neoliberal university. No specific university will perfectly fit the models or ideal types I am constructing, but they can, if I make my argument well enough, illuminate many aspects of the changes occurring in contemporary universities. Additionally, as another example, I have already invoked the language of "logics". By "logics" I mean a whole set of rules, spoken and unspoken, practices, norms and expectations that guide certain practices—the "logic" of late 19th century colonialist politics then refers to the rules, practice, norms, and expectation for those who were active in this particular "world." Later I will describe these "logics" as "games" with their own sets of rules that tend to be carried along by their own logic and momentum. The descriptions I offer of these "logics" or "games" are ideal types. They will not perfectly describe every situation, but they should help us to gain a certain way of "seeing" what is happening.

Thus, methodologically and theoretically, Weber is a key influence on what I am attempting to do. A second influence is Charles Taylor who, like Weber, is also attempting to understand macro-level social change but specifically with reference to the "moral sources" of modernity[4]. Like Taylor, I am attempting to trace the rise of certain ideas, models, practices and logics, how they gain traction, and what happens as a result. My approach is therefore much broader than typical academic arguments which tend to be very narrow. I suppose it could be characterized as a mix of traditional philosophical analysis, philosophy of academia, comparative historical analysis and a Taylor-inspired history of ideas.

The second note I want to make before beginning my analysis concerns the narrative I am creating and the charge of romanticization. Since my concern is the escalating necessity of strategy in higher education and how, I will claim, this has some disturbing tendencies towards thoughtlessness, it may appear that in my worries about the present situation in the university I am romanticizing some distant past free from the strategic demands of modern academia or alternatively a supposed state of pure disinterestedness. This impression may be in part a result of my reliance on thinkers like Arendt and Heidegger who counter the progressive narratives of modernity with narratives of decline. Arendt, as we will see in the next chapter, will present a historical narrative of the long shift away from action and thinking in the Greek polis and with Socrates towards undemocratic social control and thoughtless cognition in modernity. I am sympathetic to this account and to the criticisms Arendt is making. But my intent in tracing the shifts from the college to the research university to the neoliberal university is

not to create a narrative of decline nor to romanticize the medieval university or the American college.

I have no interest in praising—much less—returning to the American college. In terms of race, class and gender, the shift away from these colleges, which were often dumping grounds for unruly male children of wealthy families, has been a long, hard fought battle.[5] The contemporary university is a much more egalitarian institution than the American college was—although there is still a long ways to go. This history is long and complicated and I will not attempt to recount it here. Others have done so.[6] If anything the account I am giving is intended to show how neoliberalism threatens this progress, especially on the register of class.[7]

I also want to resist the impression that my valorizing of thinking is a romanticization of a state of pure disinterestedness. Historically, not only in the West but clearly in many premodern societies, acting strategically was morally suspect and different societies found different ways to attempt to minimize or hide the necessity of strategy.[8] It is true that I am pulling on these moral resources in my analysis. Furthermore, it is also true that thinking, as Arendt defines it, is a space removed from the demands of strategy.[9] But thinking is rare and temporary—there is no state of permanent disinterestedness. Because I do rely on the moral critiques of strategy and defend a space of free from strategy, this might create the impression that I think strategy can or must be escaped. I am not rejecting the necessity of strategy. What I am worried about is the valorization of strategy and the acceptance that it is universal and therefore not morally suspect. If Arendt is correct that thinking is as important as she claims, then what we will find is not an exit from strategy, but a tension with strategy. This tension

will be apparent immediately in this chapter as I examine the rise of the modern research university.

The Rise of the Research University

What most people would now think of as a university, the modern research university, is nothing like the medieval or Greek university:

> [A]cross medieval and early modern times there was nothing resembling today's institutional research culture dedicated to producing new knowledge. Rather than the production and dissemination of new knowledge, professors lectured (from the Latin *lectus*, part participle of *legere*, to read). This was in part a matter of technology: with books at a premium the oral transmission of knowledge was a necessity. The power of the church played an important role as well, in that professors were expected to promote a set of perennial truths – a *philosophica perennis* – rooted in religious orthodoxy.[10]

Throughout most of the history of the university in the West, professors didn't research, certainly not as part of a systematically organized and disciplined multinational project. Rather, they professed, i.e. they lectured. Research often occurred outside of the universities. Even as the need for systematic research began to be articulated in early modernity (Leibnitz, for example, argued for organized scientific study precisely to defend God, since, he argued, understanding the universe scientifically would prove it was ultimately well designed and benevolent[11]), such projects were initially associated less with universities than with the "Republic of Letters"—philosophers, artists and scientists who were often sponsored by wealthy aristocrats or Kings.[12] This meant that researchers, like artists, had to be independently wealthy or find ways to receive support from patrons.

The modern research university was a German invention. Previous to its invention and importation to the United States (which began in the 1870s) and other countries most colleges and universities were still like the medieval university. Take American colleges for example. These colleges were religious in origin.[13] They primarily functioned as a place to train the character of wealthy young men, but just as often served as a dumping ground for the more unruly ones. The experience these students had was quite different from what we now think of as a university education. They would have read the classics, studied the virtues and drilled their way through ancient languages, but would have little exposure to science. Often students spent their time getting drunk, playing pranks on each other and wasting time. While the American college did attempt to introduce students to the classics, it was in no way necessarily connected to the republic of letters. One did not need to go to college (and perhaps even needed to avoid it depending on the school) to be educated, nor was it the purpose of college to funnel students into the republic of letters.

These hit and miss colleges were largely swept away or completely reformed with the rise of the German research university. Bledstein argues that the major impetus for the shift from largely religious colleges to the research university was the Victorian desire for an organized institution aimed at specialization and professionalization (something more serious than the often sloppy boarding school colleges): "In nineteenth-century America, higher education emerged as the seminal institution within the culture of professionalism. No institution would continue to be more important, more primary, for the success of Mid-Victorian social values."[14] The radical shift here points away from the aristocratic and religious education with its medieval focus on character to a more democratic and Bourgeois education with a focus on practical knowledge and careers.

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The rising middle class wanted institutions that reflected their entrepreneurial and

pragmatic values: in short many Americans wanted something modern, efficient,

productive and powerful instead of the clunky colleges. They found what they were

looking for in the German research university:

> More than nine thousand Americans studied in Germany in the
> nineteenth century. [They were impressed by] two features conspicuous
> to someone coming from an American setting. The first was a well
> established principle of academic freedom (at least at the universities
> most Americans attended, Gőttingen and Berlin); the second was a
> commitment to *Wissenschaft*, "pure learning"--the idea of knowledge for
> its own sake. In Germany, academic freedom and "pure learning" had
> specific connotations: they were associated with a spirit of nationalism
> and with the concept of personal mental development, *Bildung*. For most
> Americans who saw the German university as an adaptable institutional
> model, though, they tended to reduce to a single term: science.[15]

This American interest started in 1850 and "the peak of student matriculation at

German universities came in 1895/96."[16] When young Americans like William James and

George Herbert Mead wanted to learn from the best, they went to Germany. When

American colleges sought to modernize, they went to Germany to learn how. Josiah

Royce said he and his peers were "a generation that dreamt of nothing but the German

University. England was passed by. It was then understood not to be scholarly enough.

France, too, was then neglected. German scholarship was our master and our guide...One

went to Germany still a doubter…; one returned an idealist,...burning for a chance to help

build the American University."[17] In 1876, John Hopkins was founded on the German

model and Chicago, Harvard and Columbia soon followed and remodeled themselves.

What was so attractive about the German research university that it was embraced

so enthusiastically in the United States and other countries? To be brief, it embodied a

whole host of previously unrealized or only partially realized modern ideals and values

such as efficiency, productivity, organization and transparency. Additionally, by moving away from the more aristocratic colleges it seemed to affirm a more democratic approach. In short, the German research university represented a watershed in the project of modernity and served as a kind of nexus for a whole host of other institutions, helping the economy, the military, the government, etc. I will have much to say about this in what follows.

Perhaps counterintuitively, the German research university at Berlin started out as a project of the romantics. The idea was to create a "new ruling class" based not on the "waxing dangers of *Industrialismus*, *Materialismus* and *Amerikanismus*" but an elite bureaucracy which "displayed the charisma of an artist, a Romantic mandarin and a genius."[18] The University of Berlin was therefore a project that melded the needs of the state with the Romantic ideology of culture and *Bildung*. Unlike the French system, which was broken into specialist schools and academies on one side and universities and colleges on the other, the Romantic research university would seek knowledge as part of a large project that would aid in the development of a better German people, not in a fragmented and haphazard way.[19] What made it a research university first and foremost was that instead teaching to transmit information, the romantic university was to be a collaborative research effort between charismatic faculty and students. Growth of character was to be achieved "hands on" so to speak.

This originally put science in an odd place: "pre-1848 natural scientists had to defend their subjects not in the pragmatic, utilitarian terms of the Enlightenment, in which actual or even potential application of knowledge warranted its value. Natural scientists, rather, had to argue for their subjects in view of *Bildung*."[20] Science had to

answer to romanticism and idealism. This changed soon enough however as the second half of the 19th century in Germany was dominated by positivism and material naturalism.[21] This meant that the home for the fostering of culture became an institutional home for science, which was now able to connect up with government, industry and commercialism in an unprecedented fashion. As the specter of industrialism, materialism and Americanism was embraced by Prussia it rapidly outpaced France and became the rival power to England by the turn of the century. The German research institution was the juggernaut that provided much of the brainpower to Germany's rise.

It was in this period that many of the features we now take for granted as a part of the university were implemented in Germany: "screening students upon entrance, formalizing courses of study, publishing textbooks, standardizing examination and awarding degrees."[22] For Bledstein, when the research university was transposed to the US it became the key place for rationalization and instrumentalization to seep more fully into American society. The university combined standardization, prestige, the rigor of science and the specialization of careers in a way that was much more efficient than the antiquated college and that served the new interests of both the people and the government. From the 1880s on in the US, colleges scrambled to "modernize" and become universities. The massive increase of state schools in the period helps to show that governments recognized the value of the new university.

There are multiple logics at work here. First, there is an internal logic at work in the research university. This is the logic of positivism. I mean this in the most simple sense of positivism: the insistence that science is the standard which all forms of research and knowledge seeking should emulate. Not only do we find in this period a systematic

organization of the sciences in the university, but the organization of the university along fairly scientific lines. This means the formation or streamlining of disciplines, the professionalization and normalization of the academic researcher as a scientist, the organization of journals and the other apparatuses that we now think of as part of what the academic does, etc. This has been called the rise of the "disciplinary university".[23] There are also external logics at work in the research university, by which I mean forces outside of the university that profited from the rise of the research university and influenced and were influenced by it. I am specifically interested in the way the university related to the economic logic and the political logic of the time. In what follows I look into each of these logics. I will begin with the positivist logic and approach it from two different angles: first, from the more utopian articulations of the first positivists like Comte and Saint-Simon in the early 1800s and second, from the more epistemologically centered versions of positivism of the late 1800s.

Logic 1: Early 19th Century Positivism and Science as the Engine of the Bright New Future

Science is surprisingly difficult to treat as an object of study and criticism. There is science as it is presented in textbooks, science as it is self-imagined by scientists, science as it is practiced by scientists, science as it is portrayed by non-scientists or popular culture, the history of science, the philosophy of science, and so forth. These imaginings and practices of science may be radically different. Thomas Kuhn has pointed out that many scientists are largely ignorant of the history of science.[24] Michael Polanyi

has argued that many scientists conceptualize what they are doing in ways that don't mesh with their own actual practice[25].

What I am interested in here is why the German research university was so attractive to Americans before the turn of the century such that it almost completely replaced the older colleges and universities. What values did it affirm? What did it enable? While this reflected a social shift away from older aristocratic values towards more democratic ones—a shift to be celebrated—my focus here concerns how, since the research university was under the sway of positivism, it represented the institutionalization of science and the scientification of knowledge—by which I mean knowledge was increasingly expected to be scientific to qualify as legitimate knowledge at all. Thus we can ask in turn, what was so exciting about science? What did it offer? What were the hopes and pretensions of positivism such that all disciplines and all people were expected to submit to it?

The initial founders of positivism like the French social theorists Comte and Saint-Simon had far reaching dreams in which science was the engine. They saw science as the key piece in a radical transformation of all aspects of human life. Later 19th century positivists (under the influence of JS Mill and others) focused less on these utopian dreams and more on methodological and practical considerations that would improve human knowledge. While it is easy to dismiss the early positivists as overly enthusiastic, I want to suggest it is important to pay attention to the pretensions of these early thinkers because they tend to sink into the background and go unnoticed while often still functioning "behind the backs" of later thinkers.

The hopes and pretensions of the initial positivists were nothing short of the remaking of society via the application of science to all aspects of life:

> Comte's views can be summarized as five basic principles. (1) Comte sought to adapt the successful methods of the physical sciences for the study of society and to unify all the branches of science through a common methodology based on empirical observation, comparisons of condition, experimentation, and quantitative calculation. (2) He held that the world consisted of observable, measureable phenomena (facts) and regulative patterns and relationships between phenomena (laws). (3) He rejected the search for ultimate purposes or the underlying nature (or essences) of phenomena as an activity outside the purview of science. (4) He believed that knowledge in all branches of science unfolds in progressive stages, the final stage being positivism. (5) Lastly, Comte argued that the ultimate purpose of science was to promote social progress and order. [26]

As Saint-Simon puts it: "Today, for the first time since the existence of societies it is a question of organizing a totally new system; of replacing the celestial with the terrestrial, the vague by the positive, and the poetic by the real".[27] Positivism, as it was initially articulated by figures like Comte and Saint-Simon then, is a version of the Enlightenment project that sees science as the key mover in the process of enlightenment. This Enlightenment project, the great project of modernity, sought to replace what it claimed was superstition with truth and rationality, violence with communication, incomprehension with compassion, and chaos with order. If the Bible was the key repository of truth previously, the Enlightenment would replace it with the Encyclopedia—the compendium of all knowledge that would be distributed to all. Furthermore, I would argue, if we follow the positivists as seeing science as the key to true knowledge, then the scientist is, in a way, the new priest. Comte even went so far as claim the scientist of society (the sociologist) would sit next to the King and whisper into his ear what was to be done.[28] If we push the logic of Comte and Saint-Simon even

further in light of the developments of the late 1800s, then the research university, the institution that came to house science, could be thought of as the replacement for the ancient temple.

While they didn't put it in these terms, if we pushed the earliest positivist dreams to their logical extreme the university would be the centerpiece in the new world order. The new priests, the scientists and academics, would work in these new temples of knowledge and bring forth a new sacred book, the Encyclopedia. They would help form new nations and new creeds. They promised to deliver what God never could: utopia. And from the university truth would emanate, illuminating the masses, dispelling injustice and liberating humanity.

On the one hand, this is so over the top it may just seem silly. But I would suggest we pause before dismissing what seem like fantastic imaginings concerning science and the university. A quick perusal of the websites of "leading universities" reveals that less extravagant, but still very lofty claims for the importance of these universities are ubiquitous. Here is the Harvard graduate School of Education's overview:

> Since its founding in 1920, the Ed School has been training leaders to transform education in the United States and around the globe. Today, our faculty, students, and alumni are studying and solving the most critical challenges facing education: student assessment, the achievement gap, urban education, and teacher shortages, to name just a few. Our work is shaping how people teach, learn, and lead in schools and colleges as well as in after-school programs, high-tech companies, and international organizations. The HGSE community is pushing the frontiers of education, and the effects of our entrepreneurship are improving the world.[29]

Stanford "is dedicated to finding solutions to big challenges and to preparing students for leadership in a complex world."[30] Princeton "as a world-renowned research

university... seeks to achieve the highest levels of distinction in the discovery and transmission of knowledge and understanding." As such it "is a vibrant community of scholarship and learning that stands in the nation's service and in the service of all nations."[31] None of these institutions are claiming the right to sit next to the king and tell him what to do, but they do repeatedly claim to train the leaders of the future and have the newest, best and most useful knowledge. It may be more humble, but the widely understood goal to "inform policy" is everywhere in the social sciences.

As bizarre as the early positivist dreams of science replacing religion may seem, they point to the space that the university and the scientist take up in modern society. I would argue that if the priest was the mediator between God and humanity, the scientist is now the mediator between reality and humanity. While the church was the place one would go for truth, it has now been replaced by the university.

Logic 1: Late 19th Century Positivism as the Internal Logic of the University

Comte's grandiose vision of positivism never caught on in his life. But a version stripped of the more grandiose socioeconomic and political pretensions did catch on and became the internal logic of the German research university. Here the goal is knowledge and better means to it, but without being as explicitly tied to any political or economic implications. In other words, positivism can also function primarily as an epistemological quest for better and more accurate knowledge—and not necessarily for the sake of something outside of the endeavor of seeking knowledge. The problem is that if science is not given the space to work because of the demand that it provide certain socially or technologically desired results then this may compromise the quest for objectivity.

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Ultimately, then, the concern in this later positivism is "objective" knowledge and the means to it, not necessarily what is done with it (thus the practical results of science are supposedly separated from scientific practice itself). While this toned down version of positivism backs off the explicit socioeconomic and political pretensions, it does represent nonetheless the institutionalization of science and the scientification of knowledge, which in turn implies the hegemony of science, and which, as we will see in chapter three, can lead to another set of problematic extremes. For now I want to focus on how the positivist demand that knowledge be scientific has shaped the modern research university.

The contemporary structure of the research university reflects the institutionalization of science—in other words, it is structured in ways that reflect scientific values and norms. Take for example the structure of disciplines. In the *Discourse on Method*, Descartes famously recommended breaking any difficulty into "as many parts as possible," finding the basic components, working from these more simple parts towards the larger whole in an "orderly fashion" and being completely systematic to avoid any omissions.[32] While science doesn't always follow this building block pattern, it does articulate a common general approach in science and, additionally, how science is often narrated in textbooks. We can see a similar pattern in the academic division of labor which divides up the universe into specific aspects to be examined by different disciplines. It is like the creation of a map. If a large area is to be mapped it must be divided up between different cartographers. Each will go about mapping their individual areas and report back later, adding their parts until a complete map is created. Thomas Kuhn argues that scientists are "puzzle solvers".[33] By this he means that the normal

scientist doesn't tend to pay attention to the big picture issues in favor of discipline and sub-discipline specific concerns. A scientist may spend a lifetime studying the interaction of certain kinds of molecules and never move their vision beyond these puzzle-like problems. Academia, under the influence of positivism, then, is like puzzles within puzzles. Within a discipline scholars focus in on tiny puzzles which, once they come to a conclusion, can be added to the larger puzzle or added as a new entry into the Encyclopedia. The idea, at least originally, is that, bit by bit, the pieces will add up until one day the puzzle or the encyclopedia will be complete--or at least some other useful whole. Even now, the expectation for any dissertation is that it will "contribute significantly to knowledge"—ie. add another brick to the edifice.[34]

So the institution that houses science comes to be structured by scientific values and norms. This also results in the scientification of knowledge and the expectation that disciplines that are not sciences will try to be scientific if they want to gain "true knowledge". Take the discipline of history as a specific example of how this process works. History gained academic recognition with the German positivist Ranke. In an effort to turn history into a serious science, Ranke argued historians needed to seek for "what actually happened" and the "strict presentation of facts".[35] Historians would focus on "minutiae" and then relate their individual studies "to a larger context" until the "fullness and totality" of the "universal history" is produced.[36] Later positivist historians like Bury and Elton attempted to preserve this model of history. "Each published piece of research represented a brick and the work of the historian was therefore analogous to that of a skilled craftsman. The analogy is revealing, for neither Bury nor Elton expected, nor desired, the laborer to have knowledge of the larger edifice." Elton encouraged each of

his students to "never raise his eyes beyond the detail of his own minute area of study."[37] Thus, even though it was highly contested and, I think, obviously unsuccessful, positivist historians sought to model the study of history on science.

Another scientific value that we can see bleeding into the non-sciences is the emphasis and valuation of quantitative analysis. There is an odd pecking order that emerges in the social sciences as a result of which disciplines are perceived to be more "scientific" (more quantitative) than others. Economists think and often act like they are the most "advanced" (most scientific) discipline in the social sciences (Economists even have their own Nobel award). Psychologists tend to follow them, then sociologists, and then historians and lastly anthropologists or something like that. This also seems to reflect the recognition they get outside the academy and the potential that their results will be useful to society at large. Sociology in particular is riven by the quantitative/qualitative divide. This has led to some remarkable debates and philosophical deliberation about these issues that I will turn to later in this chapter and in chapter IV. Not surprisingly it is members of these marginalized "less scientific" disciplines that often best understand the shortcomings of the demand that all function like science.

Even disciplines in the humanities, which clearly function differently than the sciences, are still expected to judge their members by quantitative standards. How do we know if someone is a good professor? Count up their publications (make sure to use the appropriate quantitative modifiers for journal strength, the so called "impact factor"), conference presentations and service.

For my purposes here I am not attempting to enumerate the norms and values of science, but give some examples that illustrate what I will call the hegemony of science in the research university. The institutionalization of science and the scientification of knowledge gives us a better idea of how positivism focused on epistemological concerns attempted to turn the attention away from any socioeconomic and political implications to methodological ones. In the quest for "objective" knowledge, use is (temporarily?) repudiated. The scholar is encouraged to focus on the tiny corner of the universe they have been tasked with mapping, and leave the question of use to others.

This creates a kind of schizophrenia regarding use however. In terms of producing "objective" results, the scholar must avoid use. Max Weber pleaded that science respect the distinction between fact and value and that it must attempt to avoid values.[38] And yet, "objective" results can be very useful. A government may want to implement a certain policy and desire that this policy be treated not as a capricious one, if not perhaps the objective and correct right option, at least as a the best option available based on experts. Alastair McIntyre points out that, despite the rather dismal track record of economists and sociologists in discovering consistent laws that would yield predictability, social scientists are nonetheless commodified as a part of a culture of expertise.[39] Social scientists come to become demanded because they provide authority. Similarly, Bourdieu has pointed to the connection between the claim of objectivity and power and shown the great efforts scientists and academics will go to create the image of objectivity.[40] Claiming objectivity and repudiating use becomes a way for academics to establish their legitimacy and their authority.

This means that at the beginning of a scientific study and also at its end, the question of use comes to the fore. Before the study even starts, the scientist must articulate why the study is useful and why it should be funded. This funding may come from the government, the university, a private donor, even a company, etc. While the study is ongoing, questions of use are supposed to disappear. But once the study is complete, the "objective" results once again enter the realm of use—to be used by other scientists, by governments, by corporations, etc.

There is a further question about the question of use, and this concerns why we should privilege scientific discovery over some other form of knowledge. It is tempting to say science does a better job at making things transparent, but it is not as if alternative systems of knowledge do not provide their own kind of transparency. Medieval Christianity or Pre-Socratic Greece and most functioning societies throughout history offered explanations of the world that made sense. So why privilege a modern scientific view over theirs? Arendt argues that modern science aims to reproduce objects: that successfully knowing a thing, amounts to knowing how to make it.[41] If this is the case, then the superiority of science is that it is able to make more things and make them better. Perhaps, then, the very criteria for the success of science is one that centers on use.

I have focused on this question of use because it brings out what I take to be a fundamental tension in scientific practice, one that is highly relevant to the relation of the research university to the world "outside" it. This will become even more obvious as I turn in the next sections to the external logics at work in the world "outside" the university and examine the pressures and expectations they created for the research

university. I begin by examining the flourishing capitalism of the turn of the century and then examine the radical political projects of modernity.

Logic 2: The Spirit of Capitalism

In the last section I examined the positivist pressure to improve academic research by making it more scientific, how this has shaped the research university itself and is in tension with the need to be productive and useful. The products of science, whether new kinds of knowledge that can lead to new inventions, more efficiency, etc., or the commodifiable expertise that can provide authority, can be extremely profitable for companies and governments. This can put the scientist in an odd place because their authority is based on the pretension of objectivity and to protect this ideal they cannot compromise their studies by letting them be guided by outside interests…and yet they may need to seek funding from these outside sources. Despite, or perhaps because of all these pressures, the scientist is supposed to be disinterested.

The need for disinterestedness in science is methodological, but the degree to which Weber stressed the importance of the fact/value distinction reflects not only a desire to be scientific but the need to counter, to some degree at least, changing attitudes in society towards disinterestedness. The changes that concerned Weber were the embrace of industrialism, materialism and Americanism in late 19th century Prussia we discussed earlier in this chapter. While England and the United States had already embraced commercial values, Germany also eventually decided to try their hand at the new game in town. The social shift this involved was radical, especially with regard to this question of money. Christian Europe and many other premodern societies had strong

injunctions against many forms of self-interest and were deeply suspicious of money as a corrupting force.[42] Capitalism had to overcome the various injunctions against trade, but when it did, modern societies became infused with a logic of interest. By the time Weber was writing it had become ubiquitous: "The capitalistic economy of the present day is an immense cosmos into which the individual is born, and which presents itself to him, at least as an individual, as an unalterable order of thing in which he must live. It forces the individual, in so far as he is involved in the system of market relationships, to conform to the capitalistic rules of action". [43] It is within this sea of interest that Weber demanded science remain disinterested.

There is another issue at stake here too. Bledstein has argued convincingly that part of the attraction of the research university was that it provided the ideal institutionalized venue for job or career training, something desperately sought after by the "culture of professionalization" that had arisen in late 19th century America. Victorians wanted transparent options—formalized, visible career paths. The research university had provided this sort of formalization for scholars and Americans sought to expand it. This creates another tension for the research university: ostensibly the research university is seeking to create knowledge, but it has come to be one of the primary sites for career training. While from either the older aristocratic perspective which presumes wealth or from the positivist perspective seeking disinterested objectivity this may seem a vulgar shift in education that compromises education itself, this pragmatic shift has tremendous moral force because it seems to pull education in a more democratic direction. No longer is education just for the wealthy and elites, but it becomes the primary means for those lower on the ladder to climb up. Again, the issue of interest is at

stake: if a student comes to the university with the purpose of moving along a career path, how much can we trust their allegiance to the task of disinterested knowledge? Yet again we find the university needing to carve out a space of disinterestedness in an increasingly interest-charged world.

I want to dwell somewhat on the rise of the spirit of capitalism and the kind of culture it led to. I see this as articulating one of the external logics that impinged on the university. This may create the impression that it is radically different from the internal positivist logic of the university, but important social critics of the time also noticed the similarities in the logics of late 19th century capitalism and positivism. Many later theorists follow Weber in characterizing these logics as fundamentally committed to rationalization and question the degree to which positivism can escape the logic of capitalism. They worry about the alienation and robotic thoughtlessness such a rationalized society produced. These concerns are important not only for thinking about the research university which was institutionalized and structured in this context but also because these criticisms have been appropriated by capitalism itself, such that late 20th century capitalism has incorporated and adjusted to these concerns—rebranded if you will. Thus the critiques of positivism and late 19th century capitalism help us think about the research university and the world that so excitedly welcomed it, but also will provide a contrast to the contemporary shifts in academia as it is neoliberalized.

I am attempting to flesh out the spirit of capitalism in the late 19th century. The question that can help us see what is at stake is: "How did commercial, banking, and similar money-making pursuits become honorable at some point in the modern age, after

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having stood condemned or despised as greed, love of lucre, and avarice for centuries past?" [44] There are many ways to attempt to answer this question. I am especially interested in those explanations that also help to articulate the cultural assumptions of late 19th century capitalism. I will draw from Max Weber's famous analysis, not only because, despite the controversy it caused, I find it quite compelling, but also because the other thinkers who follow Weber also found it compelling. Weber's concerns were picked up and elaborated on by a generation of German and French thinkers.

Weber's argument was that the shift in attitudes towards pecuniary gain was religious in origin. While many premodern societies and religions cast suspicion on merchants and profiteering, the protestant ethic rejected the ascetic otherworldliness of medieval Catholicism and embraced the idea of a worldly calling.[45] Each person had a duty to do in this life and they should be active and vigilant in their duty. Instead of merely praying, singing and contemplating, the focus fell to labor. Labor has often been a religious means to avoid temptation, but protestants rationalized it (organized it systematically and streamlined it): "What God demands is not labor in itself, but rational labor in a calling".[46] While Luther had a traditional take on labor, the push to rationalize it, according to Weber, was initiated by the Puritans.[47] Idleness was the enemy. "Wealth is thus bad ethically only insofar as it is a temptation to idleness and sinful enjoyment of life, and its acquisition is bad only when it is with the purpose of later living merrily and without care. But as a performance of duty in a calling it is not only morally permissible, but actually enjoined".[48] This in turn led to the sanctioning of a division of labor and the "accumulation of capital through ascetic compulsion to save".[49] Supplemented by the "productive investment of capital" these changes allowed for capitalism to take off[50] and

justified the "unequal distributions of wealth".[51] In short, all these changes led to the

sanctioning of "money-making" as a calling in a way that was unprecedented.[52]

As a result by the late 1900s "self-disciplined, honest, imaginative,

entrepreneurial people were seen as the cornerstone of society, which combined order

and progress".[53]

> Far from trade being suspect precisely because it lacked
> disinterestedness, the new kind of highly interested economic activity is
> seen as the cornerstone of a new ethic. It takes the traditional ideas of
> the republic, liberty and equality, and plays them in a quite new
> register. Liberty is no longer simply belonging to the sovereign people,
> but personal independence. Moreover, this kind of liberty, generalized,
> is the necessary basis for equality, for it alone negates the older forms
> of hierarchical independence. What was seen in the old view as the
> source of self-centeredness, private interest, and corruption is not the
> driving force of a free and equal society. Thus, the entrepreneur is seen
> as a benefactor...They sought [societies] admiration, praise and
> confirmation; they competed for eminence and often took leadership
> roles.[54]

What we find here is the spread of bourgeois ideals like thrift, asceticism,

progress, order, individualism, autonomy and freedom (of course, each of these terms has

to be heard with the particular valences the bourgeoisie gave them). Weber famously and

influentially argued that this shift away from premodern values to modern ones allowed

for the sanctioning of instrumental rationality and led to (or, to be more exact,

accelerated) a process of rationalization. I will say more about instrumental rationality

after the next section.

This helps us understand why the German research university was so exciting for

Americans—it was a systematically rationalized institution. It represented not only the

rationalization of knowledge, but a model of the power of rationalized institutions. To put

it in contemporary parlance, the research university was more efficient than the college,

and was a model for many other aspects of modern life of the power of embracing efficiency. For late 19th century Americans, this was a watershed moment when their ideals seems to be affirmed: the rationalized world was finally coming to fruition. The university must have seemed a kind of nexus that pulled together science, government, society and economics and the spread of efficient rationalization across these institutions.

Weber's analysis connects rationalization, efficiency, science, and capitalism in a way that helps show the deep and (critics will say) problematic interconnections between them. I want to continue the discussion of these issues, but it will be helpful to first supplement this picture with a discussion of the political aspect of these changes, the disciplinary projects of the 19th century.

Logic 3: The Disciplinary Society

In this section I want to visit the political projects going on "outside" the university. The research university would come to be seen as a great aid in the political side of rationalization. Foucault in particular has done a remarkable job showing the connection between the social sciences and the rationalization of society or, as he calls it, the rise of the disciplinary society. Once the process of rationalization gained momentum, it seemed to be insatiable. It could broker no idleness nor inefficiency and where it came across what it took to be disorganization it sought to organize and rationalize—to fix. This logic was already at work in the process of nation formation that culminated in the late 1900s. The social sciences were key in helping to normalize and rationalize the disparate people that were to become the "French", the "Germans" and so forth.[55] Even after these nations were formed the process of internal colonization continued in efforts

to turn "peasants into Frenchmen" (further establish "national identity") and incorporate

everyone as productive members of the modern economy.[56]

Zygmunt Bauman offers a compelling set of metaphors to describe the difference

between premodernity and the project of Enlightenment that marks modernity.[57] He

compares premodernity to a gamekeeper. The job of the gamekeeper on a game preserve

is to keep poachers out of the preserve and ensure that the animals in the preserve are left

alone to act as they would naturally. The gamekeeper does not intervene with the animals

to the degree a gardener does with the plants in her garden. She keeps the system

functioning as normal by not getting involved insofar as possible. The general pattern of

premodernity involves a variety of groups that are generally left to function on their own

and whose interactions with other groups are most often unmonitored by larger forces

(not least of all because the technology to do so was unavailable). Modernity, on the

other hand, is like a gardener. A gardener creates a plan for the garden, uproots all the

plants that exist naturally, and then proceeds to plant and care for a new, organized (or

reorganized) set of plants. The gardener carefully monitors her garden, destroying weeds

and insects that would upset the careful design. For Bauman this metaphor illustrates how

the massive social organization efforts of modernity aim to break with the past and

establish better types of societies.

In *Modernity and Ambivalence*, Bauman argues one of the enemies of modernity

is the "scandal of ambivalence".[58] The proper maintenance of a garden requires a

transparent organization. If the peas are mixed up with the green beans, chaos ensues.

Modernity's "quest for order" seeks to classify objects, to "manipulate probability" and

to "eliminate randomness".[59] The premodern world was a chaotic patchwork of peoples,

languages and religions. Modernity seeks to organize this chaos into intelligible categories. France slowly stamps out Langue d'Oc and replaces it with the Parisian dialect we now call French. Spain discourages Basque and Catalan. German and Italian coalesce out of the variety of dialects. Nations are formed, boundaries created. Modernity took the patchwork world and began categorizing, normalizing, and standardizing it. This process created the vastly improved economic system that has greatly improved human life around the world in many ways. Although there may have been some premodern individuals who might have liked to organize society like a garden, it was only with modernity that the resources (both material and intellectual) were generated to carry out the kind of long term gardening project that we are currently in the midst of.

Foucault calls the results of this process the disciplinary society. Like Bauman, he sees the process of disciplining as the transformation of the chaotic and rather unorganized and patchwork medieval Europe into the hyperorganized economic powerhouse that it is now. Foucault describes it as a project "to reduce the inefficiency of mass phenomena: reduce what, in a multiplicity, makes it much less manageable than a unity".[60] This process of homogenization and normalization "was, without question, an indispensable element in the development of capitalism"—which would not have been possible without optimizing human capacities while simultaneously promoting docility in the individual. Thus in Foucault we find the underside of "advances" of modernity: the individual had to be turned into a player in the "machinery of production" and be made less "difficult to govern".[61]

Broadly then, what Foucault shows is how disciplinization takes the "moving, confused, useless multitude of bodies" and distills from them "necessary and sufficient

units", the modern individual—the type of "rational" person idealized and demanded by the protestant ethic.[62] Weber points out that in premodernity an increase in wages would actually lead to less work being done by the workers. Instead of maximizing the amount of money they could earn by working more and for better wages, Weber says a peasant would happily work less now that they could, with their increased wages, make the same amount of money in less time.[63] The goal for the peasant is working less (even if this meant less potential money), but for the devout modern protestant who wants to make sure everyone avoids idleness, this is exactly the wrong attitude. For a company or a government, the mentality of the peasant is simply inefficient. Thus we find according to Weber and Foucault, at multiple levels, efforts on the part of religious leaders, the state and companies to get rid of this "work less" mentality (and other inefficient habits and ideas) and replace it with a calculative and rational approach that valorizes discipline, frugality, hard work, saving, etc.

What made Foucault's description of disciplinization so compelling is his attention to how this panned out in everyday practices in specific institutions. Foucault examines the history or, as he calls it, geneology of a variety of institutions like the hospital, the asylum, the jail, the school, the military, etc. to show how this process takes place. According to Foucault, it does this through hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment and the examination. This amounts to making the individual visible *as* an individual who is constantly under pressure from norms and who submits to periodic examination. When carried out, the result is a highly ordered, efficient society created by "a subtle, calculated technology of subjection".[64]

If Foucault and Weber are right, then one of the overarching political programs of modernity concerns the organization of humanity into a modern, rational, manageable and self-managing society, in short—"the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life".[65] What neither Foucault nor Weber adequately address, although Bledstein does, is the way the transparency that results from making individuals visible also goes the other way: the Americans that so desperately wanted to import the research university wanted institutions that were transparent, career ladders that were visible and programs that allowed them to work the system. Weber briefly mentions that for Americans "the pursuit of wealth, stripped of its religious and ethical meaning…[gains] the character of sport".[66] I take this to be a very important and unexplored insight. Foucault paints a picture of a very heavy hand on the part of "the system" but doesn't address how many players wanted to play the system. This is worth stressing: *many wanted a game that was transparent so they could play*.

To be fair, it not as if there was not an academic game before it was rationalized and formally institutionalized in the modern research institution. To participate in the Republic of Letters, as I have mentioned, required being independently wealthy or having a patron. Obtaining a patron would have required, perhaps, something of a different set of skills than those requires to succeed in modern academia. Even relatively recently it was still possible in some disciplines to succeed by being accepted and supported by the "good old boys." While networking is still a part of academia activity, rationalizing and formalizing academic practices does have the effect of making them more transparent and therefore ostensibly *accessible for more people*. The shift from the college to the modern research university to the neoliberal university is one in which there seems to be a steady

increase in tools to monitor and measure the activities of academics and students. While such efforts at transparency can move from the top down they can also move from the bottom up—transparency can be the result of demands by those on the bottom who want to see clearly what one has to do to move up the ladder. What Foucault and Weber cast in a very negative light as a controlling and manipulative force from above can also be a democratic movement seeking for a more transparent and meritocratic system. Not surprisingly then, as modern systems seek for more transparency and control for those in charge, there is a constant flow of information going the other way, currently often in the form of "how-to-succeed" books that aim at making a particular game or system transparent for those who want to play that game. In Chapter IV, I turn to one such academic self-help book and use it as a starting point for examining the academic game in the modern research university.

This point about the reverse-ability of transparency is central to my analysis because, as I will argue in chapter V, neoliberalism pounces on this issue. Instead of seeing capitalism as a stultifying and monotonous factory driven system, neoliberals rearticulate capitalism as an exciting, creative and affirming adventure. While the language of Weber and Foucault portrays modern society as dreary and oppressive, neoliberals will portray modern consumer capitalist society as an exciting and wonderful game and thus present it as the solution to the problems Weber and Foucault are pointing to. In other words, while Weber and Foucault point to the ways these forces control society and shape the modern individual, neoliberalism presents the same forces as liberating. This intellectual coup not only gives its blessing to strategic action as a

necessary part of the game, but will also be used to insist that neoliberal capitalism is the best and ultimately the only game.

Instrumental Rationality and High Modern Aesthetics: Two Commonalities between Science, Capitalism and the Disciplinary Projects of Modernity

Examining the socioeconomic and political logics at work "outside" the university show not only why the research university was so exciting as an institution that seemed to affirm the values and ideals of these logics, but also because it would prove to be extremely helpful to these economic and political programs. They also reveal a remarkable amount of similarity between the external logics and the internal logic of positivism—so much so that Weber could speak of "instrumental rationality" that underlies or unites each of these logics. Furthermore, in addition to a similar kind of rationality at work in each, I will argue each of these logics shares a common aesthetic sensibility. The rationalized university, the rationalized economy and the rationalized society look and feel right to moderns. What looked true and beautiful about the rationalized university would have appeared so to individuals engaged in rationalizing other spheres of life. In the next two sections I will examine the instrumental rationality and high modern aesthetic that underlie and bolster these different logics.

Instrumental Rationality

One of the features that underlies the positivist logic at work in the creation of the modern research university and the economic and disciplinary logics I have just examined is what Weber called "instrumental rationality." This terms works on two

levels, first as a specific type in Weber's typography of social action, but secondly as a term that for many summarized what was wrong with modernity. In the second case it serves as a kind of focal term for a whole series of social criticisms. I will deal with each in turn.

Instrumental rationality in its more narrow sense is one of a four part typography of social action Weber constructed to compare and contrast fundamental changes in social reasoning and justification.[67] The other types are "value rationality", "emotion", and "tradition". By "instrumental rationality" Weber means actions, motivation and justifications which take means and end relations as their primary categories: "Action is instrumentally rational when the end, the means, and the secondary results are all rationally taken into account and weighed. This involves rational consideration of alternative means to the end, of the relations of the end to the secondary consequences, and finally of the relative importance of different possible ends".[68] Instrumental rationality is thus primarily a calculative approach with an eye perpetually to the desired consequences, as is apparent from its other translation as "purposive rationality".[69]

Weber contrasts "instrumental rationality" with "value rationality" and actions based on emotion (affectual) or tradition. The primary contrast is with "value rationality" however. Value rational action is "determined by a conscious belief in the value for its own sake of some ethical, aesthetic, religious, or other form of behavior, independently of its prospect of success".[70] While instrumental rational action is about knowing the possible means to possible ends and thus being able to choose the best course of action based on a particular purpose, in value rationality "the meaning of the action does not lie in the achievement of a result ulterior to it".[71] Weber says "examples of pure value-

rational orientation would be the actions of persons who, regardless of possible cost to themselves, act to put into practice their convictions of what seems to them to be required by duty, honor, the pursuit of beauty, a religious call, personal loyalty, or the importance of some 'cause' no matter in what it consists".[72]

Thus, according to the typography, "Why are you attending university?" could be answered with: (1) "I want a good career" (instrumental rational); (2) "My parents have asked me to" or "It is beautiful" (value rationality); (3) "Because I love the football team" (affectual or emotional); (4) "because that is what young men in my social standing do" (traditional). Of course, in actual practice these types are almost always all mixed up together.[73] But Weber needs this typology to think about the rise of modernity, which he sees as being suffused with instrumental rationality. Many premodern societies, like medieval Christianity, had injunctions against instrumental rationality. It was viewed as being manipulative and anti-social. Even when actions were taken that were calculative, the calculative aspects of these acts was often covered over linguistically—certain words or phrases were invoked that hid the calculative aspect.[74] Thus the conflict between instrumental rationality and the other forms of action is another way of articulating the problem of disinterestedness I have been examining in this chapter. Weber's point is that once the protestant ethic overturned the age-old injunction against instrumental rationality, this sanctioned interestedness and led to the massive acceleration in the process of rationalizing all aspects of modern life.

Weber sees instrumental rationality underlying both modern science and modern capitalism. It is the combination of these two which leads to the modern bureaucratic state which aims to manage humanity. Thus, for Weber, by the late 19th century all three

of the logics I have invoked above are integrally intertwined. Weber's famous analysis of bureaucracy can be read as a response to the question of why the proletariat revolution Marx predicted never occurred: the rise of the ostensibly beneficent bureaucratic state mitigated the worst of the abuses of industrial capitalism.[75] It can also be leveled as a criticism at Marx himself: that his theory was less radical then he had imagined since it was built on the same instrumental rationality as modern capitalism.

Weber was very ambivalent about modern rationalization. On the one hand, he recognized the many benefits that resulted from rationalization, but, on the other hand, he worried about the way this process of rationalization seemed to suck everything into it. Everything must now submit to the standards of efficiency. Everything must be "rational." As Weber famously phrased it, modernity seemed to lead inexorably to the "iron cage" of rationality.[76] Thus while Weber clearly sees advances in the creation of modern bureaucracy, he also creates a harrowing vision of irrelevance of the individual in a society trapped in the increasing pressures of efficiency and mounds of paperwork. Pessimistic about alternatives, Weber could be read as the theoretical counterpart to Kafka.

The broader vision of an instrumentalized society as articulated by Weber both taps into older romantic criticisms (like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Charles Dicken's *Hard Times*) and became an inspiration for later thinkers like Heidegger, Foucault, Critical theorists like Horkheimer, Adorno and Bauman, and Existentialists who added to the image. Heidegger, for example, as we will see in the final section of this chapter, speaks of a "calculative rationality" that sees everything as a resource to be make available for human use. While there are variations on the image here, the general

picture is something along the lines of a mechanical juggernaut that cannot be stopped even as it destroys nature and incorporates all of humanity into an efficient machine. I will finish this chapter with a discussion of some of these important criticisms. Before doing so I want to point to the aesthetic values that also affirm these logics.

The High Modern Aesthetic

A second feature that unites the positivist logic with the capitalist economic logic and the disciplinary logic of the late 19th century is what James C. Scott calls the "high modern aesthetic".

Take for example the following comment from Descartes which he makes in the *Discourse on Method*:

> These ancient cities that were once mere straggling villages and have become in the course of time great cities are quite commonly poorly laid out compared to those well-ordered towns that an engineer lays out on a vacant plane as it suits his fancy. And although, upon considering one-by-one the buildings in the former class of towns, one finds as much art or more than one finds in the latter class of towns, still, upon seeing how the buildings are arranged—here a large one, there a small one—and how they make the streets crooked and uneven, one will say that it is chance more than the will of some men using their reason that has made them thus.[77]

This remarkable passage reveals some of the aesthetic values which we find common to all three of the logics we have been examining. This passage is particularly revealing, because Descartes is seeking something like "unbiased, objective truth" and thinks we can only get it when we find "clear and distinct" ideas. Despite the claim to objectivity, which ostensibly implies avoiding values, aesthetic values are constantly

creeping in the back door—more than this, they are central to the key aspects of the program. "Clear", "straight", "organized", "rational", well-ordered", etc—these are the kinds of aesthetic values we find repeatedly invoked, whether spoken or unspoken in the logics I have been examining.

Scott argues that this aesthetic follows from the disciplinary aspirations of modernity. Similar to Foucault and Weber, Scott argues "the modern state, through its officials, attempts with varying success to create a terrain and a population with precisely those standardized characteristics that will be easiest to monitor, count, assess, and manage. The utopian, immanent, and continually frustrated goal of the modern state is reduce the chaotic, disorderly, constantly changing social reality beneath it to something more closely resembling the administrative grid of its observations".[78] Scott calls this the "project of legibility" and argues "an illegible society, then, is a hindrance to any effective intervention by the state, whether the purpose of that intervention is plunder or public welfare".[79]

What the administrator (or we could add the entrepreneur or scientist) wants is the clarity, order and simplicity necessary for them to see a situation such that they can manipulate it to achieve the results they want. Scott gives the remarkable example of scientific forestry, whose goal as a good modern project, was making a legible forest. The first step in this process of making a legible forest is reconceiving it in instrumental terms as an object for humans: "The entry under 'forest' in Diderot's *Encyclopédie* is almost exclusively concerned with the *utilité publique* of the forest products and the taxes, revenues, and profits that they can be made to yield. The forest as a habitat disappears

and is replaced by the forest as an economic resource to be managed efficiently and profitably".[80] This involves a radical intellectual and verbal reorientation:

> The vocabulary used to organize nature typically betrays the overriding interests in its human users. In fact, utilitarian discourse replaces the term "nature" with the term "natural resources," focusing on those aspects of nature that can be appropriated for human use. A comparable logic extracts from a more generalized natural world those flora and fauna that are of utilitarian value (usually marketable commodities) and, in turn, reclassifies those species that compete with, prey on, or otherwise diminish the yields of the valued species. Thus, plants that are valued become "crops," the species that compete with them are stigmatized as "weeds," and the insects that ingest them are stigmatized as "pests." Thus, trees that are valued become "timber," while species that compete with them become "trash trees" or "underbrush." The same logic applies to fauna. Highly valued animals become "game" or "livestock," while those animals that compete with or prey upon them become "predators" or "varmints." [81]

Once the intellectual and linguistic remapping has occurred, then began the physical task of turning "the chaotic old-growth forest into a new, more uniform forest that closely resembled the administrative grid" laid out beforehand.[82] The new forests were, of course, planted in orderly rows which could easily be harvested and replanted (This example perfectly fits Bauman's description of modernity as a gardening project that I introduced in the section above on modern political projects).

Scott argues that two places this aesthetic is clearly evident is in architecture and agriculture. We can see these values being invoked by Descartes in the quote above where he contrasts the "crooked and uneven" ancient cities with the "well-ordered [modern] towns" that have been built from the ground up as "an engineer lays out on a vacant plane as it suits his fancy".[83] From the standpoint of a city designer interested in efficiency, transparency and social control, old cities that grew spontaneously are often full of crooked, winding streets, dead ends, confusing alleys, too narrow roads that are

simply too convoluted to be able to manage clearly. There are too many hiding places, too many mysteries—it is chaotic and, here comes the aesthetic valuation, ugly. Scott contrasts the maze of Bruges as it existed in the 1500s with the grid-like Chicago of the late 1800s, maps of old medieval farms which were laid out in long haphazard strips of land with modern farms, neighborhoods in São Paolo with those of the hyper modern capital Brasília. In each of these cases the newer constructions are made as Descartes dreamed: orderly, efficient, rational, transparent, and beautiful.

Interestingly, in agricultural science the focus on "legibility and simplicity" has problematically biased Western agronomists. Many agricultural practices in tropical America and Africa use polycultures. This means farms or gardens often mix different plants together instead of separating them into nice rows. Scott points out this is not capriciousness on the part of locals, the plants do better when planted in polycultures. To westerners however, these farms or gardens looked unorganized, inefficient and chaotic. The aesthetic values impede taking seriously polycropping and the locals are often encouraged or forced to dig it up and replant it in the Western style.

Scott's point is to show how the goals of modernity and the corresponding aesthetics are too narrow and can lead to the failure of some modern projects. For my purposes here, I want to point to the existence of an aesthetic that often guides practice while being theoretically denied. Supposedly scientific methodology aims at overcoming aesthetic and moral evaluations—Scott shows this is false. The modern goals of transparency, order and efficiency cannot avoid giving rise to or participating in an aesthetic that shares these values.

This aesthetic helps explain how the new modern research university could look and feel right to both those within academia and to politicians and businessmen outside of the university. Simply put, the modern research university looked like an efficient machine and for many at that time, this was beautiful.

The German Backlash

About the same time Americans were going abroad to learn from the great German scholars, important thinkers in Germany had begun to rebel against the positivism of the universities and disciplines. The positivistic scientism and conservatism of the German academy was seen as stultifying, mechanical, lifeless, and problematically complicit with the government (increasingly, also, with capitalism). Nietzsche accused the universities of turning "men into machines"–fodder for civil service.[84] For all the great accomplishments, something seemed awry.

Husserl, for example, argued that the success of the sciences had been one sided. Clearly, science had succeeded in making many new discoveries, but these discoveries were largely limited to the natural sciences. The "positivistic restriction of the ideas of science" had led to the most important questions of human life falling outside the bounds of 'legitimate' study.[85] Science itself had become problematically "emptied of meaning" through "technization".[86] The modern project of creating a rational society had become a series of technical problems treated in mathematical and mechanical terms:

> The exclusiveness with which the total world view of modern man in
> the second half of the nineteenth century, let itself be determined by
> the positive sciences and be blinded by the 'prosperity' they produced,
> meant an indifferent turning away from the questions which are
> decisive for a genuine humanity. Mere fact minded science makes
> merely fact minded people…In our vital need—so we are told—this

science has nothing to say to us. It excludes in principle precisely the questions which…[are]…the most burning: questions of the meaning or the meaninglessness of the whole of this human existence…What does science have to say about reason and unreason or about men as subjects of this freedom?[87]

Husserl worried that the most important parts of human life cannot be quantified and calculated. Things like values or meaning are supposed to be left out of scientific study, but purging science of these "subjective" aspects means science can say nothing about the things that matter most to humans unless it is quantified. If the social sciences and the humanities are supposed to be scientific and exclude meaning, interpretation and values from their studies, do they have anything left to talk about at all? Oddly then positivist science has increased human power immensely but abandoned the issues most important to human experience.

The obsession we find with quantification is due partially to its lofty promises, but this has problematic consequences when applied to humanity. Husserl worries about the pretension of positivism which seems to claim:

> The world is itself a rational systematic unity…in which each and every singular detail must be rationally determined. Its systematic form...can be attained, is indeed known and ready for us in advance, at least insofar as it is purely mathematical…This is the path—infinite, to be sure—to omniscience. Thus one lives in the happy certainty of a path leading forth from the near to the distant, from the more or less known into the unknown, as an infallible method of broaching knowledge, through which truly all of the totality of what is will be known as it is 'in-itself'—in an infinite progression.[88]

> Along with his growing, more and more perfect cognitive power over the universe, man also gains an ever more perfect mastery over his practical surrounding world, one which expands in an unending progression. This also involves a mastery over mankind as belonging to the real surrounding world, i.e. mastery over himself and his fellow man, an ever greater power over his fate, and thus an ever fuller

'happiness'—'happiness' as rationally conceivable for man…Man is truly an image of God…For the philosopher, in correlation with his mathematization of the world and of philosophy, has in a certain sense mathematically idealized himself and, at the same time, God.[89]

Like Weber, Husserl sees the intoxicating successes at mastering nature being extended onto humanity, which becomes an object itself for study and management.

The theme of the dehumanization of humanity through this process of objectification and quantification is a common theme among German critics of late 19th century positivism. Another important version of this critique came from Georg Lukács, who combined Weber with Georg Simmel to critique the positivism of the Marxists of his time. Against other Marxists like Eduard Bernstein who wanted a scientific Marxism, Lukács expanded Marx's concept of commodity fetishism to what he called "reification".[90] He argued the "commodity-structure" had spread throughout modern capitalist countries resulting in the widespread tendency to turn human relations into objects with the "character of a thing" and creating "a phantom objectivity".[91] Under these conditions "quality no longer matters. Quantity alone decides everything".[92] Combining Marx with positivism, was therefore exactly the wrong direction to go.

The quantification of life allows for everything to be broken into little pieces which are more manageable and more machine-like. The worker not only becomes a cog in the machine, but is also herself treated as an object that can be broken down into pieces and made more efficient (Taylorism). This atomization results in alienation, as Marx pointed out, from oneself, from the product of ones' labor, and from each other.[93] Lukács believes, like Weber, that this highly specialized, alienated and commodified state of society is the result of the reformation of the state, law and society in general by the

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abstract calculative logic of capitalism. He thought only the proletariat could overthrow this "scientific and rational factory".[94]

Lest it appear this is just science bashing it is worth stressing that neither Husserl nor Weber wanted to get rid of science. Husserl hoped to create a science of the lifeworld and Weber insisted on the scientific fact/value distinction. The concern was not science, but the hegemony of positivist science. These thinkers worried about the spread of instrumental rationality beyond the realm of science. They also worried that the aggressive naive empiricism of positivism so radically narrowed what could be considered legitimate knowledge that the most important questions for humans were exiled to oblivion. The resulting technicism was particularly disturbing in the context of the combination of the positivist university, the bureaucratic state and capitalism.

Thoughtlessness

One of the more alarming results of the technicism that came to pervade science, the bureaucratic state and modern capitalism is that it seems to lead to a remarkable thoughtlessness. This is not to say those caught up in these dramatic changes do not use their brains—clearly they do and often for very complex calculations. Rather thoughtlessness here refers to being caught up in a particular logic such that the logic itself goes unquestioned. Here is how Horkheimer puts it:

> The more ideas have become automatic, instrumentalized, the less does anybody see in them thoughts with a meaning of their own. They are considered things, machines. Language has been reduced to just another tool in the gigantic apparatus of production in modern society...Insofar as words are not used obviously to calculate technically relevant probabilities or for other practical purposes, among which even relaxation is included, they are in danger of being suspect as sales talk of some kind, for truth is no end in itself [ie, truth is

compromised when it becomes instrumental]...As soon as a thought or a word becomes a tool, one can dispense with actually 'thinking' it, that is, with going through the logical acts involved in verbal formation of it. As has been pointed out, often and correctly, the advantage of mathematics--the model of all neo-positivist thinking--is in just this 'intellectual economy.' Complicated logical operations are carried out without actual performance of all the intellectual acts upon which the mathematical and logical symbols are based. Such mechanization is indeed essential to the expansion of industry; but if it becomes the characteristic feature of minds, if reason itself in instrumentalized, it takes on a kind of materiality and blindness, becomes a fetish, a magic entity, that is accepted rather than intellectually experienced.[95]

Horkheimer is pointing out the qualitative changes that occur under the new sun of production. Once speed, efficiency, quantity, organization—in short all the things that seem to come along with the rise of instrumental rationality—once these become expectations, how we experience and relate to things like language and thoughts changes. Words and thoughts increasing appear as tools to be used. Like Lukács, Horkheimer sees this as an ineluctable process of commodification. What makes this process particularly dangerous is the way it results in extremely complex formalized systems which quickly outstrip the capability of being comprehended by one individual. Like a factory, each person is expected to do their part, but the functioning of the whole, both in terms of having a comprehensive view of each step in the process and the distance needed from the entire endeavor to judge it, becomes elusive. In such a situation it has become increasingly difficult to say anything that goes beyond the particular niche with which one is familiar. This means that it is also less likely that the status quo will be challenged:

Modern science, as positivists understand it, refers essentially to statements about facts, and therefore presupposes the reification of life in general and of perception in particular. It looks upon the world as a world of facts and things, and fails to connect the transformation of the world into facts and things with the social process...By its identification of cognition with science, positivism restricts intelligence to functions

necessary to the organization of material already patterned according to the very commercial culture which intelligence is called upon to criticize. Such restriction makes intelligence the servant of the apparatus of production, rather than its master...If theory is reduced to a mere instrument, all theoretical means to transcending reality become metaphysical nonsense. By the same direction, reality, thus glorified, is conceived devoid of all objective character that might, by its inner logic, lead to a better reality.[96]

Following Weber, Horkheimer argues rationalization fails at its promises to liberate humanity because while it does free humanity from tradition, it ties it back down to the demands of production. Thus Horkheimer reiterates the famous critique of instrumental rationality that he and Adorno made in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that rationalization becomes the new superstition: "The positivist command to conform to facts and common sense instead of utopian ideas is not so different from the call to obey reality as interpreted by religious institutions, which after all are facts too...One tends to replace autonomous reason by the automatism of streamlined methodology, the other by the authority of a dogma".[97] His conclusion: "When called upon to act independently, we cry for patterns, systems, and authorities. if by enlightenment and intellectual progress we mean the freeing of man from superstitious belief in evil forces—then denunciation of what is currently called reason is the greatest service reason can render".[98]

While Horkheimer does not use the language of thoughtlessness like Heidegger and Arendt, the kind of thoughtlessness they are concerned about is clearly what Horkheimer has in mind in *Eclipse of Reason*. Reason, the force, following Kant, that imagines alternatives and critiques the present, is reduced to calculations that work within a system under the pressures of production.[99] Instrumental rationality seems to eliminate the possibility of challenging the status quo. We find a very similar critique in Heidegger

that I want to examine because Heidegger specifically frames it in terms of

thoughtlessness. This is important because Arendt will adopt such terminology and it is

her striking discussion of thoughtlessness that I will elaborate in the next chapter and use

as my conceptual framework to examine the hegemony of science in the research

university (Ch IV) and the radicalization of these problematic tendencies in the neoliberal

university (Ch V). I want to spend a moment with Heidegger to add to Horkheimer's

arguments but also to set the stage for Arendt.

In a public speech given in 1955, Heidegger declares that "man today is in flight

from thinking".[100] Clearly, Heidegger is aware that we use our brains, we cognize, but,

similarly to Horkheimer, what he means by this is that we tend to use a calculative

[non]thinking, instead of a meditative, careful thinking. It is worth quoting Heidegger at

length to get a feel for what he means by calculative thinking. It consists in:

> The fact that whenever we plan, research, and organize, we always
> reckon with conditions that are given. We take them into account with
> the calculated intention of their serving specific purposes. Thus we can
> count on definite results. This calculation is the mark of all thinking
> that plans and investigates. Such thinking remains calculation even if it
> neither works with numbers nor uses an adding machine or computer.
> Calculative thinking computes. It computes ever new, ever more
> promising and at the same time more economical possibilities.
> Calculative thinking races from one prospect to the next. Calculative
> thinking never stops, never collects itself.[101]

Clearly, there is a time and a place for calculative approaches, but Heidegger

thinks the ubiquity of calculative rationality is turning everything into a machine-like

"gigantic business".[102] Humans "forget to ponder" and "forget to ask".[103] We come to

take for granted that this is how things work. "The world now appears as an object open

to the attacks of calculative thought...nature becomes a gigantic gas station..."[104] Like Weber before him, Heidegger worries this logic takes hold, spreads and pushes out any other logics, that calculative thinking will be taken as the *only* form of thinking.[105]

For Heidegger, our modern thoughtlessness (we don't think, we calculate) has roots all the way back to Greek philosophy. It is the end result of the slow decay of the "first beginning".[106] Heidegger describes a series of epochs, starting from that Greek beginning, and finishing with our own time, which is a kind of exhaustion of this tradition. Michel Haar describes it as kind of inverted Hegelianism—instead of a steady progression, a steady decline.[107]

While it is not necessary for me to trace the details of Heidegger's "history of being," it is important to notice (1) that he traces contemporary problems way back to their philosophical origins which he takes to be with the Greeks and (2) that in so doing the concerns about instrumental or calculative rationality often get translated back into Greek terms. Thus in many of his works like *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, *Contributions to Philosophy* and *The Question Concerning Technology* Heidegger traces "machination" and "enframing" back to, and show how it is a corruption of, the Aristotelian concept of *techne*.

Aristotle is of major importance for Heidegger, who was especially interested in Aristotle's distinction between the five "powers by which the soul distinguishes truth" in the Nicomachean Ethics: art (techne), knowledge (episteme), practical judgment (phronesis), wisdom (sophia), and intellect (nous). Heidegger explores these distinctions in great depth in his lecture series on *Plato's Sophist*, which were given in 1924-25 and were very influential for his students like Arendt and Gadamer. Gadamer gives us an idea

of why Aristotle seemed so important to him (and I think we can fairly say, for Heidegger

and Arendt):

> In my own eyes, the great merit of Aristotle was that he anticipated the impasse of our scientific culture by his description of the structure of practical reason as distinct from theoretical knowledge [episteme] and technical skill [techne] …The problem of our society is that the longing of the citizenry for orientation and normative patterns invests the expert with an exaggerated authority. Modern society expects him to provide a substitute for past moral and political orientations.[108]

But, Gadamer thinks, repeating Heidegger's worry, in our modern technocracy

there is no more space for non-technical rationality. All efforts tend to become technical

manipulation. Gadamer continues:

> I think, then, that the chief task of philosophy is to justify this way of reason [non-technical practical reason] and to defend practical and political reason against the domination of technology based on science. This is the point of philosophical hermeneutic. It corrects the peculiar falsehood of modern consciousness: the idolatry of scientific method and the anonymous authority of science and it vindicates again the noblest task of the citizen—decision making according to one's own responsibility—instead of conceding that task to the expert. In that respect, hermeneutic philosophy is the heir of the older tradition of practical philosophy.[109]

Obviously this is Gadamer's take on the importance of Aristotle, but I think it

helps to point us in the direction of why Heidegger and Arendt also find Aristotle so

important. Arendt will use these Aristotelian distinctions to build her own history, a

history of action, in *The Human Condition* (which I think can be read as her version of

the rise of instrumental rationality). Like Gadamer, she wants to move away from the

technocratic rule of experts towards democratic political action. I will have much more to

say on this in the next chapter which focuses on how Arendt articulates her own vision of

the dangers of modern thoughtlessness.

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter I have examined the rise of the German research university and attempted to show the positivist logic (broadly construed) at work both internally in the university and externally around it. This creates some interesting pressures on the scientist concerning the question of the use of science: on the one hand, the scientist is supposed to be disinterested and objective, but, on the other, the results of scientific study are very useful for governments and corporations. The research university seems to confirm the ideals of instrumental rationality while still needing to resist it. Not surprisingly, the research model of the university was embraced by Americans, who quickly adopted the model for epistemological and instrumental reasons.

Just as the new model was being embraced in America, strong criticisms of it began to appear in Germany. Phenomenology, Existentialism, Frankfurt School Critical Theory and Hermeneutics all arose in or shortly after this period in response to positivism and other concerns that came along with it. Horkheimer even complains that the backlash against positivism was so strong that he worried those who offered these criticisms would slip back into the traditional metaphysics or idealism.[110] Of course, however, these movements were not strong enough to stem the flood of positivism. About the same time these anti-positivist movements began in Germany, logical positivism, which sought to rationalize language, took off and established itself as the dominant paradigm in British and American philosophy. And while, over the course of the 20th century, logical positivism and positivism in science have been heavily criticized and have had to take large steps back from some of their original pretensions, the instrumental or calculative

logic that was so central to positivism remains deeply embedded in universities and in modern society more generally.

All of this will come to a head in Chapter IV, when I examine the expectations of the academic in the research university. My argument is that the research university normalized scientific activity even for those in the non-sciences. The academic is expected to act like a scientist and is judged and sanctioned based on quantified, rationalized measures which may make sense for a scientist, but, I suggest, do not for a non-scientist. Chapter IV is therefore the heart of my argument. Before turning to these issue however, I want to develop the philosophical, conceptual lens which I will be using in chapters IV and V. This lens is Arendt's concept of thoughtlessness. I hope to show, taking the scientist as the standard for the academic is thoughtless and that formalized science itself is constantly at risk of thoughtlessness. My argument in Chapter V is that the neoliberalization of the university exacerbates these problems.

Notes

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[3] For more on these difficulties see Tilly, Charles. *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons*. (New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation Publications, 1989).

[4] Taylor, Charles*. Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*. (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

[5] Hutcheson, Philo. *A People's History of Higher Education*. (New York: NY: Routledge Press, 2015).

[6] Ibid.

[7] See chapter V.

[8] See chapter IV.

[9] See both chapter III and my conclusions.

[10] Frodeman, Robert. *Sustainable Knowledge: A Theory of Interdisciplinarity*. (New York, NY: Palgrove Pivot, 2013), 20.

[11] Neiman, Susan. *Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternative History of Philosophy*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[12] Frodeman, Robert. *Sustainable Knowledge: A Theory of Interdisciplinarity*. (New York, NY: Palgrove Pivot, 2013), 20-21.

[13] Bledstein, Burton J. *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America.* (New York: Norton, 1978); Rudolph, Frederick. *The American College and University: A History*. (Athens, GA: University of Georgia, 1990).

[14] Bledstein, Burton J. *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America.* (New York: Norton, 1978), 121.

[15] Menand, Louis. *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America*. (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), 256.

[16] Clark, William. *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University*. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 463.

[17] Quoted in Clark, William. *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University*. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 462.

[18] Ibid., 443, 447.

[19] Ibid., 437.

[20] Ibid., 447.

[21] Guignon Charles. Heidegger and the Problem of Knoweldge. (Cambridge, MA: Hackett Pub Co Inc, 1983), 41.

[22] Bledstein, Burton J. *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America.* (New York: Norton, 1978), 124.

[23] Frodeman, Robert. *Sustainable Knowledge: A Theory of Interdisciplinarity*. (New York, NY: Palgrove Pivot, 2013), 20.

[24] Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[25] Polanyi, Michael. *Personal Knowledge: Towards A Post-Critical Philosophy*. (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1974).

[26] Baronov, David. *Conceptual Foundations of Social Research Methods* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2005), 22.

[27] http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Henri_de_Saint-Simon.

[28] Coser, Lewis. *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in History and Social Context*. (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 2003), 5.

[29] http://www.gse.harvard.edu/about/index.html#ixzz2toBWdxax

[30] http://www.stanford.edu/about/

[31] http://www.princeton.edu/main/about/

[32] Descartes, Rene. *Discourse on Method*. In Ariew, Roger and Eric Watkins, Eds. *Modern Philosophy*. (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2009), 31.

[33] Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 36.

[34] It is possible reject the metaphor of the construction of an edifice and replace it with something like "furthering a conversation", but I would suggest the language used here still reflects the building construction or map making metaphors.

[35] Qtd in Stern, Fritz. *The Varieties of History from Voltaire to the Present*. (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1973).

[36] Ibid.

[37] Green, Anna and Kathleen Troup. *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth-Century History and Theory*. (New York, NY : NYU Press, 1999), 4.

[38] See "Science as a Vocation" in Weber, Max. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1958).

[39] McIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue*. (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 2007), 85.

[40] Bourdieu, Pierre. *Pascalian Meditations*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000). See also: Bourdieu, Pierre. *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

[41] Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 295.

[42] Hyde, Lewis. *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property*. (New York, NY: Vintage, 1983); Bourdieu, Pierre. *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

[43] Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 19.

[44] Hirshman, Albert. *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 9.

[45] Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 45.

[46] Ibid., 107.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., 108.

[49] Ibid., 116.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid., 120.

[52] Ibid., 32.

[53] Taylor, Charles. *Modern Social Imaginaries*. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2007), 150.

[54] Ibid., 151.

[55] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 1991).

[56] Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge*. (New York: Vintage, 1980), 171.

[57] Bauman, Zygmunt. *Modernity and Ambivalence*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 26.

[58] Ibid., 18.

[59] Ibid., 1.

[60] Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*. (New York: NY: Vintage Books, 1995), 219.

[61] Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*. (New York: NY: Vintage Books, 1990), 141.

[62] Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*. (New York: NY: Vintage Books, 1995), 170.

[63] Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 23-24.

[64] Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*. (New York: NY: Vintage Books, 1995), 221.

[65] Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*. (New York: NY: Vintage Books, 1990), 140.

[66] Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 124.

[67] Weber, Max. *Economy and Society*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978).

[68] Ibid., 26.

[69] Habermas, Jürgen. *The Theory of Communicative Rationality, Vol. 1, Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984).

[70] Weber, Max. *Economy and Society*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), 25.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid., 26.

[74] Bourdieu, Pierre. *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

[75] This is why critical theorists like Horkheimer and Adorno picked up on Weber also: they needed a way to explain why Marxism had failed.

[76] Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 123.

[77] Descartes, Rene. *Discourse on Method*. In Ariew, Roger and Eric Watkins, Eds. *Modern Philosophy*. (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2009), 34.

[78] Scott, James C. *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1998), 82.

[79] Ibid., 78.

[80] Ibid., 13.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid., 15.

[83] See endnote 71.

[84] Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Twilight of the Idols*, in *The Portable Nietzsche.* (New York: NY: Penguin, 1977), 532.

[85] Husserl, Edmund. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Philosophy: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*. (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 7.

[86] Ibid., 46.

[87] Ibid., 6.

[88] Ibid., 65.

[89] Ibid., 66.

[90] Lukács, Georg. *History and Class Consciousness*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT University Press, 1971), 83. See also discussion in Jay, Martin. *The Dialectical Imagination: A history of the Frankfurt School and the Institute for Social research, 1923-1950*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996).

[91] Ibid., 83.

[92] Ibid., 89.

[93] Ibid., 92.

[94] Ibid., 97.

[95] Horkheimer, Max. *Eclipse of Reason*. (New York: Continuum, 2004), 16.

[96] Ibid., 56-57.

[97] Ibid., 62.

[98] Ibid., 126.

[99] Neiman, Susan. *Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternative History of Philosophy*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[100] Heidegger, Martin. *Discourse on Thinking*. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1969), 45.

[101] Ibid., 42.

[102] Ibid., 49.

[103] Ibid., 50.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid., 56.

[106] Heidegger, Martin. *Basic Questions in Philosophy: Selected "Problems" of "Logic"*. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 170.

[107] Haar, Michel. *The Song of the Earth: Heidegger and the Grounds of the History of Being*. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), 72.

[108] Quoted in Bernstein, Richard J. *Beyond, Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics and Praxis*. (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 39.

[109] Ibid., 40.

[110] Abromeit, John. *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 133-134.

CHAPTER III

HANNAH ARENDT ON THINKING, COGNITION, AND JUDGMENT

Introduction

In Chapter II, I examined the rise of the German research university, its adoption in the United States, some of the reasons it was embraced so enthusiastically and some of the criticisms of these changes that were voiced in Germany at the time. Chapter II was largely historical. Chapter III will be philosophical. I want to pick up where these German critics left off, especially with the claim that positivism with its obsessive quantification and technicism leads to a kind of detrimental thoughtlessness. My thesis is that the tendencies towards thoughtlessness in the positivist university are exacerbated as these universities embrace the logic of neoliberalism. This will be elaborated in chapters IV and V.

My purpose in this chapter is to flesh out the philosophical concepts of thinking and thoughtlessness with the help of Hannah Arendt. Arendt was a student of Heidegger and fully immersed in the debates and concerns of the thinkers I examined at the end of the last chapter. But Arendt is central to my arguments because she makes a key distinction between thinking and cognition, which allows her to explain how very smart people can be using their brains and working hard on complex problems and yet be thoughtless—in other words, how you could have a highly efficient, productive university system that is nonetheless deeply thoughtless.

The implications of this distinction are radical, challenging and perhaps even counterintuitive. I don't think they have been fully appreciated even by Arendt scholars. In fact, to make sure the distinction between thinking and cognition doesn't collapse back in on itself, I have found it necessary to introduce the term "thoughtless cognition". It is precisely this phenomenon of "thoughtless cognition" that I see in modern research university and that I think is being exacerbated as universities embrace neoliberalism.

The chapter is divided into three sections: 1. Thoughtless Cognition, 2. The Degeneration of Action into Strategic Action and 3. The Power of Thinking. The first section will elaborate this key distinction between thinking and cognition. The second section will examine the fall of what Arendt calls action and the rise of strategic action in its place. This section examines Eichmann as a model of an individual who is completely thoughtless and yet who acts strategically to advance his career goals. The third section will attempt to show how thinking, which is an activity that is denigrated in a society obsessed with production precisely because it is not productive, is nonetheless necessary for the development of judgment and a moral conscience. The radical claim Arendt makes then is that a society that denigrates thinking will suffer a loss of judgment and moral conscience. This is the worry I have about the contemporary direction of the university as it embraces neoliberalism.

Section 1: Thoughtless Cognition

Thinking and Cognition

The first step to understanding what Arendt means by thinking is to differentiate thinking from cognition, or, as Arendt also puts it, thinking from knowing, or, yet again,

thinking from the quest for truth ("cognition", "knowing" and the "quest for truth" are all related for Arendt as we will see).[1] We use the word "thinking" to describe a variety of activities, but it is very important we recognize there is a great difference between the thinking and cognition. Take a look at the following examples of different kinds of activities that we call thinking:

1. "I saw a beautiful sunset this morning and I have been thinking about life all day."

2. "I am trying to put together this table and I am thinking what to do next."

3. "I want to get a promotion. I am thinking about how to get one."

The first use of thinking is close to "wonder" or "ponder." This is the sense of thinking that Arendt wants to reserve for the word thinking. When we wonder or ponder we do not expect an answer to the questions we are thinking about. We muse or ruminate over something that surprises us and seek to know what it means. The second use of thinking could be replaced with "calculate." Arendt wants to use the word "knowing" or "cognition" for phrases like this in which thinking aims to gain some truth or knowledge. Because she uses "knowing" and "cognition" and "cognitive activities" at different points to describe this form of thinking it can be confusing. I will attempt to generally refer to this kind of thinking as "cognition." In the case of thinking as cognition we are engaging in mental activity in which we fully expect an answer to a problem we are dealing with. The third use of thinking is a synonym for "strategize." Here it has a manipulative connotation that has moved very far away from the first sense. I bring it up because it will be relevant in the next section, but my primary concern here is thinking and cognition.

Phenomenologically these are very different experiences. Thinking in the sense of wondering reminds us of Thales staring at the stars and falling in a well. Socrates was apparently always falling into a trance-like state in which he would stop what he was doing and remain silent and still, lost in thought. This is an experience each of us has had at some time or another. Something strikes us as remarkable or strange—it could be a sunset, a landscape, a strange insect we have never seen before, a set of wonderful or bizarre circumstances—and we cannot help but stop and be amazed, confused, pleased, intrigued, or surprised by what we are seeing. We are transported to no-place and no-time, suspended in a moment in which normal concerns wash away and we stand before something we cannot help but just think about and wonder what it means.

This is, of course, very different from thinking as cognition. This kind of thinking is experienced more as a kind of work that aims at producing a certain solution, truth or knowledge, to a certain problem. The problem-solution orientation of thinking as cognition means it is experienced very differently from thinking as wonder, which is not seeking for a way out. When cognition finds or is able to calculate the solution to its problem, it ceases or moves on to the next problem. Cognition is a much more active process than thinking as wonder, although it may involve a similar withdraw from the world. Cognition can be positively frenetic as times, while thinking as wonder is marked by being stunned, slowed, or in awe.

For Arendt, Socrates is the primary example of a thinker.[2] It is from Socrates that she will attempt to more fully explore what it means to think. The difficulty of the task is that with the rise of modernity thinking has been marginalized by cognition. It is not surprising that cognition has taken precedence over thinking. Thinking produces nothing

and can be destructive. As we will see, like Ariadne's web, thinking constantly undoes itself, doubts itself and rethinks itself.[3] Cognition, on the other hand, produces knowledge, which is supremely useful and potentially a great source of power. Since modern society is obsessed with production and thinking is not productive, thinking is largely ignored or treated as a quirky event we all experience sometimes.

But differentiating thinking and cognition allows Arendt to examine a very curious and disturbingly widespread phenomenon—thoughtless cognition. As Arendt says "absence of thought is not stupidity; it can be found in highly intelligent people".[4] Indeed, Arendt's concern is that entire societies, very smart, very advanced societies engaging in many different quests for knowledge, can be damningly thoughtless. My central claim in this dissertation that academia, a place of very smart people, can be remarkably thoughtless is therefore an extension of Arendt's concern with thoughtlessness.

To get more clear about what Arendt means by thinking and thoughtlessness, I begin with the quest for knowledge (Arendt also calls this the quest for truth), cognition, that is often mistaken for thinking. Arendt thinks the quest for knowledge was initiated by Plato who was disgusted and disappointed with Athens for killing Socrates.[5] Plato, Arendt thinks, initiated a project—the quest for knowledge or truth—which he hoped would overcome the shortcomings of the unpredictable Greek world. This project, the quest for knowledge, is still with us today and still deeply shapes what we think we are doing.

The Greek World Plato Does Not Like

According to Arendt, the Platonic quest for knowledge begins in response to the failure of Athens to defend Socrates. But the difficulty for us to understand this Greek world is that we, moderns, stand many steps removed from it. Even if we are able to gain some distance from our modern biases we still have to work through Platonic biases that stand between ourselves and the ancient Greeks. Many of the assumptions and concepts of the Greeks are simply foreign to us now, and yet Arendt thinks there are deeply important things that were lost when Plato rejected the polis. One of her repeated approaches is to attempt to recover the pre-Platonic meanings of key terms and concepts we take for granted.

In this section, I attempt to paint a picture of the pre-Platonic Greek world as Arendt portrays it in *The Human Condition*. It is important to recognize that Arendt's interest in *The Human Condition* was not thinking but action, which she takes to be the political activity *par excellence*. The narrative arc of *The Human Condition* is one of the fall and forgetting of action. At first glance, then, it may seem that this text has little to do with our interest in thinking and is instead about politics. The reason it is important for what we are doing here is the move away from action is the very same quest for knowledge initiated by Plato. Thus while action and thinking are very different things, they were both pushed into obscurity by the desire for knowledge. In relating the fall and forgetting of action, we can also see the ascent and dominion of knowledge. Therefore, after looking at some key features of the Greek polis in this section, we can turn to the ascent and dominion of knowledge.

The first thing Arendt points out about the pre-Platonic Greek world is the difference between the public and the private realm. The private realm, the household, is the realm of necessity. The public sphere, the polis, on the other hand, is the realm of freedom.[6] The logic of the household (economics) is a logic of command and violence. In this realm of necessity, one either directs others or follows orders. There is no room for debate or disagreement. The polis, on the other hand, escapes this logic. In the polis, one neither directs others, nor is directed by others.[7] One enters and participates as an equal.[8] It is in this unique space of the polis that action, uncoerced activity amongst a plurality of equals, occurs.

The purpose of the polis was not to make laws or to manage the city.[9] That is the logic of the household and it was left to lawmakers (who could be slaves). The purpose of the polis was more like a competitive meeting of friends. They met to talk, debate, argue, act and speak with others. Sometimes things did arise from these gatherings, a new consensus, uncoerced, and arrived at through debate and discussion amongst the plurality of equals. This is, again, what Arendt calls action. When and if some new decision, idea or consensus emerges from such a situation it has power.[10] Not the power of someone stronger forcing some weaker to do their will, but the greater power of a consensus.

Second, what mattered here was the public realm, more specifically the "world." By world, Arendt means the thing that "lies between people," the thing that we experience and participate in when we act in the public.[11] For the Greeks, the private realm didn't matter, except insofar as it allowed some to escape from necessity and the problems of economics and instead participate in the public realm. Greek architecture supports this: private residences in ancient Greece were simple and unadorned.

Everything in the Greek polis centered on public buildings, which were much more elaborate than private residences.[12] What mattered in Greece was what occurred in the public world.

Third, a public world requires the construction of durable objects like statues, monuments and buildings that create not only the physical spaces of the public realm, but that invoke a world. Statues of certain heroes and gods, for lack of a better way to say it, set certain tones and bring into place the stories and actions that are integral to a world. While the Greeks needed great artists to construct their cities, they were also deeply suspicious of artists. Artists are involved in production, something the Greeks assigned to the private realm. Art inevitably involves the application of force (chopping down a tree or hewing rock and then reshaping it) and the category of means-ends relations, neither of which was thought to be appropriate to the public world.[13] Force or violence would destroy democratic action which must take place without coercion. The means/end logic of production would infect the public realm with an instrumental mentality that would initiate an insatiable quest for more and undermine contentment with ends. The Greek polis was under constant threat and always on guard against the possibility that the "political sphere should be overwhelmed and suffused with the categories and the mentality of production".[14]

Fourth, lastly, the public sphere in Greece was a place of plurality. Those who participated (men who could escape the needs of production) were involved in an exciting world of discussions, storytelling and speaking before others. It was not a homogeneous world, but a rather chaotic and fragile one. Neither was it an efficient place, since efficiency is a category appropriate to production. It was a place for opinions

and persuasion, debates and rhetoric. None of this made for a predictable or orderly

world, and it was susceptible to strong rhetoric, even if the arguments that resulted were

wrong. This is, of course, what Plato thought happened when Athens failed to acquit

Socrates. According to Arendt, it was the inability of the polis to reach the Truth in the

case of Socrates that infuriated Plato and led him to search for a better way.

Plato's Quest for Knowledge (Truth)

In *Philosophy and Politics*, Arendt argues "the fact that Socrates had not been

able to persuade his judges of his innocence and his merits, which were so obvious to the

better and younger of Athens's citizens, made Plato doubt the validity of *persuasion*"

(73).[15] This led to his "furious denunciation of doxa, opinion" and made him "yearn for

absolute standards".[16]

What Plato wanted was something stronger than rhetoric. He wanted authority:

> It was after Socrates' death that Plato began to discount persuasion as
> insufficient for the guidance of men and to seek for something liable to
> compel them without using external means of violence. Very early in his
> search he must have discovered that truth, namely, the truths we call self-
> evident, compels the mind, and that this coercion, though it needs no
> violence to be effective, is stronger than persuasion and argument…In
> his attempts to find a legitimate principle of coercion Plato was
> originally guided by a great number of models of existing relations, such
> as that between the shepherd and his sheep, between the helmsman of a
> ship and the passengers, between the physician and the patient, or
> between the master and the slave. In all these instances either expert
> knowledge commands confidence so that neither force nor persuasion
> are necessary to obtain compliance, or the ruler and the ruled belong to
> two altogether different categories of beings…[17]

On the one hand, this is, in a way, an attempt at a coup. Plato is attempting to

overthrow the logic of the polis and replace it with a different logic, the "tyranny of

reason".[18] In attempting to establish the "tyranny of reason", Plato relies here on metaphors and relations that are appropriate to the private realm, ignoring the taboo against mixing the private realm with its logic of command and violence with the public realm, which was meant to be a place of free equals. Plato knows he cannot simply ride in and say he is in charge. The polis is, after all, highly sensitive and aimed to avoid such tyrants. Instead Plato announces the existence of a realm of eternal ideas—ideas which are true beyond rhetoric and which are only accessible to the philosophers. These ideas, Plato thinks, have the compelling force Socrates' needed to defend himself.

There is a tension here however, because, on the other hand, the philosopher does not want to rule the polis. The philosophers who leave the cave and ascend into the "pure skies of ideas" do so not with the aim of ruling, but to see and learn the "true essence of Being".[19] It just happens to be that what they are exposed to is true knowledge of the kind that serves as a measure for many things, including human behavior. If one wanted to construct the best city, Plato argues in *The Republic*, find a true philosopher to be the king. Only someone who has seen the light of the pure skies can arrange things in their proper place.

In Plato's hands, Arendt argues, the eternal ideas become measures or standards. The central metaphor Plato introduces that supports this vision of ideas as measures, one that has shaped Western thought ever since, is the metaphor of the craftsman. The idea here is that the craftsman has, in his head, an idea or a model, which he imposes on the material he is working on. He first thinks of the bed he will build, and then he imitates this model in material he is working with. Arendt says "This analogy enables [Plato] to understand the transcendent character of the ideas in the same manner as he does the

transcendent existence of the model [of the craftsman], which lies beyond the fabrication process it guides and therefore can eventually become the standard for its success or failure. The ideas become the unwavering, 'absolute' standards for political and moral behavior…"[20] Just as a craftsman can check his work against the model, Platonic ideas supposedly allow for standards with which to judge human affairs.

Ostensibly, this makes thinking, the seemingly useless endeavor Socrates exemplified, into something potentially very useful. And this creates the tension in Plato's thought: Plato's desire for authority leads him to articulate a metaphysical vision that seems to point to thinking as cognition. Plato doesn't embrace the usefulness of cognition however. It would be a long time before cognition and the quest for knowledge would fully take its throne. Despite his disdain for the polis with its fickle basis in opinion and action, Plato seems to share with the polis a mistrust of the practical obsession with use (although, alternatively, perhaps he just lacked the ability to implement the lofty plans he outlines in *The Republic*). Thus, while he incorporates metaphors from the private sphere including his use of the model of the craftsman that seem to point to a logic of use, what he settles on Arendt calls contemplation.

Contemplation shares with wonder the withdraw into nowhere and no time. But in the case of Platonic contemplation "it is not wonder that overcomes and throws man into motionlessness, but it is through the conscious cessation of activity, the activity of making, that the contemplative state is reached".[21] Contemplation is like an arrested process of making in which the process ends at the first step of bringing before oneself the image that would be used to make a certain object. According to Arendt, Plato prefers contemplation based on the experience of the craftsman (whom Arendt will also call

homo faber), because it is more common and available to more people than the experience of wonder, which is a more rare form of thinking.[22] What Plato needs to do is convince the craftsman "all he had to do was let his arms drop and prolong indefinitely the act of beholding the eidos, the eternal shape and model he had formerly wanted to imitate and whose excellence and beauty he now knew he could only spoil through any attempt at reification".[23] Thus for Plato, "the primacy of contemplation over activity rests on the conviction that no work of human hands can equal in beauty and truth the physical *kosmos*".[24] Here we find what will appear to moderns to be a kind of antihumanism. Contemplation, for Plato, gives access to the harmonious and beautiful cosmos. Human activity can never hope to match it. This is, of course, one of the assumptions that will be challenged by the moderns.

The Dominion of Knowledge (Truth)

  The Human Condition shows how alien both the polis with its focus on action and the ancient privileging of contemplation are for us moderns. With the exception of the polis, throughout the history of the West until the rise of modernity, the *vita activa* served the *vita contemplativa*. This has been completely reversed in modernity, so much so that contemplation and thinking generally only matter if they produce something. The shift from premodernity to modernity is so radical and results in a modern world so remarkably different from the premodern one, scholars have sought for years to explain this shift.

  For Arendt, as we have already begun to see, the rise of modernity is marked by various shifts away from the logic of the polis, which relegated coercion and authority to

the private sphere in favor of plurality and opinion, towards the logic of production. Arendt thinks Plato, in his disappointment with the role of the polis in the death of Socrates and with his desire for the kind of authority that would have avoided such a result, initiated the move away from the polis. He constructs a metaphysics based on the model of the craftsman and introduces other metaphors that blur the line between the private and the public realm as articulated by the Greek polis. But he doesn't fully embrace the logic of production. It is as if Plato lets *homo faber* in the back door, but still attempts to keeps him in the back room. The period between Plato and modernity is marked by other incremental changes which slowly continue this move away from the logic of the polis. Production and *homo faber* come increasingly to the fore.

Let me give one brief example of one such change in the long series of shifts towards the modern embrace of the logic of production. When Christianity rose to power in the West it continued the valorization of contemplation but changed the unmade Greek cosmos into the creation of the all-powerful Christian God (notice God here acts as a craftsman). It also made humans into immortals. This reversed the traditional Greek emphasis on the world and the cosmos as more important than humans and paved the way for the humanism of modernity.[25] If God was the great craftsman creator, and humans were created in His image, are not humans fundamentally also makers? While the medievals strongly retained the emphasis on contemplation (favoring contemplation was supported by the Christian tradition that this life, our earthly probation, is a fallen state. As Plato turned away from the polis towards the cosmos, Christians turned away from this fallen life towards the heavens.), the Christian emphasis on the importance of

human beings was another step towards the logic of production—production that could help the now much more important humans.

I will not attempt to trace each of the changes Arendt outlines in *The Human Condition*.[26] While they are interesting and help further contrast different forms of thinking (especially the large shift between thinking as wonder to thinking as cognition which is our primary concern), I want to move on to her concerns about the modern hegemony of cognition. Thus I will have to rest content with saying that while the medieval period retained the priority of the *vita contemplativa* over the *vita activa*, with the rise of modernity this ordering was reversed and the primary mode of thinking changed from contemplation to cognition—the quest for knowledge.

Cognition, as we saw earlier, has practical aims. It aims to find answers to problems. Not surprisingly, it takes its throne and full priority over other forms of thinking, especially wonder and contemplation, with the rise of production obsessed modernity. Arendt gives a lengthy description that helps to show how radically different modernity is from premodenity and shows the context that fully embraces the quest for knowledge:

> And, indeed, among the outstanding characteristics of the modern age from its beginning to our own time we find the typical attitudes of *homo faber*: his instrumentalization of the world, his confidence in tools and in the productivity of the maker of artificial objects; his trust in the all-comprehensive range of the means-end category, his conviction that every issue can be solved and every human motivation reduced to the principle of utility; his sovereignty, which regards everything given as material and thinks of the whole of nature as an 'immense fabric from which we can cut out whatever we want to resew it however we like'; his equation of intelligence with ingenuity, that is, his contempt for all thought which cannot be considered to be 'the first step...for the fabrication of artificial objects, particularly of tools to make tools, and to vary their fabrication indefinitely'; finally, his matter-of-course identification of fabrication with action.[27]

The brave new world Arendt is describing here is one in which *homo faber* is ascendent. Modernity is suffused with the categories, assumptions and ideals of what Arendt calls making or fabrication, the activity of the craftsman. This involves, of course, a fundamental commitment to production. Even intellectual activities, which traditionally meant a withdraw from the world, must now submit to the demand to be productive. Thus modernity is primarily interested in cognition which seeks to produce knowledge. Knowledge is extremely useful. It can provide authority and it can provide control over things and people. (Notice that control or power here means the ability to make something or someone else do what you want. Power in the polis is something very different, it is the "power" of a consensus among equals.)

Take, for example, science. Science, as we now think of it, begins when researchers are no longer content to "observe, to register, and contemplate whatever nature was willing to yield in her own appearance, but began to prescribe conditions and to provoke natural processes".[28] In other words, scientists began to make nature, to reproduce it. "The [scientific] experiment repeats the natural process as though man himself were about to make nature's objects".[29] Originally, "the scientist made only in order to know, not in order to produce things, and the product was a mere by-product"[30], but, of course, it is hard to overlook how useful such products can be. As I pointed out in the introduction, and as we shall see in chapter V, the logic of neoliberalism increasingly demands science produce useful knowledge (not merely interesting or useless knowledge) along with useful products.

It is not only physical objects over which we can gain knowledge and power. "Within this frame of reference, the emergence of a utopian political system which could be construed in accordance with a model by somebody who has mastered the techniques of human affairs becomes almost a matter of course".[31] If objects can be made and remade, so too can society. And why not?—it seems like it could be better in many ways. The desire to remake society is what Arendt calls the "rise of the social" or the "emergence of society".[32]

The desire to remake society, for Arendt, shows how thoroughly the modern imaginary has become suffused with the categories of production. For moderns, the desire to manage society, to remake it into something more efficient, is simply natural. The genealogy or history that is presented in *The Human Condition* is intended to disrupt this naturalness. Managing society, the goal of modern politics, is an entirely anti-political task according to the Greek polis. It is the logic of housekeeping writ large. Freedom for the Greeks was to be free "neither to rule nor be ruled".[33] Politics begins when one leaves the household and enters into the public realm of the polis which is made up only of individuals who are free from any such tasks.

The modern "functionalization" of society marks the complete collapse of the public and private realms and now the housekeeping or homemaking of the latter is being applied to the former.[34] The Platonic desire to overcome the messy pluralism of the polis appears here too. To maximize the capabilities of a society requires, even with an ever increasing division of labor (or perhaps in order to establish an ever increasing division of labor), homogenization, standardization and normalization. "Society expects from each of its members a certain kind of behavior, imposing innumerable and various rules, all of

which tends to 'normalize' its members, to make them behave".[35] Society will be more productive and more efficient if the members behave in predictable and routinized ways.

Not surprisingly, the economy is of supreme importance to modern society. Economists argue that humans behave in a calculative rational fashion and that the social scientist can discover patterns of such behavior through statistical analysis.[36] Of course, as Arendt has shown, humans have, for most of their history, not behaved in this manner. But, with the rise of "society" humans are now shaped, monitored, and sanctioned by these standards and norms. Modernity, having embraced the logic of production, has made humanity into the kind of thing it needs to maximize production.

This becomes a self-reinforcing system in which knowledge is centrally important. Knowledge means money. Businesses seeking a competitive edge pay for it. Knowledge not only makes society transparent and thus subject to management, but also provides authority for the managers. This means governments want it too. Knowledge and production become intimately connected and intertwined. With so much money at stake, this results in the commodification of knowledge and of knowledge producing individuals. In short, in modernity, cognition pays.

As a result, contemporary academia has become a site of competitive struggles and strategies both to generate, interpret and protect knowledge. New technologies and the encroachment of business interests in academia have complicated traditional scientific practice. No longer is useful data generated primarily by experiments, surveys, and censuses. The internet alone is laden with cookies and tracking programs that monitor the choices and clicks of every potential consumer to generate information that may help identify preferences and patterns which can be taken advantage of by companies.

Information is being generated everywhere, by cellphones, traffic lights, purchases in stores, televisions, etc.—as a result there is much more of it. This means interpreting this information has also often burst traditional scientific bounds. Traditional social scientific practice, like traditional science, was articulated as a cooperative endeavor. Even though generation of data could be onerous, it was often expected that data would be reasonably shared with other social scientists. But as the information buried in data sets becomes valuable, the ethic of cooperation is being eroded by competition. A good data set can yield multiple publications and valuable information—sharing could diminish both publications and potential profits.

While the challenge to the cooperative ethic of science is one of the more radical and disturbing aspects of these changes, the methodological approaches to huge amounts of data have also changed. Just as new technologies have changed how data is generated and allowed for an unprecedented flood of it, new technologies have allowed new methods of sorting through these massive amounts of data and spawned and industry of "data mining".[37] Computer programs are now sent rummaging through data for patterns. They can do so under the guidance of social scientists attempting to follow the traditional scientific method by running a regression model constrained by predictions and based on clearly defined variables, but they can also do so automatically in a fashion that completely ignores scientific concerns. When I was a graduate student in a sociology program one of the other students was assigned as a research aide and instructed by his professor to just "run the numbers" randomly in a particular data set in search for anything interesting. For an entire term, this student just rummaged around without any guidance in search of something interesting and significant. From a traditional scientific

perspective this is not only ethically dubious use of a graduate student, but a clearly unscientific approach. Yet, for a companies interested in profitable patterns there is no need to be constrained by science. This puts the social scientist in an odd place in which following traditional scientific practice is burdensome. Cutting corners may get one to tenure track faster.

Lastly, when important information has been mined out of the heaps of data, this information must be defended and protected. Academics who are particularly good at finding important information publish more, bring in more grants and may potentially earn more if they leave academia. This creates intense pressures on universities to prevent other schools or the private sector from poaching prized academics. Universities pay high prices to keep these academics aboard.

I will have much more to say about this brave new world in chapter V. For now let me return to the discussion of Arendt.

Section 2: The Degeneration of Action into Strategic Action

Action

With the rise of the social, the normalized, highly regulated organization of modernity, thinking is denigrated in favor of production-friendly and useful cognition. It is not only thinking that finds itself discouraged, but also action, which is replaced by strategic action. While thinking and action are not necessarily connected, the narrative Arendt constructs places them on a parallel trajectory. This narrative begins in ancient Greece with Socrates in the case of thinking and the Greek polis in the case of action. With the death of Socrates, Plato initiates the quest for knowledge, which is meant to

circumvent the unpredictability of action. Over two thousand years Western civilization goes through various shifts which increasingly move away from action towards a managed society based on knowledge. In the last section I traced how this process results in the denigration of thinking in favor of cognition. In this section, I want to focus on what replaces action: strategic action.

Strategic Action

Arendt never uses the phrase "strategic action". I have borrowed the phrase from Habermas.[38] By strategic action Habermas means actions taken in light of accomplishing a goal which is brought in advance to a certain situation.[39] Thus if a student approaches a teacher with the goal of creating a good impression to get a higher grade, she is acting strategically. Habermas contrasts strategic action with communicative action, which aims a dialogical communication. A student who attends class with an open mind and who is ready to participate without a set of premeditated strategic goals is approaching the situation commutatively. While Habermas shares with Horkheimer, Adorno and Weber a concern about the normalization of strategic action in modern society, he argues they paint too dark a picture of a world ruled only by manipulative strategies and that reason in modernity is not limited to instrumental rationality and strategic action.

While Arendt doesn't use the phrase "strategic action" it is clear she shares this worry. This is especially clear in her early work on Jewish assimilation. I think this work is important not only because it shows Arendt is concerned about these questions, but because she connects these philosophical questions up with very real political and existential issues that face every individual and society. Much of what she is saying

concerns the ethical and existential dilemmas that one faces when crossing boundaries and joining new games (my term, not Arendt's). Because such games are already being played at full speed, joining them can be like jumping into a raging river. This raises questions about whether and how it possible to think in such a situation, what happens to the self when it is sucked into a game, and what happens if one objects to the game itself or the direction it is moving.

The key distinction Arendt makes in her early work on Jewish Assimilation is one she borrows from Bernard Lazare between the Pariah and the Parvenu.[40] The scenario is the outsider Jew faced with a decision: to join the mainstream or to remain an outcast. If possible (not all groups are willing to allow assimilation), joining the mainstream could involve accepting its norms, speaking its language, playing its games, looking the part, saying the right things, in short, joining and blending in with its logic. This is the path of the parvenu. The other option is to refuse to play their games and end up a pariah.

Arendt explores these issues in her first book after her dissertation which is a biography of Rahel Varnhagen, a Jewish salon owner who lived from 1771-1833. Arendt's biography of Varnhagen is very complicated for a variety of reasons. First, there is a complicated history of the work itself. She wrote most of it while still in Germany in 1933 but added some chapters while in exile in France in 1938 (including the chapter on the distinction between the Pariah and the Parvenu) and it wasn't published until twenty years later.[41] Second, there is the question of the relation between Arendt and Rahel Varnhagen. Both women were Jews surrounded by intellectual gentile men. Arendt's approach in the work seems to be an attempt to inhabit Varnhagen's life and she claims to present it "as she herself might have told it".[42] This leads to question of the boundaries

between the author and the subject and the ways the book may blend the boundaries between biography and autobiography.[43] Third, scholars have approached this work with different purposes. Norma Claire Moruzzi uses it to gain insight about Arendt herself.[44] Benhabib reads it as an early formation of what she takes to be Arendt's primary concern with "a recovery of the 'public world' through authentic political action".[45] Pitkin reads it as an early articulation of blob logic, by which she means a logic that, like the blob from the 1950s horror movie, slowly and inevitably incorporates everything into itself (more on this in the next section). There is no reason it cannot be all these.

Rahel Varnhagen serves as an example for Arendt of the dangers of choosing the path of the parvenu. Varnhagen was successful to some degree in becoming a woman of high society. But Arendt thinks the parvenu success comes with a heavy price. The parvenu must act as a "deceiver" and hide some aspects of themselves while playing out to the best of their ability the expectations of the group they are seeking to join.[46] This creates a divided self that struggles to have integrity. Furthermore, the parvenu loses a sense of truth and reality because she "must focus on impression management… Varnhagen had to master the 'art of representing her own life: the point was not to tell the truth, but to display herself; not always to say the same thing to everyone, but to each what was appropriate for him'".[47] The parvenu gets sucked up in this game and becomes incapable "of autonomous judgment of action, of perceiving others accurately or relating to them non-manipulatively".[48] It becomes impossible for the parvenu to not treat everything in their lives, including themselves and others, in a strategic manner. Their life, their loves, their passions, all must be converted into "means for social climbing".[49] In short, "the price of success as a parvenu is becoming a parvenu-ish sort of person".[50]

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The example of Rahel Varnhagen is of a woman attempting to join high society, but Arendt recognizes that there are other situations in which the attempt to assimilate is less superficial. The refugee, and Arendt was one herself, is thrust into a situation in which to survive almost necessitates becoming a parvenu and attempting to win the good will of the locals. If one cannot one may be forced to keep moving endlessly or die outcast.[51] In cases like this we may sympathize with the plight of the parvenu. In the end, however, it is the pariah who manages to retain her integrity and emerges as a kind of hero. Lazare says, and Arendt follows him, that the pariah can become a "conscious pariah" as a result of her pariah status.[52] The basic contrast here is between the parvenu immersed in the game and the pariah who abstains as a conscientious objector. While the parvenu risks getting lost in the twists, turns and intrigues of the game, the pariah, who will suffer for their decision, at least can retain her integrity.

Arendt's works on Jewish assimilation are scattered throughout her career. As far as I know she never fully and explicitly connected these issues up with her later, better known works (this often goes for much of her writing where one piece will reference another but not in a systematic fashion). This means we get some interesting and important but possibly not fully developed analysis. But the analysis does bring up questions about how particular logics gain a hold and become entrenched. I have stressed how these can function like a game in which the parvenu needs to learn how to play, not only the rules but the proper way to act, to be, to speak, to live—the parvenu needs to learn a very complicated dance. Importantly, although Arendt doesn't use this language, her descriptions of Rahel Varnhagen's maneuverings show a woman lost in strategic action. Strategic action is different from cognition. Strategic action is similar to cognition

in the way it seeks knowledge but has a much more manipulative edge. The tone of each is different: the scientist is the paradigmatic cognizer, the social climber or the ruthless politician or the clever advertizer are the paradigmatic strategizers. While science has some tolerance for strategic action, the ideal of science really is something more communal, something less manipulative and something ostensibly more benevolent. Structurally, this chapter is concerned primarily with thinking, the next chapter is concerned with science and cognition and the fifth chapter is concerned with strategic action, especially as it is increasingly sanctioned and rewarded in neoliberalism. While Arendt doesn't distinguish strategic action as clearly as she does thinking from cognition, her descriptions of Rahel Varnhagen and the Eichmann trial, which we have yet to discuss, show she was clearly aware of this potentially pernicious form of action.

Of course, in contradistinction to the strategic Rahel Varnhagen, we also get a prototype of the thinker in the conscious pariah. While the conscious pariah refuses to play the game, when Arendt later begins to describe thinking she will find that thinking destroys the game or at least allows us to stand back from it and question it. We can understand this better if we focus in on the all-consuming nature of games.

Logics and Games as Blob

I have been using the language of "games" or "logics" to describe up and running systems of doing things. These systems or games can gain massive momentum and move in directions that are out of the control of the players, sweeping them all up in these unexpected movements. This riptide or whirlwind quality can have terrible effects that seem beyond the intended desires of the players. Hannah Fenichel Pitkin has argued that

this all-consuming character that Arendt draws our attention to can be described as the "blob"—which refers to the goofy 1950s horror film.[53] The Blob, for those who aren't up on their mid-century Steve McQueen horror flicks, "concerned a monstrous, jellylike substance from outer space" which oozes around consuming anyone it touches eliminating all distinction in the process.[54] I like this metaphor and I think Pitkin is right that captures something about the kind of language Arendt invokes in *The Human Condition*—language like "absorb," "embrace," "devour," "emerge," "rise," "grow," etc.[55]

Arendt isn't alone in invoking this kind of imagery. It shows up in Marx, in Adorno and Horkheimer, in Kafka, and many other thinkers and poets. The worry these thinkers share concerns the way the project of modernity tends to spin out of control. Science fiction is full of stories of human technology and human power growing faster than humans can deal with and these translate into exciting apocalyptic blockbuster movies like Jurassic Park in which the dinosaurs eat most everyone. Pitkin points out that the sense that the many wonders of modernity are also pushing us towards disaster (ecological disaster, nuclear disaster, the outbreak of scientifically created disease, etc) is still common and has shadowed modernity since the beginning.[56] In these worries there is an odd pairing of power and powerlessness, that humans have more power than ever and yet they seem powerless in the face of these possible disasters that are the unintended consequences of their own actions and "advancements". Each unique individual disappears into the mass, indistinguishable from each other, another number in the machinery of modernity.

Pitkin thinks there is a tendency in Western political thought to reify these concerns into some kind of external entity. She worries that Arendt is guilty of this too, that although Arendt "stresses human agency and condemns those who hide it by invoking superhuman entities and forces, yet she herself invokes" terms, especially "the social," that work in just such a fashion.[57] Pitkin's book, *The Attack of the Blob*, then, is a book that traces this kind "blob" language in Arendt's early works and examines how it coalesces into the "confused" and "problematic" concept of "the social".[58] This makes for a very odd read for someone sympathetic to Arendt because Pitkin does an admirable job showing how these concerns and "blob" language show up in Arendt's earliest works but does so because she, Pitkin, is not happy with the results. For my purposes I am interested in blob language because I take it to be a compelling description of the way certain kinds of logics have a seemingly irresistible force and tend to catch everything and everyone up in its wake. Despite Pitkin's concerns about mixing the language of out-of-control blobs, which seems to imply we are powerless, with the demand we think for ourselves and take responsibility for our choices, I think this is precisely the dilemma Arendt wants to illuminate. As we will see with Eichmann, his defense tried to paint him as the innocent cog in the machine. But Arendt wants to claim that even if he was caught up in the Nazi machine, in no way does that excuse him from responsibility for his actions.

The reason thinking is so important is because thinking is a kind of anti-blob. Thinking is one of the few things that resists blob logic. Thus I would argue Pitkin's concerns about the juxtaposition of the powerlessness on the one hand and the responsibility of the individual on the other is precisely what many in modern society

experience. If anything I think the work Pitkin does to trace what a contradictory and fraught situation this can be is very helpful to understand why thinking matters. In section 3 we will see that thinking is an anti-blob force—that is exactly what is needed when a blob is overcoming everything. Before turning to this, I want to examine Arendt's analysis of Eichmann, who is the model for what not to do.

Eichmann as the Paradigm of Thoughtlessness and Strategic Action

  Eichmann in Jerusalem is Arendt's most controversial book.[59] I would suggest the Eichmann trial sharpened her eye for thoughtlessness—she sees it everywhere. Thus while Eichmann is the famous archetype of thoughtlessness that emerges from the text, she sees the entire trial as surrounded by thoughtless strategic manipulations on the part of many involved. She see this thoughtless and manipulative strategic action in the prosecutor Gideon Hausner who "obey[s] his master" Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion in creating a theatrical event to push Ben-gurion's agenda.[60] She sees it in Ben-Gurion's efforts to use the trial to teach the world a lesson.[61] She sees it in the rash of trials of ex-Nazis that occurred in Germany after Eichmann's capture and the lenient sentences that were meted out.[62] She sees it in the German people doing nothing about the presence of murderers amongst themselves.[63] She sees it in Adenaur's use of ex-Nazi administrators in his government.[64] And, most famously and controversially, she sees it in the actions of some Jewish leaders. In short, the trial and events relevant to it became a way to push agendas and advance careers—the exact thing Eichmann did.

  There is a fascinating contrast in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* between the strategic actions of these different people in many different positions of power manipulating their

situations according to their desired outcomes (the only group that emerges unscathed is the court) and, on the other hand, Eichmann, who, while engaging in strategic action himself, showed a kind of thoughtlessness that was perhaps, it is odd to say, more earnest and oblivious. The narration he gave his own life was one of a normal guy hard on his luck, trying to succeed in his career but never quite making it.[65] Even though the defense tried to paint him as a cog in the machine, the prosecution as the person that ran the machine, he thought of his "colleagues" as the cogs in the machine and himself as the one who completed his tasks as a calling.[66] Eichmann portrays himself as the honest one and the others as the manipulative or cynical ones. Arendt points out that no one in the trial could take Eichmann seriously on this point, but she at least considers it. I would suggest this is a part of why her report was so controversial. To some readers the villain of the trial, the perpetuator of these crimes, may come off as innocent, while the prosecutors and the onlookers appear as disingenuous hypocrites. But, the odd earnestness and obliviousness of Eichmann do not make him innocent, for Arendt. He is still responsible, still guilty and still merited execution.

Eichmann was the perfect employee: "every line of [his notes made in jail] shows his utter ignorance of everything that was not directly, technically and bureaucratically, connected with his job".[67] He knew how to get things to work efficiently, and he managed to turn the expulsion and later killing of Jews into an "assembly line".[68] He was willing to commit everything to the job.[69] He knew the catch phrases and slogans of his time.[70] All this came together to create the insulated world of the career minded, highly motivated bureaucrat, Adolf Eichmann. And it was this insulation that safeguarded him from "the presence of others, and hence reality as such".[71]

In other words, Eichmann was caught up in a game, playing to the best of his abilities, obsessed with advancement and bitter to the end about his failures and the success of others he thought less worthy. He was stunningly oblivious to those outside these petty bureaucratic maneuverings—most obviously, of course, to those he was sending to their deaths (it wasn't personal, what else could have been done?). Arendt argues his narrow reliance on "stock phrases and self-invented cliches" reflect how entangled he was in this game.[72] His inability to see others, the others he sent to his death, was a result of his inability to think, "namely, to think from the standpoint of somebody else".[73] Eichmann was so self-involved that as far as he was concerned he was doing the best he could with the hand he had been given—he even attempted to portray himself as helping the Jews by making the best of a bad situation.[74] Not surprisingly however he often couldn't remember details about which train he sent where and who was sent to which camp but "he remembered the turning points of his own career rather well".[75]

Because of the crime Eichmann was involved in, it was assumed Eichmann must be some kind of monster. But Arendt argues he was normal, and not a monster.[76] Perhaps Arendt's portrayal of his obliviousness and her calling others out for their disingenuity make them appear like more of a monster than him, but his thoughtlessness does not exculpate him, it indicts him. The problem with Eichmann is how such a petty little creature could be responsible for such monstrous actions—and this is what Arendt means by the banality of evil.

If Eichmann was a manipulative bastard, we can blame him, kill him, and move on. But if Eichmann is a seemingly oblivious bureaucrat, not meaning to do harm even while systematically sending Jews to their death...well, then he is still repulsive, but much

harder to wrap our heads around. This convergence between the calculative and manipulative strategic action and the oblivious and earnest thoughtlessness is, in my opinion, an extremely important one. It is also a very disturbing one because, to move away from Eichmann, it points to the problem that regular Joes, doing "normal" jobs, can be committing great crimes. This seems to me to be what Arendt was arguing in *The Human Condition*, that even though the project of modernity was and continues to be bolstered by good intentions it is destroying our home, our world and our freedom.

In contrast to the thoughtlessness of Eichmann, Arendt also offers a few stories of heroes, people who refused to play the game and who exercised their judgment, saying "no" to murder. The first concerns a German soldier named Anton Schmidt who was in charge of rounding up lost German troops in Poland. While doing this he helped the Jewish underground until he was caught and executed. Arendt reports that when his name was mentioned at the trial "a hush settled over the courtroom; it was as though the crowd had spontaneously decided to observe the usual two minutes of silence in honor of the man named Anton Schmidt. And in those two minutes, which were like a sudden burst of light in the midst of impenetrable, unfathomable darkness, a single thought stood out clearly, irrefutably, beyond question—how utterly different everything would be today in this courtroom, in Israel, in Germany, in all of Europe, and perhaps in all countries of the world, if only more such stories could have been told".[77]

Another example of a deviation from the typical acquiescence (and often aiding) of most Europeans to the systematic deportation of the Jews was the response of Denmark. Arendt reports that some countries like Italy and Bulgaria saved many Jews through sabotage and "double-dealing," but "only the Danes dared speak out" against

German efforts.[78] The Danes all wore yellow badges to hide who was Jewish and eventually helped smuggle the Jews away from the Germans. Interestingly the German officials in Denmark were very slow to take Eichmann's orders seriously. Arendt argues it was the speaking out on the part of the Danes that prevented the creation of the kind of atmosphere of brutish "toughness" and conformity that was necessary to get the machinery of systematic deportation moving.

While neither of these stories is articulated in terms of thinking and judgment, I don't think it would be unfair to say Arendt's later articulation of thinking and judgment can be read as articulating why and how individuals like Anton Schmidt and larger groups like Denmark and the German officials in Denmark resisted the blob logic of Nazism. Arendt thinks these types of stories need to be told because they help us realize "it did not happen everywhere" and give us hope that when things like this happen "some people will not" join in.[79]

One of Arendt's purposes of *The Human Condition* is to recover a sense of what constitutes action. Arendt thinks what we take to be politics is not actually political at all—it is about social control. The narrative she draws up in *The Human Condition* aims to call out this confusion and to point to what real political action might look like. This was a concern of many of Arendt's works. This is not my concern in this paper however. I have told some of this story in order to articulate the issues that surround the task of thinking and attempted to show some of the forces that mitigate against thinking. This the final section I want to turn to the power of thinking and why it is important to think.

Section 3: The Power of Thinking

Thinking: The Anti-Blob

We are now in a position to understand what Arendt means by thinking. I have already given an initial outline of thinking at the beginning of this chapter, but let us return to it now that we have seen how thinking has been marginalized by the rise of cognition and gained a better sense of why and how this has happened.

Arendt begins the section in The Life of the Mind on thinking with a quote from Heidegger:

> Thinking does not bring knowledge as do the sciences.
> Thinking does not produce useable practical wisdom.
> Thinking does not solve the riddles of the universe.
> Thinking does not endow us directly with the power to act.[80]

The stereotype of the thinker lost in thought, seemingly doing nothing, staring off into space wondering about something is true for Arendt. It is not surprising therefore that in production obsessed modernity, thinking is discouraged: "thinking's chief characteristic is that it interrupts all doing, all ordinary activity no matter what they happen to be".[81] The person staring off into space at their job is told to get back to work and the child doing the same thing at school is told to get their head out of the clouds. While thinking is useless and therefore marginalized, it is an experience that we have all had and one we, at least if we want to be productive, learn to avoid.

Why do we think? Arendt says thinking is a "quest for meaning".[82] The thinker wonders why something happens, not in a scientific or causal sense, but rather in the sense of what something means, why it matters, or why it is this way and not some other way. But meaning is "slippery".[83] Unlike knowledge or truth, meaning is not verifiable. It

is not the kind of thing one can "get" and then be done with. Meaning does not accumulate in discrete pieces into some comprehensive whole. It cannot be written down and presented in a text book. "Thinking is out of order because the quest for meaning produces no end result that will survive the activity, that will make sense after the activity has come to an end".[84] It may result in wonder and even, as Aristotle says, delight, but the quest for meaning "is ineffable by definition".[85]

While wondering about the meaning of something, the thinker enters no-time and no-place. Again, phenomenologically this is something every person has likely experienced, getting caught up thinking about something and finding ourselves lost in the thought. In such a moment it feels like time has stopped, the normal activities of life are forgotten about and even the place we are in fades away. Thus we can recognize when someone else is lost in thought because they tend to stand or sit there immobile, staring off into space.

Interestingly, Arendt claims it was Kant who discovered or articulated the difference between thinking and cognition. He articulated it as the difference between *Vernunft* and *Verstand* which Arendt translates as "reason" and "intellect." Kant is interested in "the urgent need" of reason which is different from the "quest and desire for knowledge" of the intellect.[86] According to Arendt, "Kant drew this distinction between [reason and intellect] after he had discovered the 'scandal of reason,' that is, the fact that our mind is not capable of certain and verifiable knowledge regarding matters and questions that it nevertheless cannot help thinking about".[87] For Kant, these were things like "God, freedom and immortality".[88] These are the big questions. We cannot gain sure knowledge about them, so we speculate and wonder about them. The interesting move

Kant makes is to assign reason to these speculative tasks, radically severing it from what

it is more often associated with, the quest for knowledge.

Arendt thinks Kant did not realize the full import of what he had done:

> Kant, though he had insisted on this distinction, was still so strongly
> bound by the enormous weight of the tradition of metaphysics that he
> held fast to its traditional subject matter, that is, to those topics which
> could be *proved* to be unknowable, and while he justified reason's need
> to think beyond the limits of what can be known, he remained unaware
> of the fact that man's need to reflect encompasses nearly everything that
> happens to him, things he knows as well as things he can never know. He
> remained less than fully aware of the extent to which he had liberated
> reason, the ability to think, by justifying it in terms of the ultimate
> questions. He stated defensively that he had 'found it necessary to deny
> *knowledge*...to make room for faith" but he hand not made room for
> *faith*; he had made room for thought, and he had not 'denied knowledge'
> but separated knowledge from thinking.[89]

This striking passage gives a good idea of the broad extent of type of things we

may be thinking about. We may be pondering the ultimate questions, mulling over why

certain things have happened to us, delighting in a sunset, or wondering why society is

structured the way it is. Building on Kant, Arendt says "the intellect desires to grasp what

is given to the senses, but reason wishes to understand its meaning".[90]

None of this makes it any more palatable to the demands of production. Thinking

can be time consuming, produces nothing and cannot even explain itself after the fact.

This is why:

> …thinking, the quest for meaning—as opposed to the thirst for
> knowledge even for knowledge for its own sake—has so often felt to be
> unnatural, as though men, whenever they reflect without purpose, going
> beyond the natural curiosity awakened by the manifold wonders of the
> world's sheer thereness and their own condition, engaged in an activity
> *contrary to the human condition*. Thinking as such, not only the raising
> of unanswerable 'ultimate questions,' but every reflection that does not

serve knowledge and is not guided by practical needs and aims, is, as
Heidegger once observed, '*out of order*.' It interrupts any doing, any
ordinary activities, no matter what they happen to be. All thinking
demands a *stop*-and think.[91]

If the only result of thinking was the unproductive withdraw from everyday life,

thinking might just be an innocuous activity that can be an annoyance to the machinery of

production. But there is a not so innocent side to thinking: thinking can be destructive. At

least, it is destructive for traditions, norms and systems that work at the level of

unquestioned assumptions, form a part of the background of human experience or require

allegiance. In other words, thinking can cause us to question the *statis quo* and the

justificatory framework that supports it. This is because, as I pointed out earlier, thinking

is often struck by the way things are and how things could be different. In other words,

thinking sometimes brings into the fore assumptions and norms that function in the

background most of the time and causes us to wonder why they are the way they are and

how they could be different.

Take, for example, two different approaches to the demands of a new game, say

the game of becoming an academic. There are a certain set of activities the new graduate

must learn to navigate: publishing papers, networking, presenting at conferences,

teaching, and so forth. The strategic approach says "What are the rules of the game?

What do I need to do to win? Who can help me achieve my goals? How can I do this

most efficiently and effectively?" The thinker, on the other hand, asks: "Why are things

done this way? How could it be done differently?" In terms of what needs to be done to

become an academic, these questions are unnecessary and even dangerous. The recipe for

success is get to work and *not* think about it.

Thinking, then, is a destabilizing force.[92] "The quest for meaning...relentlessly dissolves and examines anew all accepted doctrines and rules".[93] Arendt compares it to Penelope's web: thinking "undoes every morning what it has finished the night before".[94] This is why it is fair to call thinking the anti-blob. If there is one thing that can help us avoid getting swept up in blob logics or help us realize we are being carried away, it is thinking. It is tempting to say this makes thinking very useful after all, but Arendt assiduously avoids applying this kind of language to thinking. Again, thinking seeks meaning, but never gets it. If it turns out there are potentially desirable "results" they are, at best, unintended consequences.

This is important because there are other unintended consequences to thinking that make it "valuable" (more language that does and doesn't apply to a useless activity). These other unintended consequences are important enough for Arendt to devote a section to each.

Unintended Consequence of Thinking #1: The Two-in-One

In *The Life of the Mind*, Arendt claims that the reason she started thinking about thinking was the startling thoughtlessness she observed at the Eichmann trial. She says about Eichmann: "I was struck by the manifest shallowness in the doer that made it impossible to trace the uncontestable evil of his deeds to any deeper level of roots or motives. The deeds were monstrous, but the doer...was quite ordinary, commonplace and neither demonic nor monstrous. There was no sign in him of firm ideological convictions or of specific evil motives, and the only notable characteristic...was not stupidity but *thoughtlessness*".[95] Arendt had already in *The Human Condition* articulated what she was

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doing as attempting "to think our situation" and implied that there was something deeply

thoughtless about modernity[96], but it was the Eichmann trial that led her to focus her

attention on the activity of thinking itself. The "banality of evil" she observed with

Eichmann led her to consider that 'the problem of good and evil, our faculty for telling

right from wrong, [might] be connected with our faculty of thought" or, to state it more

fully: "Could the activity of thinking as such, the habit of examining whatever happens to

come to pass or to attract attention, regardless of the results and specific content, could

this activity be among the conditions that make men abstain from evil-doing or even

actually 'condition' them against it?"[97] If this is the case, it is Socrates, Arendt's

preeminent thinker and the foil to Eichmann, who will serve as the case study.

Not surprisingly, as her preeminent thinker, Arendt reports that Socrates, "that

lover of perplexities, made very few positive statements".[98] Thinking doesn't produce

knowledge, so it is rare for Socrates to make positive assertions—most of the time he just

disabuses other of their positive notions. This makes it quite interesting to see what

claims Socrates is willing to defend. Arendt finds two positive statements in the *Gorgias*

that help us to understand the problem at hand. The first is that "it is better to be wronged

than to do wrong"—a very un-Greek idea, Arendt points out.[99] The second reads: "It

would be better for me that my lyre or a chorus I directed should be out of tune and loud

with dischord, and that multitudes of men should disagree with me rather than that I,

being one, should be out of harmony with myself and contradict me".[100]

Right away we notice that in the second quote Socrates attributes to himself what

Arendt calls the two-in-one: "What Socrates discovered is that we can intercourse with

ourselves, as well as with others, and that the two types of discourse are related".[101]

Arendt says first we have friends and we talk with them. But then we learn we can talk with ourselves like one would a friend. "I first talk to others before I talk with myself, examining whatever the joint talk may have been about, and then discover that I can conduct a dialogue not only with others, but also with myself as well".[102] This self that is with itself is the two-in-one:

> The meaning is clear: even though I am one, I am not simply one, I have a self and I am related to this self as my own self. This self is by no means an illusion; it makes itself heard by talking to me--I talk to myself, I am not only aware of myself--and in this sense, though I am one, I am two-in-one and there can be harmony or disharmony within the self. If I disagree with other people, I can walk away; but I cannot walk away from myself, and therefore I better first try to be in agreement with myself before I take all others into consideration. This same sentences also spells out the actual reason it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong: if I do wrong I am condemned to live together with a wrongdoer in an unbearable intimacy; I can never get rid of him. Hence the crime that remains hidden from the eyes of gods and men, a crime that does not appear at all because there is no one to whom it appears [does nonetheless appear to me]...as I am my own partner when I am thinking, I am my own witness when I am acting. I know the agent and am condemned to live together with him.[103]

What Arendt is offering here is a theory of conscience. To have a conscience is to have a split self: "Conscience is the anticipation of the fellow who awaits you if and when you come home".[104] Just as in a dialogue my interlocutor may disagree with me and cause me to rethink, further articulate or offer better justifications, so too the other in me, my conscience, can disagree, challenge and affirm me. To do something that causes me to disagree with myself is to contradict myself. Thus Arendt connects the Socratic two-in-one with what she takes to be the command that underlies Kant's categorical imperative: "Do not contradict yourself".[105] The remarkable effect of the Kantian categorical imperative is to force us to take responsibility for our own choices by disallowing us to

appeal to some higher authority: "For if I don't want to contradict myself, I act in such a manner that the maxim of my act can become a universal law. I am the legislator, sin or crime can no longer be defined as disobedience to somebody else's law, but on the contrary as refusal to act my part as legislator of the world".[106] This is, of course, immensely important for Arendt who was deeply concerned with the way individuals push off responsibility onto some higher authority or excuse their sins as the result of being a cog in the machine.

Of course, the other side of this is that some people, perhaps most people, never develop the two-in-one. It may be that in order to be comfortable with murder "all he has to do is never start the soundless solitary dialogue we call 'thinking,' never go home and examine things. This is not a matter of wickedness or goodness, as it is not a matter of intelligence or stupidity. A person who does not know what silent intercourse (in which we examine what we say and what we do) will not mind contradicting himself, and this means he will never be either willing to account for what he says or does; nor will he mind committing any crime, since he can count on its being forgotten the next moment. Bad people—Aristotle to the contrary notwithstanding--are *not* 'full of regrets'".[107]

These are remarkable conclusions. Thinking, useless thinking, has the unintended consequence of producing a division within the self and fostering a kind of inner dialogue that Arendt equates with conscience and which is key to becoming a responsible person. Levinas has pointed out how responsibility is related to the need to respond to the Other. Arendt is showing us how this need to respond to the Other goes on within the self and creates the need to avoid contradicting the self by taking responsibility for one's actions.

Not thinking or avoiding thinking can lead to the absence of conscience, which, as we will see with Eichmann, can have terrible effects.

Unintended Consequence of Thinking #2: Judgment

There is yet another extremely important unintended consequence of thinking: the freeing of the faculty of judgment. I say "freeing the faculty of judgment" because Arendt thinks it is currently often reduced to almost mathematical function of subsuming particulars according to set rules under the proper universals—to a kind of calculation. Recall that Arendt claims Plato thought "if people could be convinced that there were immutable standards governing the realm of human affairs, standards available only to the philosopher, then the wisdom of the few could take precedence over the fluctuating opinions and beliefs of the many. Truth would replace opinion, moral conflict would disappear, and an agonistic, chaotic plurality would give way to a harmonious unity".[108] But Arendt worries this vision of immutable standards inculcates "a habit of mechanical, unthinking judgment. The more judgment is identified with the application of a rule, an unvarying standard or 'yardstick,' the more our powers of judgment atrophy, the less we are able to 'stop and think' in the Socratic sense".[109] To "free" judgment is therefore to dispel the conceptualization of judgment as something mechanical.

This reduction of judgment to calculation is not something accidental nor innocent. It was for Plato a power move, an attempt to circumvent the logic of the polis and replace it with something that would lead to a more predictable, more rational, more manageable society. As Dana Villa has pointed out, Arendt sees totalitarian regimes taking this logic to a damning extreme. She argues totalitarian ideologies place a

straightjacket on life, reducing the complexity of the world and the people within it to something more "calculable and docile".[110] This frees the members in a totalitarian society from the difficult task of judging by replacing it with "syllogistic deduction"— monological calculations based on a limited set of comprehensible rules.

For Arendt judgment is basically the opposite of this: "thinking in the Socratic sense—is a maieutic function, a midwifery. That is, you bring out all your opinions , prejudices, what have you; and you know that never, in any of the [Platonic] dialogues, did Socrates ever discover any child [of the mind] who was not a wind-egg. That you remain in a way empty after thinking...And once you are empty, then, in a way which is difficult to say, you are prepared to judge. That is, without having any book of rules under which you can subsume a particular care, you have got to say 'this is good.' 'this is bad,' 'this is right,' 'this is wrong,' 'this is beautiful,' and 'this is ugly'...we are now prepared to meet the phenomena, so to speak, head on, without any preconceived system".[111]

Instead of establishing rules, thinking destroys (casts doubts upon, forces us to rethink, etc) preconceived systems and in so doing frees judgment to move beyond the mechanical "applying of categories and formulas".[112] It is not surprising that, considering this rejection of the Platonic desire for quasi-mathematical or logical proof (truth or knowledge), judgment, on Arendt's account, is not some kind of method or procedure for making good judgments. There is no list of steps to proper judgment. This is, of course, exactly what Arendt was trying to push back against. As a result, judgment may seem frustratingly open ended, unconstrained or underdefined—at least as a method (which it is not).

There are further difficulties in understanding judgment, the most glaring being that Arendt died before writing the final section of *The Life of the Mind* which was to be on judgment. We thus have various statements on judgment from lectures, conferences and other works, but these remain fairly piecemeal. If this wasn't enough, from what scholars have pieced together, Arendt seems to have developed two different theories of judgment at different times in her life.[113] The first stems from her interest in recovering the political realm. This form of judgment seems to be based on presenting one's opinion through dialogue with others and seems related to Aristotle's concept of *phronesis*. The second theory of judgment seems to be based on Kant's conceptions of judgment and taste and hinges on obtaining the distance of a spectator and a "broader perspective".[114] Of course, this sort of thing gives scholars something to do, trying to sort out these differences. For our purposes here, I'm not sure we need to resolve them. Ultimately I agree with Dana Villa that these two theories are similar enough that we can see them being "two poles of the more inclusive phenomena of independent judgment".[115]

Despite all these difficulties, the reason judgment is of such interest to Arendt scholars, I suspect, is because judgment brings Arendt's concerns full circle. Judgment is the most political of the mental faculties: "If thinking, the two-in-one of the soundless dialogue, actualizes the difference within our identity as given in consciousness and thereby results in conscience as its by-product, then judging, the by-product of the liberating effect of thinking, realizes thinking, makes it manifest in the world of appearances, where I am never alone and always much too busy to be able to think. The manifestation of the wind of thought is no knowledge; it is the ability to tell right from wrong, beautiful from ugly".[116] Judgment as she says here "realizes thinking"—it takes it

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back to the world of appearances (everyday life). It represents a sort of culmination of the process initiated by thinking. It is a result of conversation with others and with the self that has led to an enlarged mentality and a developed sense of taste that takes into account both a distanced historical awareness and the particular world it reenters. It is willing to take responsibility as a legislator of the world. It returns to the world not with some sure knowledge, but with a judgment, which, felicitously for Arendt's hopes of recovering the political, strikes me as similar to the opinions of the polis.

Recall that Arendt began thinking about thinking because of the thoughtlessness she observed at the Eichmann trial. She wondered why some stood up to totalitarian regimes and others didn't. The language of her analysis of thinking and judging is always provisional. She stresses that what she has to say about thinking and judgment *might* be the case. Those of who think *might* develop judgment and *might* be more willing to say no to murder. I think we could also say she hoped it was the case. If we could talk of Arendt's hope it would be for the following:

> When everybody is swept away unthinkingly by what everybody else does and believes in, those who think are drawn out of hiding because their refusal to join is conspicuous and thereby becomes a kind of action. The purging element in thinking, Socrates' midwifery, that brings out the implications of unexamined opinions and thereby destroys them--values, doctrines, theories, and even convictions--is political by implication. For the destruction has a liberating effect on another human faculty, the faculty of judgment, which one may call, with some justification, the most political of man's mental abilities. It is the faculty to judge particulars without subsuming them under those general rules which can be taught and learned until they grow into habits that can be replaced by other habits and rules [which is what happens in totalitarian regimes].[117]

It is judgment, Arendt hopes, that says no when called upon to murder. This is the dramatic hope that drives her later works.

Judgment is not just important in extreme political situations, but in everyday life. Good judgment is wisdom. Unfortunately, as we will see in the next chapter, judgment has been denigrated with the rise of modernity as being an inadequate foundation for knowledge. Modernity seeks to replace judgment with Method, to replace qualitative sensitivity with quantitative exactness. This is a mistake. This establishes a quantitative and mechanical approach to knowledge that demands strategic action and denigrates judgment and thinking and, as a result, can lead to a disturbing thoughtlessness on that part of academics.

Conclusion

At the conclusion of the film *The Mission*, in which Spain and Portugal collude with the Catholic church to destroy the power of Jesuit missions, the Portuguese leader who pushed for this stands with the Catholic archbishop who under political pressure sanctioned it and argues that they need not lament the massacre they caused because "the world is thus." The archbishop sadly responds: "No, thus we have made the world."[118]

The concepts of thinking, judging and thoughtlessness might be taken to be provisional in some ways because Arendt never finished *The Life of the Mind*. Nonetheless I suggest we take them up because they offer a powerful lens that can help us identify when we are slipping into language that insists "the world is thus." Thinking helps us see "the world could be different" and judgment can intervene in the world saying: "no, I will not participate in making the world so." In the remainder of this dissertation I am interesting in applying these concepts to the hegemony of science in academia (chapter IV) and the neoliberalization of academia (chapter V).

Notes

[1] Arendt, Hannah. *The Life of the Mind*. (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978).

[2] Ibid., 180-190.

[3] Ibid., 88.

[4] Ibid., 13.

[5] Arendt, Hannah. "Philosophy and Politics." *Social Research*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Spring 1990), 74.

[6] Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 30.

[7] Ibid., 32.

[8] Ibid., 31.

[9] Ibid., 194.

[10] Ibid., 199.

[11] Quoted in Benhabib, Seyla. "The Pariah and Her Shadow: Hannah Arendt's Biography of Rahel Varnhagen." *Political Theory*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Feb. 1995), 13.

[12] Pounds, Norman. *Hearth and Home: A History of Material Culture*. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), 59.

[13] Arendt, Hannah. "Culture and Politics." *Reflections on Literature and Culture*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 193.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Arendt, Hannah. "Philosophy and Politics." *Social Research*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Spring 1990), 73.

[16] Ibid., 74.

[17] Ibid., 107-108.

[18] Ibid., 108.

[19] Ibid., 109.

[20] Ibid., 110.

[21] Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 303.

[22] Ibid., 304.

[23] Ibid., 304.

[24] Ibid., 15.

25 Ibid., 314.

26 While contemplation was the activity of primary importance for the ancient and medieval worlds, it was not limited to the Platonic version. There were other versions, like the Stoic model of contemplation. For the Stoics, contemplation is less a means to have some access to the beautiful cosmos than a method to withdraw from this terribly violent world and exercise a kind of self control (*Life of the Mind*, 54). This is a very different model, one that could nonetheless be mixed with the Platonic model of contemplation by Christians.

27 Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 306.

28 Ibid., 231.

29 Ibid., 295.

30 Ibid., 297.

31 Ibid., 227.

32 Ibid., 38.

33 Ibid., 32.

34 Ibid., 33.

35 Ibid., 40.

36 Ibid., 42. Obviously the discipline of economics is very diverse and approaches like macroeconomics and behavioral economics do not share the same commitments as rational choice theory. Arendt here is referring to a general economic perspective that has become a kind of widespread assumed utilitarianism in modernity .

37 Witten, Ian H, Eibe Frank and Mark A. Hall. *Data Mining: Practical Machine Learning and Techniques*. (Burlington, MA: Morgan Kauffman, 2011).

38 Habermas, Jürgen. *The Theory of Communicative Rationality, Vol. 1, Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984).

39 Ibid. See also Ingram, David. *Habermas: Introduction and Analysis*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010).

40 Pitkin, Hannah Fenichel. *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt's Concept of the Social*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 21.

41 Benhabib Seyla. "The Pariah and Her Shadow: Hannah Arendt's Biography of Rahel Varnhagen." *Political Theory*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Feb. 1995), 7.

42 Ibid., 8.

43 Moruzzi, Norma. "From Parvenu to Pariah: Hannah Arendt's *Rahel Varnhagen*" in Fleischacker, Samuel, ed., *Heidegger's Jewish Followers* (Pittsburg, PA: Duquesne Press, 2008).

44 Ibid.

45 Benhabib, Seyla. "The Pariah and Her Shadow: Hannah Arendt's Biography of Rahel Varnhagen." *Political Theory*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Feb. 1995), 12.

[46] Pitkin, Hannah Fenichel. *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt's Concept of the Social*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 22.

[47] Ibid., 26.

[48] Ibid., 27.

[49] Ibid., 26.

[50] Ibid., 22.

[51] Ibid., 53-54.

[52] Ibid., 64.

[53] Ibid., 4.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid., 4.

[56] Ibid., 8.

[57] Ibid., 15.

[58] Ibid., 1.

[59] Bernstein, Richard J. "'The Banality of Evil' Reconsidered," in Calhoun, Craig and John McGowan, eds., *Hannah Arendt and the Meaning of Politics*. (Minneapolis, MS: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

[60] Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. (New York: Penguin Classics, 2006), 5-6.

[61] Ibid., 7.

[62] Ibid., 15.

[63] Ibid., 16.

[64] Ibid., 17-18.

[65] Ibid., 50.

[66] Ibid., 57.

[67] Ibid., 54.

[68] Ibid., 45.

[69] Ibid., 42.

[70] Ibid., 48.

[71] Ibid., 49.

[72] Ibid., 49.

[73] Ibid., 49.

[74] Ibid., 46.

[75] Ibid., 53.

[76] Ibid., 26.

[77] Ibid., 231.

[78] Ibid., 171.

[79] Ibid., 233.

[80] Arendt, Hannah. *The Life of the Mind*. (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 1.

[81] Arendt, Hannah. *Responsibility and Judgment*. (New York: Schocken, 2005), 164.

[82] Arendt, Hannah. *The Life of the Mind*. (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 15.

[83] Ibid., 122.

[84] Ibid., 123.

[85] Ibid., 123.

[86] Ibid., 14.

[87] Ibid., 14.

[88] Ibid., 14.

[89] Ibid., 14.

[90] Ibid., 57.

[91] Ibid., 78.

[92] Villa, Dana. *Politics, Philosophy, Terror*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 1999), 165.

[93] Arendt, Hannah. *Responsibility and Judgment*. (New York: Schocken, 2005), 177.

[94] Arendt, Hannah. *The Life of the Mind*. (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 88.

[95] Ibid., 4.

[96] Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 15.

[97] Arendt, Hannah. *The Life of the Mind*. (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 5.

[98] Ibid., 180.

[99] Ibid., 181.

[100] Ibid., 181.

[101] Ibid., 188-189.

[102] Ibid., 189.

[103] Arendt, Hannah. *Responsibility and Judgment*. (New York: Schocken, 2005), 90.

[104] Arendt, Hannah. *The Life of the Mind*. (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 191.

[105] Ibid, 188.

[106] Arendt, Hannah. *Responsibility and Judgment*. (New York: Schocken, 2005), 69.

[107] Arendt, Hannah. *The Life of the Mind*. (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 191.

[108] Villa Dana. *Politics, Philosophy, Terror*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 1999), 93.

[109] Ibid., 163.

[110] Ibid., 92.

[111] Quoted in Villa Dana. *Politics, Philosophy, Terror*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 1999), 101.

[112] Arendt, Hannah. *Responsibility and Judgment*. (New York: Schocken, 2005), 37.

[113] See interpretive essay by Ronald Beiner in Arendt, Hannah. *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[114] Villa Dana. *Politics, Philosophy, Terror*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 1999), 103.

[115] Ibid., 103.

[116] Arendt, Hannah. *Responsibility and Judgment*. (New York: Schocken, 2005), 189.

[117] Ibid., 188-189.

CHAPTER IV

THE HEGEMONY OF SCIENCE

Introduction: Welcome to Academia

In Chapter II I examined the rise of the research university. I argued that the model of the research university which was developed in Germany was exuberantly embraced in the United States for epistemological (internal logic) and instrumental/calculative reasons (external logics). The success of the sciences led to the positivist demand that all forms of knowledge be scientific and the research university emerged as the institutional home of science. This was the epistemological force working from within the university. The results and prestige of science were, in turn, very useful and immediately in demand by companies and governments. These were, and continue to be, the outside pressures that act on the university. Thus the research university served as a kind of nexus that seemed to affirm not only the values and aspirations of positivists within the academy who wanted better, more scientific research but also the values and aspirations on the part of politicians who sought to create, organize and manage the modern state and business people who were working to create a free market society. I argued that this creates complicated tensions about the use of science. These tensions will be further explored in this chapter.

My worry is that these changes have contributed to a kind of pervasive thoughtlessness in contemporary society. The university, the place where people supposedly go to learn to think, is increasingly a place that discourages thinking.

Especially as the logic of production increasingly dominates the university, thinking, which is simply unproductive, is less and less desirable or necessary. The thinker who best helps us articulate this situation is Hannah Arendt. In chapter III I examined what she means by thinking, thoughtlessness and judging. With this discussion of thinking and thoughtless as a kind of philosophical lens I now want to turn to contemporary academia. My argument is that institutionalized science has some disturbing tendencies towards thoughtlessness. These tendencies are most obvious in non-sciences that attempt to imitate the hard sciences (especially in the social sciences). This works on two levels: there is the thoughtless embrace of scientific demands in the non-sciences and the potentially thoughtless tendencies within institutional science itself. This is the topic of this chapter. In the next chapter we will see how the neoliberalization of the university exacerbates the tendencies towards thoughtlessness.

Thus in this chapter I examine the universe of the academic. I aim to show how the norms, expectations, sanctions and structures of academia are based on the model of a scientist engaged in institutionalized normal science. Even academics working in non-scientific disciplines are evaluated primarily via the kind of quantitative means that make sense for institutionalized normal science: how many publications? In what quality of journals? How many conference presentations? How much service? This approach to measuring the success or failure of an academic is based on certain positivist assumptions about the nature of knowledge. These assumptions have been incorporated into the structure of the university such that, even though the full blown pretensions of positivism may be rejected, these assumptions continue to guide academic practice.

This is a mistake. There are good philosophical and practical reasons for rejecting the hegemony of science—especially in the social sciences where there has been the most pressure to imitate the hard sciences (even down to the name "social sciences"). Scientific practice involves a set of dispositions that cannot be transported well into the social sciences and humanities. Bourdieu argues these dispositions involve a scholastic fallacy that distorts results and warps the study of humans.[1] Gadamer argues the scientific adherence to method translates poorly into the non-sciences and vitiates judgment.[2] These thinkers and others are not necessarily opposed to science, but worried about what happens when the expectations, values and norms of science are transposed into the non-sciences. It too often leads to the intricate human world being shoved into too neat boxes that are convenient for mathematical analysis, but thoughtlessly strips human existence of its richness.

I am especially interested in analyzing academic activity as a game. This is to say that the young aspiring academic is initiated into and learns the rules, dispositions and practices of their particular discipline as a kind of game. Those who learn to play the game quicker and better are rewarded. My concern is that the competitive nature of these games discourages questioning the way the game is played and rewards immediate immersion and conformity to the game: to use economic language thinking is deincentivized. There is not time for hesitation, questions about alternatives, and criticisms about the way the game is currently played—thinking about all this leaves one behind. The most successful approach is not to think but to strategically learn the rules and then play hard.

My approach will be to begin with these academic games, specifically the games scientists play, to describe what is expected of an academic. I will first use Bourdieu to outline what I mean by a game. Then I turn to Kuhn's discussion of puzzle solving as the model for how normal science works. Kuhn gives us the basic model of what academics do and in the next three sections I build upon this basic model moving from the problematic importance of Method, to quantification and finally to the moral sources of this model (we can add to this the two features discussed in Chapter II, instrumental rationality and high modern aesthetics). Obviously this is not exhaustive of the features of academic games, but I have attempted create a recognizable framework that both helps understand academic practice and also emphasizes how these features often discourage thinking. In short, I am interested in how these features wrap the academic in a kind of protective cocoon that assures them what they are doing is epistemologically, strategically and morally right and that they need not challenge the ways things are done. Not surprisingly, my claim is that these features combine to lead to a highly efficient game that tends towards being thoughtless about its own practice.

It is not enough to point to features that lead to thoughtlessness. The final sections of this chapter explore a set of examples of failures that result from the unreflective application of positivist scientific standards to the non-sciences. These examples aim to show that this often too thoughtless appropriation of scientific practice in the social sciences is actually detrimental to social science practice. These failures have led to a healthy debate in the social sciences as to why and whether science should be the model for the social sciences. I will not be able to examine this debate in full, but I am in agreement with those authors who claim what is needed in the social sciences is precisely

judgment. I conclude that if Arendt is right that thinking is key to developing judgment and if judgment is necessary in the social sciences and humanities, then academic practice in the non-sciences should not be modeled on positivist scientific practice. To do so undermines the skills and dispositions need by academics in the non-sciences to approach their studies ethically and effectively.

Institutionalized Science

Before turning to academic games, I want to make it clear that my concern is *institutionalized* science. Institutionalized science is also *rationalized* science. My claim is not that science is thoughtless. Rather my claim is that the way science has been institutionalized, especially as it bows to the logic of production and the pressures that result, *discourages* thinking. It is quite possible however for the contemporary scientist to overcome the pressures of *rationalized* production that discourage thinking and to think. But the deck is, in a sense, stacked against her due to the intense demands of hypercompetitive academia. Science that functions outside of the logic of production is much more likely to encourage thinking. The Greek "scientist", medieval monk "scientist" and the European aristocratic gentleman "scientist" all had time to think and they often did—often writing about all kinds of topics. Only in modern rationalized and institutionalized science do we find the intense pressure to be productive and heavy specialization that makes thinking a waste of time.

Thinking is also a central part of revolutionary science. By this I mean that, following Kuhn, in those moments when a particular scientific tradition has become radically questioned—say when the Aristotelian paradigm or the Newtonian paradigm

can no longer adequately explain certain problems—science enters a revolutionary transition in which what is needed is precisely thinking to break apart old paradigms and open up new spaces and imagine alternatives[3]. As we saw in the last chapter, thinking is interested in alternatives (to the current game, to current paradigms, to current accepted ideas, etc), in questioning why things are the way they are, and so forth. In revolutionary science thinking is therefore needed to imagine new ways of framing problems to resolve contradictions that have become irresolvable under their current paradigm. In normal scientific practice, however, thinking is often counterproductive. Normal science functions within a settled paradigm and involves working through the immense minutiae of little problems that make up a discipline. As we can see, revolutionary science is a very different game from normal science. My analysis concerns the minutiae focused practice of normal science.

Playing Games

In the last chapter I wrote about the way certain logics can gain momentum and, like the blob, seem to sweep everything into their flow—to work with these logics is to risk being carried away by these logics. I also invoked the language of games to describe how joining a logic already at work is like joining a game already being played. The language of games not only captures the sense of momentum, but also helps to think about the border that marks the entrance into a game. Within a certain game there is already a set of rules, norms, values, tacit understandings at work. To succeed at a certain game means to master all these complexities. But it also means once games get running they tend to gain a life of their own and carry along those who are caught up in the game.

This can lead to the remarkable conjunction of expertise, excellence and thoughtlessness that concerns me. In this section I want to flesh out this metaphor of the game to help us understand the logic of rationalized, normal science.

The sense of game I want to invoke comes from Bourdieu, who was himself a rugby player when he was young and uses sports language like game, field and practice to develop his approach to social theory.[4] This allows Bourdieu to analyze different types of activities as games, from "intellectual games" to "social games", and in terms of the strategic moves made in games—having a "feel for the game", getting "ahead of the game" and embodying "the game".[5] This use of sports shows Bourdieu's debt to phenomenology where the phenomenological experience of playing sports is particularly helpful to rethink embodiment and being-in-the-world. Bourdieu follows Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty in wanting to overcome the Cartesian picture of the self as a mind that stands over and against a world. Clearly we do have experiences where we stand back and look at something in the world, including perhaps our own bodies, from a distance. Heidegger's famous example was stopping the activity of building something because the hammer has broken.[6] The worker feels the hammer break or realizes it isn't working well and stops to examine it to see what has happened. Heidegger wants us to notice that stopping to look at the hammer involves a different disposition than being immersed in a project that uses the hammer. I relate to everything around me differently when I am building a table than when I have stopped my table building to examine what happened to my hammer. This mundane example is meant to show that most of human life actually takes place in a mode of full investment, interaction and immersion within the world around us and that the mode of standing back and examining something is a derivative

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(or secondary) and less common kind of experience. Part of the reason Heidegger has been so influential is because this kind of phenomenological description helped to show that the distanced, examination mode of comportment that is so common and valued by academics and scientists is neither the primary way of relating to the world nor necessarily the best one. When playing sports, the individual who constantly stops to examine what is going on will be left behind. Playing a particular game involves a certain set of dispositions, skills, and understandings that are appropriate to that particular game and these tend to work tacitly and in the background—in other words, once we learn to play a particular game, we do not have to think about how to play it, we embody it.

Bourdieu's awkward word to describe the player is "Habitus".[7] Obviously the term is meant to bring attention to the way the player has ingrained the rules, norms, and expectations of the game such that they have become habitual and do not need to be thought about each time the player acts. A skillful basketball player knows when and where to be in any particular situation within the game based on repeated experience and embodied knowledge. The player does not need to think about where they should be, she simply moves there automatically as she responds to the flow of the game. The player works within a "field".[8] This obviously refers to the rugby field, but Bourdieu sees the landscape and/or situation within which any set of activities takes place as a kind of field. Thus Bourdieu can analyze the way people act in an art museum in terms of the habitus (the felt way I am and act in museums) and field (the structures, tacit rules and expectations about museums). All the players in the game (those who make the art, the museum workers, those who view the art) understand that they work within a particular field that has understood boundaries and rules (don't touch the art, don't stand in front of

others while they are appreciating art, etc). The field elicits certain dispositions on the part of the players. But it also allows for, and in fact thrives on, different styles. Some artists work with these expectations by doing things like putting a urinal on the wall or creating interactive art that plays with the expected rules. The viewers also get to express a style. Perhaps the individual who moves too fast doesn't appreciate the art. Some stand ponderously for hours in front of certain works. Some gawk at a certain artwork because it is by someone very famous. These are all different styles that reflect individual taste, which in turn can reflect class background, education, etc.[9]

In addition to working to overcome the trenchant Cartesianism of modernity, the focus on sports or games also allows Bourdieu to emphasize the use of strategies in social interactions. This has proven to be one of the more controversial aspects of his approach. Historically, strategic action has been often seen as morally suspect. In the last chapter we saw Arendt argue that the Greeks sought to keep artisans out of the polis for fear that the instrumental approach of artisans would infiltrate and contaminate the polis and change action into strategic action. In chapter II, we saw Arendt's predecessors and contemporaries like Weber, Heidegger and Horkheimer argue that modernity has sanctioned instrumental rationality and strategic action in a way that leads to the exploitation of nature and humanity and establishes the bleak efficiency of the "iron cage of rationality". By no means is this concern about strategic action limited to these thinkers. Most premodern societies, including the Greeks, Jews, the Christianized West, Islam, Confucian China, etc. set up "taboos of calculation", attempted to separate "the pure from the commercial", denied the economy to some degree and sought limits on merchant activity.[10] The basic worry is one that is widely familiar in the West from

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(among other places) the teaching of Jesus who argued ulterior motives undermined the morality of actions.[11] Bourdieu saw this denial of the economy in his early ethnographic studies among the Kabyle in northern Africa. The problem for the Kabyle, like other premodern societies, was that despite these moral concerns and taboos on the commercial they *did* engage in trade, they *could not* avoid the economic aspects of human interaction and they could not live up to the (Bourdieu argues) impossible ideal to act disinterestedly.[12] What they could do was establish elaborate rituals and invoke certain forms of language (euphemisms, etc.) that covered over the calculative or interested aspects of these relations thus creating the social illusion that interested activities were not occurring. If Bourdieu had limited his studies to the Kabyle his theory might have only been of interest to anthropologists, but Bourdieu argues the repression and elision of interestedness can be seen in many aspects of modern society also—especially in academia and science. Thus the supposed "purity" and objectivity of science and academic activity can be read as a function of covering over and repressing the less pure aspects that are nonetheless always present. Bourdieu points out that the supposedly pure water is actually always muddy.

What is controversial about this approach is not only that Bourdieu undermines the claim to purity and disinterestedness but that he invokes the kind of taboo language disallowed by these societies (or institutions) to describe them. Bourdieu's approach in his studies of the Kabyle employs economic language to "extract the principles of an economy of symbolic goods".[13] Because of this intense use of economic language, Bourdieu was accused of "economism".[14] Especially for a sociologist, a member of a discipline that began by defining itself against the simplistic reduction of human activity

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to calculative activity that is so prevalent in economics, this approach seemed misguided. But Bourdieu argues his approach was meant precisely to reject any kind of facile economic "utilitarianism" because 1. Bourdieu rejects that agents are "moved by conscious reasons" and 2. argues against the assumption that "the principle of action is well thought out economic interest".[15] The sports metaphor is helpful again here. The point is that human action is more like an individual moving fluidly in a game than a rational actor calculating out maximum profits and minimum loses. Strategies used in sports are not necessarily ulterior motives, they may just be the ways one responds to a particular situation. As he puts it, "social actors have 'strategies' which only rarely have true strategic intention as a principle".[16] Bourdieu is *not* therefore, like some economists or utilitarians, assuming that when we lift up the layers of cultural baggage and religious injunctions we find all humans are fundamentally rationally calculative self-interest maximizing machines—quite the opposite. But Bourdieu does think that academia is one of areas of modern society that has held onto the distinction between "the pure" and "the commercial" (a tension we saw in chapter II) and that this desire to preserve an imaginary space of "disinterestedness" negatively effects academic understanding of its own activity—something Bourdieu attempted to show by articulating a theory that examines practices in terms of the kind of language they had excluded.[17]

Against Bourdieu I want to suggest that there is a space of disinterestedness: thinking. If the phenomenological account we saw Arendt give in chapter II of the distinction between thinking and cognition is correct then there is an outside, so to speak, to games. In those rare moments of thinking we are taken to a place (or rather a no-place and a no-time) where we are no longer subjected to the demands of games. Thinking

entails the suspension of all strategic action. It is worth pointing out that thinking is not a constant state, cannot be entered into on command and is relatively rare. Most of human life is lived immersed in specific situations in which strategic responses to the situation are constantly occurring. My point is not to present thinking as a permanent escape from strategic action, but I likewise want to resist the claim that strategy is all pervasive. I worry about the ways that the rejection of a space of disinterestedness can lead to an uncritical, blanket acceptance of all forms of strategy. I think this gives up on the moral insights about the dangers of strategy that occur in many premodern societies and have played a large role in the history of Western thought and morality. In other words, I think we need Bourdieu's insights to critically examine the problematic ideals of pure objectivity *in addition to* Arendt's phenomenological support for the existence of a rare space of disinterestedness—thinking—that we all experience sometime or another. We can reject a sort of constant state of pure disinterestedness as a condition for true knowledge and recognize the existence of strategy in most human activity without abandoning the moral concerns about it. I don't think Bourdieu and Arendt are irrevocably at odds here. Arendt's phenomenology allows us to see that due to the widespread mistaking of cognition for thinking, the waters are much more muddy than academics tend to admit. Bringing Arendt and Bourdieu together can help us analyze academic activity as a game—a game that increasingly has become thoughtless. I will return to this question of the tension between thinking and strategy in my final conclusions.

Lucky for us, academia is precisely one of the areas where Bourdieu has applied his theory.[18] Bourdieu sees academic activity as a kind of game that involves its own set

of complex norms, values, expectations and dispositions. To be trained as an academic is to become familiar with a particular field, embody the appropriate ways of playing the game, and develop your own sense of style and play to win. Like any game, academic games have limitations and Bourdieu argues that there are a variety of what he calls "scholastic fallacies" at work in academia.[19] These most often involve mistaking the abstract model created by academics as accurate descriptions of real world practice. This type of mistake is common in academia because, to invoke Heidegger's example again, academics tend to privilege the abstract disposition which stands at a distance to see what happened to the now broken hammer over the immersed disposition of using the hammer that is the primary mode of human experience. The abstract disposition allows for the articulation of the rules of the activity or modelling it in a way that is useful for making the activity more transparent and quantifiable (thus accessible to outsiders), but quite different from actually doing the activity itself. The announcer of a sporting event may help us to see what is going on in a particular game, but understanding the rules and communicating in abstract terms the strategies of the players are not the same as playing the actual game well.

It is worth taking a moment to elaborate this point and tie it to the issue of embodiment before moving on. Dreyfus and Dreyfus have expanded Heidegger's insights about privileging the derivative abstract disposition of the announcer over the lived disposition of those playing a game.[20] They show that abstract models and the explanation of rules are needed to make a foreign or new game comprehensible—not only for academics but for anyone learning how to play a new game or master a new skill. Thus in everyday tasks when we approach a new game or a new activity we

normally attempt to learn the rules first. Interestingly, Dreyfus and Dreyfus point out that while we often learn a new activity through articulating the rules and proceed to learn to apply them better and better, true mastery is attained when the rules are no longer needed and the player is able to act in a situation flexibly, responsively and correctly without stopping to think ("cognize" in Arendt's terminology) about the rules.[21] This goes for advanced surgery and chess masters as well for more mundane activities like driving a car. When one has truly mastered driving a car, a particular surgery, or chess, one no longer has to think about the rules and, interestingly, may not even be able to articulate what or why one did to drive well, finish a surgery well or win the chess match. Thus the true expert who has mastered a certain practice transcends the rules in a sense. The activity may be described in an abstract model or in formalized rules, but to master the activity, to use Bourdieu's terminology again, means to move freely and skillfully as a habitus at ease in a particular field—not merely to explain it from the sidelines. Later in this chapter we will discuss such expertise as practical judgment—a level of mastery in which one is able to judge correctly the right thing to do in a particular situation as opposed to merely mechanically follow a rigid set of rules. Now, with this framework from Bourdieu, I want to turn to academic activity as a game.

Winning the Games Academics Play: The Necessity of Strategy

Most graduate programs include something along the lines of professionalization seminars. These courses are intended to make sure students understand what is expected to succeed as an academic. Rarely is the purpose of such courses to actually *think* about a discipline (which could challenge how it is structured and practiced), rather the purpose is

to initiate them into the academic games of their disciplines. This may be quite a change for undergraduates who are primarily engaged in coursework. The primary tasks of most academics are research, service and teaching. Of these research is far and away the most important. It is the most prestigious. The best universities seek the best researchers, who are notoriously not necessarily the best teachers. When universities hire adjunct professors it is to teach classes, not to do research, while the tenure track professors teach.

So, although it varies from discipline to discipline, graduates are primarily prepared to do research and will be evaluated primarily on the quality of research they do. These evaluations are quantitative: first and foremost the number of articles published and the quality of the journals they are published in (quantified via the "impact factor") and secondly the number of presentations at conferences (which are ranked informally by "acceptance rank"). It is increasingly common in the hard sciences for journal publications (in sufficiently highly ranked journals) to take the place of writing a dissertation.

Not surprisingly, competition is fiercely intense. To prepare graduate students adequately for the research game means providing them not only information about relevant journals, expectations of their particular discipline, helpful software, etc, but, most importantly, strategies. Thus the basic activities of academics (research, service, teaching) are surrounded by a nebulous penumbra of (or perhaps, to use a different metaphor, shot through with) strategies that are needed to get ahead. These strategies are legion. They can be straightforward, manipulative, disingenuous, cooperative or

commonsensical, and so forth. Like any other game they come together to help produce a particular style of playing the game.

There are guidebooks that attempt to relate effective strategies for the academic. Take for example a book I was assigned as a part of a sociology proseminar: *Winning the Games Scientists Play* by Carl Sindermann (that I was assigned a book for scientists that featured a scientist in a labcoat on the cover in my sociology course I take to be yet another example of the hegemony of science). The author is frank about the game-like nature of scientific practice: "'Game playing,' in science or in any occupation, can be defined as the ability and willingness not only to govern actions by a set of rules, but to have those rules work in your favor".[22] (While Sindermann will articulate the game in terms of formal and abstract rules, we know from what we have just seen from Bourdieu and Dreyfus and Dreyfus that the successful professional scientist doesn't only learn the rules but embodies knowledge in a way that will transcend robotic rule following.) Sindermann thinks that this penumbra of strategies is deeply important for successful scientific practice: "Many scientists play like amateurs or like poorly paid semipros throughout their entire careers because they do not pay adequate attention to simple game rules--or worse still, because they deny the existence of rules, or the presence of any formalized structure for interpersonal and institutional relations in science".[23] There is a tension here between the strategic aspects of the game of science and the pretension to be engaging in a form of pure activity that transcends such games. It is clear from his comments in the introduction and preface that Sindermann recognizes that the strategies he is pointing to as necessary for success may appear to some as falling outside the realm of scientific practice proper. If "pure science" is taken to be something like the set of

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practices that appear in textbooks about science then all these strategies may appear to the purist like attempts to play the system and get ahead instead of engaging in the supposedly straightforward tasks of science proper. These strategies seem to muddy the clean waters and perhaps even impugn on the integrity of science.

My purpose is to question how these strategies affect academic practice. Sindermann's purpose is to frankly and unabashedly accept that these strategies are an integral part of the games scientists play, and to review "what we know and what we think we know about the art" of "the interpersonal strategies that surround the act of doing good science".[24] As I mentioned, the strategies that surround academic practice are legion and cannot be fully catalogued nor exhaustively and systematically articulated: "Game activities are not always overt, and the rules are frequently imprecise or arguable".[25] Despite this difficulty the purpose of Sindermann's book is "to attempt to codify a fund of observations gained as a spectator and participant on some of the great playing fields of science—cocktail parties, symposium mixers, review committee meetings, laboratory conferences, seminars, workshops, faculty committee meetings, international symposia, and many others".[26] There you have it. The young aspiring academic might not have anticipated the necessity of strategically negotiating cocktail parties, but one must learn to survive in the "great playing fields of science".

A perusal of Sindermann's chapter titles shows both what a complicated universe the academic works within and the necessity of "interpersonal strategies." Here are some examples:

"Part One: A Primer for Scientific Strategists"
"Chapter 2: The Scientist as Performer: Presenting Scientific Papers"
"Chapter 5: The Scientist as a Producer/Director: Organizing Scientific Meetings"

"Chapter 6: The Scientist as a Negotiator: Participating in Committee Meetings"
"Chapter 8: The Scientist in Control: Getting and Using Power"
"Chapter 11: Coping with Bureaucracy and Bureaucrats"
"Chapter 12: Dealing with External Forces: News Media, Lawyers, Politicians and the Public"

While I think this and other texts like it deserve a lengthy treatment because of their interesting location in the "real" world of "impure" science and are interesting because of what they can tell about the tensions within science itself concerning what constitutes scientific practice and how it is narrated and portrayed, my purpose here is merely to point to this penumbra of strategies that surrounds (or suffuses) normal scientific practice while often remaining in the shadows or background. On the one hand, these strategies are the inevitable part of any game, but, on the other hand, I worry about the effects of strategic thinking and strategic action on thinking itself: they tend to crowd out thinking and shrink the space for anything outside the game. As we will see (and have discussed to some degree in the last chapter) strategic action involves a set of dispositions that are very different from the kinds of dispositions that occur in thinking. These are not dispositions that can work together well. Calculative rationality and strategic action are a radically different way of being and acting in the world than thinking—in fact, if Arendt is right, they detract from thinking and undermine it. They prevent the development of judgment.

My concern then is that with the increasing competition as the university is neoliberalized and embraces market logic, strategic actions become an ever larger part of academic activity. I say "even larger part" because there are already strategic demands that come from positivist, normalized science itself. The pressures of neoliberalization seem to exponentially increase the pressures of positivist, normal science. I take this to

come at the expense of thought (denying time to exit the game and think—including

potentially thinking about the game itself) and thus to lead to a striking thoughtlessness in

academia. The demand that all disciplines function like science means that all disciplines

are forced to structure their practices like that of a scientist (insofar as is possible), which,

as we have seen in this section and will see in the next, means the normalization of

science with the corresponding quantitative evaluations and a whole host of strategies for

winning the games scientists play. My argument is not that these disciplines would avoid

strategic action if they were not expected to function like normal science, but that

rationalized normal science requires *more*, much more, strategic action than how they

would be practiced were they not expected to be scientific. If academics in the non-

sciences were not expected to work like a scientist in universities that institutionalize

positivist assumptions about the nature of knowledge with the corresponding vision of

what an academic is doing that this entails, they might work in a less hypercompetitive

atmosphere that would be friendlier to thinking.

But all I have shown in this section is that there are a host of often unrecognized

(or, as Bourdieu argues, repressed)[27] strategies that are necessary for success in the

universe of science. We have looked briefly into the nebulous penumbra of strategies that

surrounds scientific practice. While it may be tempting to see these strategies as "impure"

pressures that come to "pure" science from outside science (demands of government or

businesses), it is clear that positivist normalized science *itself* also creates the demand for

productivity and thus gives rise to the necessity of strategy. Thus, I want to turn away

from the interpersonal strategies that surround science to the kinds of activities that form

the core of scientific practice itself and examine the assumptions behind why science

works the way it does, what strategies this demands and why other disciplines are expected to work this way too. My argument will be that these practices may also lead to thoughtlessness and that therefore the hegemony of science, even prior to the imposition of the demands from "outside" science, introduces demands that tend towards thoughtlessness. Again note that I am not arguing that science necessarily leads to thoughtlessness. There are clearly thoughtful scientists. Rather my claim is that it is not only the demands of the economy that necessitate productive results and discourage thinking because thinking is not productive, but also that rationalized, institutionalized, normal scientific practice organizes academic practice in a way that demands productivity and therefore discourages thinking. The scientists may be a thoughtful person, but this thoughtfulness is most often developed outside the bounds of institutionalized scientific practice precisely because thinking is unproductive.

I want to turn to four central features of normal `science. These are (1) the positivist puzzle or building models of knowledge, (2) method as the key to overcoming judgment, (3) quantification and (4) the unacknowledged moral sources of modernity. In no way are these exhaustive of scientific practice. I focus on them because they the aspects of scientific practice I take to be the biggest contributors to thoughtlessness in academia.

1. Normal Science as Puzzle Solving

The phrase "normal science" comes from Thomas Kuhn's classic *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn distinguishes between periods of normal science and periods of revolutionary science.[28] Normal science occurs in relatively calm periods where a

particular paradigm has become established. Scientific revolutions are what happen when a particular paradigm runs into deep problems that call the entire paradigm into question. Thus, the history of science is one of a series of scientific paradigms that have held sway for a period, broken apart, and been replaced by new paradigms. The key figures in this history are often revolutionary thinkers like Aristotle, Newton or Einstein who helped establish new frameworks of understanding.[29]

Kuhn characterizes normal science as "mop up work"–the working out of the new problems and unresolved questions of a paradigm that has become established.[30] Scientific training is training in a particular paradigm and the trainee is initiated into a certain perspective that delimits what counts as legitimate problems.[31] Those things that fall outside of the paradigm ("unflexible box") tend to be ignored, written off as outliers or, more likely "not seen at all".[32]

Kuhn also characterizes normal science as "puzzle solving".[33] This felicitous phrase emphasizes the way specialization in science gives the researcher the task of focusing on a very small piece of the puzzle. Puzzle solving assumes that reality is ontologically such that is best studied by attempting to break it down into pieces and figuring out how those basic pieces come together to create a coherent whole. But normal science is more than a mere method because a paradigm can "insulate the community from those socially important problems that are not reducible to the puzzle form".[34] Thus there is a certain kind of blindness and lack of awareness when a paradigm becomes normalized. Perhaps this is necessary: puzzle solving can be painfully boring and it requires a "proper sort of addict".[35] Kuhn stresses that a paradigm is almost always not explicitly articulated.[36] It forms a kind of background horizon of assumptions that shape

what the researcher sees, how they proceed, what they consider legitimate knowledge, how they intuitively proceed, etc. "A paradigm is a prerequisite of perception itself. What a man sees depends both upon what he looks at and also upon what his previous visual-conceptual experience has taught him to see".[37]

This is a very helpful theory for understanding what Heidegger means when he says "science itself does not think".[38] This is not an insult. The activities of science involve a calculative approach that we saw in the last chapter Arendt calls cognition. A scientist engaged in normal science, does not have to think, they cognize. Again, this doesn't mean science necessarily leads to thoughtlessness, clearly there are thoughtful scientists, but it does mean normal science discourages thinking—after all, if scientists sit around thinking, nothing will get done.

Kuhn's metaphor for normal science as puzzle solving points out the game like quality of the central practices of normal science (in other words the games are not limited to what could be construed as peripheral "interpersonal strategies" but are useful for describing normal science too). Once immersed in the game, one plays to win. The problem is, and this is one of Kuhn's concerns, that the textbook narrative of science doesn't do justice to the complexity of the history of science and makes it look like there is only one game in town. The textbooks tend to present a cumulative narrative that place modern scientists at the pinnacle.[39] This is a powerful story that imbues the contemporary scientists with an almost Godlike aura. At its most fantastic the Enlightenment sought to systematically remake humanity: modernity would do what god couldn't and save humanity from itself.[40] The academic division of labor is the key structural organization that would allow for the discovery of truth. The scientist, in the new plan of salvation,

stands in the place previously occupied by the priest. If you want truth, you go through science. It is not surprising, then, that the social sciences want to be sciences.[41]

The metaphor of puzzle solving also points to assumptions about the nature of knowledge: that the object being studied can be broken in discrete bits which are more manageable and then recombined back together to form an accurate picture of the object in question. This is one of the central assumptions of positivism. Not surprisingly, since, as I argued in chapter II, the research university itself is structured by positivist assumptions, this approach shows up at multiple levels in academia. At the largest level the university is divided into disciplines—each of which takes up its part of the map. Each discipline is divided up into smaller groups and so forth until each individual researcher is working on their tiny part of the puzzle. Theoretically once all the pieces are finished and put together a complete picture could be created.

When knowledge is conceived this way it allows for a disciplinary division of labor. Strategically the graduate student or new professor needs to find their niche (as soon as possible). By finding a small corner in the universe of their discipline and focusing on the unanswered problems of that small part of the universe they mark out a space within which they are able to discover new knowledge and show themselves useful to the discipline. Academic activity is almost always self-narrated to mark the niche it fits into: papers begin with a review of the current "literature" (the current debates, studies, movements) going on in the small corner of the disciplinary universe and position themselves as answering questions on the cutting edge of knowledge. A strategic academic can thus ensconce themselves and dig out a little place on the frontier of knowledge such that they become an expert in the field or subfield. Thus when you ask

an academic what they do, they tend to answer by articulating the problems of the little corner of their universe.

This is unsurprisingly a process of intense specialization. The more specialized the academic is, the less likely others can answer the types of questions they work on and the more "necessary" they are to discipline since they become the experts in that small corner of the universe. Of course, it is not enough to find a niche for oneself, one must be careful about which niche one chooses as those which are more obviously useful (profitable) or more fashionable are more likely to get funding, grants, etc.

Some positivists unabashedly embrace extreme specialization. Recall the positivist historians Bury and Elton whom I mentioned in chapter one actively discouraged students from raising their "eyes beyond the detail of [their] own minute area of study".[42] The pretension here is that each scholar will focus on "minutiae" and then relate their individual studies "to a larger context" until the "fullness and totality" of the "universal history" is produced.[43] On such a model, narrowness of vision is not myopia but a honed and specialized gaze. While such narrow vision may produce great results on the small scale, there is good reason to worry about the inability to see the bigger picture (even worse, the prohibition against doing so): especially as the knowledge humans can produce is increasingly capable of destroying humanity and the environment (nuclear technology, nanotechnology, etc—science fiction is full of warnings about dangerous technologies) it seems ever more important that we be able to think about what we are doing instead of just doing it because we can. Divorcing responsibility for new knowledge and technologies from the process of discovering or developing new knowledge and technologies may make scholars more productive, but is disturbingly

irresponsible. To some degree the dangers here have been recognized with the establishment of IRBs (Institutional Review Board) that monitor academic projects on ethical grounds. But the ethicist as a specialist is still subject to the same problems of narrow-mindedness and thoughtlessness that I worry result from hyper specialization. I am not convinced another specialist can mitigate the problems of specialization.

Even if we reject this kind of hyper specialization that can lead to myopic academics who are seemingly incapable of thinking about the potentially devastating results of their studies, I want to suggest the logic of a discipline that is structured on this positivist model is going to inevitably tend towards such myopic scholasticism. If a discipline is structured based on these positivist assumptions about knowledge, then efficiency and productivity become central concerns of the scholar and the discipline. Intense competition among scholars means that academics who can be more efficient and prove more productive will come out on top. When this happens the categories of business begin to encroach on academia and the leisurely activity of thinking is actively discouraged and relegated to a marginal activity best done on your own time. The disturbing result of embracing this positivist model uncritically is that thoughtlessness is openly and actively encouraged because, unlike cognition, thinking is not productive and not profitable.

The puzzle solving division of labor therefore has some problematic consequences. There are structural disincentives to think. This situation is exacerbated by the second feature of normalized and institutionalized science that I want to address: method. Method provides the metaphysical and epistemological assurance that the academic is doing what is right by adhering to the academic division of labor.

2. Method and the Repression of Judgment

In the last section I looked at the puzzle solving division of labor as the first feature of institutionalized normal science that discourages thinking. In this section I turn to a second feature: method. My argument will be that method is often completely misunderstood to replace human judgment. This not only obfuscates and represses the role the judgment necessarily plays in all human activity, including science, but also gives the mistaken impression that method can escape the realm of human prejudice and attain unassailable objectivity. Method therefore becomes the means to true knowledge and proper adherence to method becomes an article of faith. Method and the division of labor reinforce each other. Unfortunately, as a result, it often becomes a sacrosanct and unexamined practice. Method becomes less something to think about and more a procedure to learn and implement.

We should be clear from the outset: it is not as if ancient and medieval thinkers did not have "methods" that were meant to attain the "truth". Meditation, prayer, logical analysis, etc. are all means that were employed to obtain some form of knowledge. But modern philosophers like Descartes denigrated all such previous means to knowledge as woefully insufficient and out of date. Unlike the thinkers of the Renaissance who looked back to the ancients and sought to recover their wisdom, the moderns, as we can see by their self-designation as "modern", thought they were sweeping away the past and initiating a radical new beginning.

The radical new beginning of the moderns aimed to secure a sure path to knowledge through Method. One of the key foils to Method was prejudice or bias—in

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other words (bad) judgment. Descartes declares in the *Discourse on Method* that "because we were all children before being men and because for a long time it was necessary for us to be governed by our appetites and our teachers…it is nearly impossible for our judgments to be as pure or as solid as they would have been if we had had the full use of our reason from the moment of our birth and if we had always been guided by it alone".[44] Since our judgment is doomed to impurity and inevitably fails to be a rock solid foundation, we need something to put us on the sure path to knowledge. This is Method based on math: "I delighted most of all in mathematics because of the certainty and the evidence of its reasonings...I was astonished by the fact that no one had built anything more noble on its foundations, given that they were so solid and firm. On the other hand, I compared the writings of the ancient pagans that deal with morals to be very proud and very magnificent palaces that were built on nothing but sand and mud".[45]

It goes beyond the scope of my purposes here to attempt to fully enumerate all the features of the mathematically based scientific Method that emerged with the moderns. What I do want to point out is that as Method spread, it forced out and delegitimized many of the previous means to knowledge. Gadamer gives four examples of means to knowledge that come from the humanist tradition that came under attack with the rise of science: *bildung*, *sensus communis*, judgment and taste.[46] These share what Wittgenstein would call a family resemblance. While they are not reducible to Aristotle's *phronesis*, which is commonly translated as practical wisdom, practical judgment or practical reason, they are the philosophical descendants of *phronesis*. Gadamer is not alone in attempting to defend these "guiding concepts of humanism".[47] Critics of the hegemony of scientific method have repeatedly turned to Aristotle's analysis of *phronesis* in an attempt

to rescue the human component of the study of humanity from the pretension to rise above the human to something "objective".[48] Aristotle himself can be read as attempting to preserve the human component of knowledge and the human world from Plato's attempt to "make decisive progress beyond the ordinary human condition" towards a rather inhuman "self-sufficient intellect".[49] While it is clear Aristotle's discussion of *phronesis* in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is underdeveloped and in need of fleshing out[50], it is the defense of the human and the recognition of the limitations of the human and the human world against the desire to overcome such limitations that unite these critics. What these critics haven't done is developed a consistent terminology. Thus some seek to defend "practical reason", others "practical judgment", some just keep the Greek term *phronesis*. As Gadamer shows the family of *phronesis* is complex, but it seems to me the term that most clearly connects the rise of Method with the analysis offered by Arendt (in the last chapter) and Gadamer is practical judgment, which I will shorten to judgment when speaking of this "family" of concepts and concerns.

These different kinds of judgment are what Gadamer sees being pushed aside by the rise and predominance of the scientific method. He thinks this is a terrible mistake and wants to rescue judgment from modern science and show not only why it is an integral part of the human sciences (the social sciences and the humanities) but also that science itself is dependent on judgment. Notice that Gadamer is very close to Arendt here. While Arendt narrated the decline of action and thinking with the corresponding weakening of judgment, Gadamer is offering a similar account which traces the occlusion and repression of judgment with the rise of science. While they may differ on some details (in interesting and informative ways), Arendt and Gadamer are, like their teacher

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Heidegger, concerned about the mechanization or technicization of modern society and concerned to recover thinking and judgment from this technicization.

So what is judgment and why did Method define itself against judgment? What can we learn from these family members? First, judgment entails what Gadamer calls "tact": "a special sensitivity and sensitiveness to situations and how to behave in them, for which knowledge of general principles does not suffice".[51] This entails a second point, that judgment is "tacit and unformulable".[52] This means, third, that good judgment cannot be learned merely as a set of rules in a classroom setting, but rather is something that comes through practice and experience. Good judgment is at use in properly using a language, driving skillfully, writing an excellent essay, performing surgery at the highest levels, in politics, in relationships—in short in all aspects of life. Take for example what it takes to truly master a second language. While grammar study and vocabulary memorization can help, true mastery of a language involves getting a feel for all the nuances, shadings, ambiguities and colloquialisms that simply cannot be reduced to a set of rules in a textbook. For the native speaker the differences between the master and the individual who has formal education but not full mastery is glaring. Interestingly, the good sense the master has gained is often difficult if not impossible to articulate by the master herself. As we saw earlier, Hubert Dreyfus has shown how master surgeons and chessmasters often cannot explain why they made certain decision after the fact, even though it is the right choice.[53] The master surgeon does things and responds in ways that go beyond book knowledge, and yet after the fact all the master may be able to say is "it felt right".[54]

Judgment works at the professional level, at the level of the bodily comportment, in language, in sports, and in science. Gadamer points out that any particular society or community has "common sense": "the sense of what is right and of the common good that is to be found in all men...it is a sense that is acquired through living in the community and is determined by its structures and aims".[55] Judgment is present, whether consciously or not, at all levels of human activity.

Now, the reason Gadamer introduces all this is because he wants to argue there was (and continues to be) a complicated form of judgment at work in the human sciences. Humanism developed a "cultivated consciousness" that involved both an "aesthetic sense" and a "historical sense".[56] Gaining such a "cultivated consciousness" involves intense historical learning and awareness, familiarity with literature and art, and, the key to all this, the desire and openness to dialogue with other traditions.[57] The humanist is fascinated by humanity and desires to learn new things from all walks of life. Through this dialectical back and forth with "alien" traditions the humanist expands her horizons and, importantly, is able to gain a privileged perspective on her own traditions. The humanist thus gains a kind of wisdom concerning their own and other cultures.

As we saw in chapter II, the German research university was originally developed precisely to encourage this kind of cultivated consciousness in students. *Bildung*, however, according to Gadamer, is at its heart not the sort of thing that instrumentalizes or can be instrumentalized.[58] It is understandable why the German romantics wanted to spread such cultivated consciousness, but turning it into a project to be foisted upon the masses radically changes the entire tone. *Bildung* is not the sort of thing that can be taught nor is it the kind of things that can be accomplished as a goal: to treat it in such a

manner is to treat it instrumentally and Gadamer says any such attempts to do so result in a "secondary kind of Bildung".[59] I take Gadamer's point here to be that the dispositions involved in being a cultured individual are ones that are antithetical to instrumental dispositions. An ancient or foreign tradition that is approached instrumentally is being related to very differently from one that is approached out of friendship and interest. The fundamental dispositions that enable the development of *bildung* are disrupted and undermined when it is instrumentalized.

With the rise of science, judgment has been dismissed for being incapable, unlike proper Method, of offering a sure path to knowledge. More than this, with the Enlightenment, judgment became something to be overcome: prejudice. By positioning itself over and against tradition, the Enlightenment asserted that via Method it could escape having pre-judgments (prejudices) and achieve objectivity.[60] Thus the Enlightenment gave us the negative connotation surrounding prejudice that remains to this day.[61] Judgment in general became one of the many previous attempts to gain knowledge that needed to be discarded.

The entire text of *Truth and Method* is Gadamer's response to this situation, but I will only focus briefly on three points he makes. The first is that there are forms of knowledge that are recognizably legitimate that remain beyond the reach of Method. Gadamer takes art to be the primary example of this. Thus while Method has made massive inroads into the social sciences, it has not gained the same sway in disciplines that deal with art. Much of what goes on in these disciplines is still based to some degree on judgment and taste. The leads to the second point, which is that since there are forms of knowing that cannot be replaced by science, "the world of physics cannot seek to be

the whole of what exists".[62] I take this to be a rejection of the hegemony of science. Not only this but, as we will see later in this chapter, the use of science in situations where it may not be appropriate can be extremely detrimental. Third, Gadamer argues that it is impossible to escape prejudgments. Science itself is a kind of prejudice that approaches the world through a certain lens for certain reasons. Since "all understanding inevitably involves some prejudice" the Enlightenment, it turns out, is actually embroiled in a "prejudice against prejudice itself".[63] What we should be doing is not attempting to escape all prejudice, but rather attempt to recognize what prejudices, insofar as this is possible, we have. This is precisely one of the things a good humanist had to master.

The pretension to escape judgment can result in kind of thoughtless and uncritical faith in Method. While the cultivated consciousness of humanism requires recognizing and conversing with alternative traditions which in turn results in a kind of self-reflexivity about one's own tradition, Method can become a very formalized procedure that takes itself for granted and isn't aware of its own biases. This was one of Thomas Kuhn's worries. As a historian of science, he was aware that there are many different approaches to scientific practice and that different periods of science involve different assumptions about the nature of "reality", the nature of scientific laws, the way scientific practice is organized, etc. But, he finds, scientists engaged in normal scientific practice are often unaware of the history and philosophy of science.[64] They aren't taught it and they have no practical reason to know it as long as they can find their niche and work on their piece of the puzzle. Obviously this hails back to what we were talking about in the last section, but adds to it a concern about the historical and philosophical ignorance that results from a misunderstanding of Method which represses judgment.

Philosophers of science have long since shown the inadequacy of the positivist pretensions of science that exalt Method and deny the role of judgment in science. The scientist and philosopher Michael Polanyi, for example, has shown that judgment (tacit knowledge) is unquestionably basic to scientific practice.[65] Other philosophers of science like Kuhn, Feyerabend, Lakatos and even Popper have given good philosophical reasons to reject positivist models of science. Despite these good philosophical reasons, it has proven extremely difficult to break the hold of positivism on the academic imaginary and challenge the ways it has structured academic practice. Why, despite good philosophical reasons, has this proven so difficult?.[66]

I will suggest two reasons, which parallel the discussion in Chapter II of the common features shared by the research university, the political disciplinary projects and economic projects of the late 19th century. The first is the transparency created by quantification. Quantification is the most common means to rationalization as it allows for the translation of all sorts of things into the common language of math. This, of course, is very useful for governments and businesses who want to have transparent "subjects". The second is the spiritual foundations of the positivist academic cosmos. Just as there is repressed judgment at work in science, there is also repressed aesthetics and repressed spiritual resources. Taylor thinks that these spiritual resources are particularly important for understanding the hold of some of these bad narratives about science. I will deal with each in turn.

3. The Quantified Cosmos

Weber complained 100 years ago that "The capitalist economy of the present day is an immense cosmos into which the individual is born, and which presents itself to him, at least as an individual, as an unalterable order of things in which he must live. It forces the individual, in so far as he is involved in the system of market relationships, to conform to capitalistic rules of action".[67] We could say the same thing about positivist academia: it is its own cosmos and it forces the individual as a player in the academic game to conform to a certain set of rules—even if, as we are seeing, those rules are questionable.

The academic cosmos could be called a quantified cosmos. Everything seems to be quantified. As we saw in the last section, Descartes argued the sure path to knowledge was via Method modelled on math. While the ancients and medievals also loved math, they never achieved the degree of quantification that exists now.[68]

Recall from Chapter II James C Scott's claim that the goal of modernity, whether those of science, governments or businesses, is legibility.[69] Quantification is the primary means of making legible—whether for the scientist who cannot even see sub-atomic particles except through procedures that allow for them to be measured; or for the government that wants to see how many people and what kinds of people exist in a certain territory; or a businessman who may seek the same information for different purposes.

Quantification has proven wildly successful for each of these purposes. Furthermore, quantification allows for the easy transferal of information across these different spheres and across languages. A business in South Korea may profit from

information gathered by the US government about the number of people in California and their preferences. An oil company from China may profit from a scientific study funded by the US government about geology in Mozambique. The transparency created by quantification cuts across disciplinary boundaries and different spheres of life and creates a cumulative series of visibilies and profits that may seem undeniably good.

In fact, quantification has been so successful that it can become difficult to imagine and articulate from within a cosmos ruled by quantification why quantification could be problematic. What is taken as success for one group may not be so for another however. It is quite possible that what is successful for a particular government may not be desirable for a particular people living within its territory who do not want to be quantified and managed—this was the experience of many indigenous peoples who did not want to be colonized.[70] It is possible that making the world quantitatively visible only makes it increasingly available as a resource for humans and can lead to a spiral of environmental destruction.[71] We have already seen at the end of chapter II some objections by German social thinkers to positivism and quantification. This chapter will end with contemporary critiques of the quantified cosmos. But the staying power of the quantifiable cosmos is not only due to its practical successes, but also due to its spiritual supports. Before turning to the critiques of the quantified cosmos, I want to briefly address some spiritual sources as the second feature that helps explain its power over the contemporary imaginary.

4. The Spiritual Foundations of the Positivist Academic Cosmos

For many it is very odd to speak of the spiritual basis of science. Scientific naturalism is normally taken to be something like the opposite of spirituality—more than this, spirituality is treated as metaphysical hokus pokus or personal beliefs that cannot be mixed with science. If anything, the problem, we are told, has been precisely that attempts at scientific practice were traditionally mixed up with unverifiable metaphysical and religious views. Only when these were cut out and was science able to come into its own—at least something like this is how the rise of modern science is often narrated.[72]

Nonetheless, as we have seen in the section above on method and judgment, simplistic narratives like this are dangerously naive and misrepresent science. To define science over and against spirituality, emotion, values or judgment risks not noticing the way science is always embroiled with and relies on each of these. It is a form of repression.[73]

No philosopher has done more work to show how misleading such narratives of modern science or, more broadly, modern epistemology, are than Charles Taylor. Like Rorty, Taylor wants to argue that modern thought is rooted in a turn to epistemology.[74] Privileging epistemological concerns as the sure path to knowledge has led to the repression of spirituality, emotion, value and judgment. But, ironically, Taylor wants to point out that the turn to epistemology itself had spiritual and moral motivations. The move to dismiss the repressed elements is itself driven by values. Here is how he describes the picture that emerges in modern epistemology:

> I want to introduce the structure of modern epistemology, which I am
> taking as more than a set of theories which have been widespread, but

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also at the level of a structure in my sense--that is, an underlying picture which is only partly consciously entertained, but which controls the way people think, argue, infer and make sense of things.

At its most blatant, this structure operates with a picture of knowing agents as individuals, who build up their understanding of the world through combining and relating, in more and more comprehensive theories, the information which they take in, and which is couched in inner representations, be these conceived as mental pictures (in the earlier variants), or as something like sentences held true in the more contemporary versions.

Characteristic of this picture is a series of priority relations. Knowledge of the self and its states comes before knowledge of external reality and of others. The knowledge of reality as neutral fact comes before our attributing to it various 'values' and relevances. And, of course, knowledge of the things of 'this world,' of the natural order, precedes any theoretical invocation of forces and realities transcendent to it.[75]

What Taylor describes as a picture that emerges in modern epistemology then provides a vision of what it is to be a self, how the self relates to the world, the nature of knowledge and human knowing, and so forth. This whole way of understanding has become commonplace for moderns. Unfortunately, this picture is deeply flawed. Taylor thinks Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty in particular have radically and fatally challenged this entire modern epistemological picture:

Seen from the deconstruction [of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty], this is a most massive self blindness. Rather [that merely discovering the sure path to knowledge] what happened is that experience was carved into shape by a powerful theory which posited the primacy of the individual, the neutral, the intramental as the locus of certainty. What was driving this theory? Certain 'values,' virtues, excellences: those of the independent, disengaged subject, reflexively controlling his own thought process, 'self-responsibly,' in Husserl's famous phrase. There is an ethic here, of independence, self control, self-responsibility, of a disengagement which brings control; a stance which requires courage, the refusal of the easy comforts of conformity to authority, of the consolations of an enchanted world, of the surrender to the promptings of the senses. The entire picture, shot through with 'values,' which is meant to emerge out of careful, objective, presuppositionless scrutiny,

is now presented as having been there from the beginning, driving the whole process of 'discovery.'[76]

This is an important passage and one of the key points Taylor has elaborated over and over throughout his career: the supposedly presuppositionless, emotionless and valueless objective stance of modern science is actually shot through with values. As we saw above, method does not allow an escape from the necessity of judgment—if anything the pretension to objective method represses judgment. We can now add to this that the picture of the presuppositionless, unemotional, valueless and objective researcher represses the presuppositions, emotions and values that make their research possible. No wonder Taylor calls it "a most massive self blindness."

But the point is that this mistaken image of the self-controlled, objective researcher serves as spiritual sustenance. The researcher can take comfort in participating in the wonderful international project of dispelling falsehood and replacing it with scientifically verified truth. While the comforts of heaven and authority are gone, they are replaced by the neo-Stoic affirmation of the honesty and responsibility of giving up such metaphysical pipedreams for the cold, rational truth. Perhaps there is no life beyond death, but the researcher lives on in the efforts to improve humanity. The spiritual basis for the modern epistemological picture therefore allows for the researcher to feel good about what they are doing when they are researching—to affirm that what they are doing is right. Add to this the aesthetic component we discussed in chapter one and we can say the researcher can take pride in participating in a process that is beautiful, true and right.

Perhaps not all scientists need such sustenance. There is an immensely complex set of issues here that Taylor has attempted to address. My purpose is not to attempt to do

justice to the hyper-complex moral sources of modernity. Rather in pointing to the availability of such spiritual sustenance for the modern scientist I aim to show yet another layer in the cocoon that often bolsters the thoughtlessness that too often surrounds scientific practice. When you add together the game like nature of scientific practice, the security of tried and true methodologies, the efficiency and transparency of quantitative analysis, the repression of judgment, emotion and value while still being able to pull on moral, spiritual and aesthetic resources and the neo-Stoic affirmation of the life of a researcher, you end up with a vision of science that tends to "massive self blindness." With so many values affirming the importance and significance of science and scientific research, it is not surprising that there is relatively little discussion of the limits of science.

I want to now discuss some of the problems that result from this thoughtlessness about scientific practices. As we have seen in these last four sections, positivism discourages thinking in favor of cognition. It also demanded and has largely succeeded in establishing the hegemony of science and the standards of scientific practice and knowing in academia. Academics are judged, rewarded and penalized based on the model of a scientist engaged in normal science. The success of positivism in this regard has resulted in a quantified academic cosmos that, due to poor philosophical self-theorizing, often represses its own aesthetic and spiritual values. Furthermore, the prescribed narrowness-inducing hyperspecialization, historical ignorance and professional pressures combine to establish the quantified cosmos as the only cosmos—*the* game that academics must learn to play. Not surprisingly, young, aspiring academics are quickly introduced to the rules of

the game and encouraged to get up to speed quickly and to develop the kinds of dispositions they will need to succeed. There is rarely time and little incentive to think about this game, to doubt if things should be done this way. And so, in the end, the academic system is mystified and most often left unquestioned in favor of the practical difficulties of playing the game to win tenure.

The first set of problems I am concerned with are because thoughtlessness about scientific practice leads to mistakes. The second set of problems concerns thoughtlessness about scientific practice even when it succeeds—we could say, when it works too well. I finish with some questions about the relationship of science to democratic practice, capitalism and the need for practical judgment. I am assuming that many of these issues would be lessened if there were more thinking and reflexivity about scientific practice.

When Science Doesn't Work: Killing Them Softly with Occam's Razor

There have been many arguments that the methodology and assumptions of the sciences do not work well in the social sciences. One of the key sticking points is the scientific pretension to objectivity and to be "value free" and whether this can translate over into the social sciences. It is one thing to be objective about objects like rocks. It is quite another to be objective about humans who are subjects and bring their own complex understandings and meanings to the table.

Unlike rocks, humans live in a world suffused with meaning. Refusing to take this into account or inadequately articulating one's own values in order to proceed "scientifically" can have detrimental effects, both for the quality of the study and, more importantly, for those being studied. Robert Bellah argues that "science that thinks itself

nonideological and free of extrascientific considerations is profoundly ideological and political".[77] The results of social science studies are not neutral technologies. They are often powerful tools which may make a population or group of people visible. Thus "a science that imagines itself uninvolved in society, that sees itself as operating under no ethical norm other than the pursuit of knowledge, will produce instruments of manipulation for whoever can afford to put them into practice".[78]

Bellah provocatively calls this "the manipulative model" of social science.[79] The phrase "manipulative" could be heard to cast the social scientist in an evil role. For Bellah it is meant to draw attention to the way an approach that doesn't recognize that it moves within the tangled webs of a deeply moral situation (or thinks it can rise above this somehow), threatens to tear that web apart. Bellah thinks humans are not pawns in a game and if they are reduced to statistics we risk manipulating them in a deeply arrogant and naive fashion.

Sadly there are many examples of this. One of the contemporary places we can see this manipulative model at work is in international development, where the ontological, ethical and aesthetic assumptions of "modern" countries often get foisted upon "underdeveloped" countries.[80] James C. Scott gives the example of how British and French colonizers in Southeast Asia attempted to inculcate an entrepreneurial attitude in certain groups. They encouraged the "locals" to take greater risks, and hence potentially reap greater rewards. The colonizers thought this would help the locals, but they received strong resistance. Scott explains that many of these groups did not want to take great risks because if they failed, they might actually die. For them the tried and true route to communal success and harmony involved NOT taking unnecessary risks.[81] What to the

colonizers was the key to prosperity, was to the colonized an approach that would undermine society.

The problem is that often Western colonizers imposed what they thought to be clearly superior modes of acting, thinking and organization. I am not interested here in cases of brutish exploitation, but in cases that claimed to be benevolent, scientifically supported "reorganization". Scott is particularly interested in the failure of massive "utopian engineering schemes of the twentieth century".[82] These vary from attempts to force nomads to settle in villages in Tanzania, to soviet collectivization, to enforcement of the use of surnames, to the creation of modernist cities like Brazilia, to the reorganization of African agricultural practices and so forth. Scott thinks these diverse efforts are driven by what he calls the logic of "high modernism" which seeks to overturn "irrational" traditional practices with more efficient, scientific modern practices.[83] These are not problems limited to the efforts of colonialists in the 19th and 20th centuries: problematic, scientific and colonialist efforts continue today.[84] We do not have to look any further than the efforts of the IMF and the World Bank to help third world countries modernize.[85] These efforts continue to fail at an alarming rate (indebting some countries more than helping them out) due the rigid free market economism of these institutions and the lack of flexibility that rarely pays adequate attention to local conditions. Little wonder many countries in Latin America continue to mistrust the beneficence of wealthy nations.

We already saw something about this in Chapter II with the surprising key example Scott offers of German scientific forestry. Returning to this example helps to illustrate the dangers of utopian social schemes and highlights their key features. Recall

that the utopian dream of scientific forestry was to replace the tangled wild forest with an organized, scientifically managed modern forest. Many German forests were chopped down and replaced by evenly spaced, linear, mono-cropped forests. These forests were more accessible, more visible, and easier for the lumber industry to use.[86] At least, this is what was supposed to happen. As it turned out the managed forests failed. A flourishing forest is, of course, a highly complex and interrelated collection of different flora and fauna. Without these other relations, the mono-cropped forests were not healthy and the scientists turned to what they called "forest hygiene"—reintroducing bees, ants, birds, etc. (all in a highly ordered fashion, with "specially designed boxes").[87] The odd result was the reintroduction of many of the elements originally systematically removed. Scott concludes: "The metaphorical value of this brief account of scientific production forestry is that it illustrates the dangers of dismembering an exceptionally complex and poorly understood set of relations and processes in order to isolate a single element of instrumental value".[88] This general pattern repeats itself in the other failed utopian engineering schemes he explores.

Now, one could argue that, in many of these examples, what we see simply wasn't good science. Perhaps. What is interesting concerns what prevented it from being good science. As we saw in chapter II, beyond the hubris, what Scott finds is an aesthetics. This is an aesthetics that values order, visibility, simplicity and clarity. Repeatedly Scott shows western scientists failing to appreciate the virtues of traditional practices because they fail to meet these aesthetic criteria, even though many of these traditions are time tested and proven.

Another striking example of this is the way language has been put to the rack in the twentieth century in the attempt to purify it. Like the wild forest, languages tend to be very tangled, full of irregularities and idiomatic expressions, and frustratingly ambiguous. Instead of seeing this as a wonderful richness, the twentieth century has seen multiple attempts to clean it up (the most famous in philosophy being logical positivism). Gadamer argues that his is one of the age old dreams of the project of modernity. Leibniz, for example, Gadamer says, thought "only through mathematical symbolism would it be possible to rise entirely above the contingency of the historical language and the vagueness of their concepts." He wanted to construct a new artificial language that would be universal.[89] This infuriates Gadamer, which is almost funny because he is normally so level headed. For Gadamer this artificial approach is an "act of violence against language" that attempts to replace a living, breathing language with an ossified system of technical terms. It is "impotent pedantry".[90] Against the intention of the creators of artificial languages, Gadamer thinks "knowledge acquired through these symbols is not clear and distinct" but "blind".[91] This is not to say such artificial languages don't work, but that they work in a very distorted way. Because the attempt to create an artificial language seeks to make everything "intelligible" and thus available as a resource for human appropriation,[92] Gadamer worries such efforts might turn us into a "total technocracy".[93]

Perhaps I am wrong, but I suspect many people would find Gadamer's concerns about "violence against language" strange. But this only goes to show how far we have traveled the path of turning the world, language, animals and humans into objects that we can manipulate for our purposes.

What these examples point us to is that even though science likes to claim objectivity, it is riven through and through with values—some, perhaps many of which are problematic in certain contexts. Objectivity itself is a value. The problem is not that science has values, it is when and if science claims not to have values. This denial only hides the values that do guide science. The resulting obliviousness can lead to a deeply problematic confidence and hubris.

When Science Works Too Well: The Danger of Technocracy

In the last section I focused on moments when scientific efforts in the social sciences fall short due to a lack of recognition of the values that guide science and the non-scientific values inevitably brought to science by its human practitioners. The scientist that approaches a situation unaware of, for example, the aesthetic values of science, may end up misunderstanding different cultural practices or, worse, imposing her values onto others or a particular situation. This hubris and obliviousness can lead to all sorts of failures. But it can also succeed all too spectacularly. The scientist, overly confident, can bulldoze their way to the results they want. The results may look right and affirm modern aesthetic values, may lead to more efficiency, more prosperity, and a whole slew of other modern values, but it may have destroyed a culture in the process.

The first thinker I want to examine in this regard is Foucault. He has been, of course, a very important figure for rethinking what happens in the social sciences and I read him here as a historian and philosopher of the problematic successes of the social sciences. He describes what he does as the "genealogy" of the establishment of the social sciences which occurs through a process that aims to "filter, hierarchise and order"

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traditional forms of knowledge and practices.[94] These "scientific" processes delegitimize and disqualify these traditional forms of knowledge and practices in order to legitimize scientific knowledge.

Foucault turns the table on social scientists when he asks "what types of knowledge do you want to disqualify in the very instant you demand: 'Is it a science'? Which speaking, discoursing subjects...do you want to 'diminish' when you say: 'I who conduct this discourse am conducting a scientific discourse, and I am a scientist'?"[95] What Foucault points to here is that what occurs here is not the mere establishment of scientific knowledge. There are clearly issues of power involved and we should examine the "politics of the scientific statement".[96] Foucault was and is pivotal in problematizing the claim to scientific objectivity by articulating the relation between knowledge and power.

As we saw above, Thomas Kuhn argues that science textbooks simplify and streamline the history of science in a way that makes it appear progressive and almost inevitable. This places the scientist at the peak of knowledge. Foucault's genealogies are an attempt to undo this, to aid "the insurrection of [marginalized] knowledges against the institutions and against the effects of the knowledge and power that invests scientific discourse".[97]

A second way Foucault unsettles this narrative is through connecting science with the rise of the modern state and its projects of standardizing and normalizing populations in order to facilitate production. Foucault points to the ways science has served the state in the creation, "preservation, upkeep and conservation of the 'labour force'".[98] Science was brought into this process as a means of helping to bring about "the dream of a

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transparent society, visible and legible in each of its parts".[99] This implies, of course, that it is (perhaps unwittingly) deeply complicit in the creation of the modern capitalist order and that the claims to objectivity only mask this complicity.

What is important is the way the social scientist may be working on a technical problem, say how to make soldiers in an army more efficient, and yet not realize how they are complicit in broader changes that go far beyond the technical issue they are working on. This fits with the image I have been invoking of how certain logics gain a hold and are carried on by their own momentum. The social scientist, focusing, like a good scientist, on narrow issues, may not be able to see how their efforts can have bulldozer effects or even assume that this is a necessary part of "progress". Like Eichmann, they can be oddly oblivious to the larger consequences of their work as they move from project to project. The involvement of psychologists in development and implementation of torture methods used by the US on suspected terrorists is a recent striking example (one of these psychologists admitted to personally participating in torture).[100] Both of these researchers were good upstanding Christians and seemed not only oblivious to the possibility of wrong doing in torturing another human being but blissfully proud of what they had done. This obliviousness and thoughtlessness is the concern Gadamer is voicing when he worries about the establishment of a "total technocracy".[101]

While Eichmann and these psychologists are individual examples, the concern is not limited only to individual cases but to how an entire discipline can be warped by the demands to be scientific. I can illustrate this problem by looking at what happened to the

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discipline of sociology according to C Wright Mills when it embraced this positivist, quantitative logic.

Mills wrote *The Sociological Imagination* in 1959. It is a criticism of how the discipline of sociology has moved away from the comparative historical sociology of the founders of sociology (Marx, Weber, Durkheim) towards becoming a technical apparatus for governments and companies. Mills claims that as sociology improved its technical abilities it became increasingly relevant and in demand by various organizations. "Nowadays social research is often of direct service to army generals and social workers, corporation managers and prison wardens. Such *bureaucratic use* has been increasing; no doubt it will continue to increase".[102] These organizations want "administrative technicians" to help their systems function more efficiently and effectively and sociologists increasingly began to see this as what they had to offer.[103]

Sociologists discovered the more they embraced the bureaucratic ethos, the more they were respected, in demand and valuable. Not surprisingly, they began to change their graduate programs to produce "administrative technicians." This involved a turn away from more historically based approaches to methods based more on "the fine little mill of Statistical Ritual".[104] Statistical analysis and other empirical methods are less messy than comparative historical methods, less time consuming to learn and practice, and easier to measure. Notice that the kind of streamlining of populations Foucault pointed to occurs here to the "scientists" themselves and to their scientific practice. The move away from comparative historical sociology to empirical and statistical methods made the sociologists and their practice more transparent for the companies and governments that wanted to use them.

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Mills' concern is that in so doing sociologists lose their "moral autonomy and [their] substantive rationality, and the role of reason in human affairs tends to become merely a refinement of techniques for administrative and manipulative uses".[105] In other words, they lose the ability to think because they are immersed in technical problems that require cognition. Mill worries this results in young people who lack "genuine intellectual puzzlement" and "passionate curiosity" and instead "one finds a deadly limitation of mind".[106] These new sociologists participate in a "strange block building endeavor" where they, in true positivist fashion, keep their attention narrowly focused on the specific technical problems and methods they use.[107] While comparative historical sociology often aims at tracing the historical antecedents of the present, and hence calls the present into question, the sociologist as administrative technician need not pay attention to these issues, and hence tend not to challenge the status quo.[108]

This last point is important, because it shows how the positivist attempt to achieve objectivity by avoiding subjective values has political consequences. This is how Horkheimer makes the point:

> Modern science, as positivists understand it, refers essentially to statements about facts, and therefore presupposes the reification of life in general and of perception in particular. It looks upon the world as a world of facts and things, and fails to connect the transformation of the world into facts and things with the social process...By its identification of cognition with science, positivism restricts intelligence to functions necessary to the organization of material already patterned according to the very commercial culture which intelligence is called upon to criticize. Such restriction makes intelligence the servant of the apparatus of production, rather than its master.[109]

The problem goes beyond the ways positivism fails to challenge the status quo, however. It also involves a potentially anti-democratic aspects of positivist scientific

practice. Mills points out, like Foucault, that the rise of the bureaucratic ethos that

embraced positivist social science allies the social sciences to the "non-democratic areas

of society--a military establishment, an advertising agency, an administrative division of

government".[110] Mills, Gadamer, Bernstein, Scott and, of course, Arendt are all

concerned with how this positivist/technocratic logic creates a dependency on experts

that discourages the development of a competent citizenship. Habermas makes the point

well:

> The real difficulty in the relation of theory and praxis does not arise
> from this new function of science as a technological force, but rather
> from the fact that we are no longer able to distinguish between practical
> and technological power. Yet even a civilization that has been rendered
> scientific is not granted dispensation from practical questions; therefore
> a peculiar danger arises when the process of scientification transgresses
> the limit of technical questions, without, however, departing from the
> level of reflection of a rationality confined to the technological horizon.
> For then no attempt is made to attain a rational consensus on the part of
> citizens concerning the practical control of their destiny. Its place is
> taken by the attempt to attain technical control over history by
> perfecting the administration of society, an attempt that is just as
> impractical as it is unhistorical.[111]

If Habermas and these other thinkers are right, then there is a concerning anti-

democratic impulse that arises in a technocratic culture of expertise. Democracy, like

many of the best things in life, simply isn't efficient. When it is treated as thing to be

fixed, manipulated and improved via technical control, it is it is in danger of being

warped. A managed democracy becomes something other than democracy. This does not

mean there are aspects of democratic practice that cannot be improved by technical or

scientific study, but that there are some aspects of democratic practice that require

judgment and that should be studied by individuals who have the time and space to think

and exercise judgment.

Conclusions: The Limits of Science and the Need for Practical Judgment

There is good reason, then, to be cautious about the way "social science...tends to become a functionally rational machine" when expected to act like institutionalized, normalized science.[112] This is not to say that science is bad, or that efficiency is unimportant, or that technical expertise is wrong. It is simply to say that they do not work in all contexts and that other approaches are often necessary. The concern is the hegemony of science, efficiency and technical expertise. The problem is that the logic at work in science has spread far beyond science in a way that is deeply problematic. Thus, what Gadamer offers in *Truth and Method* is an "admonition to scientific consciousness to acknowledge its own limits".[113]

Gadamer argues that the social sciences and the humanities can't merely imitate the hard sciences. It doesn't work. Or, sometimes, it works too well, bulldozing reality until it fits a given model. What is truly needed in the non-sciences, what is needed to deal with human beings who are always enmeshed in the web of meaning and morality, is practical judgment. Bellah, Bernstein, Scott, Dunne, and other thinkers dealing with these issues are all in remarkable agreement about this point.[114] I will not attempt here to compare and contrast their arguments for the importance of judgment, we have already seen enough of this in the section above on Method and judgment for me to make my point. If Gadamer and these other thinkers are correct then while the hard sciences function with a method, while the social sciences and humanities need practical judgment, which is more akin to a careful skill, a sensitive habituation or a cultivated disposition. While the scientific method may take years to learn and use well, practical

judgment is an unfinished lifelong task. It is not, I think, easily amenable to academic games. It is a rare kind of wisdom in a society aimed at efficiency and standardization, and yet, if we are to avoid some of the great mistakes of 20th century social science, it is what non-scientists need to develop.

So much of the logic of modernity mitigates the development of practical judgment. If Arendt is right that thinking is key to developing judgment and if judgment is necessary in the social sciences and humanities, then academic practice in the non-sciences should not be modeled on positivist scientific practice. Academics in the social science and humanities need the time and space to think unproductively and to develop judgment. To usher them quickly into academic games modeled on scientific practice may actually serve to undermine the skills and dispositions need by academics in the non-sciences to approach their studies ethically and effectively. I worry that for the young academic (the grad student, the new professor, and even the undergraduate) there isn't time to develop practical judgment. Loans are looming. Methods are the quickest means to publish. In the academic game, there just isn't time for thinking or practical judgment.

This predicament is made much worse when universities embrace the logic of neoliberalism. This is what we turn to in Chapter V.

Notes

[1] Bourdieu, Pierre. *Pascalian Meditations*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).

[2] Gadamer, Hans Georg. *Truth and Method*. (New York: Continuum, 1996).

[3] Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[4] See Craig Calhoun's discussion in his chapter on Boudieu in Ritzer, George, ed. *The Blackwell Companion to Major Contemporary Social Theorists*. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003).

[5] Bourdieu, Pierre. *Practical Reason*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 75-81.

[6] Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time* (London: SCM Press, 1962), 98.

[7] The terns "habitus" and "field" are omnipresent in Bourdieu. See for example: Bourdieu, Pierre. *Pascalian Meditations*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).

[8] See note 6 above.

[9] Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

[10] Bourdieu, Pierre. *Practical Reason*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 99-109.

[11] For a good discussion of the worries about economic interests see Hyde, Lewis. *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property*. (New York, NY: Vintage, 1983) and Hirshman, Albert. *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977).

[12] See chapters 4 and 5 in Bourdieu, Pierre. *Practical Reason*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

[13] Ibid., 93.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., 79.

[16] Ibid., 81.

[17] See chapter 6 in Bourdieu, Pierre. *Practical Reason*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

[18] Bourdieu, Pierre. *Homo Academicus*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990).

[19] Bourdieu, Pierre. *Pascalian Meditations*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).

[20] Dreyfus, Hubert and Stewart Dreyfus. *Mind over Machine*. (New York, NY: Free Press, 1988).

[21] See also Flyvbjerg, Bent. *Making Social Science Matter*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[22] Sindermann, Carl. *Winning the Games Scientists Play*. (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2001), 1.

[23] Ibid., 2.

[24] Ibid., vii.

[25] Ibid., 2.

[26] Ibid., 2.

[27] See chapter 4 "Is a Disinterested Act Possible?" in Bourdieu, Pierre. *Practical Reason*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

[28] Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., 24.

[31] Ibid., 11.

[32] Ibid., 24.

[33] Ibid., 35.

[34] Ibid., 37.

[35] Ibid., 38.

[36] Ibid., 46.

[37] Ibid., 113.

[38] Heidegger, Martin. *What is Called Thinking?* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1976), 8.

[39] Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 139.

[40] Neiman, Susan. *Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternate History of Philosophy*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[41] If this appears too fantastic see Midgley, Mary. *Science as Salvation: A Modern Myth and its Meaning*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 1994).

[42] Green, Anna and Kathleen Troup. *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth-Century History and Theory*. (New York, NY : NYU Press, 1999), 4.

[43] Qtd in Stern, Fritz. *The Varieties of History from Voltaire to the Present*. (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1973).

[44] Descartes, Rene. *Discourse on Method*. In Ariew, Roger and Eric Watkins, Eds. *Modern Philosophy*. (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2009), 29.

[45] Ibid., 27.

[46] See Ch1 of Gadamer, Hans Georg. *Truth and Method*. (New York: Continuum, 1996).

[47] Ibid., 9.

[48] See especially Dunne, Joseph. *Back to the Rough Ground: Practical Judgment and the Lure of Technique*. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997) and Flyvbjerg, Bent. *Making Social Science Matter*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001). The following are some outstanding figures in this tradition: Bellah, Robert. "Social Science as Practical Reason," in Callahan, Daniel and Bruce Jennings, eds., *Ethics, the Social Sciences and Policy Analysis*. (New York: Plenum Press, 1983); Bernstein, Richard J. *Beyond, Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics and Praxis*. (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983); Bernstein, Richard J. *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory*. (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978); Scott, James C. *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1998).

⁴⁹ Nussbaum, Martha. *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 237, 264.

⁵⁰ Dunne, Joseph. *Back to the Rough Ground: Practical Judgment and the Lure of Technique*. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997).

⁵¹ Ibid., 16.

⁵² Ibid., 16.

⁵³ Dreyfus, Hubert. *Mind Over Machine*. (New York. NY: Free Press, 1988). See discussion of Dreyfus' model of expertise in Flyvberg, Bent. *Making the Social Sciences Matter*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Gadamer, Hans Georg. *Truth and Method*. (New York: Continuum, 1996), 22.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 17.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 14.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 11.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 271.

⁶¹ Ibid., 270.

⁶² Ibid., 452.

⁶³ Ibid., 270.

⁶⁴ Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

⁶⁵ Polanyi, Michael. *Personal Knowledge: Towards A Post-Critical Philosophy*. (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1974).

⁶⁶ Taylor, Charles. *Philosophical Papers: Volume 2, Philosophy and the Human Sciences*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 5.

⁶⁷ Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 19.

⁶⁸ Crosby, Albert. *The Measure of Reality: Quantification and Western Society, 1250- 1600*. (New York, NY: Cambridge Univeristy Press, 1997.)

⁶⁹ Scott, James C. *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1998), 78.

⁷⁰ Scott, James C. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2010).

⁷¹ Heidegger, Martin. *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. (New York, NY: Harper, 1984).

[72] Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

[73] See chapter 4 "Is a Disinterested Act Possible?" in Boudieu, Pierre. *Practical Reason*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

[74] Taylor Charles. "Closed World Structures" in Wrathall, Mark, ed. *Religion After Metaphysics* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[75] Ibid., 49.

[76] Ibid., 50.

[77] Bellah, Robert. "Social Science as Practical Reason," in Callahan, Daniel and Bruce Jennings, eds., *Ethics, the Social Sciences and Policy Analysis*. (New York: Plenum Press, 1983), 33.

[78] Ibid., 33.

[79] Ibid., 33.

[80] Pack, Justin. *Hammering Square Pegs into Round Holes: International Development and the Flawed Ontological Assumptions of Modernity*. Brigham Young University. Department of Sociology, 2009.

[81] Scott, James C. *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*. (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1998).

[82] Scott, James C. *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1998), 4.

[83] Ibid., 87.

[84] Easterly, William. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*. (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2006).

[85] Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Globalization and Its Discontents*. (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 2003).

[86] Ibid., 21.

[87] Ibid., 21.

[88] Ibid., 21.

[89] Gadamer, Hans Georg. *Truth and Method*. (New York: Continuum, 1996), 415.

[90] Ibid., 415.

[91] Ibid., 416.

[92] Ibid., 413.

[93] Ibid., xxxvii.

[94] Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge*. (New York: Vintage, 1980), 83.

[95] Ibid., 85.

[96] Ibid., 112.

[97] Ibid., 87.

[98] Ibid., 171.

[99] Ibid., 152.

[100] http://www.democracynow.org/2014/12/16/after_duo_created_cia_torture_methods.

[101] See endnote 72 above.

[102] Mills, C. Wright Mills. *The Sociological Imagination*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 80.

[103] Ibid., 96.

[104] Ibid., 72.

[105] Ibid., 180.

[106] Ibid., 105.

[107] Ibid., 65.

[108] Ibid., 88.

[109] Horkheimer, Max. *Eclipse of Reason*. (New York: Continuum, 2004), 56.

[110] Mills, C. Wright Mills. *The Sociological Imagination*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 114.

[111] Quoted in Bernstein, Richard J. *Beyond, Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics and Praxis*. (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 43.

[112] Mills, C. Wright Mills. *The Sociological Imagination*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 180.

[113] Gadamer, Hans Georg. *Truth and Method*. (New York: Continuum, 1996), xxiii.

[114] Bellah, Robert, et al. "Social Science as Public Philosophy." Appendix to *Habits of the Heart*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996); Bernstein, Richard J. *Beyond, Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics and Praxis*. (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983); Scott, James C. *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1998); Dunne, Joseph. *Back to the Rough Ground: Practical Judgment and the Lure of Technique*. (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1993).

CHAPTER V

NEOLIBERALISM

Introduction

In Chapter II, I argued the modern research university, which was imported to the

US from Germany in the late 19th century, was structured as a positivist institution.

Broadly construed, this means academic activity would now be modeled on the scientist

engaged in normal science. In Chapter IV, we saw how this results in a quantified

cosmos. Some key features of this positivist quantified cosmos are: a massive academic

division of labor that demands hyper-specialization; the denigration of judgment in favor

of method, which supposedly allows academics to escape the biases of value judgments;

the discouraging of (unproductive) thinking in favor of (productive) cognition; a strong

emphasis on quantitative analysis which allows for the translation of complex phenomena

into more transparent terms that can be more easily used by governments and

corporations. These features come together to form a streamlined academic machine to

which students must quickly adapt.

One of the problems with this is that despite the attempt to achieve objectivity,

there are moral, aesthetic, and metaphysical assumptions and values at work here. But the

combination of hyper-specialization, the discouraging of thinking, the security of

supposedly tried and true methods, and the success of this machinery leads too often to a

profound lack of reflexivity about these practices. Ironically, this lack of reflexivity is

bolstered by moral and aesthetic values which tacitly affirm the beauty and correctness of

these practices while being denied and repressed by them. Altogether these features

create a kind of cocoon around the academic playing this positivist game that affirms the status quo by obscuring the many problematic aspects of positivist academic activity and quickly funneling academics into their tiny niche. The disturbing results of this situation is a tendency towards thoughtlessness.

I argued that this thoughtlessness is particularly concerning in the social sciences where the uncritical adherence to the scientific method too often results in reductive approaches that cannot do justice to the complex meaning-laden web of human existence. Too often this results in brutish, too mechanical approaches that either fail or succeed by bulldozing to the desired results. Ironically, what is needed to respond appropriately, sensitively and ethically is precisely judgment. But, if Arendt is right that thinking and judgment may be related, then the development of good judgment is unlikely in an atmosphere antagonistic towards thinking as an unproductive activity.

In this chapter I will argue that these tendencies towards thoughtlessness are greatly exacerbated as universities embrace neoliberalism. As we saw in Chapter II, the modern research university was already torn between the need to not be pressured for specific results that would compromise scientific objectivity and the need to be productive and useful for the governments and corporations that were increasingly providing funding for scientific activities. With the influx of neoliberal values, universities are increasingly run like businesses. This means that academics are more than ever judged on their productivity, the kinds of grants they can bring in (from which the university takes a cut), how much prestige they provide—in short, they are expected to commodify not only themselves but also their work. Thus all the pressures that

originate from the scientific division of labor are ratcheted up to a new level while being simultaneously increasingly articulated in business terms. The quantitative cosmos becomes the money cosmos. As academic activity becomes more frantic and competitive, academics are forced to act more and more strategically: to streamline their practices, to do more, ever more, to pay more attention to their CVs, to seek to produce work that is more cutting edge and that will attract more attention, to pay more attention to the trendiest topics of debate in academic circles, to bring in bigger and better grants, to get accepted into the best conferences and get published in the best journals, to attend more meetings and be more accountable to the administrators who are seeking for ever more efficiency to create the smoothest running academic machinery possible (with, of course, the best football team). There is little time to think here.

I begin by articulating what I mean by neoliberalism. I am especially interested in paying attention to how neoliberalism is a response to criticisms that were leveled at the disciplinary society and the protestant ethic that undergirded the producer capitalism of the late 1800s and early 1900s. These criticisms assert that the world of producer capitalism was stultifying, alienating, mechanical, petty and narrowminded. By the 1960s these criticisms had reached a critical mass when frustration with the rigid Leave-It-To-Beaver protestant business world mixed with the civil rights, women's rights, and gay rights movements and the student revolts to create an atmosphere that demanded change. Following Boltanski and Chapello, I will argue that many businesses restructured and attempted to reform in light of these criticisms, especially the concerns about the stultifying workplace. Businesses attempted not only to create positions that encouraged adventurousness, creativity, and flexibility, but to rearticulate the world of work for all

workers. What had previously been treated as necessary jobs were rearticulated as fulfilling, meaningful and exciting careers.

Thus neoliberalism is not merely the reassertion of free market capitalism. It is a rebranding of free market capitalism in light of these criticisms. Some scholars, like the critical theorist Zygmunt Bauman and the social theorist Anthony Giddens have suggested these shifts are radical enough to consider capitalism to have entered a new phase or period[1]. The interesting problem is that this new capitalist period affirms many of the criticisms that were leveled at earlier forms of capitalism. Thus criticisms that aim to break out of producer capitalism and the disciplinary projects that went along with it may inadvertently strengthen the new form of capitalism. Nancy Fraser for example has recently argued that feminist critiques of the disciplinary society have unwittingly contributed to the victories of neoliberal capitalism[2]. I want to attempt to bring this issue into focus by outlining Bauman's theory of Liquid Modernity and supplementing it with Boltanski and Chiapello's analysis of neoliberalism. I think Bauman helps to track what is occurring in these shifts and help better articulate what is a stake and the new demands these shifts place on academics. I begin in part 1 with a general discussion of neoliberalism. In part 2, I turn to Boltanski and Chiapello and examine how consumer capitalism assimilated the critiques of the 1960s. In part 3, I outline Bauman's theory of liquid modernity. In part 4, with the framework established I will then discuss the effects of these changes on academia.

Section 1: Neoliberalism

The term "neoliberalism" may be confusing to many Americans because of what the term "liberal" is currently taken to mean. "Liberals", in popular parlance, is often used as a blanket term for leftists or democrats in opposition to "conservatives" or republicans. "Neoliberalism" however is a conservative movement that refers to the revival of economic liberalism.

Economic liberalism is a utopian political and social project that was implemented in the 1800s.[3] It is based on the myth of the free market: the ideal of a "truly free, self-regulating market system".[4] No such self-regulating market has ever existed: in all traditional societies the economic was "embedded in social relations" (indeed, Polanyi argues that when the social is made subservient to the economic, society is torn apart—in other words, that free markets are unsustainable).[5] Economic liberalism seeks to reverse this however. Recall the values that Taylor claims underlie much of modern thought: "the independent, disengaged subject, reflexively controlling his own thought process, 'self-responsibly,'…an ethic…of independence, self control, self-responsibility, of a disengagement which brings control; a stance which requires courage, the refusal of the easy comforts of conformity to authority, of the consolations of an enchanted world, of the surrender to the promptings of the senses".[6] Economic liberalism seeks to create a society based on this calculative, atomistic, self-possessed, rational (masculine) individual coming together to trade with other such individuals.

This is fantasy of course. People are not like this. But for economic liberalism, bolstered by the protestant ethic, people *should* be. And so the advocates of economic liberalism attempted to remake the world in their own image by force, imposing these

ideals both at home and abroad in the process of disciplinarity and colonization analyzed by Foucault and others.[7] This was an often brutal process of breaking apart traditional social structures, legally forcing peasants off their land via legislation like enclosure acts and forced proletarianization. These draconian measures displaced the poor, changing them from poor peasants with some degree of community that ostensibly protected them even in their poverty to displaced poor proletariats left on their own. Not surprisingly this land grab enriched both those who bought up these lands and the factory owners who took advantage of the new displaced proletarian labor: "unheard-of wealth turned out to be inseparable from unheard-of poverty".[8] Dicken's novels attest not only to the social destruction and poverty that resulted, but also to the new ideological excuses marshalled by liberals to blame the poor and liberate the wealthy from their traditional Christian responsibilities to care for them.[9]

By almost any measure the liberal experiment was a failure. Only by accepting the "near-indigency of the mass of the citizens as the price to be paid for the highest stage of prosperity" could economic liberalism be justified.[10] For those who hadn't been hoodwinked by the new economic religion ("The laws of commerce were laws of nature and consequently the laws of God".[11]), there were two options: abandon capitalism and seek an alternative like communism or push for legislation that would attempt to limit the abuses of capitalism. The late 1800s was marked both by the influence of communists and efforts to regulate markets through a whole variety of means: establishing minimum wages, maximum hours, minimum age, taxing the wealthy, regulatory oversight, trust busting, the creation of unions, etc.

With the Great Depression in the 1930s and the collapse of markets around the world, laissez-faire free market policies fell into disrepute. It seemed clear not only that if capitalism was not regulated adequately it would lead to myriad abuses but also that unregulated markets were dangerously unstable. Thus the period from the 1930s to the 1970s was marked by the Keynesian ideal of the use of government control to stimulate and regulate markets to prevent some of the extremes of the unregulated market. This period was marked by high taxation of the wealthy, robust growth of the middle class, increased bureaucracy, active intervention of government in building infrastructure, growth in public universities, etc. None of this challenged the fundamental economism that economic liberalism had established, but it seemed to have found a way to curb its worst excesses. By the early 1970s, Nixon commented that "we are all Keynesians now".[12]

This makes it all the more remarkable that in 1979 Margaret Thatcher was elected prime minister in Britain and in 1980 Ronald Reagan was elected president of the US. Both pushed for a return to laissez-faire free market policies: thus the term "neoliberalism". But hadn't laissez-faire capitalism already proven to be unstable? Didn't the United States already deal with a period of robber barons and gross inequality? Why go back to it again? Harvey calls this the problem of the "construction of consent": how did Reagan and Thatcher get the public support for policies that had already been tried and had failed?[13] Harvey argues we can "interpret neoliberalization either as a utopian project to realize a theoretical design for the reorganization of international capitalism or as a political project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites."[14] The former is Polanyi's approach. Harvey opts for the

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latter and argues that the rise of neoliberalism was less a matter of an attractive utopian vision that captivated the British and American public than a political coup. Elites who were under threat as a result of the economic instabilities of the mid-70s decided to reestablish their power. They pushed to cut taxes for the wealthy, attacked unions, cut social safety nets, and deregulate markets. This is not to say they had not been doing so throughout the era dominated by Keynesian economic thought, but that their efforts broke through with Reagan and Thatcher.

Obviously, I am not going to be able to historically trace all the political and economic changes that led to this shift. The literature on this is incredibly immense, spills across multiple disciplines and is ongoing. My attempt will focus on the cultural rebranding of economic liberalism as traced by Boltanski and Chiapello and Zygmunt Bauman. My argument is that together they give us enough of a picture of neoliberalism to begin to understand how the embrace of neoliberal logic is affecting the research university. I will seek to show first, with Boltanski and Chiapello, how neoliberalism assimilated the leftist critique of producer capitalism to restructure and rearticulate itself. This creates a new "spirit of capitalism"—one that is sleeker and hipper than the old protestant spirit of capitalism described by Weber. I will then turn to Bauman argue that this new spirit can best be described as consumer capitalism. This shift involves some stark twists and turns that greatly complicate the important task of criticism. Contemporary criticism that does not recognize the new spirit of capitalism risks repeating old criticisms that not only miss that their target has changed, but actually can accidentally aid the new consumer capitalism which assimilated these criticisms. Bauman

himself could be read as falling prey to this, so I hope tracing this shift in his own writing helps to illustrate the danger.

Section 2: Critiques of Capitalism

The Critique of Producer Capitalism and the Disciplinary Society

Between the critiques leveled at positivism in chapter II and the criticisms voiced about the hegemony of science and the disciplinary society in chapter IV by Gadamer and Foucault, we have already touched on some of the critiques of producer capitalism. I have stressed the ways the protestant ethic and instrumental rationality connect positivism, capitalism and the disciplinary projects of modernity. Now, instead of stressing the commonalities that unite the different projects of the world of producer capitalism and by extension the critiques of it, I want to stress some of the tensions in the critiques of capitalism. These tensions help reveal fundamental shifts in capitalism. To begin to examine what these tensions and shifts mean I turn to the sociologists Boltanski and Chiapello.

Boltanski and Chiapello argue that there are two main critiques of capitalism: (1) the artistic critique and (2) the social critique. These critiques can be combined but also can be in tension with each other. They also can flare up at different times and with different strengths. Boltanski and Chiapello argue that the social critique was the driving force in the reformations during and after World War II and that artistic critique drove many of the reforms that resulted in the 1960s and 70s.[15] Here is how they describe each:

[The artistic critique] which is rooted in the invention of a bohemian lifestyle, draws above all upon...two sources of indignation....on the one hand the disenchantment and inauthenticity, and on the other the oppression, which characterize the bourgeois world associated with the rise of capitalism. This critique foregrounds the loss of meaning and, in particular, the loss of the sense of what is beautiful and valuable, which derives from standardization and generalized commodification, affecting not only everyday objects but also artworks...and human beings. It stresses the objective impulse of capitalism and bourgeois society to regiment and dominate human beings, and subject them to work that prescribes for the purpose of profit, while hypocritically invoking morality. To this it counterposes the freedom of artists, their rejection of any contamination of aesthetics by ethics, their refusal of any form of subjection in time and space and, in its extreme forms, of any kind of work.[16]

The second critique, they call the social critique:

The second critique, inspired by socialists and, later, by Marxists, draws instead on two sources of indignation...the egoism of private interests in bourgeois society and the growing poverty of the popular classes in a society of unprecedented wealth--a mystery that will find its explanation in theories of exploitation. Basing itself on morality and, often, on themes inspired by Christianity, the social critique rejects -- sometimes violently--the immorality or moral neutrality, the individualism, and even the egoism of artists. [17]

Delineating different strands of critique is important not only because these different critiques can help us see different aspects of capitalism, but also because the responses to capitalism have been fraught with tension—so much so that sometimes they can detract from each other. In turn, how capitalism responds to challenges to it depends on which critique it is responding to.

In fact, for my analysis a further delineation is needed. As Boltanski and Chiapello say, there are two sources of indignation that make up the (1) artistic critique: (1a) the first is a rejection of the type of life extolled by the protestant ethic, (1b) the

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second protests the exclusion and elimination of the other types of life by the normalization of the bourgeois world. Put simply, as we have already seen with Foucault, the rise of modernity involved the organization and normalization of diverse and diffuse populations via the imposition of bourgeois standards. The process of standardizing language, education, and manners enforced the heterosexual, white, masculine, protestant, instrumental rational world on all. The (1a) first aspect of the artistic critique of this process rejects the new world that this produces:

> For as soon as capitalism was triumphant and 'passion' seemed indeed to be restrained and perhaps even extinguished in the comparatively peaceful, tranquil, and business-minded Europe of the period after the Congress of Vienna, the world suddenly appeared empty, petty and boring and the stage was set for the Romantic critique of the bourgeois order as incredibly impoverished in relation to earlier ages—the new world seemed to lack nobility, grandeur, mystery, and, above all, passion.[18]

Following Hirschman in this passage, I will call this the romantic critique.

The (1b) second critique of this process focuses on all the voices, forms of knowing, and practices that are discouraged, marginalized or eliminated by this process: cultural traditions and practices, gender, sexual orientation, race, etc. Following Nancy Fraser I will call this the recognition critique. The goal for critics here is stop the marginalization of these groups and allow them recognition.[19]

Often, as Boltanski and Chiapello argue, the romantic critique and the recognition critique go together. It is quite possible, however, to rage against the petty bourgeois world along the lines of the romantic critique but not pay sufficient attention to who it excludes. An aristocrat, for example, may lament the rise of the bourgeois world but have

little interest in how it excludes certain groups (except his own) and exploits the poor. Alternatively, it is possible to be primarily concerned with marginalization and the need for recognition while not being concerned with, or even supporting, the bourgeois world. Thus in what follows I rely on a tripart distinction (renumbered from 1a, 1b and 2) between 1) the romantic critique of the bourgeois, protestant ethic world, 2) the recognition critique and 3) the social critique. While each of these critiques may focus on different aspects of producer capitalism, Boltanski and Chiapello argue they all agree on the necessity of transgression. The nature of this transgression and its goals are where conflicts may occur between different critics. In the next section I want to examine the key shifts in capitalism that have occurred in response to these criticisms.

The Capitalist Response: A Leftist Capitalism?

Following in the footsteps of Weber's classic work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Boltanski and Chiapello's work is entitled *The New Spirit of Capitalism*. They argue capitalism has moved through two newer phases since it was described by Weber and that each resulted in a slightly different "spirit" of capitalism. The first new phase occurs at the end of the 1930s with rise of government sponsored protectionism.[20] Boltanski and Chiapello see this as a response to types of criticisms that make up the social critique. These criticisms center on the plight of the poor and the "egoism of private interests".[21] The spirit of the times that emerged in response to the social critique, then, was of mediating the worst of capitalism through government intervention.

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The second shift, according to Boltanski and Chiapello, occurs as a response to the criticisms that were voiced in the 1960s and early 70s. These criticisms are based on the artistic critique (romantic and recognition critiques). Critics accused capitalism of being overly hierarchical, rigid and constraining, alienating, and stultifying. Against all this critics sought freedom, flexibility, creativity and self-affirmation. As it turned out, this presented an opportunity for companies. In terms of efficiency, great gains could be made if work could be restructured and rearticulated as a self-affirming career that workers loved instead of dreaded. A fulfilled and excited worker gets more done than a begrudging one. It also shifts the onus from the company to discipline the worker to the worker disciplining themselves in order to get and succeed at the desirable jobs. Once companies realized how these untapped energies could be harnessed, the criticisms of the 1960s became the mottos of the 1980s. Thus, like the earlier shift in the 1930s, Boltanski and Chiapello argue these criticisms caused some radical changes in capitalist practice and ideology as a result of the efforts to take these criticisms into account. Importantly, the shift managed to incorporate not only the artistic critique, but also leftist anti-government sentiment, which was then used to begin rolling back the social safety nets that had been established as a result of the previous shift. In the end, the artistic critique was a boon for capitalism as it helped pave the way for a more flexible capitalism that not only answered the artistic critique but marshalled it to attack the gains made by the social critique. Thus Boltanski and Chiapello argue the new spirit of capitalism, because it harnessed leftist arguments and leftist anti-government sentiment, can be called a "leftist capitalism"![22]

The New Spirit of Capitalism

One of the ways Boltanski and Chiapello attempt to track this shift is by tracing the changes in the kinds of language invoked in management literature: "The 1990s management texts reflect the image of a world that has been largely reorganized by comparison with the 1960s...One by one, all the mechanisms derived from the second spirit of capitalism [the protectionist period] have been questioned, modified, transformed, abolished, replaced".[23] This new world is one that stresses mobility, freedom, adaptability, flexibility, enthusiasm, creativity, "multiplying connections", "proliferating links", ever creating new projects, etc.[24] In short, many of the artistic ideals that were used to critique earlier forms of capitalism, have now been slowly but surely co-opted or appropriated by capitalists. This is not to say that the factory jobs have been done away with, but that the language surrounding even factory work has changed. In short, the world of work has been recast in an effort to make work a meaningful, self-affirming career instead of a demeaning job.

In some cases, this means not only restructuring work activity itself (giving workers more autonomy, more freedom, encouraging creativity and worker initiative), but also restructuring work space to actively create a community of workers, say, by building an entertainment room that is available for workers to use after hours or a free cafe for employees. These shifts aim to turn work from the place one trudges off to in the morning to a place one wants to be to work on the projects that one has invested so much in.

Franco Berardi argues that the workplace no longer aims just for the body, but for the soul: work now involves more than repetitive body movements, but the immersion of

the whole soul into the language, emotion and creativity of work projects.[25] This helps to explain why "in the 1980s (and even more, as we know, in the 1990s) the average labor time increased impressively. In the year 1996, the average worker invested in it 148 hours more than their colleagues did in 1973. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics the percentage of individuals working more than 49 hours per week grew from 13% in 1976 to 19% in 1998".[26] Where work used to be a place one was ready to leave come 5PM, some workers are finding their work activity preferable to non-work activities![27]

If this is indeed the case, then it is a stunning coup that reflects a radical change in the spirit of capitalism. It also has caused confusion among critics of capitalism. The old goal of transgressing capitalism is now problematic as capitalism has learned to profit from many forms of transgression. Artistic critique is now, in some ways, undermined, especially if artistic criticisms have been appropriated by capitalism itself. Remarkably, the artistic critique has been marshalled by conservative capitalists back at the left!

Take for example the book *Wealth and Poverty* by George Gilder. The Los Angeles Times called Gilder the "prophet of the new [neoliberal] economic order" (211).[28] He was President Reagan's favorite author. Gilder claims that supply-side economics embodies creativity, generosity, adventurousness, and even love for humanity! "Because no one knows which venture will succeed, which number will win the lottery, a society ruled by risk and freedom rather than by rational calculus, a society open to the future rather than planning it, can call forth an endless stream of invention, enterprise and art."[29] This is stunning. Notice what Gilder is doing. He is distancing himself from the protestant ethic and tying it to the protectionist government approach that arose in the late 1930s. Ostensibly rejecting calculative rationality, he claims supply side economics

results in the dreams of artists everywhere. He uses the artistic critique to attack the

reforms that had resulted from the earlier social critique. He brazenly claims that supply

side economics embodies a gift culture, which itself had become a key source of the

artistic critique:

> Contrary to the notions of Mauss and Levi-Strauss, the giving impulse
> in modern capitalism is no less prevalent and important--no less central
> to all creative and productive activity, no less crucial to the mutuality of
> culture and trust--than in a primitive tribe. The unending offering of
> entrepreneurs, investing jobs, accumulating inventories--all long before
> any return is received, all without any assurance that the enterprise will
> not fail—constitute a pattern of giving that dwarfs in extent and in
> essential generosity any primitive rite of exchange. Giving is the vital
> impulse and moral center of capitalism.[30]

Put aside whether these claims are right or not (I think they are wrong). What is

disturbing is the way Gilder is flatly rejecting the ideals of the protestant ethic and

producer capitalism and attempting to formulate a new morality for capitalism that

incorporates the artistic critique. Does this mean that the artistic critique is compromised

as a critique of capitalism? Not entirely. But it does mean that the task of criticism of

capitalism has been greatly complicated and that critics now face a situation in which

they may raise criticism or encourage forms of transgression that may actually aid the

very thing they are attempting to criticize. As we will see with Bauman, in consumer

society transgression is often quickly commodified and sold.

I can explain this conundrum more fully by adding in the recognition critique to

the dialectic narrative of the artistic and social critiques that Boltanski and Chiapello

analyze. The tripart distinction allows us to see divisions on the part of both

conservatives and leftists. On the conservative side we find two groups that differ about

what to do about the recognition critique, we could call these the traditional social conservatives and the new pure free market neoliberal conservatives. The traditional conservative side rejects the recognition critique and throws it weight against policies like affirmative action and gay marriage. The new neoliberal group, on the other hand, doesn't object as strongly to the recognition critique—in fact, if the logic of consumerism is fully embraced, then these previously marginalized groups seeking recognition also represent new markets. Why object to gay rights when there could be a new market here? Why discriminate in any way other than by what or who leads to more efficiency and more profit, regardless of race, creed, gender or sexual orientation? The pure logic of neoliberal consumerism doesn't see difference as a danger but as a new and exciting opportunity to sell new products aimed at "different" markets and increase efficiency. With the rise of neoliberalism there arises, then, a new tension amongst conservatives between those who want to defend "traditional morality", "traditional families" and "traditional values" and who hence oppose accommodating the kinds of changes sought by leftists who want recognition for marginalized groups and neoliberals whose primary concern is freer, more efficient markets and who see marginalized groups as potential markets.

On the left, especially in academic circles, the 1980s was dominated by the recognition critique. So much so that Nancy Fraser has argued the social critique was problematically left aside.[31] The problem is that the recognition critique has often come coupled with the romantic critique as a part of the artistic critique. But in a neoliberal setting, where consumer capitalism has embraced the romantic critique as a means of attacking the social safety nets of that were established in the aftermath of the social

critiques of the 1930s and 40s, artistic transgression now often has the effect of strengthening neoliberal consumerism. Pure neoliberal capitalism doesn't blush at the sight of a drag queen, it sees a new fashion and a new target market. Thus leftists also find themselves in a new conundrum: there are still many conservatives who oppose the kinds of changes sought by the recognition critique, but transgressing the traditional boundaries that social conservatives want to enforce may aid consumerist, neoliberal capitalism.

In a nutshell: the conservative that seeks to protect "family values" may actually undermine their cause by supporting neoliberal capitalism that in its pure form welcomes "difference" as a source of new products and new markets. The leftist that seeks to transgress traditional boundaries may inadvertently contribute to the success of the same consumeristic capitalism by failing to challenge the hegemony of free market forces. Either way, neoliberal consumer capitalism wins. Obviously, the political situation is more complex and the positions are often more sophisticated than what I am presenting, but nonetheless this example allows us to see how the field breaks up into new and often difficult to understand tensions.

Boltanski and Chiapello give us a sense of the new spirit of capitalism and also point to the confusion that resulted from the rise of neoliberalism, especially as it assimilated aspects of the artistic critique of the anti-establishment left. In the next sections I turn the social thinker Zygmunt Bauman. Ultimately my claim is that his theory is important because Bauman adds to the picture Boltanski and Chiapello an emphasis on consumerism, which I will claim, is key to understanding academic activity in the

neoliberal university. But I also want to contrast his early work with his later work, precisely because the early work demonstrates the confusions created by neoliberalism. Thus instead of straightforwardly presenting his theory of "liquid modernity" I attempt to show how he worked through his earlier position to this later position. While this may seem tangential I want to suggest it is helpful to see the wrong road he initially takes, why it is the wrong way to go, and how recognizing this suggests an alternative.

Section 3: Bauman's Theory of Liquid Modernity

Introduction

Bauman's early works agree with Foucault's description of the disciplinary society of modernity and seeks for alternatives. In this early period he argues for what he calls a "postmodern ethics" that will help overcome modernity. But his later works suggest the disciplinary society Foucault describes has shifted in key ways. He argues that while many critics like himself sought for an alternative to modernity their criticism instead leads to a different version of modernity—a "liquid modernity" that replaced a "solid modernity" (this is akin to Jameson's claim that postmodern is more late modernity than a radical break with it).

In essence, Bauman argues we are now living in a consumer society. This does not mean that the self is no longer being shaped as it was in a disciplinary society. It means that *in addition* to how the self is formed in a disciplinary society we are *further* shaped for life in a consumer society. The disciplinary society, closely aligned with the ideals of the protestant ethic, encourages discipline, control, calculation, frugality and

obedience. The consumer society, on the other hand, in order to sell ever more, rejects

such limitations and uses emotion, sexuality, irrationality, etc. to encourage frantic

spending. The liquid modern self must keep these often contradictory impulses properly

channeled and know when to work hard, and when to play hard.

Recognizing this shift is important because, if Bauman is correct, then projects

that aim to overcome the disciplinary society that do not recognize it has been

supplemented to also create a consumer self in consumer society risk undermining their

own cause. As we have seen, these anti-modern or postmodern projects often take the

form of transgressive acts (which can vary from writing in a different style like Adorno

or Derrida, to performative acts of transgression, to breaking social norms, etc) and/or

hope to create a culture of transgression that encourages the perpetual breaking out of the

disciplinary society.[32] This culture of transgression, however, while comprehensible in

the context of the disciplinary society, may actually feedback into a consumer society. In

trying to wriggle free from the disciplinary society they may unknowingly be sinking

deeper into a consumer society. Bauman is not claiming that we should not transgress,

but that in recognizing how the disciplinary self has been supplemented with a consumer

self we are forced to recognize that transgression has in some ways, as we saw to some

degree in the last section, been compromised and needs rethinking. Let me flesh all this

out in more detail.

Bauman's Postmodern Project

In chapter II, I invoked Bauman's description of modernity as a gardening project

that attempts to organize society into a transparent and manageable order. Like

Foucault's description of the disciplinary society, Bauman's description of the gardening society may appear quite bleak. Yet Bauman also argues that the more modernity succeeds, the more it undermines itself. In attempting to map out reality and order humanity, the project of modernity ends up increasing the forms of knowledge, multiplying means of gaining knowledge, and ultimately making everything more complicated. Over time this produces more of a cacophony than a symphony.

In *Modernity and Ambivalence*, Bauman calls this "the Revenge of Ambivalence".[33] As I mentioned briefly in chapter II, Bauman argues that for modernity ambivalence is dealt with through the process of classification. But, he continues, with each classification there always seem to be further ambiguities that require further classification. These classifications also need further classification to deal with ever new ambiguities. Thus, for example, what begins as science becomes physics, astronomy, chemistry, and biology. Each of these eventually is further divided (quantum physics, microbiology) and even sometimes recombined in novel ways (biochemistry, astrophysics). Soon enough, there are so many different classifications and even more ambiguities that the sheer amount of information has been dramatically increased and the possibility of ordering things into a coherent whole becomes impossible. The initial fragmentation of reality is never overcome and "turns the problem-solving into Sisyphean labour and incapacitates it as a tool of order-making".[34] In other words, everyone is busy cutting the world into smaller and smaller pieces to make it comprehensible, but no one is putting the puzzle back together. "The struggle against ambivalence is, therefore, both self-destructive and self-propelling".[35] The process of fragmentation initiated by

modernity in order to turn the infinite cosmos of premodernity into "solvable little

problems" ends up producing a malignant cacophony.[36]

But the project of modernity was and is not only threatened by its own internal

logic, but, as we have seen in this chapter, also by its critics. Any process of classification

and categorization involves marginalization and valuation. Some groups came out better

as a result of the project of modernity than others. Men came out better than women.

Whites better than non-whites. Europeans better than non-Europeans. Since the inception

of modernity in early modern Europe, many groups found themselves under threat of

marginalization, ostracism or assimilation by the gardening project of modernity.

Naturally, groups that were marginalized or defined as inferior in some way objected and

fought for recognition. It is not surprising that many of the thinkers that criticized

modernity come from marginal and or ambivalent positions. Derrida was an Algerian

Jew. Simone de Beauvoir was a member of the second sex. Foucault was gay (although

he objected to the label). Edward Said was a Palestinian-American. Anzaldúa was a

Lesbian Mexican American. Not fitting the plan of the modern garden, these thinkers and

many others raised questions about how the garden had been planned and pointed out the

violence that had been used to create it.

Earlier in his career, Bauman uses the term "postmodern" to describe the period

that may be arriving as modernity fragments under its own unstoppable momentum and

under the increasing attack of critics. Bauman, influenced by Levinas, hopes for a

postmodernity that involves a new kind of ethics:

> If postmodernity is a retreat from the blind alleys into which radically
> pursued ambitions of modernity have led, a postmodern ethics would

be one that readmits the Other as a neighbor, as the close-to-hand-and-mind, into the hard core of the moral self, back from the wasteland of calculated interests to which it had been exiled; an ethics that restores the autonomous moral significance of proximity; an ethics that recasts the Other as the crucial character in the process through which the moral self comes into its own.[37]

A period that comes after modernity is one that should be acutely aware of how much violence has been done in the name of order. Bauman's *Postmodern Ethics* is therefore a call to be more aware of the violence that exists in every society and to seek ways to lessen that violence. In this sense, postmodernity would be a good thing and it seems to be something Bauman is hoping for. Indeed, he finishes *Modernity and Ambivalence* with a discussion entitled "Postmodernity, or Living with Ambivalence".[38]

A new ethic is also necessary because the scale of human knowing and experience has expanded. A postmodern period offers new challenges that go beyond traditional ethics:

> The scale of possible consequences of human actions have long outgrown moral imagination of the actors. Knowingly or unknowingly, our actions affect territories and times much too distant for the 'natural' moral impulses which struggle in vain to assimilate them, or abandon the struggle altogether. Morality which we inherited from pre-modern times – the only morality we have – is a morality of proximity, and as such woefully inadequate in a society in which all important action is an action on distance.[39]

Bauman gives credit to Hans Jonas as one of the thinkers that tried to draw attention to the problems caused by the massive scale of the project of modernity. Even if it is breaking apart, it is still hurling forward and changing in ways that threaten to overwhelm the human capacity to comprehend it. According to Hans Jonas we have

reached an odd position—one he called "the threat of catastrophe from excessive success".[40]

Briefly put, life was simpler in pre-modern and even early modern times in important ways. Modernity has created a cacophony. But many critics in their efforts to embrace the ambiguous and to break out of the violent binary oppressions that mark the gardening project of modernity, also create more cacophony. These critics often celebrate hybridity and seek to welcome the Other. They seek to counter the demands for less ambiguity and more order made by modernity with the demand for the recognition of difference and complexity. This ethical recognition of the Other creates a difficulty however, because it also means that there are more narratives and ethical systems allowed into circulation—alternatives that were often excluded in modernity. The traditions that guided society previously are placed into question in this new cacophonous world and now find themselves in competition with a great variety of alternatives. What, in a state of affairs of broken and swirling alternatives, can provide moral guidance for the postmodern individual? Or is moral guidance a vestige of modernity?

The Consumer Self in a Consumer World

Despite arguing for a postmodern ethics, Bauman is aware that what he outlines in *Postmodern Ethics* is the high road and that a force that can provide easier answers is already at work: the market. In *Thinking Sociologically* Bauman argues that in the fragmented postmodern world (or, Bauman asks, is it still modern?) identities, meanings and narratives come to be bought and sold. Individuals seeking purpose and identity go to malls to buy their way into "neo-tribes" that provide purpose and meaning.[41] In

Modernity and Ambivalence he discusses how the American Mall is the "grotesque restaging of the Enlightenment drama".[42] The shopping mall is the ultimate triumph of modernity (or is it now postmodernity?): "They offer controlled, physically and spiritually secure environment for an alternative life-world, in which the joy of choosing is not polluted by the fear of error, as there are only 'rational choices' left".[43] Like the perfect garden, the mall "is carefully monitored (literally and metaphorically), neatly split into thematic sections, each reduced to clear-cut stereotyped and easy-to-read symbols with virtually all danger of ambiguous interpretation removed".[44] While the priest guided the populace in the past, the mall is designed by experts who "offer safe guidance through the mysteries of the world".[45] Thus where modernity founders in the face of fragmentation, the new spirit of capitalism succeeds—as long as the consumer can be initiated into a new world of consumerism and consumer solutions.

This involves creating a self that understands itself as a consumer: "The society of consumers' is a kind of society which (to recall the once popular term coined by Louis Althusser) 'interpellates' its members (that is, addresses them, hails, calls out to, appeals to, questions, but also interrupts and 'breaks in upon' them) *primarily in their capacity of consumers*".[46]

In a producer society, Bauman argues, men are interpellated as workers or soldiers and taught obedience, conformity, self-control, and discipline in order to become "fit to inhabit...their intended natural habitat: the factory floor and the battlefield".[47] Women are interpellated as "purveyors of services" and taught to act similarly. In agreement with what we saw earlier with Berardi, Bauman says this aimed primarily at controlling the *body* and largely ignored the *spirit* which was "numbed" and

"deactivated" in order to cope with the "monotony" of the factory and bootcamp. This is, of course, one of the primary concerns of the aesthetic critique as we saw with Boltanski and Chiapello.

But long before the protests of the 1960s, capitalists had already realized there were problems with this. These problems became apparent in the early 1900s with what Stewart Ewen calls the "social crisis of industrialization".[48] In *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture*, he argues the invention of the assembly line allowed for a massive increase in the amount of products that could be produced. But this left factories with an enormous surplus. They now had to figure out how to sell this surplus, and, not surprisingly, the solution was to artificially increase demand through advertising. This shifted how employers thought of their employees. For most of the day they needed to work hard and be disciplined. But when the day ended they need to be encouraged to play—and thus to buy. This required the creation of a consumer self.

Thus, "in stark distinction from the society of producers/soldiers, the society of consumers focuses its training and coercing pressures, exerted on its members from their early childhood and throughout their lives, on the management of the *spirit*"[49]—on questions of identity, meaning, purpose and fulfillment. This is painfully obviously if one turns on the TV. Most ads take an approach that attempts to provide meaning, purpose and identity via products they are selling. Buy the shampoo, get the man. Buy the car, get the woman. The products being sold become the means of forming an identity, accomplishing one's goals and affirming oneself. Interestingly, some even go so far as to present their products as a solution to the problems created by the disciplinary society!

Thus we find ads which show bored workers, suffering through their jobs, who find happiness and temporary relief through some product. Life miserable? Watch Monday Night Football and you'll feel better!

In a consumer world, many of the ideals of the 1960s, freedom, creativity, flexibility, individual choice, etc, now become demands on the individual that are expected of everyone—the individual is given the task of making themselves. "*Members of the society of consumers are themselves consumer commodities*, and it is the quality of being a consumer commodity that makes them bona fide members of that society. Becoming and remaining a sellable commodity is the most potent motive of consumer concerns, even if it is usually latent and seldom conscious, let alone explicitly declared...'Making oneself a sellable commodity' is a DIY job, and individual duty".[50] Becoming your true self is now a task given to everyone, as task of self-commodification that is preferably accomplished by buying the right products to freely construct the person you want to be. Succeeding in consumer society involves becoming a smart shopper.

Children are now taught both discipline and consumerism from a young age. In school they learn to follow the rules, obey their teacher, to think (instrumental) rationally and so forth. But they are also surrounded with the demands of consumerism: "the battles waged over and around children's consumer culture are no less than battles over the nature of the person and the scope of personhood in the context of the ever-expanding reach of commerce. Children's involvement with the materials, media, images and meanings that arise from, refer to, and are entangled with the world of commerce, figures centrally in the making of persons and of moral positions in contemporary life".[51] To play

in the game of life in a consumer society, children will have to learn to take responsibility for themselves as an object that must itself be turned into something attractive and consumable by others and must do so primarily via proper choices in their own consumption.

Consumer society, by placing the onus on the individual for their own meaning, purpose, identity and packaging, results in a situation in which social conditions are obscured: poverty must be the result of failed choices on the part of the individual, wealth must be the result of successful choices on the part of the individual. According to the logic of pure consumerism, race, gender and sexual orientation are irrelevant, what matters is efficiency and the generation of wealth. If we are not equal yet we must be soon, because the market promises to erase all boundaries and barriers: all are welcome to participate in the great game.

Once this logic gains a hold, it has proven nearly impossible to assail:

> The consumer commodity market, one has to admit, makes a peculiar, bizarre sovereign, starkly different from those familiar to the readers of political science tracts. This strange sovereign has neither legislative nor executive agencies, not to mention courts of law--which are rightly viewed as the indispensable paraphernalia of the bona fide sovereigns explored and described in political science textbooks. In consequence, the mark is, so to speak, more sovereign than the much more advertised and eagerly self-advertising political sovereigns, since in addition to returning the verdicts of exclusion, the market allows for no appeals procedure. Its sentences are as firm and irrevocable as they are informal, tacit and seldom if ever spelled out in writing. Exemption by the organs of a sovereign state can be objected to and protested against, and so stand a chance of being annulled - but not the eviction by the sovereign market, because no presiding judge is named here, no receptionist is in sight to accept appeal paper, while no address has been given to which they could be mailed.[52]

Supposedly this is the only game in town.

Liquid Modernity

Early in his career, then, Bauman sometimes talks about what he calls "postmodernity" as if it is a better future and sometimes as if it is just a new, subtle modification of modernity. He seems to treat "postmodernity" in the positive sense when he is prescriptively talking about how things could or should be, in opposition to modernity. "Postmodernity" in this sense is a desirable future state. At other times however, the postmodern seems to be a new form of modernity, up to the same old tricks of social control through more subtle means. In this sense, Bauman is describing the shift from a producer society to a consumer society. Whether he meant it or not, it is easy for the reader to get confused about whether or not this new consumer society is a postmodern society, a fundamentally different period, or just a different version of modernity. This confusion is also evident in other thinkers that attempt to deal with this same set of issues (like Baudrillard for instance).

This confusion about what exactly postmodernity is has led some scholars to abandon the word "postmodern" entirely and to argue that we are not entering into an entirely new epoch, but rather are entering a new phase of modernity. Frederick Jameson calls postmodernity "late capitalism."[53] Anthony Giddens calls it "late," "high," or "radical" modernity.[54] Bauman settles on the term "solid modernity" for what in his early career he called modernity and "liquid modernity" for what he called postmodernity. In

Bauman's later work, he has dropped the word 'postmodern' entirely. Thus, even though

he is seeking an alternative to both solid and liquid modernity, he has avoided using the

term "postmodern" as a description of the alternative for either.

Bauman thinks these changes means it increasingly makes less sense to take the

disciplinary society as the primary model for contemporary society:

> The notion of an integrating community is a notion inherited from the
> now bygone panoptical era: it refers to the organized effort to fortify
> the borderline separating the 'inside' from the 'outside,' to keep the
> inmates inside while barring outsiders from entry…It refers to the
> enforcement of a uniform, monotonous, space-and time-ascribed code
> of conduct…an integrating community is essentially a conservative
> (conserving, stabilizing, routine-imposing, and preserving) force. It is
> at home in a strictly administered and tightly supervised and policed
> setting—which hardly describes the liquid-modern world, with its cult
> of speed and acceleration, novelty and change for the sake of
> changing.[55]

Although earlier in his career Bauman himself frequently wrote about modernity

and how to overcome it (and lead to a postmodernity), as this passage shows, he now

argues that we have to distinguish two forms of modernity: solid and liquid. Those that

have not recognized this distinction in some way or another often end up fighting against

the solid modernity while not recognizing that the new threat that comes from liquid

modernity. In so doing they may actually exacerbate the difficulties of liquid modernity.

> Whatever its pragmatic merits, the panopticon-style, 'discipline,
> punish, and rule' way of achieving the needed/intended manipulation
> and routinization of behavioral probabilities [solid modernity] was,
> however, cumbersome, costly, and conflict-ridden. It was also
> inconvenient, and surely not the best choice for the power holders, as it
> imposed severe and nonnegotiable constraints on the rulers' freedom of
> maneuver; as it transpired later, alternative and less-awkward strategies

could be devised through which systemic stability…could be achieved and made secure.[56]

Thus as we have seen, when this shift from solid modernity to liquid modernity began, many thinkers (including Bauman) hoped they may be moving into a new era and overcoming the gardening dreams of modernity. He goes on to argue that this was not the case:

> What in fact happened was the discovery, invention, or emergence of an alternative method of civilizing (a less cumbersome, less costly, and relatively less conflict-ridden method, but above all, one that gives more freedom, and so more power, to the power holders)—an alternative way of manipulating behavioral probabilities necessary to sustain the system of domination represented as social order.[57]

This suggests the need to consider the different strategies of critiquing and fighting solid modernity and liquid modernity. If solid modernity is trying to order society and put everyone into the right place, it makes sense for a critic to encourage rebellion to such a social ordering. Break out! Be yourself! Go your own direction! But, if the primary mode of social control has changed, this may not only be futile, but also damaging to the cause of those who are critiquing liquid modernity.

Bauman thinks we are no longer under the same kind of threat as we were in a disciplinary society: "Surrendering to the 'totality' is no longer a reluctantly embraced, discomforting, cumbersome, and often onerous duty but an avidly sought and eminently enjoyable entertainment".[58] People are no longer being controlled by big brother. Instead they are running to the malls. We are dealing with Huxley's *Brave New World*. "The cultural managers switched from 'normative regulation' to 'seduction,' from day-to-day

surveillance and policing to PR, and from the stolid, overregulated, routine-based panoptical all-surveilling and all-monitoring model of power to domination through [the constant change of trends and possibilities]. In stark opposition to state bureaucracy, consumer markets are known to thrive on the *frailty* of routines and their rapid *supercession*—rapid enough to prevent their hardening into habit or norms".[59]

The Cacophony of Consumerism

In the liquid modern world, pure consumerism does not care if critics seek to be different and to create themselves as an artistic project that breaks the hegemony of the system. If anything, the breaking of boundaries is exactly what liquid modernity wants. If anyone moves in some new creative direction in an attempt to break out of the constraining norms, there will be entrepreneurs waiting in the wing for any new trend they can popularize and make a pretty penny.

All this creates a cacophony of possibilities, combinations and deviations. Heading off in your own direction, breaking boundaries, being hybrid, is now seen "as a virtue and a sign of distinction, rather than, as it was viewed until quite recently, as a vice and a symptom of…inferiority".[60] The new neoliberal world will allow you to do anything you want as long as it is essentially a form of consumption or self-commodification:

> For the art of life, this new setting opens unprecedented vistas.
> Freedom of self-creation has never before achieved a similarly
> breathtaking scope—simultaneously exciting and frightening. Never
> before was the need for orientation points and guidance as strong and
> as painfully felt. Yet never before were firm and reliable orientation
> points and trustworthy guides in such short supply…That shortage

coincides with a proliferation of tempting suggestions and seductive offers of orientation and with a rising wave of guidebooks amid swelling throngs of counselors.[61]

In his earlier works Bauman had already pointed out one of the odd contradictions of solid modernity: the process of classifying things greatly increases the amount of information over time to the point that it becomes overwhelming. With each new distinction, with each new amount of knowledge discovered, the overall picture becomes more intricate and more difficult to comprehend. This is particularly apparent in academia—as the study of the world moves along there has been a constant increase in disciplines. Each discipline becomes broken into sub-disciplines. It has reached a point now where no single person could hope to have a clear picture of all that is going on even within a particular discipline. The encyclopedia of knowledge has grown so large that it would be impossible to read in a lifetime. The painful irony is that as knowledge progresses it seems to show how infinitely complicated the universe is—instead of creating a comprehensible picture, the academy is exponentially multiplying perspectives. Now there seem to be logical, legitimate perspectives from different disciplines that are contradictory. Instead of providing the guidebook to improving life the progress of knowledge has obtained a kind of life of its own that seems to never stop. As Bauman puts it, if solid modernity takes its original goals seriously it must now admit it is "both self-destructive and self-propelling".[62]

Liquid modernity seems to solve this problem. The more complicated the world becomes the more a variety of answers can be offered by cultural managers—for a price, of course. Gurus abound, each with products that offer solutions to your problems (or, as it may be, both a problem for you and a solution), all for a profit. The liquid modern

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world doesn't care who is having sex with whom, doing what drugs, dressing in what outfits or transgressing, as long as the system keeps working.

Rebranding Economic Liberalism: Freedom, Creativity and Flexibility in the Service of Production

In light of the continued struggles for equal rights for marginalized groups, it is clear that many of the exclusionary aspects of the disciplinary society have not dissipated in an ocean of consumerism. There are still many people attempting to normalize certain forms of life and marginalize others. Bauman does not mean to undermine the needed and legitimate efforts of some groups to achieve recognition. His *Postmodern Ethics* makes clear his support for these causes. Rather his concern is that liquid modernity presents a *new* threat: "A specter hovers over the denizens of the liquid-modern world and all their labors and creations: the specter of superfluity".[63] Where solid modernity kept some out and some in, liquid modernity is open to all comers as long as they can keep the machinery of consumerism running.

This means that the disciplinary society is only partially accurate as a description of the creation of the modern self. We need to supplement Foucault's account with something like Bauman's to recognize the changes that have been brought about as a result of the rise of a consumer society. It is worth repeating the consumer self doesn't eliminate the disciplinary self. But if Bauman is right, it does imply that the kinds of projects that seek to counter the disciplinary society may be sinking us deeper into consumerism.

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It is important to also stress that what previous looked like salvation from the stultifying world of producer capitalism—freedom, creativity, flexibility, etc—have been assimilated and reincorporated as *requirements* in consumer capitalism. Now the individual is expected to show that they are creative, can work on their own initiative, be flexible, and be productive without being managed all the time or guided through each process. The quality of freedom, creativity and flexibility change when they become requirements. In producer capitalism one might feel stuck in a certain office and want more flexibility; in consumer capitalism, on the contrary, the worker may be expected to be flexible with their time, with where they live and with how often they are willing to travel. In producer capitalism, work might feel stultifyingly routine and might produce a desire for a more creative and affirming workplace; in consumer capitalism, the individual may be expected to be creative and make their work a life affirming task. The freedom from producer capitalism become the freedom to participate in consumer capitalism. Freedom, creativity and flexibility now not only serve productivity—the incessant production of things—but also to turn the self into a commodity. This process of self-commodification lifts the responsibility for the quality of life off the shoulders of social institutions and onto the shoulders of each individual.[64] By recasting the atomistic economism of economic liberalism in terms of freedom, creativity, and self-responsibility, neoliberalism is able to rebrand itself. The radical and often brutal policies of the economic liberalism of the 1800s are recast as the self-affirming freedoms of neoliberalism. When the middle class begins to shrink, when the poor find themselves worse off, when the rich get richer, the neoliberal is able to appeal without blushing to the

good choices and responsibility of those who come out on top and to the poor consumer choices and irresponsibility of those who come out on bottom.

Thanks to globalization the worst abuses of human labor and the worst externalities have been exported abroad. The rebranded economic liberalism is now able to invoke freedom, creativity, flexibility, love and a whole host of other virtues that had previously been marshalled against it as reasons *for* neoliberalization. Cut down the social safety nets, we are told, meritocracy is here. There is no other way we are told: the logic of capitalism wins and the gospel of efficiency is enshrined. All institutions must embrace business values and open their doors to supply and demand. This includes, of course, the university.

In the rest of this chapter I want to apply the theories of Boltanski and Chiapello and Bauman to the neoliberalization of the research university. How does neoliberalization change the research university? How does consumerism change how we think of education and academic activity? Again, there is no way for me to exhaustively track all these issues, rather, I will attempt to focus on those features that I take it are making it harder to engage in the activity of thinking. Broadly, the argument is that as the values of the business world come to suffuse academia, the demands to be productive will be greatly increased and the time to think will shrink. More specifically I am interested in how the academic games I examined in the last chapter are changed. My suggestion will be that the basic structure of academic games does not change, but that there are new featured added to academic games (especially grant writing) in addition to the general pressure that results from the increased demands for efficiency and productivity.

Section 4: Academic Activity in the Neoliberal University

The End of Skhole*?*

In Chapter III, we saw how the Greek polis needed art to memorialize great acts but also needed to prevent the instrumental logic of artists from entering the polis. The instrumental approach would undermine politics and turn it from action, the free activity of equals, into social engineering or management, an activity the Greeks found appropriate for the private sphere or slaves. To be free of the need to earn money or manage others is to have *skhole*, the Greek word for leisure time. *Skhole* is necessary to engage in action or thought because action and thinking are activities that are ends in themselves and cannot be done for ulterior motives. To bring an outside motive into these activities is to radically alter the dispositions that are involved and hence the activity itself. According to Arendt, thinking has no purpose. If we bring one to it we are not thinking but cognizing. Likewise action that is taken with a specific predetermined goal is no longer action, but strategic action.

Skhole is the root word for the English "school" and the equivalent word in many other European languages. This shows the original connection of education and the leisure class. With the rise of modernity and democracy, education has become less and less and activity of *skhole* and instead an activity with a predetermined purpose, whether that purpose be to shape citizens to participate in a functioning democracy, to inculcate the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, to foster national identity and homogenize language use, etc.—but, despite these changes, there is still a sense that education should

be a time apart and that learning is a good in and of itself. This can especially be seen in conflicts about the increasing encroachment on education by advertising and businesses, for example, the possibility of making textbooks cheaper by allowing advertizing.[65] In college sports, for another example, athletes are not allowed to get paid or make money with autographs, appearances etc. The concern is that to do so would undermine their status as "student athletes" and turn college sports, which is supposedly still primarily about education, into professional leagues. Thus, even though universities and the NCAA make all sorts of money off star athletes or star programs, the purity of education is invoked to prevent student athletes from being paid like professionals. The tension concerns how the activity of education needs to keep some distance from the world of capitalism to function properly (education would obviously be undermined if students could simply pay for the grades they want). We saw this tension in chapter II with the rise of the research university which has always been torn between the need for an interest free space to accomplish some degree of objectivity and the need to perform and bring about useful results for the companies and governments that often provide the funding necessary for academic activity. The scientist seeking to preserve the integrity of their practice may not be seeking the same thing as *skhole*, but they are seeking a space apart like the Greeks in the polis. They deal with the same tension that threatened action and thinking.

My premonition is that *skhole* comes to an end with neoliberalism. The rise of the neoliberal university is the victory of instrumental logic, the sanction of strategic business values into the realm of education where such values and such pressures were once and are occasionally still discouraged. This is not to say that Pespi will run the universities,

but that the pressures of the business world will no longer be held back. Universities and academics will now more than ever be expected to provide results for shareholders and accept the ever increasing demands of efficiency and productivity. What does this actually mean for academic practice?

The Neoliberal University

Interestingly, and perhaps counterintuitively, it means the rise of larger administrative bureaucracies. Even though neoliberalism situated itself over and against big government, as universities have embraced neoliberalism they often begin a process of transferring control of university governance from academics to administrators. Thus while student enrollment has ballooned, tenured professors have actually decreased and administrative positions have increased.[66] These new administrators are trained to run institutions according to the demands of efficiency and productivity. Like neoliberal shock troops, their job is to shape up a lumpy, tenure laden system that spends too much time thinking, discussing, debating and ruminating instead of producing. Academics are quickly pushed out of administrative positions and ushered back into their offices and labs.[67] Teaching, a task that brings less prestige to a research university, is increasingly pawned off on graduate students and adjuncts. Neoliberal house cleaning means getting everyone in their right place according to the logic of hyperspecialization: administrators make sure everything is done according to the newly enshrined logic of efficiency, academics publish and present, adjuncts and graduates teach.

To assure that the university, traditionally a notorious den of radicalism, free thinking and other silly activities, is working optimally, administrators have established

an audit culture.[68] This describes "not so much a type of society, place or people so much as a *condition*: one shaped by the use of modern techniques and principles of financial audit, but in contexts far removed from the world of financial accountancy. In other words, it refers to contexts in which the techniques and values of accountancy have become a central organizing principle in the governance and management of human conduct–and the new kinds of relationships, habits and practices that this is creating."[69] This is the same process described by Foucault and Bauman, but now with the tools of finance management. The point of these efforts is to make academics and academia transparent to administrators so that inefficiencies can be weeded out and the entire system can be made profitable.

> Universities are just one site among many where we can observe the effects of neoliberalism and the rise of 'New Public Management'. What we have witnessed here is the transformation of the traditional liberal and Enlightenment idea of the university as a place of higher learning into the modern idea of the university as corporate enterprise whose primary concern is with market share, servicing the needs of commerce, maximizing economic return and investment, and gaining competitive advantage in the 'Global Knowledge Economy'. Several factors are driving this process: the cost-cutting fiscal regime of 'economic rationalism' in which government funding for universities has been steadily eroded; the move from 'elite' to 'mass' university education, which has brought many more students with no comparable increase in permanent staff numbers; and the trend towards universities increasingly operating like private businesses, accompanied by the emergence of higher education as a significant export industry. Audits, performance indicators, competitive benchmarking exercises, league tables, management by targets, and punitive research assessment exercises and periodic teaching quality reviews are the technologies that have been used to spread new public management methods into the governance of universities – and all at a time when overall government funding for universities and per student has declined.[70]

Not surprisingly when the university is run like a business the language of academia begins to change. Universities are now

> transnational financial corporations, the emphasis being on generating income through commercialized research, on training rather than education, and on providing students (now called 'customers' and 'users') with marketable rather than critical skills. The new regimes of audit have also precipitated a shift in the management of universities, which are now defined in terms of their administrations and management teams. Academics are no longer treated as constitutive members of the university but as its *employees*, an individualized proletarian workforce that must be 'subordinated to the organizational hierarchy of managers, people of whom the "University" must demand excellence'.[71]

With the embrace of neoliberal values, cost cutting, efficiency and profitability become the primary concerns. In order to streamline academia, out come the neoliberal carrots and sticks: academics are kept sweating under the increasing demands to publish as tenure track jobs are made less available in favor of administrators who will now run the university and adjuncts who will now teach courses—and who, conveniently, will work for much less and who are treated as replaceable. Adjuncts, then, become a kind of academic indentured servant as the business logic of the neoliberal university prefers the cheap, replaceable labor of adjuncts to the traditional and much more expensive tenure track professor.[72] Besides, the precarious position of adjuncts makes them less likely to challenge the authority of the new neoliberal administrators.[73] As a result of the efforts to push researchers into labs and pawn teaching off on adjunct and graduate students:

> Most undergraduate education is conducted by a super-exploited corps of disposable workers that Cary Nelsen describes as a "lumpen professoriate", often collecting wages and benefits inferior to those of

fast-food clerks and bell-hops. According to the Coalition on the
Academic Workforce survey of 2000, for instance, fewer than one-third
of the responding programs paid first-year writing instructors more than
$2,500 a class; nearly half (47.6%) paid these instructors less than
$2,000 per class. At that rate, a full-time load of eight classes nets less
than $16,000 annually and includes no benefits…Like Wal-Mart
employees, the majority-female contingent academic workforce relies
on a patchwork of other sources of income, including such forms of
public assistance as food stamps.[74]

The comparison of adjuncts to the low paid fast workers is frustratingly accurate

and this process of lumpen professorization has been aptly described as the

"McDonaldization of Education".[75]

I recently witnessed the marginality of adjuncts and graduate students at my own

university, the University of Oregon, in the fall of 2014 when the unionized graduate

students went on strike after failing to reach a new contract with the administration. The

strike began during the last week of classes and put the university in a tough position:

graduate students on strike were responsible for many of the grades that were due in a

few weeks. The university attempted to circumvent the graduate students by collecting all

grades through the first 8 weeks, removing graduate students as instructors of record,

eliminating the graduate student instructor's ability to contact students and demanding

each department find replacements for them. The very attempt to replace graduate

teachers in the final week of classes revealed how profoundly the university

administration was not primarily concerned with education but with delivering a product

to consumers. The administration insisted that no matter what, students would receive the

grades they had "paid for". But where would these grades come from if the teachers were

no longer present? In my own case I was teaching a unique course that had never been

taught before: Philosophy and Science Fiction. I had not yet even written the final exam. Who would replace me?

When my department refused to replace graduate teachers, the administration's response was to cancel the remaining classes and offer the students a stunningly inflated grade that was supposedly based on work done through 8 weeks of classes and that was calculated by an administrator up the ladder who had never seen any of my students. By ignoring some assignments and offer a blank check of 100% attendance and participation (something the administration had no way of measuring without input from the actual teacher) the students were offered grades that were a whole letter grade higher (in a few cases two letter graders higher) than they should have been and given the option to wave the final. The students, who were obviously pleased to find they now had grades much higher than they knew they deserved all—every one—conveniently opted to not take the final, which the university had no way of preparing. In short, the university sacrificed educational integrity to preserve the functioning of the business of education. I emailed the students to explain the situation:

> On the one hand, no one is going to complain about easy grading. On the other, since this is, after all, a science fiction class, what we are seeing here is both you as a student and me as a teacher being treated as mere numbers. You will receive a grade that only weakly reflects what you have done and that isn't at all responsive to you as a person. I argued in the class that modern society is shifting to a consumer society where the logic of money takes over - what this results in is your education being reduced to numbers…
>
> The idea that someone would replace me as your teacher on the last week of classes offended me. The idea that you have been given a robot grade that only loosely reflects what you did in class also offends me. I understand that it may be nice to get inflated grades, I just wanted to encourage you to think about how this reflects fundamental and disturbing shift in higher education in which neither you nor I are really

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here, there is just a world of numbers and money flying this way and that.

The increase in adjuncts, the increase in administrators and the decrease in tenure track positions all feed into each other. As the administration grows, tenured academics are increasingly pushed out of governance and into labs. Since more and better research brings in more grants and more prestige for universities, administrators push for more and better research. Hiring adjuncts both frees researchers to do research and cuts costs since the high cost researchers are now being utilized more "effectively". As less tenure track jobs become available more PhDs fail to find work except as adjuncts or as post docs. With more graduate attempting to squeeze into fewer tenure track positions, the pool of adjuncts grows and administrators taken advantage of this new academic lower class. It is increasingly expected that graduates will complete one—if not multiple—post docs to accomplish the kind of CV that are necessary to land a tenure track position.

This entire shift represents the conversion of an educational system into a factory system. Like a good factory, more measures are put in place to more accurately assess efficiency and this entails an increasing quantification of all aspects of academic life and this causes reverberations throughout academia: less tenure track jobs means more competition for them which entails the need for better means to measure academics. This leads to quantified rankings of journals, conferences and institutions to better measure the quality of the more numerous publications being rolled out by the increasing number of sweaty professors competing for the decreasing amount of tenure track positions. Sweaty graduate students who want to be sweaty professors discover they need to start playing the game earlier than ever because other sweaty graduates have already begun beefing up

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their CVs. Sweaty undergraduates who want to become sweaty graduates pay more for better GRE prep courses and begin looking for conferences to present at. Even sweaty high school students are looking to take AP classes so they can get their general ed coursework out of the way and get immersed sooner in their new careers. Woe unto the undeclared major who is still thinking about what to do with herself!

Not surprisingly, the tone of education radically changes in the new neoliberal university. Whatever lingering aspects of *skhole* survived the demands of positivism wilt in the harsh noonday consumer sun. There simply is little time to think when one is busy shaping oneself into the most attractive product for the ubiquitous market:

> Surveillance, and the unrelenting measurement of performance, are institutionalized and normalized in everyday life. Performative technologies, involving auditing and evaluating have directed attention to the measurable, no matter how inappropriate this may be in educational and research terms. The changes are significant in terms not only of how they refocus research and teaching efforts, but also of how they change the cultural life of the university and other higher education institutions. Incessant auditing and measuring is a recipe for self-display and the fabrication of image over substance; it also leads to a type of Orwellian surveillance of one's everyday work buy the university institution that is paralleled in one's personal life with a reflexive surveillance of the self. One is always measuring oneself up or down. Everything one does must be counted and only the measurable matter. Trust in professional integrity and peer regulation has been replaced with bibliometric indicators.[76]

As we saw with Bauman, the individual is now expected to take responsibility for the process of self-commodification and self-marketing. They must be willing to commit their whole soul to the calling of academia. This entails the need to be "careless" as Kathleen Lynch puts it.[77] By this she means that the academic will struggle to be successful it they have children or other non-academic commitments that will eat up their

time and distract them from their primary purposes as an academic. "Carelessness" is

necessary because the many demands of academia require flexibility: a willingness to

travel, to move to new universities, to work when needed—ideally to be caught up in

academic work all the time.

All this may sound overly demanding and alienating, but, recall how both

Boltakski and Chiapello and Bauman have shown that work is recast in neoliberalism as a

self-affirming career: an academic career is full of pressures, but it is the chance to do

what one loves, to produce something that truly expresses who one is, to make

a difference, to be creative, even free. Above all, Bauman argues (mimicking Margaret

Thatcher), there is no alternative.[78] This is the game in town and it has incredible

momentum. If you object to the way the game is being played, be careful, there are others

who will gladly take your place.

Not everyone is on board with the new neoliberal regime of course. Especially for

those who are committed to education in the classical sense with an emphasis on thinking

instead of production, these changes are deeply alarming. As Lynch argues:

> When externally controlled performance indicators are the constant
> point of reference for one's work, regardless of how meaningless they
> might be, this leads to feelings of personal inauthenticity. There is a
> deep alienation in the experience of constantly living to perform,
> particularly when the performance is experienced as being of
> questionable education and scholarly worth. Working under constant
> surveillance also breeds a culture of compliance: there is little incentive
> to innovate or to challenge prevailing orthodoxies, necessary though it
> may be. Those committed to independent scholarship and education are
> asked to live a lie, to sign up to values and practices which they believe
> are morally abhorrent and scholastically futile.[79]

There is no alternative. This applies not only to individual academics but to each

university or college. Once enough institutions convert to neoliberal logic it become

extremely difficult for universities or traditional liberal arts colleges to resist the tide.

"Rather than universities being subordinated to the production and transmittal of

knowledge, knowledge is now subordinated to the needs of universities for profit and

recognition".[80] To insist on a more traditional role of preparing individuals to become

competent citizens, develop judgment, think or even to seek scientific advancement

without neoliberalization is to risk not only falling behind but also to risk ceasing to exist,

as profit breeds profit and the new neoliberal game pays better. Those universities that

have resisted and many liberal arts colleges especially face tough decisions as they

remain one of the last American institutions to be "de-churched": "that is, it is one of the

last to have its ideological justification recast in terms of corporatization and

commodification and to become subject to serious state surveillance. Universities are no

longer to lead the minds of students to grasp truth; to grapple with intellectual

possibilities; to appreciate the best in art, music, and other forms of culture; and to work

towards enlightened policies and public service. Rather they are now to prepare students

for jobs. They are not to educate, but to train".[81]

Even in universities that have already decided to embrace neoliberal logic, the

process of bringing about this reorientation is still a fight, as many faculty members do

not want to see the university run like a business or be pushed out of university

governance. As I mentioned above, the key to enforcing this shift is the establishment of

an "audit culture" that attempts to make the workings of the university and the professors

more transparent for administrators.[82] Once an accountability regime is set up, those

professors who do not do enough to bring prestige to the university can be eliminated and replaced. Tuchmann points out this is less a panopticon style control than a self-policing: in true neoliberal logic, if and once the market logic takes hold, faculty members begin competing with each other to win grants, publish papers, etc. and on these grounds police themselves.[83]

This hypercompetitive atmosphere can be damaging to scientific practice, which as is traditionally narrated is meant to be fundamentally cooperative and to form a "Republic of Science".[84] Take for example the establishment of "luxury" journals. After winning the Nobel prize in physiology or medicine in December 2013, Berkeley scientist Randy Schekman announced he would no longer be sending papers to "luxury" journals and would instead use open publishing journals.[85] He explains:

> I am a scientist. Mine is a professional world that achieves great things for humanity. But it is disfigured by inappropriate incentives. The prevailing structures of personal reputation and career advancement mean the biggest rewards often follow the flashiest work, not the best. Those of us who follow these incentives are being entirely rational – I have followed them myself – but we do not always best serve our profession's interests, let alone those of humanity and society.
>
> We all know what distorting incentives have done to finance and banking. The incentives my colleagues face are not huge bonuses, but the professional rewards that accompany publication in prestigious journals -chiefly Nature, Cell and Science.
>
> These luxury journals are supposed to be the epitome of quality, publishing only the best research. Because funding and appointment panels often use place of publication as a proxy for quality of science, appearing in these titles often leads to grants and professorships. But the big journals' reputations are only partly warranted. While they publish many outstanding papers, they do not publish *only* outstanding papers. Neither are they the only publishers of outstanding research.
>
> These journals aggressively curate their brands, in ways more conducive to selling subscriptions than to stimulating the most important research. Like fashion designers who create limited-edition handbags or suits, they know scarcity stokes demand, so they

artificially restrict the number of papers they accept. The exclusive
brands are then marketed with a gimmick called "impact factor" – a
score for each journal, measuring the number of times its papers are
cited by subsequent research. Better papers, the theory goes, are cited
more often, so better journals boast higher scores. Yet it is a deeply
flawed measure, pursuing which has become an end in itself – and is as
damaging to science as the bonus culture is to banking.[86]

As I pointed out in Chapter I, the new technologies and information generated by

science can be extremely profitable and the neoliberal university knows it. Like Dr

Frankenstein working with the monster watching through the window, scientists in

neoliberal university work with crowds of entrepreneurial onlookers anxious to not miss

out on the next potential discovery they can market. Even the university administrators

are waiting in the wings, ready to take a cut: Tuchmann points out that with the neoliberal

"transformation of knowledge into capital" the value of the scientist is increasingly

measured in how many grants they bring into the university (out of which, of course, the

university takes a nice slice as overhead or indirect costs).[87] In such an atmosphere it is

no surprise that sometimes corners are cut.[88] Perhaps the republic of science must now be

called the business of science.

The threat to scientific practice is disturbing, but the changes that result from the

neoliberalization of the university are even more radical in the social sciences and can be

even more so in the humanities. As the university embraced neoliberalism it was not clear

what to do with the humanities and to a lesser degree some social sciences. "Disciplines

that focused on basic skills, on the past, on difficult and controversial social and cultural

domains, meaning fields like sociology, anthropology, history, literature, philosophy,

music, drama, classics and linguistics, in short, studies of the whole spectrum of human

life and culture summed up in French academia as the 'human sciences,' lost money,

caused trouble, and were not seen as part of society's economic engine. When that engine faltered cultural study could be cast as an expensive luxury; resources should, in culture-war doctrine, be diverted to the rock face of technological innovation".[89] Although the "cultural disciplines" were seen as "second class" and it isn't always clear how to get money out of them, the pressure to perform, to publish, to bring prestige to the university, to become more transparent to administrators, etc. have greatly increased.[90]

What this means for each discipline varies with each. Take sociology for example. Sociology is methodologically very rich. Methodological options include: statistical analysis, content analysis, interviews, ethnomethodology, comparative historical approaches, surveys, etc. These methods take different amounts of time to learn and to use, and some of the qualitative methods require the kind of good judgment discussed in the last chapter. In the hyper pressurized atmosphere of the neoliberal university, where the young graduate student or new professor desperately needs to publish, there is not much incentive to use qualitative methods. It simply makes more sense to get access to a data set, run your analysis, write it up and submit it. I argued in the last chapter, however, that quantitative methods are not always appropriate, that there are circumstances that require qualitative methods and the use of judgment. But, if qualitative methods and the development of judgment are time consuming and not efficient, one has to wonder if there will be any sociologists left that do qualitative research.

The humanities in general are struggling under neoliberalism for a variety of reasons. On the most simple level, they are not as profitable as the sciences. As both universities and students increasingly act with an eye towards money, humanities struggle to attract students and to receive support from universities. Defenders of the humanities,

like Martha Nussbaum, claim the humanities are important for developing critical thinking skills and an empathetic global awareness. Nussbaum thinks this is necessary to be a competent, participating and caring citizen who can deal with an increasingly complicated global world.[91] Thus, as can be seen in her title, while the humanities are *Not for Profit* they are, nonetheless, important for democracy and provide skills that are highly useful in many spheres, including the business world.

Like Nussbaum here, most humanities programs increasingly feel the need to justify their existence and argue for their importance. Take for example this excerpt from the Harvard University Arts and Humanities webpage with the headline, "On the Value of Liberal Arts Education":

> Before students may even have decided to apply to college, it still seems important to state that significant employment opportunities as well as opportunities for excellent further education in the professional schools are open to graduates of Harvard College no matter what concentration or course of study they elect. The record on that is clear.[92]

Before saying anything else, this justification of the humanities is immediately framed in instrumental terms. Even the title "On the Value of Liberal Arts Education" is stated in terms of value. The justification then goes on to claim that businesses increasingly need broadly knowledgeable individuals, not just specialists in specific majors. Medical schools too! In the humanities, then, one can study topics that one is passionate about and still be prepared to enter the business world. On the defensive from the start, this justification aims to prove that the humanities too, can live up to neoliberal standards. In the end, "A healthy system of higher education offers many rewards:

scientific discoveries, eventual and even unforeseen applications, thoughtful political leadership, intelligent public discourse, cultural vitality, and an educated workforce."[93] Thus even though a degree in the Humanities will not prepare one for a specific job, it is very useful for many things and you still might just get that job.

My point in citing this example from Harvard's website and Nussbaum is not to assess whether they are right about the "worth" of the humanities, but to show how threatened the humanities have become under neoliberalism. Not only have the humanities struggled to show how they too are valuable, but neoliberal demands increase the pressures to be productive and affirm the positivist insistence on measuring this in quantitative terms and thus radically hamstring the practices that are necessary for successful humanist research. I argued in chapter IV that the humanities were already a bad fit with the quantified cosmos that was established by the positivist research university and were already struggling under the pressure to fit into a positivist atmosphere. Time to think and time to develop judgment are key activities in the humanities. Neither can be quantified. Neither are necessarily productive. As a result, in a quantified cosmos, the humanities begin to look relatively useless (especially if economic growth and productivity become the primary measures of worth). If thinking and judging were threatened under the influence of positivism, they become endangered species when the world of business and the world of positivist science come together. The pressures to act strategically and cognize instead of think become overwhelming. I would suggest that when the humanities begin to attempt to defend themselves according to the types of justifications that would make sense to either the positivist quantified cosmos or the economically driven (business) quantified cosmos, the battle has been lost. While it may

be true that critical thinking skills are developed in the humanities and that the humanities are needed to produce good citizens, the core activities of the humanities are fundamentally altered when treated instrumentally. Under immense demands to be productive, thinking and developing judgment become replaced by cognition and strategic action. It is therefore not enough to attempt to make room for the humanities to play the new game too, because, in the first place, the humanities will always lose, but more importantly, because the fundamental activities that are necessary to humanist activity cannot survive in the hyper-turbulent neoliberal waters. I will say more about this in my conclusions.

Despite the terrible mismatch between the humanities and the demands of the new neoliberal university, the potentially compromising dangers of mixing science and business for scientific practice, and the shift towards higher education as career training, academics are, with a few exceptions, going gently into that neoliberal night. After all, as Bauman states, we are taught TINA: there is no alternative.[94] In an institution increasingly driven by market values that stress efficiency, productivity, and profitability, the very activity that would alert us to alternatives and make us aware of the absurdity of the neoliberal machinery, thinking, is systematically discouraged. It isn't efficient. It isn't productive. It isn't profitable. Survival in the neoliberal academic jungle requires not thinking but, above all, ruthless and cunning strategic action. Think about that. Then again, maybe we shouldn't. Someone else is gunning for that postdoc position too.

Notes

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[3] Polanyi, Karl. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2001).

[4] Ibid., xiii, from the forward by Joseph Stiglitz.

[5] Ibid., 60.

[6] Taylor Charles. "Closed World Structures" in Wrathall, Mark, ed. *Religion After Metaphysics* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 50.

[7] See the discussion of this in Ch 1. Polanyi also makes the same point, 172.

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[9] Ibid., 106.

[10] Ibid., 123.

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[14] Ibid., 19.

[15] Boltanski, Luc and Eve Chiapello. *The New Spirit of Capitalism*. (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2007), 201.

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[17] Ibid., 38.

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[22] Ibid., 202.

[23] Ibid., 103.

[24] Ibid., 110-126.

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[29] Ibid., 213.

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[33] Bauman, Zygmunt. *Modernity and Ambivalence*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 160.

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[35] Ibid., 3.

[36] Ibid., 13.

[37] Bauman, Zygmunt. *Postmodern Ethics* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1990), 84.

[38] Bauman, Zygmunt. *Modernity and Ambivalence*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 203.

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[40] Hans Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics of a Technological Age* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1985), 140.

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[43] Ibid., 226.

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[45] Ibid, 226.

[46] Bauman, Zygmunt. *Consuming Life*. (Malden, MA: Polity, 2007), 52.

[47] Ibid., 54.

[48] Ewen, Stewart. *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture*. (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2001).

[49] Bauman, Zygmunt. *Consuming Life*. (Malden, MA: Polity, 2007), 54.

[50] Ibid., 57.

[51] Ibid., 55.

[52] Ibid., 65.

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[55] Bauman, Zygmunt. *Does Ethics Stand a Chance in a World of Consumers?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 21.

[56] Ibid., 155.

[57] Ibid., 155.

[58] Ibid., 156.

[59] Ibid., 203.

[60] Ibid., 24.

[61] Ibid., 24.

[62] Bauman, Zygmunt. *Modernity and Ambivalence*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 3.

[63] Bauman, Zygmunt. *Does Ethics Stand a Chance in a World of Consumers?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 185.

[64] Bauman, Zygmunt. *The Individualized Society*. (Malden, MA: Polity, 2001).

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[70] Ibid., 282.

[71] Ibid., 289.

[72] http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/04/20134119156459616.html.

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77 Ibid., 57.

78 Bauman, Zygmunt. *Consuming Life*. (Malden, MA: Polity, 2007), 65.

79 Lynch, Kathleen. "Carelessness: A hidden doxa of higher education." *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 2010, 9: 55.

80 Tuchmann, Gaye. *Wannabe U: Inside the Corporate University*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 11.

81 Ibid., 41.

82 Ibid., 44.

83 Ibid., 61.

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90 Ibid., 208.

91 Nussbaum, Martha. *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).

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94 Bauman, Zygmunt. *Consuming Life*. (Malden, MA: Polity, 2007), 65.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS: THE STRATEGIC DISPOSITION

> *Socrates sat back from his computer. After two hours of researching potential journals and reading over the CVs of the editors in an effort to figure out which might be most receptive to his paper, he rubbed his temples and gave it up for now. His coffee was long cold, but he was still tempted to drink it. He glanced at the clock and grimaced - he needed to get going to his meeting.*
>
> *The last couple of hours hadn't been a total loss. Tom Cooper had sent him a draft copy of his new book. Perhaps some references to the forthcoming work of the well respected Cooper would help put his paper over the top. Also, he had found out Rita Rotheson would be at the SNGU conference next month. He had meant to see if she wanted to collaborate on a project. She would be a good person to be able to say he knew.*
>
> *As Socrates gathered up what he would need for the meeting, he noticed a tiny bright red bird he had never seen before hovering right outside his window seeming to look right at him. He paused for a moment. That is weird. What an interesting little bird, just looking in at me. Wow. I wonder...No, no time for that. Got to get to my meeting.*
>
> *Socrates finished gathering his things, adjusted his tie and closed the door behind him. The bird flew off.*

It is traditional for a dissertation to position itself by examining the current literature in a particular subfield, outlining an unresolved problem in that literature, and contributing to the resolution of that problem. This model, as we have seen, was prescribed by positivism and institutionalized in the positivist research university. In my case, I have chosen to examine a very large problem, the neoliberalization of the research university, and apply to it a unique lens: Hannah Arendt's underappreciated distinction between thinking and cognition. This distinction comes in her last unfinished text, but by reworking though her earlier works I have attempted to flesh out this distinction with special attention to the phenomena of thoughtless cognition. I argue when this lens is

focused it enables us to see how the neoliberal university is an institution that is deeply hostile to thinking and judgment. I see this hostility as a culmination of the impulses unleashed by positivist science which had institutionalized a method that not only aimed to replace judgment but also provided a framework that discouraged unproductive thinking in favor of productive cognition. Neoliberalism does not fundamentally change this framework. It adds to academia the demands of the market economy. I have attempted to show this has explosive results that are problematic for science but seem to be devastating for the humanities.

As a result of these processes the entire tenor of higher education has shifted radically. Education becomes less about learning and thinking and more about strategizing and playing the games of a particular discipline. Instead of a space free from pressures that potentially compromise thinking and learning, higher education is saturated with the ubiquitous need to commodify the self and build a portfolio.

When education is structured as a field of strategic action it becomes difficult to trust the integrity of the other players. In Chapter I, I gave some examples of sneaky strategies that can give one an advantage, such as: writing a letter to the professor after the last day of class but before grades have been issued thanking them for what has been an incredible class; expending extra effort on a first paper to create the initial impression of excellence and allow for less effort to put into future papers; skimming required readings and carefully managing the impression of having done all the work, etc. I've learned some new sneaky strategies from other students recently: sending out the same presentation proposal to multiple conferences and giving the same paper multiple times with slight changes (thus getting to add multiple lines to the CV instead of just one while

saving time by rehashing the same point); including conference presentations that could not be attended on the CV as if one did attend them; thoroughly researching the editors of a journal to find those most likely to accept a certain paper. None of these strategies are cheating, but many of them are certainly manipulative.

But strategies need not be sneaky or manipulative to be problematic. Students and academics are, of course, aware of how they will be measured and judged and respond accordingly. The GRE is one of the ways graduate programs attempt to measure the strength of incoming students. As such an entire industry has arisen around the GRE and increasing scores: guidebooks, seminars, courses—better scores guaranteed! Students can take the test multiple times and often do in their frantic efforts to meet minimum scores. Similarly, as academics are judged by the number of publications and the quality of the journals published in, the amount of presentations and the quality of the conferences, the amount of service, etc., they need to develop strategies for publishing more and in better journals, present at more and better conferences, etc. I have sat through multiple presentations and strategy sessions that aimed to help students win these games. The results, as I suggested in Chapter I, are students and academics like Swift's Laputans— with both eyes pointed in different directions—one eye always to the CV.

When the academic world becomes a stage, can the actors be trusted? How do I know if the student in office hours has questions because they actually are interested in the material or if they are angling for a better grade? Some students are frank that it is about the grades, but some students are more devious and attempt to give the impression that they are genuinely interested in the material in the hope that they will look better for being genuinely interested in the material. It becomes difficult to know who actually is

interested in the material and who is just seeking a grade. As a committee looks over the CV of a job candidate, can they trust that conference presentations were actually given and that they are actually different presentations or could it be that some of the presentations never really happened and that some are just the same paper given in different circumstances? Or perhaps all that really matters is that universities brand is visible in the conference programs of prestigious conferences.

I would suggest that *as motives become more obscure and difficult to assess, this actually redoubles the interest in the results: it difficult to know the intent of the individual, but results are results*. What comes out of this is a CV arms race: students and academics alike constantly scrambling to stay ahead of the competition. Neoliberalism tells us this kind of competition increases efficiency and encourages the best to rise to the top. I have argued it does so at the expense of thought. The more desperate the scrum the less time to think. The less time to think and the less appreciation for thinking, the less development of judgment. The odd result is a massive academic machine that is running on autopilot: thoughtless because thinking is denigrated and disincentivized for being unproductive and time consuming.

At this point, having arrived at the moment for conclusions, the typical question in an academic dissertation is: what should be done? I am not going to provide an answer to that question. Rather I am going to attempt to show the problems that arise in attempting to provide an answer to that question and how the question itself is inscribed in a problematic logic.

The first problem concerns any attempt to see thinking as a kind of solution. This presents a difficulty because thinking stands outside the problem-solution dialectic that belongs to cognition. If we treat thinking as a solution we risk turning it into cognition and thus losing the very thing we are extolling as a potential solution. And yet, thinking is, in a way, a kind of solution. This is a problem Arendt also ran into in her studies of thinking: how to talk about thinking in a way that doesn't reinscribe it into the problem-solution dialectic. More to the point, the importance of thinking implies a critique of the problem-solution framework: some things fall outside the dialectic of problem and solution. An obnoxious but consistent way to end this dissertation therefore would be to claim that the demand for solutions and conclusions that play such a big role in academia—the demand to add to knowledge and to be productive—are antithetical to thinking and to therefore end abruptly and unceremoniously with no conclusions at all.

A second problem, which is related to the first, concerns the relation of thinking and strategy. One does not have to accept that our current situation is as bad as I have presented it to accept Arendt's claim that thinking is one of the few things that can provide a check on logics or machinery that spin out of control. But what would it actually mean to accept that thinking is important and needed and it should be taken seriously as a check on runaway logics? It is hard to imagine how to incorporate the activity of thinking into a society driven by efficiency. Employees could take an hour break each day to think? Develop a cadre of full time professional thinkers whose task is to watch and think about what is happening?

Such suggestions seem preposterous, both from the perspective of efficiency and from the perspective of the thinker. The profit seeking company doesn't have time for

unproductive thinking and the thinker cannot turn thinking on and off on demand nor direct it strategically towards practical results. It seems thinking and strategy are separated by a large gulf. Looking from one side to the other seems like standing on the edge of a cliff and any attempt to bridge the gap seems to be a leap to one's death. But is this the case?

By far the greatest concern I have heard in discussing Arendt's distinction between thinking and cognition (which I have expanded to include strategic action) at conferences and with colleagues is that the strong distinction seems elitist. Disinterested thinking seems to smack of the ivory tower that stands aloof from the practical concerns of the masses. Many academics *want* to make a difference. They want to *make* things better. They have attempted to descend from the ivory tower and to them Arendt sounds like she wants to go back. Along with this comes the concern that the supposed gulf between thinking on one side and cognition and strategy on the other is too pure. Arendt seems to be claiming that it is possible to avoid strategy, but, it is often suggested, not only is strategy not as dangerous as Arendt implies, it is also omnipresent in human activity.

As we have seen, Higher education is particularly fraught with tension between disinterestedness and strategy. This comes from at least two sources: the necessity of freedom to study (skole) and the ideal of scientific objectivity. Let me deal all to briefly with each in turn.

In the last chapter I discussed how the word "school" comes from the Greek *skole*, which has to do with leisure time. To be able to study, requires being free from needing to engage in other activities. This means free from needing to get food, free from

needing to manage a home, free from needing to govern, free from any tasks that would get in the way of studying.

As we saw in chapter III, this kind of freedom, *skole*, was required to participate in the polis. This freedom was strongly protected and Arendt claims that while the polis needed to admit artisans to make the great works of art that commemorated the acts of those in the polis, those who were free to participate in the polis were deeply concerned with preventing the instrumental mentality of the artisans from infiltrating the polis. The suspicion concerns how the strategic approach born out of necessity would radically disrupt the freedom of the polis. This meant, of course, that to participate in the polis one had enough money to have others who would get food, make food, manage the home, make more money, etc. This was a very elitist form of social organization. The vast majority of society, including all women, could not participate in the polis.

To expand education from the elite minority to a whole society is an auspicious task. It requires massive financial support to help create the space in which one is supposed to be free to concentrate on studying. Many children do not get the support they need. But in higher education the issue is more complex, because of role the ideal of intellectual freedom plays in scientific study. This is the ideal of getting closer to the truth by being as unbiased as possible. The tensions around this ideal have shown up throughout this dissertation.

In both of these cases, strategy is viewed as problematic and against vulgar strategy there is an attempt to carve out a pure space. This pure space of disinterestedness and freedom reflects social privilege and the pretension of epistemic privilege. The results can be a flagrant elitism. No wonder thinkers like Bourdieu object to the power

behind "the scholastic fallacy."[1] Thinkers like Bourdieu and Foucault seek to unmask this pretension and show that despite the supposed purity and objectivity of these claims, power and strategy suffuse all human activity.

My claim that Arendt has discovered a space of disinterestedness, thinking, and my affirmation of her insights concerning the importance of it, are not meant to return to re-enthrone elitist institutions and practices. I agree that there are many situations in which we must seek solutions strategically. I am thinking for instance of the kinds of strategies mothers must use in raising children and the kinds of strategic expertise that mothers may develop as a result.[2] Here the strategies involved are clearly aimed at producing certain results with the child and, while there is a sense that the aim is to "manipulate" a situation, the negative connotations of "manipulate" do not seem entirely appropriate here as the intent is often to help and care for the child. This shows not all strategic actions are the same, while some may be morally wrong or suspect other strategic actions are morally praiseworthy. Clearly there are different valences and tones in different forms of strategic action, something we saw briefly with Bourdieu.[3] *The problem is not that Arendt treats cognition or strategic action without nuance, rather the problem is that strategy has been too uncritically accepted into academic activity*. In other words, I am suggesting that while strategic actions are inevitable and necessary to academic activity, the ideological neoliberal valorizing of strategy as an integral and good part of efficient business practice makes it difficult to distinguish the more problematic forms of strategy from the morally praiseworthy ones and therefore seems to say "anything goes". The business world offers much more room for strategy than has ever been tolerated in academia, even in the positivist era. Insisting that strategy is

omnipresent in human activity does not do justice to the dangers of the more problematic forms of strategic action—this is what Arendt can help us to see.

The issue is more than just what kinds of strategies are at stake. Even if this ratcheting up of pressure only encourages the proliferation of the less problematic forms of strategic action, it still leads to a fundamentally different way of relating to academic activity. To put the point in phenomenological terms, strategic action and thinking are different dispositions. By this I mean that thinking, cognition and strategic actions are different ways of relating to the world. The world is experienced differently when thinking than when strategizing. Objects and people show up differently depending on how we approach them. This is what I take it is made clear by Arendt's phenomenology of thinking. It is not simply a matter of there being rare moments of pure thinking while most other moments of thinking are mixed with cognition or strategic calculation: the phenomenology shows that thinking and cognition are qualitatively different and that the experience of each is indeed radically different. This is what the vignette about Socrates I wrote to open of this conclusions is meant to point out: a world suffused by the logic of productivity and navigated through strategic action is qualitatively different from a world suffused by wonder and thinking.

In chapter III we saw that the most valorized disposition during ancient Greece and throughout the medieval period was contemplation. Arendt thinks that the rise of modernity has ushered in an age of cognition and strategic action, which, she worries, will tend heavily towards being a thoughtless age. Even if we accept that strategic action is an inevitable part of human life, Arendt gives us good reason to worry about how the ubiquity of strategic action in modernity—the sweaty necessity to act efficiently and

always productively in a hypercompetitive capitalist world—normalizes a strategic disposition while foreclosing the space and time for thinking. Academia resisted this logic longer than most other modern institutions, but not anymore. With the rise of the neoliberal university we find a new academic: the academic that no longer thinks.

The problem of strategy seems to imply the need to be strategic about strategy. But to be strategic about strategy does not seem to escape the fundamental difficulties I am attempting to discuss. I do not introduce these problems to solve them—rather to point how difficult it is to present solutions when the critique is of the problem solution dialectic or to be strategic about strategy when the problem is strategy itself. These are tensions that any attempt to "solve" these issues would have to deal with.

My conclusions for "what should be done" should be clear by now: we need to leave some spaces and time for thinking. Academics need to challenge the neoliberalization of the university while remaining sensitive to the ways strategizing about practical forms of resistance fall into the same dialectical structure I have attempted to point to in these conclusions. Recovering thinking and judgment as a key part of this process would entail limiting the demands of productivity and recognizing the danger of strategic action. It would be unprofitable and inefficient. This alone makes it highly unlikely. Thinking and thinkers, few as there are, will likely have to come from outside academia and outside the logic of productivity of modernity.

Notes

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