There's a war out there, old friend, a world war, and it's not about who's got the most bullets; it's about who controls the information - what we see and hear, how we work, what we think. It's all about the information.

<div align="right">Cosmo, <u>Sneakers</u></div>

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

What Should a University Be?
An Essay in Academic Politics

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

CALGARY, ALBERTA

DECEMBER, 2001

ABSTRACT

This thesis raises the question "What should a university be?" The New Left consisting of deconstructionists/postmodernists and multiculturalists, and the New Right consisting of Neoliberals and Neoconservatives, are in dire conflict over answering this question. The politics of academes involve wars over who can define the cultural agenda. These four political ideologies divide the university into factions battling over the future of the **institution. After** looking at each of the contending views, the thesis sets out to explore what the clash of ideals have to tell us about ourselves and the university.

In loving memory of my father

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INTRODUCTION

The campus has become a battle ground for the New Left and the New Right. For this paper I have chosen the topic academic politics, and have limited myself to those issues which are characteristic of the New Left - deconstructionists and multiculturalists, and the New Right - neoconservatives and neoliberals. Thus, I hope to investigate the present day evaluations which affect our knowledge as a social process and a way of life.

What is at stake is the nature of the university itself, and its influence upon students. It is important to be clear about the ideals espoused. Neoconservatives want free thought for the elite and the teaching of classics to students. The neoliberals have characterized the university as career training and profitable research. Deconstruction would like to constantly raise problems and unsettle common thought. Multiculturalism has used minority studies, affirmative action, and political correctness to make the university a vehicle for social change.

These different paradigms conflict and practical choices affect and are affected by what we expect from a university. The four different political ideologies have their own ideals of the university. This thesis raises the guestion "What should a university be?" and looks at the four different answers. Its premise and conclusion is that this is a moral issue. The question involves the search for excellence and the way in which people treat each other. It is hoped that by viewing the con-

flicts in this way, some of the distorted and extreme rhetoric may be deflated and a better understanding of ourselves and the university attained.

CHAPTER ONE: THE SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION

The question dealt with throughout this thesis is "What should a university be?" This chapter begins with a few philosophical comments to create a context within which the question has practical and theoretical relevance. It then discusses Alasdair MacIntyre, who gives a historical explanation of why our ethical disputes seem to be unresolvable. He offers a way out of the quandaries of modern thought, through the asking of substantive questions about ourselves and our purposes. Charles Taylor qualifies what it means to ask the question. He explores the kind of answer for which we are looking, and what gets missed in the tradition of modern ethics. This chapter then concludes with some thoughts about how we are to proceed in looking at the different answers. A shift from an epistemological perspective to a moral one will add to the debate.

Epistemologists tend to center their discussions around the question "How do you know?" They look at propositions from an individual perspective in search of foundations from which they can build knowledge. Foundations suggest a stable Archimedian point, but as living beings we are always in process. John Rawls came up with the idea of wide reflective equilibrium, which means that as we collect new facts we adjust our beliefs as little as necessary to incorporate new information. This is a constant interaction between individual and general judgments. The

dialectic never ends, but we move on as best we can given our overall state of knowledge and uncertainty.

The epistemological point of view also tends to be individualistic. However, no man is an island, and knowledge also happens to be a social phenomenon. If it were not for interactions with people, books, and technology, would we have self-conscious "knowledge"? Some sociologists would say we would never acknowledge anything, even ourselves, if it were not for the presence of other people. Language is a social phenomenon without which we may not even be able to organize our thoughts into coherent form. Foucault has suggested that "'Truth[1] is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements." (Foucault 1984b p.74) A central institution for the processing of information is the university. It organizes and facilitates the pursuit of truth.

One thing that is important for organizing individual and collective behaviour is values. Values are not made up out of thin air, but are objective facts of social life. Max Weber is known for having introduced the fact/value dichotomy. According to him, facts may be true or false, but values are a matter of opinion. Yet values are tied up with knowledge. A limitless number of things can be said about anything. Choosing a topic, which perspective to take on it, and deciding what would persuade us to believe anything about it, all involve value judgments. The same thing can be described in different ways, and a useful

description may inescapably necessitate terms which are value loaded. People may believe that true knowledge is neutral and objective, and following the fact/value dichotomy, this may be defined as being value-free. Yet, objectivity is a goal for which we strive. To deny that objectivity is value-neutral does not mean we have to become cynical. Virtues are terms that have conditions as to their proper use which depend upon certain qualities actually existing. The choice of which set of values to adopt entails wide reflective equilibrium including interactions with others. This is one goal of the university.

In <u>After Virtue</u>, Alasdair MacIntyre gives a historical explanation of why discourse has been truncated, preventing us from rationally debating our most fundamental values. The first thing he notes about contemporary moral debates is their interminable character. This is not to say that they go on and on, but that there is no terminus, no rational way of securing agreement. Our debates are marked by three qualities. 1) They are conceptually incommensurable. Conclusions may validly follow premises, but when the argument is carried far enough the basic assumptions are exposed and the debate degenerates into assertion and counter-assertion. 2) They have the form of being impersonal. When asked "Why should I do such and such?" To answer "Because I wish it" would carry no force unless I am your superior, you love or fear me, or you want something from me. To respond with a claim that "it's your duty" would carry force independent of the relationship between speaker and listener. These two qualities

are paradoxical. There is the attempt to be objective and reasonable, but it collapses into a clash of arbitrary antagonistic wills. 3) Our moral terms have completely different genealogies. Terms that were coined in one historical context can change their meaning when used in a completely unrelated context. For MacIntyre, the historical element is very important.

Many contemporary philosophers believe that history is irrelevant, and treat arguments as if they were timeless. They would claim that interminability is not historically specific to our time, but true of all moral discourse. Emotivism states that evaluative claims are not empirical facts and are, therefore, reducible to preferences or feelings which are neither true nor false as their appeal is non-rational. Analytical philosophers have objected, claiming that logical moral reasoning does occur. A particular judgment is justified by refering to a universal rule, which is in turn justified by a more general rule, and so on. However, this reasoning cannot be infinite so it stops at a point for which no further reason can be given. Emotivism is thus culturally pervasive rather than merely theoretical.

How did we come to the state of emotivism in our culture? MacIntyre explains it as the failure of the Enlightenment project to justify morality. The Enlightenment writers agreed on the content of morality, which they inherited from the Christian past and which entailed a view of human nature that was not compatible with the assumptions of the modern age. Aristotle contrasted man as he happened to be with man as he could be, if he realized his

essential nature, his <u>telos</u>. Ethics was the science of practical reason, enabling man to move from potentiality to actuality. To go against ethical precepts was to be frustrated and incomplete, not realizing the rational happiness which was peculiar to Man. The religions of the Middle Ages merely added that Man was created to fulfill the law of God. The Age of Science rejected scholasticism, along with the concept of Reason as comprehending essence or teleology. The idea that Man had a true end for which he was created was dropped, leaving only the dichotomy of untutored nature and moral precepts. The link between these two, which was the rationale of ethics, was missing. It was then taken as a point of logic that no 'ought' could be derived from an 'is', since, in a valid argument, nothing could appear in the conclusion that was not already in the premise. Yet we can derive from "he is a captain" the fact that "he ought **to do** what a captain ought to do." What enables us to go from an 'is' to an 'ought' is the use of functional concepts. We can go from "this watch keeps accurate time" to "this is a good watch" because the function of a watch is to keep time. 'Man' used to be a function-al concept for the classical and medieval traditions. He had an essential nature with a corresponding purpose. Thus, statements about the good of something used to be seen as factual. 'Man' as a functional concept was not merely theoretical but rooted in his social roles. To be virtuous was to be a good citizen. It was only when the individual was seen as self-defined prior to and apart from all social roles that 'Man' ceased to be a functional

concept. This transformation was seen as liberating man from the religious superstitions which justified the hierarchies and hereditary roles of traditional society.

The Enlightenment chose to find a secular basis for morality. Utilitarianism assumed that the nature of man was to seek the most pleasure for the least amount of pain, and the goal of the reformer was to promote general welfare. The problem was that pleasure was heterogenous and incommensurable. We were left with no practical guide to make qualitative distinctions and tell us which pleasures we should seek. Kant thought that insofar as man was rational, he would be logically committed to the freedom to reason for himself. Thus we had the right to autonomy. Yet, rights, far from being universal, have appeared only lately in our vocabulary. At the time they were introduced they were justified as "self-evident truths". However, **according to** MacIntyre, we can no longer accept self-evident truths in debate. He quotes Ronald Dworkin as replying that the inability to prove the existence of natural rights does not mean that they do not exist. According to MacIntyre, utility and rights are fictions which claim to supply us with rational criteria but in fact do not. Protests used to promote a particular vision of Man and were only consequentially a criticism of present conditions. Now they are only negative reactions to the invasion of someone's rights in the name of someone else's utility. Since rights and utility were coined in completely different historical contexts to serve incommensurable purposes, it is no wonder that arguments between

the two have no means of being rationally settled. Emotivism, therefore, has become the bottom line of modern discourse, and moral debate has thus degenerated into the task of unmasking the arbitrary will of the opponent. Having lost a vision of the nature of man which included an understanding of his proper function, we are left without a rational recourse to arbitrate social conflict. Neoconservatives like Bennett and Bloom think the universities need to regain a vision of the greater good to help us prioritize our conflicts and situate the different disciplines within a coherent context. A university must contribute something unique to our society that it cannot get anywhere else. The university needs a purpose, a function which defines it and tells us what it should be. This could mean going above and beyond the call of duty, furthering the virtue characteristic of a particular institution or universities in general.

MacIntyre goes on to make a case for reviving virtue theory, which has its roots in the pre-modern thought of Ancient Greece (Aristotle) and Medieval Christendom (St. Thomas Aquinas). This is not relevant to this thesis. What is important is how the modern moral philosophies of utilitarianism and Kantianism have the effect of reducing ethics to subjective emotion; a game of assertion and counter-assertion without any recourse to a means of arbitrating claims. A substantive view of man as having a purpose and a function, according to MacIntyre, would dispel the aporias of modern thought. A return to premodern ethics, such as virtue theory, might enable us to discuss the intrinsic nature of

our values and the concrete ends for which we should strive. In "Ethics of Inarticulacy," Charles Taylor argued that modern philosophy quite actively debates what commands our obedience, but is curiously silent about what the good is in itself. He gives a new imperative for exploring and articulating our moral feelings; to inspire us and thereby empower us to live up to our ideals - what we love and want to be. Heidegger said that more fundamental than knowledge is our being-in-the-world. What we choose to learn is affected by what we care about, the ongoing projects and concerns we already have. Ontology is prior to epistemology.

The modern obsession with epistemology assumed the question "how did we know when something was good?" had to be answered before we could describe what was ideal. Correspondingly, modern philosophy conceived correct thought as a procedure by which we could figure out for ourselves what **was** right. For the utilitarians it was rational maximization. For the Kantians the definitive procedure of practical reason was that of universalization. Supposedly, if one followed the right method, one would arrive at the truth. A more substantive evaluation, however, would judge the method by the result. If a move from A to B resulted in identifying and resolving a contradiction or confusion that A relied on, or acknowledged an important factor ignored by A, then one could say that such a move was an improvement. This would not mean abstaining from our feelings but grounding our views on our strongest intuitions, where these have successfully met the challenge of proposed alternatives.

According to Taylor, the procedural character of contemporary philosophy has given a rather narrow scope to moral thought. It has been concerned with what we ought to do, rather than what it is good to be or love. There has been a drive in modern moral philosophy to systematize all obligations to a small list of "basic reasons." A basic reason is such that we affirm an action as necessary because its description entails an identity of the act with certain properties that confer an obligatory status on the act. Utilitarians and Kantians have organized their philosophies around one basic reason: happiness and the categorical imperative. Intuitionists are anti-reductionist and more willing to allow for a variety of goods (including acknowledging incommensurable geneologies). Basic reasons are external to the act they command, while articulating moral intuition is saying what is internal to the act which **makes** it good. We are trying to explain the point about what we do. Someone alien to a foreign country might learn the rules of local etiquette without understanding why they're important. It is one thing to argue that I must treat you appropriately because that means respecting your rights. It is quite another to explain what it is about humans that is worthy of respect and what it is about the appropriate action that makes it one of respect. Our moral feelings are more than mere gut reactions, they entail a moral ontology. There is nothing that makes an object a fit one for nausea other than we feel nauseated about it. A moral sense, on

the other hand, makes a claim about the object our feelings are about, which can be misguided.

Spelling out the implicit point of our activities has implications for the proceduralist. Compelled by the deepest values, such as freedom from bias, proceduralists have denied that they already presuppose an intuition about what was good, which was supposed to be the <u>result</u> of correct method. If we accept that the good is determined by rational debate, we must implicitly hold that rational debate is an incomparably higher good which confers obligation on the result. To couch this in terms of simply finding the truth is to ignore the unarticulated background values it presupposes. Putting into words our most fundamental intuitions in a way that is compelling is quite a challenge! However, the value of articulating our deepest moral intuition is not only that it makes us **clearer about** what inspires us, but that by inspiring us it empowers us to live up to these ideals. This is very important for universities in becoming institutions of excellence.

When asking the question "What should the university be?" we are not saying that the university <u>has</u> to be a certain way, for whatever reason. We are inquiring into what brings excellence into the quality of academic life. To view the university as a method for getting what we want is to miss the point of seeing what is valuable about it in itself. What is it about the academic life which makes it worth living? Answering this

question should tell us what a university should be, hopefully

inspiring us.

Hilary Putnam has put the argument of this chapter rather

succinctly ...

> Any choice of a conceptual scheme presupposes values ...
> because no conceptual scheme is a mere "copy" of the
> world. The notion of truth itself depends for its content
> on our standards of rational acceptability, and these in
> turn rest on and presuppose our values. Put schematically
> and too briefly, I am saying that theory of truth presup-
> poses theory of rationality which in turn presupposes our
> theory of the good. "Theory of the good," however, is not
> only programmatic, but is itself dependent upon assump-
> tions about human nature, about society, about the
> universe (including theological and metaphysical assump-
> tions). We have to revise our theory of the good (such as
> it is) again and again as our knowledge has increased and
> our world-view has changed. (Putnam 1982 p.215)

Truth, reason, and values interact in a self-correcting way

producing wide reflective equilibrium. This is a way of keeping a

normative ideal of truth without having to have foundations. It

neither succumbs to relativism nor hopes for a transcendental

justification. It is an alternative to both postmodern decon-

structions and analytic systems.

This thesis is neither postmodern nor analytic, but her-

meneutical. In describing what a university is, or should be, a

formal definition is not sought; we are looking at different

connotations. Following Hans-Georg Gadamer, in trying to under-

stand the different ideologies I have tried to place myself

within their perspectives to see how they could be right, even

advancing their arguments where they seemed to need it while

remaining true to the logic of their discourse. The aim of this thesis is not to argue a basic point systematically, but to explore different ideologies. Deconstructionists would try to disrupt our intuitions, and analytic philosophers would try to use language to rigorously prove some fundamental premise. The goal of this thesis is neither critical technique nor pure abstract theory, but practical philosophy. Understanding different points of view, the way in which people think and interact, engenders a reflective awareness of what makes up the university. This is practical philosophy since reflexive awareness helps to shape the university. We have to live with other people. Understanding where they are coming from, we can adapt our behaviour to be appropriate, thereby affecting the life of the institution. Understanding ourselves and becoming more aware of what we are doing, we can assess our motives and ask whether our behaviour promotes the values by which we are trying to live. What makes academic life worth living is this quest for mutual understanding.

In conclusion, as MacIntyre has so deftly illustrated, values are not simply arbitrary. They have a reality that is integral to the theoretical enterprise. They are more than rules to live by, they contain a world view. The significance of this is that this world view can and must be the subject of rational discourse. In this thesis, I will examine the dominant values that have influenced debates about the university in the last two decades. I hope to reveal both the strengths and weaknesses of

the various approaches.

CHAPTER TWO: THE NEOLIBERAL IDEAL

Neoliberalism favors the free market and believes that the true purpose of the university is career training, lifelong upgrading, and profitable research. It is the least substantive of the various ideals, since its overriding concern is the usefulness of the university for the new economy. This chapter contrasts neoliberalism with the more substantive neoconservatLsm, it looks at the neoliberal ideal of the university, which is minimalist, and offers a neoconservative critique.

Neoliberalism vs. Neoconservatism

Neoconservatism is often used interchangebly with the New Right. However, there are two strands to the New Right, fiscal conservatism and social conservatism, or neoliberalism and neoconservatism respectively. The former was a reaction to Keynesian economics. The latter a reaction to the Sixties.

John Maynard Keynes explained that we got out of the depression through organizing the economy to back the war effort. The leading role of government, he thought, could be continued after the war. Government could put people back to work through redistributing income. Having more people with more money would increase demand for consumable goods. The increased demand would stimulate business and a policy of easy money could help invest-

ment. A policy of easy money involving low interest rates could result in inflation, but this was thought to be a trade-off for low unemployment. Thus, a country with a closed economy could control its growth through fiscal and financial policies. Unfortunately, during the Seventies, inflation and unemployment rose together at an alarming rate. Milton Friedman, the father of monetarism, thought nothing could be done to affect the "natural" rate of unemployment, but inflation could be slowed down by raising interest rates. Stabilizing the value of assets would encourage investment by making people feel their wealth was more secure. Another new conservative theory, supply side economics, thought that lowering taxes could be an incentive for consumption to go up and for business to expand, possibly increasing revenue at the same time. With low tax revenues and high interest rate costs the government might run a deficit creating a debt problem. To pay for the debt, public assets were sold and/or privatized, while social programs like health, social security, and education were cut back. It was thought that the discipline of the market was more efficient in solving problems than the government, which should be run like a business. These programs would make a country more competitive in the new global economy.

During the Eighties, under the presidency of Ronald Reagan, and the Prime Ministership of Margaret Thatcher and Brian Mulroney, the economic policies of the New Right were put in place, and with the collapse of communism it seemed that capitalism had won. This new economic environment was, by the media and

population, often called neoconservative, but it should have properly been called neoliberal. One of the inspirations for this movement was Friedrich von Hayek, an Austrian economist who moved to Britain during the war. His book <u>The Road to Serfdom</u> (1944) condemned a planned economy on the grounds that it threatened individual rights and freedoms. In his book, he explicitly called for capitalism to go back to the classical liberal political economy of Adam Smith. Hayek thought that Keynesian economics was a slippery slope toward totalitarianism.

Another guru of the New Right was Robert Nozick, who said that taxes were theft. He drew his inspiration from the liberal political philosopher John Locke, who said that we constructed society as a contract to protect presocial/natural property rights. These liberals, Smith and Locke, believed in <u>laissez faire</u> economics. In the Twentieth Century, this form of liberal-ism was left behind for the new reform liberalism of John Dewey, John Maynard Keynes, and John Rawls. They believed in state action to correct injustices which inhibit individual growth. Left alone, the market would create conditions where not everyone had a chance to live a humane life. The fiscal conservatives of the New Right wanted to return to the good old days of <u>laissez faire</u> free-market liberalism. Hence, they are properly called neoliberals, not neoconservatives.

Neoconservatism proper was an intellectual development derived from Irving Kristol, and inspired by Leo Strauss. It was not an economic program, but a moral crusade. Neoconservatives

were strong on law and order, including capital punishment. It was a backlash against the counterculture of the Sixties; New Age occultism, drug use, promiscuity, feminism, gay liberation, Black power, etc. Unlike old European conservatism which was sceptical of change and demanded deference to tradition, Kristol thought that since America did not have a history of hereditary status, it had to rely on a creed or civic religion for patriotism.

Following Leo Strauss, neoconservatives have preferred classical over modern political philosophy because the classics recognized the importance of religion for establishing a basis for civic morality. As the backbone of social stability, Neocon-servatives cherish family values, which they believe are threat-ened by a gay liberation and feminism that seems to promote alternative life styles, divorce, and abortion. They are also against birth control information in schools because it seems to legitimize promiscuity. Instead they would like to see prayer in schools. Feeling that modern media are biased in a secular liberal direction, neoconservatives have sometimes been vulgarly populist — witness Rush Limbaugh. Two of neoconservative's greatest supporters are the Christian Coalition and the Moral Majority.

Neoconservatism and neoliberalism can work in harmony. They are in agreement on condemning the welfare state. But they can also come into conflict. Neoconservatives regard liberal in-dividualism to be selfish, and think it should be replaced with community. Freedom is suspected to be nothing more than self-

indulgence, which should be replaced by duty. In short, liberal-
ism creates a permissive society instead of a virtuous republic.

The Anti-versity

For the   neoliberals the ideal university should be
completely independent and autonomous from government financial
aid with   the dependency and external control which it engenders.
The taxpayer should   not be burdened by the cost of running
useless university projects with the waste that comes from
government bureaucracy. The university should depend for most of
its funding on the students who are the ones profiting from the
service, while flexible university-industry partnerships should
fund research that will pay off in the long run. This would make
the universities more competitive in catering to the desires of
consumers and the needs of the labour market. Since the market is
the most efficient means of allocating scarce resources, it
should set priorities for the university, not special interests.
Claims to a "higher purpose" often defined as a liberal education
is a luxury we can do without; it is merely the arrogance of the
intellectual, Left or Right. The goal is to cut down on redundan-
cy, reduce cost, increase accessibility, and streamline services,
while maximizing accountability and consumer freedom at the same
time. Thus, universities must be run as a lean mean efficient
machine that is competitive in the new information age and the
global marketplace.

Tim Luke gives a compelling picture of the University of Phoenix. The rationale for this university is that the traditional university based on the accumulation of knowledge and the mass production model of education is too cumbersome for the age of information. The new information highway uses knowledge as a tool for practical application by very short-run corporate outsourcings, task-specific government contracts, or entrepreneurial venture capital start ups. Temporary ad hoc work teams like consulting groups, think tanks, government bureaus, industrial labs, research centers, or advocacy coalitions are formed for specific tasks which involve the awareness of scholarly discussions but are geared to specific problems like environmental protection, crime prevention, or infrastructure reengineering, Since there is no need for centralized accumulation of knowledge they can remain mobile using fax, e-mail, phone, or the internet to communicate. There is no need for campuses with large buildings and even larger overhead costs. What is needed is high-level information that is transdisciplinary, uses a variety of methods, and remains timely, concrete, and applied. As June Maul, the AT&T School of Business' development director has said, "our students do not want to hear about hypothetical stuff out of a book. They want what is relevant to their real-world jobs." (Luke 1998 p.25)

The traditional university may not have a monopoly on accredited degrees. If business doesn't get what it wants from the institution it will get it elsewhere. There is no loyalty to the idea of the university per se. The university is only one

recognized avenue among others for the circulation and certification of information. The University of Phoenix was created to meet the needs of this environment:

> It has a narrow practical curriculum, a nondisciplinary structure, no library resources, no research commitments, a flat, small central administration and only a part-time semi-professional faculty. Moreover, it runs on a for-profit basis. (Luke 1998 p.25)

Its staff have graduate degrees with real jobs in the area of their expertise. Both staff and students are expected to be computer literate and have access to their own computers and modem equipment. With the flexibility of being able to access the school from a hotel room, airport, office, or home at any time of the day, the school has the sixth largest student body of all private universities in the US. Eighty percent of them are business majors.

> To achieve excellence, it will be necessary to do <u>much less</u>, not always do more. Instead of expanding degree programs, hiring more faculty, enrolling additional students, buying more books, erecting new buildings, or elaborating disciplinary frameworks, the university of the 21st century often will be seen as effective only if it can discontinue degree programs, fire more faculty, enroll fewer students, buy fewer books, shutter existing facilities, and consolidate disciplines into more compact units. Such moves following those in pre-informational manufacturing and services, will succeed only by the university outsourcing its services, downsizing its offerings, flattening its hierarchies and trimming its personnel. (Luke 1998 p.27)

The bottom line is that in a time of fiscal restraint, all this saves money while enabling the university to expand revenue. The

philosophy of 'do more with less' would eliminate many elements which characterize a university. We need to decide if what is left is worth calling a university.

Zero Tolerance: Hot Button Politics in Canada's Universities by Peter C. Emberley examines the conflict between social and fiscal conservatism, which is to say, neoconservatism and neoliberalism. Inspired by the conservative philosopher Michael Oakshott, Emberly has criticized virtual universities, the elimination of tenure, and the income-contingent loan program. The ideal of this critique is in line with the neoconservatism of Bloom and Bennett which promotes free thought for the elite and teaching the classics.

The prize on the neoliberal table is "alternative delivery mechanisms". "Modularized curricula" and "outsourcing" would cut down on redundancy, reduce costs, increase accessibility, and broaden the financial base. Students from a number of universities could tune in on large-screen colour monitors with directional microphones and automatic cameras simulating classroom discussion with renowned experts. They could also take the tapes to watch by themselves whenever they want and correspond with the experts via e-mail. Remote testing would also be incorporated into such self-directed hypermedia learning. The corporate Right feel this could revolutionize teaching through flexible university-industry partnerships catered to the needs of the labour market.

Putting aside the enthusiasm for new gadgets, Emberley says there are some troubling questions about how this approach will affect the culture of the university. Understanding is not the same as information management. Will the student experience be impoverished without the face-to-face interaction with a live professor as a role model imparting intellectual passion? Public discussion can be useful for testing private theories, under-standing, and interpersonal skills. Students often get creative ideas for their papers from the inconsequential things others have said in passing. Informal conversations with teachers and other students is important. The cry against duplication misses the point that courses in different institutions are not the same. Different teachers offer a variety of perspectives. The whole fiscal agenda is impersonal and can undermine collegiate community. Does the university's purpose transcend the interests of the market? What would be left that would make the university unique as an educational institution? Corporate financing can come with strings attached, such as a tight control on the sharing of knowledge. The projects they support may seem trivial, such as the yellowing of paper or the destruction of timber by insects. To many people the commercialization of highbrow culture would be Philistine; a complete indifference to what a university should be.

Cutting back on what little highbrow culture is already offered would also be Philistine. One of the hated obstacles for governments looking to terminate academic staff and cut programs

for financial reasons has been tenure. Criticized as lifelong job
security protecting the deadwood, it has come under hot debate.
Emily Carasco has offered the defence —

> Tenure is a status granted to those professors who have
> demonstrated excellence in their particular fields after a
> five- to seven- year probationary period. As recent
> examples prove, tenure does not protect those who neglect
> their duties. It protects the right of professors to
> pursue research in what may be unpopular areas and publish
> their findings free from fear of reprisal from govern-
> ments, corporations or other interests, (as guoted in
> Emberley 1996 p.63)

Tenure dates back to Seventeenth Century Oxford and Cambridge,
and   was   linked   to   academic freedom in late Nineteenth Century
Germany to protect the universities from the reigning powers.
Unfortunately, there are those, who after the customary probation
period, abuse their privilege, while unemployed scholars with a
proven record of excellent teaching and published material have
no chance of getting an interview. However, Mary Pavelka has
complained that this view is not fair. The average academic works
fifty to sixty hours a week.

> It distresses me because I know there is a public percep-
> tion that university professors are somehow underworked
> and overpaid. That couldn't be farther from the truth.
> What people don't realize is that professors are working
> all day, every day, weekends, evenings. It's never
> finished. [Tenure] only guarantees that you get to
> continue jumping through the hoops. Once you get tenure,
> the pace, the demands increase. The university expects
> more of you. (as quoted in Emberly 1996 p.66)

A public that demands instant gratification often has a narrow
view of the useful and satisfying and makes rash decisions on

priorities. It cannot understand the unaccountable pace and uncertain wanderings of scholarship, which needs to question conventional wisdom and go over the same ground time and again. However, the real threat, according to Emberley, comes from the pressure to conform to one's peers. Those who work outside the approved canons of scholarship, who are not considered cutting edge, or who do not follow the partyline, need tenure as protection against the scholarly culture itself. The complaints by governments about their lack of power have been denounced as misplaced. They forget that ...

> for over a decade nearly 85 percent of collective agreements in Canada's universities have had program redundancy and financial stringency clauses, making it possible to revoke tenure when necessary. Second, these same agreements explicitly give power to university management to fire tenured faculty for neglect of duties and incompetence. Tenure does not mean an academic cannot be fired. [However,] were it not for the nearly inflexible security established through the [faculty] associations' collective agreements, presidents would indeed have the power to fire delinquent faculty. (Emberley 1996 p.72)

While in theory it may be possible to dismiss a professor, the faculty associations will fight for any of its members regardless of merit. This makes the process extremely difficult since the associations can be very powerful. Tenure remains a controversial issue, a thorn in the side of those who want to cut back.

With the developing fear of deficits and debt, there has been large scale retrenchment of public services due to cutbacks. One of the funding programs favored by the neoliberal Right is the ICLP (income-contingent loan program) proposed by Milton

Friedman. It is in a sense a user fee that would shift financing from government grants to student loans. The argument is that since students are the ones benefiting from university, they should be the ones paying the cost, not the taxpayer. It is a way of privatizing the public debt. The burden is shifted from the past generation (who benefited from lower rates) to the present generation. The old system had students pay a set rate regardless of income and had forced a number of them into bankruptcies and defaults. The ICLP would not demand payment until the graduate was earning a high enough salary, though the interest would still accumulate. There would also be exceptions for special needs and single mothers, for which the paying students would make up the difference. The loans would be given from the federal government to the students directly and they would spend it on the university of their choice. This would increase consumer and federal control, making sure the money was spent on education. The institutions would be forced to compete for funding, making their programs more competitive, catering to the desires of consumers. The banks would also gain more control over repayment. Students would pay back regularly on schedule rather than diffusely over a lifetime through taxes. It could be within the bank's power to refuse loans for those enrolled in high risk programs like the arts and humanities.

As funding shifts from the government to the consumer, tuition fees could rise to full cost. The <u>Globe and Mail</u> has congratulated Queen's and the University of Toronto executive

training program for just these measures. Stating that it makes them truly independent and autonomous from government patronage and control. Students afraid of the cost should be encouraged to go elsewhere.

> Advocates of ICLP see such contributions - an informed political citizenry, guardians of Canada's heritage, a population with intellectual horizons that lead to more mature use of leisure time - only as externalities and not to be taken into the equation, (as quoted in Emberley 1996 p.180)

The neoliberal ideal would undermine the autonomy of the academic institution. The ICLP would give the student/consumer and banks more influence over the priorities of the university since the university would be more dependent on them for funding. The ideology is that the market should dictate the allocation of resources. However, this would rely on the student's decision, even when he or she may not have enough experience to know what he or she really wants or needs. The university's guidance would be prey to the fickle whims of popularity. If the only purpose of the university is to train people for careers and the labour market, what would make it different from any other educational institution? Is the university a business like any other, or is there a substantive difference? For neoliberals any claim to a higher mission would be the arrogance of the intellectual, Right or Left. The university cannot afford such luxuries, and they would get in the way of its real directive: training and profit-able research. The market should set priorities, not special

interests. It is just not profitable to ponder, contemplate, and question our spiritual motives. Even if we did grant that the university is more than just a business, it would still have to face the bottom line and be fiscally responsible.

Emberly criticized the ICLP because it   shifted   the university from a public to a private good. A virtual university would miss the human element of a classroom.   The informal face-to-face contact of teaching inspires understanding and offers a role model, and is not reducible to information management. Corporate partnerships limit the circulation of information, trivialize research, and can lead to a conflict of interests. Tenure   is   security   against academic politics and short-sighted demands which seem urgent but are really just passing fads. According to Emberly, tenure should be tougher to get, but it is needed. Catering to the market would undermine the autonomy of the institution. The big philosophical questions which can affect the quality of the university would be considered a waste of time, and would therefore not be contemplated. Because it is so minimalist, and lacks the important social qualities desired in an institution of higher education, the neoliberal university is the "anti-versity."

CHAPTER THREE: THE NEOCONSERVATIVE IDEAL

The opposite of the anti-versity is the neoconservative ideal which favors tradition, and teaching the classics. It demands the autonomy of academic thought from social fads and political agendas. This chapter will first look at Allan Bloom's critique of the damage he thinks has been done to the university since the radical Sixties, and then look at William Bennett's critique of recent trends in education.

Bloom's Concern for Free Thought

Allan Bloom's The Closing of the American Mind (1987) was a number one bestseller and became the classic reference for every neoconservative critic that followed. According to Bloom, the university and liberal democracy were the result of the Enlightenment's battle against superstition, in its quest to forge a rational society. "The free university exists only in liberal democracy, and liberal democracies exist only where there are free universities." (Bloom 1987 p.259) From the death of Socrates to the rise of Fascism and Communism, intellectuals could not say things that were disloyal to the partyline of the ruling regime. Only in liberal democracies were they allowed to follow free thought wherever it might lead. This was because the

rulers were sold on the idea that people would freely dedicate themselves to a social order that was rational. Instead of being told by religion or government what sacrifices people ought to make, they were free to think for themselves, rationally maximizing their utility. Science was to produce the technology which catered to our desires, while the social sciences were to produce more sound and efficient policies. These were to be byproducts of the academic freedom to pursue thought for its own sake.

Bloom feared there were dangers for free thought within a democracy. As the traditional sources of authority were abandoned in America, Toqueville thought that men and women would turn to common opinion for guidance on issues that were beyond them. Given that in a democracy, no one's opinion would be deemed naturally superior to anyone else's, the only appeal would be to the majority, which seemed right especially when there was little or no opposition. With everyone thinking like everyone else, there would be a lack of material on which to base a critique. The ability to assess ourselves and make improvements would be impoverished by a narrow understanding of alternatives. The pressing problems of the regime of the day could make the critical distance needed for the theoretical life seem like a negligence of social duties. The university should protect the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, free from the popular demands which could kill criticial thought; to preserve the great thoughts of exceptional men that are needed to keep healthy scepticism alive. We must not stunt the human potential for a

higher life of contemplating the perennial questions. The univer-
sity must protect its autonomy from the desire to be "more
useful, more relevant, more popular."

The common enemy of the neoconservatives seem to be the
Sixties. Bloom was no exception. While he was at Cornell, the
faculty gave in to the demands of a few black students who
threatened the lives of some professors with the use of guns. The
staff gave in to the mob because they had lost the sense that the
university had a higher purpose to protect. As Bloom saw it, the
students sensed this weakness and took advantage of the cowardice
of the staff who did not want trouble. This was coupled with a
moral servility that justified the coercion as the need to right
the history of injustices done to blacks. Despite all their hype
about the sanctity of academic autonomy and freedom, they did not
call the police but legitimized the students' protest. "The
faculty voted overwhelmingly under the gun to capitulate to out-
rageous demands that it had a few days earlier rejected." (Bloom
1987 p.317) At that moment, the university became just another
institution, tenure only meant job security, and freedom of
speech meant that obscene gestures were given the same protection
as science. The distinction between highbrow and lowbrow culture
collapsed, and the loss could be unrecoverable. In the name of a
self-actualization that would be unique to the individual,
students were allowed to do their own thing, and one academic
requirement after another was dropped. The vision of what an
educated person should be died.

One of Bloom's greatest satisfactions as a teacher happened during the Cornell chaos. He was one of a group of professors who refused to teach until the guns were off campus and order was restored. However, he had a class of freshmen who were intensely involved in Plato's <u>Republic</u> and wanted to finish it. So they continued to meet informally. "These students were rather contemptuous of what was going on, because it got in the way of what they thought it important to do. ... They really <u>looked down</u> from the classroom on the frantic activity outside, thinking they were privileged, hardly a one tempted to join the crowd." (Bloom 1987 p.332) The experience inspired Bloom because these few students would rather study the classics than partake in the fray of activism which seemed so important to everyone else. It validated Bloom's desire that higher learning should be of greater importance than being "more useful, more relevant, more popular."

According to Bloom, the university seems to have lost its mission and higher purpose. We do not even raise the question "What is a liberal education?" anymore. We do not organize the disciplines into a unity because hierarchizing them may ruffle some feathers. It is easier to let students choose their profession, taking the required courses and whatever options catch their fancy without any coherent guidance. The university is now just a disparate smattering of specialties vying for the students' patronage. The vision of a liberal education is shattered. This was proven by the different reactions of the natural

sciences, social sciences, and humanities in response to the demands that they change their standards and their content. "There was no solidarity in defense of the pursuit of truth." (Bloom 1987 p.347) The natural sciences did not feel themselves to be involved. "It was the absolute independence of their work from the rest of the university's activity, and their trust that theirs is the important work, that made them indifferent." (Bloom 1987 p.348) There was criticism of their collusion with the military-industrial complex, but the scientists were able to distance themselves from the use to which their results were put, saving the autonomy of their research and passing the buck for change onto the other disciplines. The humanities fully supported the revolution, but their expertise in old books was considered to be useless and irrelevant for creating the new future. The humanities still tried to deal with the big questions, but its material was the refuse left behind by the sciences. No one read them anymore to find out if they were true. This is why post-modernism found a home there, and could give priority to creative interpretations over accuracy to the text. Everything is creative interpretation, "there is both no text and no reality to which the texts refer. A cheapened interpretation of Nietzsche liber-ates us from the objective imperatives of the texts that might have liberated us from our increasingly low and narrow horizon." (Bloom 1987 p.379) Thus the humanities have nothing positive to contribute toward the vision and unity of liberal education. The social scientists were overwhelmed with pressures and oppor-

tunities to be the vanguard of change, but it was here that some demanded that this not be allowed to upset their objectivity, their academic freedom should be protected. Appreciating that they could learn from those with whom they disagreed moved them to join together, fighting and protesting the passions which could undermine their scholarship. The social sciences may seem to have a general outline of their field with a systematic ordering of the disciplines, but they see themselves as indepen- dent rather than integrated. For example, psychology may critic- ize the formal assumptions of economics for being unrealistic, while anthropology criticizes the free market for undermining happiness and community, etc. Thus they do not offer much hope for the unity and vision of liberal education.

Dropping the question "What is liberal education?" leaves a number of other questions unanswered. What is inherently good about the university? What are the academic virtues that need to be nurtured? What makes it different from other educational institutions? Bloom thought it was the free pursuit of truth for its own sake, the contemplation of the big questions. However, he is pessimistic about the vocation of the university today. There seems to be no overarching vision coordinating and integrating the different studies. There is even a remarkable lack of solidarity. The university seems to be powerless, ready to be victimized by the Philistinism of the New Left. Thus, we have the "closing of the American mind."

Bennett's Appeal for a Humanistic Education

On November 28, 1984 The Chronicle of Higher Education
published an issue which included William Bennett's "To Reclaim a
Legacy: Text of Report on Humanities in Higher Education". It was
the opening salvo fired by the neoconservatives against multicul-
turalism and deconstruction. Even before Allan Bloom's The
Closing of the American Mind in 1987, it set the tone for
succeeding conservative polemics by identifying the crisis of the
universities.

"Between 1966 and 1986 - a time when the number of
Bachelor Degrees awarded in [the U.S.] increased by 88 percent-
the number of Bachelors Degrees awarded in the humanities
declined by 33 percent." Bennett thought this revealed a decline
in the quality of higher education. The dropping enrollment in
the humanities was the result of the way undergraduate and
introductory courses were taught. These classes were often taught
by graduate students, who are cheap labor that enable the
professors to devote more time to their research. For Russell
Jacoby (1994) the problem was not in the quality of material or
teaching that was offered. Enrollment in the humanities had gone
down while everything else had gone up because the rationale for
the university had changed. Knowledge had become a valuable tool
for society, ensuring a profitable career. Unfortunately the
humanities had been stigmatized as useless leisure that wouldn't
secure a job for the student in the future. Students in the

humanities were often asked what they were going to do when they got out into the real world after graduation. It was not the way the humanities had been taught, but that they were seen as a risky investment which made them something to be avoided.

This is a great loss, since the humanities are of central importance. They include____

> the best that has been said, thought, written, and otherwise expressed about the human experience. The humanities tell us how men and women of our own and other civilizations have grappled with life's enduring, fun-damental questions. ... These questions are not simply diversions for intellectuals or playthings for the idle. As a result of the ways these questions have been answer-ed, civilizations have emerged, nations have developed, wars have been fought, and people have lived contentedly or miserably. (Bennett 1984 p. 17)

Since the humanities are so valuable, a lack of awareness in this area is very serious.

> It is simply not possible for students to understand their society without studying its intellectual legacy. If their past is hidden from them, they will become aliens in their own culture, strangers in their own land. (Bennett 1984 p.21)

The stakes seem to be rather high as they involve the quality of people's lives as citizens contributing to the health of their society as a whole. Bennett proclaims that we need to restore the humanities to their central position within a weD rounded educa-tion.

A politically charged question is what should the univer-sity include in its curriculum? The coherence of the curriculum

has been eroded, according to Bennett, because we've allowed students to decide for themselves what they want to take. Because of a "lack of nerve and faith" during the sixties and seventies university officials gave in to the protesting radicals, undermining in the process the intellectual authority to say that some things were more important than others. Knowledge has come to be seen as relative to student and faculty interests. It may be "fashionable" to declare that there is too much diversity in America to reach a consensus on what should be read, but, according to Bennett, there is more agreement than people are "willing to admit". He says that it is a good thing that there is "increased accessibility to women, racial and ethnic minorities, recent immigrants, and students of limited means." (Bennett 1984 p.21) But the pressure to force affirmative action in the authors that students are required to read should be resisted. Americans share with the Western European tradition a set of beliefs about justice, freedom, democracy, and equality before the law. Hence, the importance of studying 'dead white European males'; the "best" that has been thought.

> It is not ethnocentric or chauvinistic to acknowledge this. But our eagerness to assert the virtues of pluralism should not allow us to sacrifice the principle that formerly lent substance and continuity to the curriculum ... The core of the American college curriculum - its heart and soul - should be the civilization of the West. (Bennett p.21)

The problem has been that education has been undermined through opportunism and lack of nerve. "Many academic leaders lack the

confidence to assert that the curriculum should stand for something more than salesmanship, compromise, or special interest politics." (Bennett 1984 p.21) Asking the universities to produce the hegemony he wants has led to his being labeled repressive, elitist, reactionary, anti-gay, sexist, racist, imperialist, etc.

Two things that really turn students off, according to Bennett, is the way subjects are subordinated to the political agendas of the teachers, and the assumed dogmatic relativism which does not appreciate the truth and value of the works being taught. The two go together. Some American postmodernists have argued that ideology governs the most self-evident truths. Claims to universal value are the product of particular interests trying to dominate other perspectives. There are no non-arbitrary independent standards to say that one thing is better than another. Thus, the distinction between **highbrow** and **lowbrow** culture collapses. Multiculturalism uses postmodern deconstruction as the theoretical basis for their polemics.

> Poor teaching can masquerade as good teaching when it invites students to join a club of sophisticated cynics who are witty, abrasive, and sometimes engrossing. Many teachers in the humanities parade and glorify their eccentricities, and only on reflection and at some distance does one realize that they are really lifeless. (Bennett 1984 p. 17)

Extreme skepticism may discourage an eager mind from pursuing its curiosity in researching and finding out the truth. Claiming truth doesn't exist, undermines the point of scholarship, which is the pursuit of rational evaluation. Irving Kristol claims that

postmodernism attacks secular rational humanism and bourgeois morality, thereby undermining civilization itself. (Kristol 1995a p. 134) Conservatives are fond of quoting the chanting crowd led by Jesse Jackson at Stanford: "Hey, hey, ho, ho, Western culture's got to go." The result, they say, is pure nihilism.

The charge of anti-rationalism may be true of American postmodernists, but this is the result of a misappropriation of French thinkers. The project is to question reason, not do away with it. Foucault said:

> How can we exist as rational beings, fortunately committed to practicing a rationality that is unfortunately criss-crossed by intrinsic dangers? ... If it is extremely dangerous to say that Reason is the enemy that should be eliminated, it is just as dangerous to say that any critical questioning of this rationality risks sending us into irrationality. (Foucault 1984e p.249)

Derrida has coupled this with the statement

> It is not a matter simply of questions that one formulates while submitting oneself, as I am doing here, to the principle of reason, but also of preparing oneself thereby to transform the modes of writing, approaches to pedagogy, to the [university] in general, to its inside and its outside. Those who venture forth along this path, it seems to me, need not set themselves up in opposition to the principle of reason, nor need they give way to "irrationalism." (Derrida 1983 p.17)

According to these authors, radical questioning should be the beginning of thought, not the abortion of it. To give up on this difficult process would be cowardice.

Bennett also bemoans the trend towards specialization in the humanities. People learn more and more about less and less.

Academics are unable to integrate the larger picture for their students. Courses are compartmentalized among isolated disciplines, and do not enable the students to see the interconnectedness of ideas. This fragmented culture is crippled with a tendency to speak in unintelligible jargon, using perverse sexual themes to spice up the tedious nature of their work. This criticism may be well deserved. American postmodernism makes full use of abstract and trendy jargon. Roland Barthes, a French postmodern literary critic, said that clarity was a bourgeois value which tried to limit and control the multiplicity of meanings contained within a literary or poetic statement. This has been understood by some to mean that a work which is subversive of our more basic assumptions will be difficult to understand at first because it does not play into the cliches of common thought. Yet, one does not have to write badly to be taken seriously, or be obtuse to be profound. Meanwhile, deconstructionists concentrate on playing sophisticated word games, with the result that theory and criticism have become an art form in themselves to the detriment of the books they are expounding. In effect, they distract the reader's attention away from the material being presented. It does not show the respect the Western tradition deserves.

Bloom and Bennett agree that a university is part of a larger Western tradition that spans time and space. Both authors think the university should be an organic whole, a coherent context within which the disciplines may situate themselves in

relation to one another. The university should be recognized as something greater than ourselves to which we may be loyal. Bennett suggested that the president should take matters into hand, promote a defined philosophy of education tailored to the particular institution, and get the diverse disciplines of the humanities to cooperate in working out a core curriculum like the universities used to have, one that would reveal the intercon-nectedness of ideas. The university should be pondering and answering the big questions: What is liberal education? What should an educated student know? What should a university be? From exposure to the vast array of the greatest thinkers of all time, it is hoped the student will find little drops of wisdom from which they can build a philosophy in which they can believe, a higher spiritual inspiration and meaning to life. A good teacher is essential. Sometimes an introductory course is all a student will take in a field. This may be the teacher's only chance to introduce them to a larger world. Ideally, a teacher should be able to impress the students with a love for the subject, piquing their interest. A teacher should make the classics come alive for their students. The traditional ideal is very demanding.

When Bloom was fifteen years old he was exposed to the University of Chicago for the first time. He was impressed by the pseudo-gothic architecture.

> Buildings that were evidently dedicated to a higher
> purpose, not to necessity or utility, not merely to

shelter or manufacture or trade, but to something that might be an end in itself. ... There one finds examples of a sort not likely to be seen around one, without which one could neither recognize one's own capacities nor know how wonderful it is to belong to the species.

The experience inspired a vision of higher education.

> A great university presented another kind of atmosphere, announcing that there are questions that ought to be addressed by everyone but are not asked in ordinary life or expected to be answered there. ... It made a distinction between what is important and not important. ... In a nation founded on reason, the university was the temple of the regime, dedicated to the purest use of reason and evoking the kind of reverence appropriate to an association of free and equal human beings.... I did see real thinkers who opened up new worlds for me. The substance of my being has been informed by the books I learned to care for. They accompany me every minute of every day of my life, making me see much more and be much more than I could have seen or been ... I have had teachers and students such as dreams are made on. And most of all I have friends with whom I can share thinking about what friendship is, with whom there is a touching of souls and in whom works that common good of which I have just spoken. ... Never did I think that the university was properly ministerial to the society around it. Rather I thought and think that society is ministerial to the university, and I bless a society that tolerates and supports an eternal childhood for some, a childhood whose playfulness can in turn be a blessing to society. (Bloom 1987 p.243-5)

According to Bloom, the university should be a protected retreat where the elite discuss the important questions that are not asked in everyday life. Society should revere it and minister to it as a tribute to society's highest potential for personal, public, and technological growth. This is a rather positive image of the university, and inverts the criticism of the university as an irrelevant and verbose ivory tower.

In conclusion, I think that it is true that the university should have some relative autonomy, even if we want to address the pertinent social questions of the day and take a political stand. While I am very sympathetic to the importance of studying the classics, Bloom and Bennett seem to wrongly imply that the classics contain a homogenous set of "Western values" and believe that the study of these texts will inspire students to promote these Western values. However, once these values are brought to conscious awareness, they may be put into question. The real value of the classics is not just to illustrate the values of the West; they are not just texts; they have had the power to affect the history of the West and its institutions. In studying the history which has made us what we are, we can understand ourselves better and more effectively overcome our historically imposed limitations and imperfections, as we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: BOURDIEU VS. FOUCAULT

This chapter looks at two influencial French thinkers for the New Left, the agenda the New Right is reacting against. They illustrate very different and important options of writing for the New Left: hermeneutics and deconstruction. The issues dividing these two are the nature of theory and the politics of truth. This Chapter will first look at their different projects, then compare their views on identity and change, finishing with a look at how they treat other people's discourse.

The projects of Foucault and Bourdieu differ in their goals. Foucault seeks to perform a critical ontology that would free us from the stifling and sometimes painful identity which has been imposed on us socially. Our categories are historical constructions whose origin is "derisive and ironic, capable of undoing every infatuation." (Foucault 1984c p.79) Once we have deconstructed our intuitions, we may be able to think differently and hopefully change the way we do things.

> The critical ontology of ourselves has to be considered not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating; it has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them. (Foucault 1984a p.50)

For Bourdieu the goal is to stretch the philosophy of knowledge into areas where philosophers dare not tread. Philosophers like

to look at arguments and ideas as timeless, and think of thought as arising through pure disinterested contemplation. Bourdieu sets out to reveal the arbitrary origin of common sense assumptions as constructions forged by social conflict. By exposing this he hopes to free us somewhat from the unconscious stranglehold of our unquestioned indoctrination and make us more aware of the unarticulated background determining how we think. The difference between the two can be very subtle. Bourdieu is concerned with the political, economic, and social biases affecting the content of our knowledge. He wants to create a critical theory to help us understand ourselves more deeply. Foucault is concerned with the means we use to obtain knowledge and the way knowledge functions in our society. He sees genealogy as a nomadic guerrilla tactic that is local, specific and concrete. "The problem is not changing people's consciousnesses- or what's in their heads - but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth." (Foucault 1984b p.74) Bourdieu is hermeneutical. Foucault is deconstructive.

Bourdieu calls the common understanding which enables the orthodox and the heterodox to communicate with each other enough to disagree over something, the <u>doxa</u>. Since both sides take for granted certain unspoken assumptions, these are never called into guestion or raised for debate. They tend to operate, therefore, without being made the object of conscious awareness. "Nothing, paradoxically, is more dogmatic than a <u>doxa</u>, a set of fundamental beliefs which does not even need to be asserted in the form of an

explicit, self-conscious dogma." (Bourdieu 2000, p.15) It is a set of common assumptions, which happen to include believing that the stakes of the academic game are worthwhile. The field of a discipline is defined by what is considered interesting. Thus, <u>doxa</u> defines the identities and differences of the separate fields.

In <u>The Order of Things</u> (1970) Foucault talked about Archaeology as a search for the historical <u>a priori</u> which carved things up before presenting them for understanding. It looked for "the threshold above which there is a difference and below which there is a similitude" (Foucault 1970 p.xx). In this way, the unconscious structures that enable certain kinds of knowledge to make sense in one period, but not in another, could be revealed and studied. This would be similar to studying the history of doxic change. In "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" **(1984c),** however, Foucault shifted from explaining the way things were structured to a project of deconstructing the identities we thought we had. Genealogy would study <u>Herkunft</u>, or lineage and descent, and <u>Entstehung</u>, or emergence.

> The search for descent is not the erecting of foundations: on the contrary, it disturbs what was previously con-sidered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent with itself. (Foucault 1984c p.82)

For Foucault, an identity is not an acquisition that grows and solidifies; it is a fragile collection of disparate elements.

An example of what Foucault means can be shown in the way he characterized discipline.

> It is rather a multiplicity of often minor processes, of different origin and scattered location, which overlap, repeat, or imitate one another, support one another, distinguish themselves from one another according to their domain of application, converge and gradually produce the blueprint of a general method. (Foucault 1979 p. 138)

Foucault would try to free our thought from the finality of a monolithic history of imposed identities that seem to resist change. This is in contrast to doxa which is a shared common unity of understanding defining a science or tradition. Bour-dieuvian hermeneutics is an endless quest to try to exhaustively articulate our background. Theory gives us a metaphysics to help us pick out themes, thereby constructing an interpretation. For Bourdieu, the expert is supposed to understand what is going on beneath the surface and fill in the missing pieces. Yet, according to Foucault, there may be nothing there.

> If the genealogist refuses to extend his faith in meta-physics, if he listens to history, he finds that there is "something altogether different" behind things: not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms. (Foucault 1984c p.78)

Foucault could say there may be no unconscious doxa shaping our disciplines; Bourdieu was being too theoretical. Sometimes the orthodox and heterodox don't talk to each other but past each other. They could be on completely different wavelengths, not sharing any common ground. This is particularly illustrated in

the culture war between the postmodernists and the neoconserva-
tives who hold contrasting positions on the role of the univer-
sity while failing to come together enough to adequately debate
their opposition. The neoconservatives do all the criticizing,
while the postmodernists fail to respond. Sometimes the same idea
has different meanings in different historical contexts, so that
a tradition is in name only. A change in paradigm can lead us to
forget the sophisticated developments of the previous era. The
first part of genealogy, <u>Herkunft</u> or lineage, would not search
for our common "roots" but would disrupt, or deconstruct, the
routine categories that we presently use.

     <u>Entstehunq</u>, the other side of genealogy, is the study of
how things change or emerge onto center stage. Things change
because the rules of the game are turned around and used against
those who impose them.

> Rules are empty in themselves, violent and unfinalized;
> they are impersonal and can be bent to any purpose. The
> successes of history belong to those who had used them, to
> disguise themselves so as to pervert them, invert their
> meaning, and redirect them against those who had initially
> imposed them; controlling this complex mechanism, they
> will make it function so as to overcome the rulers through
> their own rules. (Foucault 1984c p.86)

This could just as easily have been said by Bourdieu. For
Bourdieu the weapons of knowledge have been forged to combat
opponents. These weapons once raised could then be turned around
and used against those who introduced them.   Rational argument
and appeal to universal values can uncover the personal bias of

an opponent. The opponent could then use these same objections against the others to uncover their personal bias. This way objectivity could be assured. If something were true then it should be true for all. Through the intrigue of enemies, objective and universal truth could arise. Individuals would be forced to sublimate their naked ambitions in order to play by the impersonal rules of the game. Thus the academe could seem disinterested while it is not. Political and economic powers need to be legitimated by knowledge which does not appear to be in collusion with them. Yet, insofar as people try to seem impartial, they must act in such a way as to be impartial. Too obvious an abuse of power could be called into question and used against those who commit such improprieties. By exposing the political and economic influences which promote certain views, science can free itself from their control to some extent so **that it can** live independently by its own standards in the search for truth. In this way, science has forged universal truths that rise above the particular conditions of their production. As more assumptions are brought to light and the weapons forged get more stringent, science progresses historically so that knowledge of the current state of the art becomes a prerequisite for entry into the game. Bourdieu does not deny the socially constructed nature of knowledge, but he does distinguish himself from postmodernism by his faith in the ability of science to produce Truth. The story of the historical battle for universal truth is an alternative to both _a priori_ positivism and complete relativism. We have to

work at liberating objective and universal truth from personal bias.

According to Bourdieu, science is on the side of powerless groups in fighting symbolic violence — social categories that legitimate systems of hierarchy. An example of this would be the visceral feeling a black man may have of his subordination, which he learned through body language before he was old enough to reflect on it. Symbolic violence is the power of dominant groups to impose their categories on others, organizing mass behaviour. The political Left would try to expose the arbitrary nature of these categories, while the Right would try to legitimate them as necessary and natural. Social science tries to explain common "taken-for-granted" views. By showing how they rely on power, science reveals how they are misrecognized as natural and brings their unacknowledged coercion to light. This should undermine the status quo and open up new possibilities. The aim is not to take sides on an issue, but by studying it, expose the game. Science can legitimately do this, however, only insofar as its academic freedom is not compromised by collusion with political and economic power. To better enforce the integrity of fields of knowledge, Bourdieu has called for a reflexive sociology — an intellectual study of intellectuals. Bourdieu thought that science was naturally on the side of the dominated, but according to David Swartz (1997 p.261) "revealing the hidden mechanisms of power, science may be of service to dominant groups in that it

may lead to better and alternative modes of manipulation and social control."

Foucault would oppose Bourdieu's picture of emancipation by knowledge. Why would it matter whether something was called a science? It is because our society invests so much power and authority into a statement which appears scientific. In this way, cultural capital is social capital and inextricably implicated in power struggles or regimes of truth. Foucault asks "What types of knowledge do you want to disqualify in the very instant of your demand: 'Is it a science?'" (Foucault 1980 p.85) The demand for objective universal discourse can turn other more local, per-sonal, and particular ones into "subjugated knowledges". However, unlike some of his American postmodern followers, Foucault does not dismiss truth as only a mask for domination. Foucault is neither polemical nor reductionistic. Knowledge by itself may be objectively and universally true, but the means by which we obtain it and the use to which it is put can be coercive. "'Truth' is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extends it." (Foucault 1984b p.74) Each may entail the other, but that does not extinguish the difference between the two. What he does, is question the image of a science with a stable identity following its own predetermined logic, its telos — which means uncovering a final transcendental truth innocent of power struggles. There is no purifying liberation

from repression, everything is always already implicated in power and defined by it.

In <u>Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison</u> (1979), Foucault asked "Is it suprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?" (Foucault 1979 p.228) What these institutions had in common was the way they disciplined the smallest details to organize and study mass behaviour. A constant coercion was imposed which increased the utility of the body with the least cost of displaying power. Discipline analyzed and regulated bodies in space and time.

A university had its own space separated from all others. Within this enclosed space each individual had a place and each place an individual. Each student had to have his or her own desk in class, separate from the others, breaking up unwanted groups talking and cheating. Since anything out of place would be easily noticed it would cut down on absenteeism. Thus, this analytical plan made it possible to supervise both generally and specifically the work being done, and classify the person assigned temporarily to the rank appropriate to that place.

The timetable established the rhythm of repetition assigned to different tasks. It was not enough to avoid wasting time. Each second could be counted, enforcing the application of each individual and controlling the development of each stage. The entire position and attitude of the body had to be organized in relation to the object used in order to support the most

efficient speed   for an activity. How one held a pen and sat at a desk had to be proper. Time was to be broken down into successive and parallel   segments ending   after a   specific interval with an examination to see if the student had advanced. Simple activities would graduate   into more complex ones, so that an individual was situated within a subdivided   series of   assigned exercises which defined his   rank. It would be counterproductive to impose a task which was too hard for the student, one   for which   they were not properly prepared.   Each part   was to be combined and articulated into one   organized   machine.   A   senior   student   could   tutor a novice, and   so on.   To save time a precise system of command was to be instituted.   The   student   would   be   trained   to correctly respond   immediately   to   a   signal   that   would   not   have to be explained. Strict discipline was the key   to bringing   order to a fully functioning   complex institution creating docile and useful bodies.

> The historical   moment of   the disciplines   was the moment
> when an   art of   the human   body was born, which was aimed
> not only at the   growth of   its skills,   or at   the inten-
> sification of   its subjection,   but at   the formation of a
> relation   that in   the   mechanism   itself   makes   it more
> obedient   as   it   becomes   more   useful,   and   conversely.
> (Foucault 1979 p. 137-8)

Knowledge is indispensable   for   discipline.   It   does not simply   treat   the   population   as   a   single   uniform   mass, but separates, analyses, differentiates, and   above all   trains them. It studies and creates individuals as targets and instruments for its control. It coerces by means of a surveillance that constant-

ly threatens exposure without the student realizing it has happened. Paranoid, the students internalized the coercion, disciplining themselves. A one-way hierarchy is imposed with people at the top who could see but not be seen. According to Foucault, architecture was planned such that with a single glance everything could be taken in, the classroom or the halls. A pyramid scheme with a single superior supervising a number of specialized subordinates was established. This could be broken down from the most general to the most minute levels to cover everything. Even the students could be used. In discipline, the smallest infraction or failure to live up to standards could be penalized with repeating the same exercise until the student got it right, or repeating a drill until he learned his lesson. They could also be rewarded for good behaviour. Observation established a norm to which the individual could be compared, and thereby judged and classified according to his character, with a position appropriate to their aptitude and conduct assigned, a rank that could be raised or lowered. In relation to common behaviour the student could be differentiated and individualized. Regular examinations were a solemn ritual of power which enabled a science of pedagogy to be developed. They created an accumulation of formal documentation that could be correlated and entered into the general register of a central office as a permanent record in a case file on the individual's history that could be used to intervene in their lives. Thus, the reality of individuality was constructed and imposed through the many minor

techniques of coercion and observation that functioned in institutions. In this way power and knowledge were inextricably linked in a disciplinary society. People were subject to scientific authority.

The difference in attitudes towards science is reflected in how each author treats their subjects. For Bourdieu first hand reports are not to be taken at face value as the starting point for sociology, but are data for sociologists to use in constructing their theories. The expert is expected to understand things which go unnoticed by the subject. Thus, the expert must communicate in a technical language, which is more useful in that it more closely approximates a carefully constructed interpretation relevant to the interests of the field. Foucault turns this around and explains that he simplified his writing style because those directly dealing with issues knew more than the intellectual about their problems. Foucault was anti-reductionist, and he criticized the social sciences for silencing people by not taking what they said seriously. It was dehumanizing and Bourdieu could be criticized for being arrogant. Instead of speaking for people, Foucault would like to enable people to speak for themselves.

> In our society it is difficult for the insane who are confined or the sick who are hospitalized to make their own revolution; so we have to question these systems of exclusion of the sick and the insane from the outside, through a technique of critical demolition. The university system, however, can be put into question by the students themselves. At that point criticism coming from the outside, from theoreticians, historians or archivists, is no longer enough. And the students become their own archivists. (Foucault 1989 p.64)

Thus, Foucault and Bourdieu offer alternative views about the expertise of authority and how people are to be treated.

The contrast between Foucault and Bourdieu has important implications for theory and freedom. Hermeneutics would say that propositional knowledge is grounded in our practical involvment in the world. It merely brings to light parts of the unarticulated background of how we cope. To call <u>doxa</u> a set of assumptions may be too cognitive and rational, when it could be more basically a feel for the academic game. We may never be able to consciously "know" everything going on, but we can continue uncovering pieces, making partial detachment and revision possible. Theory is essentially practical. Deconstruction would replace the ideal of self-understanding with self-making. There is no deeper self of which to uncover the "true" meaning. We create who we are through the descriptions we give ourselves. The self is an experiment, a work of art, not a fact. What is needed is not a more adeguate theory but a technigue to free ourselves. The problem is what should we free ourselves to become?

Foucault criticizes discipline for being coercive, but he does not give a description of what the university should be. He might think this was a trap, telling people what they should do, thereby reinforcing authority. However, in order to create something, we need to be inspired by a substantive vision. After all, discipline may be necessary and essential to an institution. The fear of surveillance and a permanent record, may keep

subjects on their toes. If a professor did not care about the opinions of his peers and his students, he might abuse his privileges, neglect his duties, make off-color remarks, etc. Discipline can be a good thing, if used properly in accordance with what a university should be.

Unfortunately Bourdieu's view of the university is more procedural than substantive. It is a place for antagonistic wills to forge universal and objective truth. He is more substantive when it comes to the kind of truth that is to be produced. This truth should raise our background assumptions and feel for the game to conscious awareness. This should aid the progress of science to be more rigorous. The byproduct of revealing the arbitrary nature of doxa is that without taking sides on political issues, it may liberate the less fortunate from symbolic violence.

Alternatively, Foucault is merely critical of the university. He does not offer a positive vision of what the university should be. We are left wondering what to do with the points he has raised.

> And there is the student: to a certain extent he is caught similarly inside a circuit which possesses a dual function. First, a function of exclusion. The student is put outside of society, on a campus. Furthermore, he is excluded while being transmitted a knowledge traditional in nature, obsolete, "academic" and not directly tied to the needs and problems of today. This exclusion is underscored by the organization, around the student, of social mechanisms which are fictitious, artificial and quasi-theatrical (hierarchic relationships, academic exercizes, the "court" of examination, evaluation). Finally, the student is given a gamelike way of life; he is offered

> a kind of distraction, amusement, freedom which, again,
> has nothing to do with real life; it is this kind of
> artificial, theatrical society, a society of cardboard,
> that is being built around him; and thanks to this, young
> people from 18 to 25 are thus, as it were, neutralized by
> and for society, rendered safe, ineffective, socially and
> politically castrated. There is the first function of the
> university: to put students out of circulation. Its second
> function, however, is one of integration. Once a student
> has spent six or seven years of his life within this
> artificial society, he becomes "absorbable": society can
> consume him. Insidiously, he will have received the values
> of this society. He will have been given socially desir-
> able models of behaviour, so that this ritual of exclusion
> will finally take on the value of inclusion and recupera-
> tion or reabsorption. (Foucault 1989 p.65-6)

Neither Bourdieu nor Foucault give us much in the way of a substantive answer to the question "What should a university be?" What is important to understand is the substantive difference between a hermeneutical and a deconstructive approach.

The deconstructive approach may be necessary, but is not sufficient. It is valuable in unsettling our attachment to certain dogmas that are generally taken for granted. It attempts to loosen the hold of the limitations to which our habitual ways of thinking confine us. However, it leaves us at sea; it decon- structs our horizons without pointing to any positive alterna- tives. In contrast, the hermeneutical approach gives us a better understanding that is not simply negative nor nihilistic, as I will show in the final chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE DECONSTRUCTIVE IDEAL

Jacques Derrida, a student of Foucault's, has developed the deconstructive project. In fact, he came up with the term. The assumption is that language is made up of pairs of opposites. A word gets its meaning through being contrasted with other terms. Every author emphasizes one side of a dichotomy in order to make a point. Deconstruction would interpret a text emphasizing the other side of the dichotomy, and then show that the "true" meaning was undecidable between these two readings; leaving everything problematic, without foreclosing the question by giving an answer. According to such an ethos what should a university be? Derrida says that exploring the raison d'etre of the university should be one of its objectives. There has been a growing emphsis on utility, while both the Left **and** the Right have used the curriculum for indoctinating students. Derrida has set up his own university that emphasizes new things not taught in other universities.

In the fall of 1983, Diacritics published "The Principle of Reason: The University in the Eyes of its Pupils". In this paper, Derrida examines the raison d'etre of the university. According to him, there are two ways of offering a reason for something. One is to explain what caused something: the principle of sufficient reason. The other is to explain why: giving its aim or purpose. "But is answering to the principle of reason the same act as answering for the principle of reason? Is the scene the

same?" (Derrida 1983 p.8) One could not think of the university without recalling the need to answer to reason. "As far as I know, nobody has ever founded a university against reason." (Derrida 1983 p.7) But giving a reason for this calling is different. It could lead to a circular argument or nowhere at all. Can one demand a reason for reasonableness itself? Is it more reasonable to question reason, or should such questioning be ruled out? How we answer this has political implications for the university and its raison d'etre.

According to Derrida, the rationale for the university has become one of utility rather than leisure and contemplation. It is no longer possible to distinguish between pure and applied research. This dichotomy has been deconstructed. "Consider the remarkable example of the science of astronomy, which is becoming useful after having been for so long the paradigm of disinterested contemplation." (Derrida 1983 p.12) The payoff from certain kinds of knowledge may be deferred or provide unanticipated benefits. The military may invest in telecommunications and data processing for strategies of securing command, as well as in semiotics for ideological warfare, and psychology for espionage. Even if some line is useless, it keeps people busy, and shows off affluence. If the State wants to suppress a certain line, it does not have to actively censor, but can withdraw its support for production, transmission, publication, and diffusion. "The prohibiting limitations function through multiple channels that are decentralized, difficult to bring together into a system."

(Derrida 1983 p.13) This undermines accountability since no one is responsible to anyone for the death of a line of research. Lack of funding can affect disciplines which are not immediately profitable. Inspired by Heidegger, knowledge can be seen as a form of modern technology that can be used to control people, nature, and things, and which, in turn, needs to be controlled.

For Russell Jacoby (1994) the growing importance of usefulness explains why enrollment in the humanities has gone down while other faculties have gone up. The rationale for the university has changed. Knowledge has become utilitarian. Education is now a valuable tool that leads to a profitable career. Unfortunately the humanities have been stigmatized as useless leisure that won't secure a job for the student in the future. In a utilitarian world, a humanist education would be a risky investment that must be avoided.

One way that the humanities may be useful is by indoctrin-ating students with the dominant values. Both the New Right and the New Left recognize this. What is at issue between them is not purely philosophical, but practical and political. They are competing for the heart and soul of the university. For example, the New Right sees traditional education as giving students a background for understanding their society by introducing them to the best ideas that have influenced the Western culture. Critic-izing this for prejudicial bias is seen as politicizing the university, which should be devoted to disinterested scholarship. Yet, creating good citizens is a political goal. The Frankfurt

School criticized positivism for studying, and accepting, things the way they are, undermining critical evaluation as "unscientific". Denying the political aspect of academic work could be a very effective means of indoctrination with little resistance. But the New Left is also guilty of indoctrination when it tries to change multicultural studies from electives into required courses.

The problem is both the Right and the Left talk about curriculum as if it was a unity to be imposed or opposed, but it contains too many conflicting opinions to be made a whole. Depending on the size and style of the classroom, students do not have to be passive recipients. They can question the teacher about what they read and hear. They can evaluate things for themselves. Learning about the assumptions which make up a culture can be used to criticize that culture.

Given that universities help shape the minds of our youth, what should they do? Bennett, a neoconservative, suggested that the president should take matters in hand, promote a defined philosophy of education tailored to the particular institution, and get the diverse disciplines of the humanities to cooperate in working out a core curriculum like the universities used to have. Derrida, on the other hand, would keep the question about the raison d'etre of the university open against those like Bennett who would close it. "They never question scientific normativity, beginning with the value of objectivity or of objectivation, which governs and authorizes their discourse." (Derrida 1983

p. 16) To do so would be too threatening to the institution, rhetoric, rites, procedures, modes of presentation and demonstration of the university. "But if the analysts end up for example working on the structures of the simulacrum or literary fiction, on a poetic rather than an informative value of language, on the effects of undecidability, and so on, by that very token they are interested in possibilities that arise at the outer limits of the authority and the power of the principle of reason." (Derrida 1983 p. 14) It is the deconstructionists who should affirm the responsibility of asking the question. According to Derrida, this is a far cry from countering the New Right with irrationalism and nihilism, which is symmetrical and dependent upon the principle of reason anyway. Also, in the face of recent trends toward utilitarianism and politicization, deconstructionists must always beware of being exploited by social forces who find it in their interests to do so. Derrida did not mention multiculturalism, but the same consideration might apply. Knowledge is degraded when it is merely propaganda, or manipulated for ulterior motives. There has to be some relative autonomy to arguments, since they have to be sold not forced. So, how do you draw the line around the political? What should the universy do?

The double goal of the university, for Derrida, is to try to remember the past while risking the future. To this end, he opened up the International College of Philosophy in October 1983. It was to be interested in new problematics, topics, and disciplines not accepted by other institutions. It has no tenure

and no chairs, only contracts, and encourages non-French scholars to join. It is supported by the State while trying to remain as free from the State as possible. Derrida admits, "We have to be vigilant, we have to be careful, but it's not impossible. And as you know, private institutions are not freer." (Derrida 1986 p.5) It seems there can be no universal model. Even if the autonomy of the university is accepted, compromises have to be made, which will be different for each country. Professionals must be trained to contribute to their society, even while getting them to question professionalization. Against deconstruction, Bourdieu has argued that the danger for the intellectual is having an excessive faith in language.

> It is the typical illusion of the lector, who can regard an academic commentary as a political act or the critique of texts as a feat of resistance, and experience revolutions in the order of words as radical revolutions in the order of things. (Bourdieu 2000 p.2)

The left has criticized deconstruction for distracting us with word games from actually doing something about the material conditions which affect people's lives.

Like the neoliberal University of Phoenix, there is no tenure, no chairs, only contracts. It would be interesting to speculate on the political culture in that university. One would not expect people to put roots there and make the institution their life's work. This may cut down on political conspiracies, having no stakes in the game. But with such little job security, coalitions may choose not to renew contracts. If it is so easy to

get rid of people, there may be no opposition to ¹groupthink',
however weird it gets. This is the freedom Derrida asked for: new
problematics, topics, and disciplines not accepted by other
universities. It may have a diminished social structure, but it
has great freedom of thought. Unlike neoconservatives, however,
it is critical of tradition. Classics are not valued for their
own sake as authoritative, but are material to be used in ways
not intended by the author, to say something new and possibly
unrelated. After all, the true meaning of a text is undecidable.

According to Derrida, what should a university be? It
appears that Derrida thinks of the university primarily as a
research institution, teaching and academic life seem to be
secondary considerations. The university should constantly be
asking what is its reason for being, without forclosing it by
giving an answer or lapsing into irrationalism. It should also
beware of being useful. Besides exploring new avenues of thought,
there does not seem to be much in the way of an ideal of how the
university should be.

In conclusion, Derrida makes a valuable contribution in
his insistence on the radical questioning of everything in an
effort to keep our options and our eyes open. However, Derrida's
openness gives no direction to action. The lesson we need to
learn is that while we must answer the question about the purpose
of the university, we must also recognize that our answers are
tentative while at the same time determining what behaviour is
deemed acceptable. Despite his desire to avoid the politicization

of deconstruction, his philosophy has been inappropriately appropriated by some for the political agenda of the New Left, as I will show in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX: THE MULTICULTURAL IDEAL

Multiculturalism is the attempt by the New Left to stand up for minorities: women, blacks, gays, the elderly, etc. It has created its own academic departments, influenced mandatory cur-riculum, and implemented its own policies, such as Affirmative Action and Politically Correct speech codes. In this chapter, I will argue that multiculturalism should not be closely associated with deconstruction. I will then look at the substantive moral/ political questions involved. Who deserves lowered entrance requirements and why? What speech is not acceptable?

Multiculturalism vs. Postmodernism

Postmodernism is usually defined by the idea that there is no such thing as truth, and therefore, universal standards are an attempt to create a hegemony by assimilating "subjugated know-ledges." The orthodox view is that there is only one reality, therefore two conflicting truths cannot both be true. Aristotle thought that the principle of non-contradiction was the basis of rational thought. "Two contradictory statements cannot both be true at the same time in the same way." The possibility remains open that conflicting truths may each be valid in different ways. Different interpretations are limited by their nature and can be criticized for not acknowledging important points that the other

side does. Bloom complained that students were moral relativists. Since each culture has different values, students would ask "how can one be arrogant enough to say that one was better than another?". For them, multicultural writing has as much right to be read as part of a curriculum as something written by "a dead white Western male." To dismiss the writings of minorities would be cultural oppression.

Deconstruction can use the "classics" of the Western tradition to make the tradition questionable, reversing the hierarchy in the dichotomy assumed by a writer and showing how the text can support a reading contrary to the author's intentions can reveal the way in which the author and the text undermine themselves. This strategy of postmodernism can turn the tables on the priority of truth over power, portraying academic standards as propaganda for the priviledged. The **problem** is that postmodernism could deconstruct the identity of being a 'minority'. Unlike Foucault, the point for multiculturalism is not to escape identity, but to affirm it and possibly return to its roots. In reaction to this, Foucault would say that it is too metaphysical to believe in a natural element which needs to be liberated from repression, so that it can return to a pristine state. We gain a social character in being defined by power through our resistance.

An identity is not stable but made up of disparate elements. An author has a function within discourse that, Foucault thinks, may disappear.

> The author is not an indefinite source of significations
> which fill a work; the author does not precede the works;
> he is a certain functional principle by which, in our
> culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by
> which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipula-
> tion, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposi-
> tion of fiction.... It does not seem necessary that the
> author function remain constant in form, complexity, and
> even in existence. I think that, as our society changes,
> ... the author function will disappear, and in such a
> manner that fiction and its polysemous texts will once
> again function according to another mode, but still with a
> system of constraint - one which will no longer be the
> author, but which will have to be determined or, perhaps,
> experienced. (Foucault 1984d 119)

Foucault would have us deconstruct the author, but multicul-

turalism wants to study pieces written by minorities. The

identity of the author is important for a multicultural cur-

riculum. The minority status of an author lends authenticity to

their illustration of the gender, race, or class problem.

Deconstruction would do without such identity **metaphysics.**

An example of a deconstructive feminist would be Julia

Kristeva. Instead of articulating the value of being a woman, she

deconstructs gender difference. "First wave" feminism wanted the

same rights and powers as men. "Second wave" feminism wanted to

celebrate women's differences from men. According to Kristeva,

third wave feminism should guestion the metaphysics of dif-

ference :

> In this third attitude, which I strongly advocate - which
> I imagine - the very dichotomy man/woman as an opposition
> between two rival entities may be understood as belonging
> to <u>metaphysics</u>. What can 'identity', even 'sexual iden-
> tity', mean in a new theoretical and scientific space
> where the very notion of identity is challenged? ... What

> I mean is, first of all, the demassification of the
> problematic of difference, which would imply, in a first
> phase, an apparent de-dramatization of the 'fight to the
> death' between rival groups and thus between the sexes.
> _____but in order that the struggle, the implacable
> difference, the violence conceived in the very place where
> it operates with the maximum intransigence, in other
> words, in personal and sexual identity itself, so as to
> make it disintegrate in its very nucleus. (Kristiva 1986
> p.209)

Unlike deconstruction, multiculturalism affirms minority status,
and studies people in terms of their social identities of gender,
class, and race. To deconstruct these identities would be to pull
the rug out from under the feet of their Leftist interpretations.
The postmodernists, however, are right in saying that the self
should not be reduced to mere gender, class, and race.

In "Liberal Politics and the Public Sphere", Charles
Taylor wrote that ...

> The conditions for a genuine democratic decision can't be
> defined in abstraction from self-understanding. They
> include (a) that the people concerned understand themsel-
> ves as belonging to a community that shares some common
> purposes and recognizes its members as sharing in these
> purposes; (b) that the various groups, types, and classes
> of citizens have been given a genuine hearing and were
> able to have an impact on the debate; and (c) that the
> decision emerging from this is really the majority
> preference. (Taylor 1995 p.276)

A sense of being heard depends upon the feeling of being valued
and respected by the larger community. It is a matter of percep-
tion which depends on self-identity. To exist, a community must
recognize itself as such. Groups, classes, or subcommunities may
feel excluded or no longer feel a bond with their compatriots

because of a rift in the political community. If people under-stand themselves to be part of a good relation with the larger community, they will have a sense of being heard even if their demands are not met. Some demands may be too big, and failure to capitulate may be understandable. If smaller demands are not met, people may feel that their concerns barely impinge on the national agenda. Once a group experiences a diminished position within the public sphere, it may take the fulfillment of increas-ingly large demands for the minority to feel like a member of the larger community. It is a matter of perception, which affects and is affected by the state of the whole relationship. A healthy democracy has to deal with issues of identity and perception — a politics of recognition.

It would be patronizing to give others the formal right to speak, while the content of what they have to say is not **valued.** What is it about a minority group that deserves to be heard? Allowing that conflicting truths may both be valid does not fore-close the option of saying that one interpretation is better than another, which is a value judgement. Once we add morality to our cause, we place a demand upon ourselves that transcends personal interest. Multiculturalism needs to articulate a vision of the self as something worthy, a practical theory to guide us in living up to the best in ourselves and the university. Postmodern deconstruction is thought to be the theoretical tool used for the moral agenda of multiculturalism. However, it is a liability, since one consequence of this tool is that the categories of

gender, race, and class may be seen as unnecessary metaphysical baggage. That is why it is important to distinguish between the New Left of deconstructionism and multiculturalism.

Neoconservatives have criticized the moral/political agenda of multiculturalism. In speaking of Sidney Hook, Charles Sykes wrote:

> He was horrified by what he saw as the "systematic politicization" of the university classroom, reflected in "biased reading lists and unscholarly assignments" and the use of classrooms by professors for the "propagation of political and other ideas that have no relation to the subject matter of their courses." (Sykes 1990 p. 16)

The tradition is said to have the value of discussing timeless universal truths about the human situation. The classics should not be condemned for not addressing the problems of today as they had no relevance for the time in which the authors were living. Using the university for ulterior agendas takes away from the ideal of disinterested objective scholarship. Bloom said that academics should not feel guilty about not being "more useful, more relevant, more popular." The intellectual tradition has a wider view of what is important and the university should be critical of the passing fads of social pressures felt to be intensely important at the moment. However, once the political issue has been raised it is unavoidable; to choose not to be politically involved is still to make a political choice. It is a facade to claim value-neutrality. A writer wishes to make a difference, even a neoconservative. Do we really have the luxury

of ignoring the problems of our society? As responsible citizens should we allow ourselves this luxury? Foucault criticized the university for transmitting "A knowledge traditional in nature, obsolete, 'academic' and not directly tied to the needs and problems of today." (Foucault 1989 p.65) He said that "young people from 18 to 25 are thus, as it were, neutralized by and for society, rendered safe, ineffective, socially and politically castrated." (Foucault 1989 p.66) However, for a postmodernist to reduce this moral issue to one of power is to cut short any debate about the relation between values and curriculum, leaving only antagonism as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Neither denial nor force are adequate responses to issues about the ethics of curricular choice. If the purpose of the humanities is to show us the different styles of thinking, then popular culture can give us an awareness of our environment just as the **classics can offer** us alternatives to common thought. Tracts from minorities may also offer new perspectives from which to critique society. Their literature may not be the "best" and have proven itself over the passage of time, but it may have an excellence of its own which needs to be spelled out and investigated. Given that there is limited room within an introductory class for the number of authors, selecting a popular or multicultural text will mean leaving a classic unexperienced. Since an introductory course may be all that a student is exposed to outside their major, the problem of curricular choice will remain a controversial issue.

Affirmative Action

There is a common metaphor in modern liberal society that depicts the living of life as people running a race (Kramnick 1981). This was a radical doctrine because in the Middle Ages a person's career and status were hereditarily ascribed. There was no competition against the nobles who were a highly protected and privileged class. The new idea was that status should be distributed according to merit not birth. Those on top should have proven themselves the more worthy person. The first condition of equal opportunity was the ability to enter the race. It was assumed that in running a race, there would be winners and losers; there would be no guarantees. Each individual was to make it on their own merit, proving their worth. The university was important because it helped students to hone their skills for the race, making them better able to compete. Education used to be the leisure reserved only for the upper class. Now, universities were to be a test, grades would be the measure of the student's intelligence and weed out the unfit, making sure the leaders of society were the best. Unfortunately, even after they graduate, minorities with a history of discrimination may find it difficult to get into certain professions. A glass ceiling may be in place that hampers them from having real equality of opportunity. Class, gender, and race should not limit the chance to compete, the way ascribed status did based on birth rather than merit.

In the Sixties, the first demand for blacks was the Equal Rights Amendment which disallowed discrimination based on the color with which one happened, by chance, to be born. However, it was seen that that was not enough. Lyndon Johnson said ...

> You do not take a person, who for years has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up the starting line of a race and then say "you are free to compete with all the others," and still justly believe that you have been completely fair, (as quoted in Kramnick 1981 p. 178)

Affirmative Action was called for by the New Left. Certain measures had to be imposed by government to ensure that there were a token number of minorities in esteemed positions, as a way of breaking through the "glass ceiling" and giving them a chance to compete. This meant unequal treatment of individuals according to race and gender, which entailed preferential treatment based on qualities ascribed by birth rather than merit. Whether an end to discrimination meant that color-blindness, or "reverse dis- crimination," was needed got right to the heart of a contradic- tion in attitudes within modern society between reform liberals, who called for government intervention, and neoliberals, who called for the absence of interference. Both assumed the substan- tive vision of life as running a race and drew different con- clusions about what real equality of opportunity meant as a policy.

However, the New Right might say, when people have made it they want to feel they've earned it and deserve it. To have it handed to them because of their class, gender, or race may make

people feel that their reward was less than fully legitimate, and therefore less valuable and impersonal. This could ruin their motivation. In running a race, it is important that individuals get by on their own merit, not by special status and privilege. The fear of being a nobody should push people forward into the full fray of the competition, making them more productive (Kramnick 1981). People should do more than what they have to in order to get by; they should be made to go that extra mile to achieve true excellence.

Many conservative people think that affirmative action betrays academic standards of excellence.

> We find that the majority of respondents who oppose race-targeting policies (1) frame racial discrimination as a problem of the past; (2) define race-targeting as a subversion of meritocracy; and therefore, (3) devalue programs that seek to provide differential opportunity to those groups that have been structurally **disadvantaged in** American society. (Fraser and Kick 2000 p. 13)

The neoconservative Dinesh D'Souza (1991) explained that admission to a university used to be based on grade point averages and test scores, but it was found that there was a disproportionate percentage of white and Asian students attending universities. In order to satisfy the affirmative action ethic, it was necessary to distinguish between different racial groups and select the best from each group. Since blacks and Hispanics tended not to do well in GPAs and test scores, the requirements for college and financing were lowered for them. Thus, students who did not do as well as their competitors could find themselves accepted ahead of

them. To acknowledge that standards have been lowered for minorities is deemed insensitive and insulting. Therefore, affinitive action must be verbally denied, and to guestion it is to risk severe ostracism.

In a marathon it is unacceptable for anyone to get a head start. If one was a purist, one would take this stand. But entrance requirements for universities have been lowered for all kinds of reasons that have not provoked heated controversy. Preferential treatment is a common practice among the universities who give special consideration to children of alumni. Legacies form a highly privileged hereditary caste, with an annual population larger than minority applicants. There are other groups which benefit from lower standards: benefactors and their children who have given large donations to the university, students from fashionable prep schools, prize atheletes, people from distant locations, adults who enroll as older students, etc. For people to get so upset because blacks are given lower entrance requirements, complaining that this lowers academic standards of excellence, but not care about other groups who get similar treatment is inconsistent.

The issue as to who or what deserves special consideration is a substantive one entailing a view on the nature of man. In "An Affirmative View", Judith Butler (1996) has said that without Affirmative Action, lowered entrance requirments will operate anyway with a different set of categories defining the disadvantaged. Lowered entrance reguirments are to be given to someone

who has suffered adverse conditions such as economic disadvantage, a dysfunctional family, or the antisocial environment of neighborhoods in decline. The individual must have shown moral "character" and the ability to "overcome obstacles", proving they will dedicate themselves to school and finish their degrees. It is an individualist solution rather than a political, institutional, or social transformation. Issues of class, gender, and race are addressed without being mentioned through discussing topics such as economic disadvantage - a desire to help the poor individual who can overcome his position through his own effort- - the Horatio Alger myth; declining neighborhoods - the results of black and chicanos situated in gang-infested slums; dysfunctional families - including drug and alcohol abuse, unmarried mothers, wayward fathers, lesbian and gay families, divorce, incest, and child abuse. (Issues that undermine **family values axe** particularly repugnant to neoconservatives.) These are problems that involve an individual's behaviour, and are therefore seen as needing an individual solution. "Color blind" policies entail an 'individualist merit' rather than the 'social oppression' idea of deserving special consideration. According to William Ryan (1971), this is a friendly way of blaming the victim, saying that the minorities have a problem because there is something wrong with them, such as a background of cultural deprivation producing a lack of motivation and skills. It reaffirms the American dream that everyone has an opportunity to succeed. It follows that if some individuals do not succeed, then they either chose not to or

have failed to measure up. It does not question the structure of American social life which, like the market itself, is generally assumed to be a fair race.

Comparing social oppression with running a race, it may be said that the problem is not with the runners but that the rules are not fair. (Kramnick suggests that we should no longer see life as a race but as play, where there are no winners and losers; that is, we should no longer run society as a meritocracy.) The problem is the game is biased for the benefit of some, at the expense of others. For example, in the USA schools are paid out of local property taxes rather than equally from general revenue. There is no universal standard of education. This has meant that rich neighborhoods have better schools, while slums have schools with horrible conditions. Poor marks in these latter schools are often explained as the result of cultural deprivation. The parents do not read to their children, or they lack education themselves. This is a problem involving individuals and their behaviour. To address the tax system which systematically deprives these schools is to call attention to social oppression. To make up for such desperate conditions, a multiculturalist would argue, the university should sponsor students that are minorities, as a way of correcting the social injustice inherent in American society. By lowering entrance requirements for these students the university is playing a leading role in creating a more just society. The responsible university should accept its duty as a tool for making America a

country that really has equal opportunity for everyone. It may have to make adjustments for them to be welcomed, but a multiculturalist would say that is a small price to pay for helping the disadvantaged. Once minorities graduate from university they can then use the skills they have learned to contribute toward the greater good of the country. In the end, everyone benefits.

Affirmative action has been generally discussed as a constitutional issue. This would make the issue a procedural one. However, as we have seen, special consideration is, in itself, not the real controversy. Why do some people get so upset when blacks are given lower entrence requirements, but not when other people get them? What is at issue is who or what deserves it and, most importantly, why. This is a substantive issue. The traditional vision of what is worth recognizing is the ability of an individual to overcome adversity. Lowered entrance requirements may reward the heroic determination. There have been four justifications for Affirmative Action: producing color/gender blindness, assuaging the guilt of whites, promoting minorities into positions of power, and developing diversity on campus. Each have its problems and affects the style of the university, as well as its ethical position.

For some, like Ronald Dworkin, it is a temporary measure. In itself affirmative action is not good, since it treats people differently according to their race and gender. However, it may be a necessary evil to create a less racially conscious society. When enough minorities are in lucrative role model positions,

blacks may feel less excluded and others will treat them with increasing respect.

> Affirmative action tries to provide more blacks as classmates for white doctors, not because it is desirable that a medical school class reflect the racial makeup of the community as a whole, but because professional association between blacks and whites will decrease the degree to which whites think of blacks as a race rather than as people, and thus the degree to which blacks think of themselves that way. (Dworkin 1985 p.295)

Shelby Steele, a black author, has explained why affirmative action, instead of furthering integration, may be exacerbating a politics of difference. Many students enter college with anxieties of not being good enough, but the black student carries the weight of an excessive amount of dehumanizing myths about racial inferiority. They have a reflexive fear that a poor grade or a flubbed response in class will confirm the myth as real. "A black's problems have a way of becoming a 'black' problem." (Steele 1995 p.180) A person may be unwilling to accept these feelings, so they see the problem as coming from outside. They watch everything for signs of racism, as a way of assuaging their fear of inadequacy. Lowering entrance requirements for athletes has led to the image of the dumb campus jock. In the same way, affirmative action has led to negative stereotypes of blacks. Others may be surprised when they say or do something smart— that is then taken as proof of condescension. The uncomfortable feelings a black may have can be avoided by sticking to their "own kind", a form of self-segregation. This in turn may do

nothing to relax resentment among other groups, who feel alien-
ated. The dream that minorities will find their place in the
mainstream may be empty, since they cannot afford to lose their
victim status with its preferential treatment, even if it is
demeaning.

Shelby Steele wonders why whites react with such unthink-
ing concession to black demands for "black studies departments,
black deans of student affairs, black counselling programs, Afro
houses, black theme dorms, black homecoming and graduation
ceremonies" etc. The way he explains it, whites are trying to run
away from their feelings of guilt through appeasement. Blacks may
feel that it is just revenge or retribution, while whites may
think of it as atonement. Affirmative action is not undertaken
for its own sake but as a necessary evil to **assuage** difficult
feelings.

> Very small provocations often suffice to mobilize take-
> overs, sit-ins, and other campus disruptions. It should
> not be assumed that these are acts of great courage on the
> part of the protesters, because virtually never are they
> exposed to punishment; indeed they are typically praised
> for their display of passionate commitment. (D'Souza 1991
> p.137)

In their cowardice, according to d'Souza, administrations are
more interested in appeasement than getting to the root of the
student's problems. It is patronizing and has led to a number of
double standards which people find infuriating. John Ellis has
listed some of them as follows.

> Gender stereotypes are reprehensible - but women are more nurturing- Cultural stereotypes are objectionable - but Westerners are sexist and racist. Hate speech must be stopped - but white males must be denounced. Segregation is evil - but blacks need separate dormitories and clubs. (Ellis 1997 p. 154)

> They deserve the help of affirmative action because they are equal; but they need it because they are not equal. (Mansfield 1986 p,98)

If guilt is the justification for affirmative action, there may be no limit to the extent taken to redress the social problem. The debt of centuries of oppression can never be "repaid". In this way, affirmative action is self-defeating, since it never resolves the problem of guilt.

A more positive justification for Affirmative Action is that it has promoted minorities into positions of esteem and power that might not have achieved it otherwise. The point is not to create a color-blind society but to share power; to **make sure** that minorities are in positions to promote the welfare of their race, gender, or class. The problem is that so few make it. D'Souza warned that the beneficiaries of affirmative action often find it hard to compete because they are not sufficiently prepared, blaming their poor grades on institutional racism rather than working harder on their skills. After all, postmodernists believe that "standards and values are arbitrary, and the ideal of the educated person is largely a figment of bourgeois white male ideology, which should be cast aside" (D'Souza 1991 p.229). Steele believed in Martin Luther King's dream that black students would prove themselves to be better than others. To

fight racism, the student would burn the midnight oil while his roommates were tired and went to bed. With Affirmative Action the message black students get is that they are already equal to, or as good as, anybody else. There is no need to go the extra mile to prove themselves. King's hope and dream has been undermined b special status. In the end, according to D'Souza, fifty percent of Hispanics and sixty percent of Blacks drop out. Some stick around only long enough for the proportional representation of admissions to look good. Students don't feel they belong.

It seems to me that students might feel better if there were more minority teachers as role models with whom they could talk. Unfortunately, since there are so few PhDs from these groups, the universities are left scrambling in a bidding war for minority professors, often stealing professors from the black colleges. The scarcity of qualified black **teachers** in **many** subjects looks like institutional bias, making minorities defensive.

Some have justified affirmative action on the grounds of promoting diversity on campus. They do not see affirmative action as a necessary evil, but as a positive tool for creating a pluralist culture for academic life. The rationale is the substantive ideal that students will be exposed to forms of learning that they cannot get through books. This should prepare students for dealing with an increasingly multicultural society. Our leaders will need to understand the mentalities of diverse groups, to attain this skill they will need exposure to these

groups. Hopefully, the academic body will become more sensitive to the issues and problems of minority cultures. The creation of a racially mixed campus is a direct and irrefutable consequence of affirmative action. There is no waiting for a long-term pay-off which might never come.

What has been the effect of racial diversity? According to D'Souza, it seems that incidents of bigotry are on the rise. Many think that racism is always there and should be treated with consciousness-raising sessions. If it is not expressed openly then it goes underground where it manifests itself in subtle ways. If this was true, says D'Souza, then racial attacks would be more frequent in the Deep South where racism had its ancestral home, but the incidents seem to be happening in Northwestern universities. Why is it that as attitudes are becoming more progressive and tolerant, racial problems are **increasing?** Sometimes verbal or physical attacks directed personally at the student have been hastily interpreted as racially motivated, inflating the impression of a growing epidemic. However, at the University of Michigan, D'Souza interviewed some students who saw claims of racism as "crybaby" hype. They see blacks getting special concessions and segregating themselves from others, while accusing whites of racism. Instead of being interested in improving relations and their marks, some black students seem keener on celebrating their special status, and playing the victim. The students interviewed were afraid of raising critical questions lest they be labeled racist or sexist and get a lot of

flack, another reason for resentment. They used to be liberal, not prejudiced, but they learned to be judgmental through experience. According to D'Souza, biased affirmative action policies coupled with the oppression of political correctness is exacerbating racism.

In the first chapter, I said that viewing the university as a method for getting what we want is missing the point of seeing what is valuable about it in itself. I asked what qualities are internal to the academic life which make it one worth living. Diversity directly adds to the academic life by introducing an exotic array of experiences with other races, religions, and ethnicities. Students may be exposed to a variety of mentalities which they could not get out of books. This should make the university a place of understanding. However, for any of the justifications for Affirmative Action to work, students would need a new image of minorities as valuable contributors to the larger community. Affirmative action by itself cannot guarentee the desired outcomes. This means that blacks would have to tutor one another to help improve their academic excellence, making up for past neglect. They would also need to overcome their self-enclosed segregation, and be less defensive about looking for unacknowledged racism. Students will need a dream by which to live, a substantive inspiration to encourage them through the difficult challenges of the academic world. This could be a form of blaming the victim, but to change attitudes and fight dehumanizing stereotypes the students must do their part.

Political Correctness

Universities that used to fight hard for the freedom of
speech have now implemented policies which limit that speech.
Some schools have made it into a crusade by putting up posters
that encourage students to report racism, and have even put in
telephone hotlines open twenty-four hours a day to receive
reports of abuse. There are consciousness-raising sessions to get
students to admit and face their sexism, racism, or homophobia as
well as required multicultural courses to educate them on the
evils and subtleties of prejudice. These are often biased and do
not allow alternative views. White males can feel persecuted,
particularly when they have no means of, and are denied grounds
for, complaining about racism or sexism against them. They must
watch what they say, and as tensions rise **more** policing is
demanded.

According to Peter Emberley (1996), postmodernism has
undermined all foundations for discussions that aim at recon-
ciliation. For postmodernists "truth" is just a political tool
for domination. This suspicion has poisoned any atmosphere of
trust there may have existed at our institutions. Statements
which may have been ironic, tongue in cheek, or humorous can be
taken defensively as slurs to be reported on. However, on the
other hand, according to Valerie Scatamburlo (1998), there has
recently been a serious backlash against political correctness in
the media to the effect that if one talks about the insensitivity

of someone else, they may be accused of "McCarthyism of the Left", thereby silencing the free speech of complaining.

For Americans, freedom of speech is protected by the First Amendment. Enshrined in the constitution, it is seen as an absolute right. The American legal protection of freedom of speech pre-supposes the distinction between pure speech and speech that borders on action — eg. incitement, hate propoganda, etc. Yelling "fire" in a crowded theater, or using "fighting words" to provoke another into retaliation, is not protected.

This distinction between pure speech and speech that is a form of action has been challanged by J. L. Austin. He distin-guished between performatives and constatives. Examples of performatives were "I pronounce you married" or "I promise" which are statements which perform actions. Constatives stated proposi-tions which were true or false. He found in **his investigation of** language that this distinction between act and speech could not be upheld; making a truth claim was in itself an act. This pre-occupation with speech and its performative significance explains the postmodern concern with "discourse", which does not simply describe the world but shapes it. Stanley Fish, a postmodernist, argues that speech is never without consequences, except in special artificial circumstances. Content matters. "Like expres-sion, freedom is a coherent notion only in relation to a goal or good that limits and, by limiting, shapes its exercise." (Fish **1994** p. **108)** What the courts do when they make judgments on the First Amendment is not to protect a realm of "pure" speech from

intrusion, but classify speech in relation to an unacknowledged higher value. Since free speech is not pure and absolute, the undesirable result is that the definition of its content is contested ground between opposing political powers. Without a general principle, each situation has to be evaluated on its own merit. It is a balancing act between freedom and other values. This turns speech from a procedural issue to a substantive one.

> Take the case of universities and colleges. Could it be the purpose of such places to encourage free expression? If the answer were "yes" it would be hard to say why there would be need for classes, or examinations, or departments, or disciplines, or libraries, since freedom of expression requires nothing but a soapbox or an open telephone line. The very fact of the university's machinery - of the events, rituals, and procedures that fill its calendar - argues for some other, more substantive purpose. In relation to that purpose (which will be realized differently in different kinds of institutions), the flourishing of free expression will in almost all circumstances be an obvious good; but in some circumstances, freedom of expression may pose a **threat to** that purpose, and at that point it may be necessary to discipline or regulate speech, lest, to paraphrase Milton, the institution sacrifice itself to one of its accidental features. (Fish 1994 p.107)

One of the best arguments articulating the substantive value of free speech and the desire to exclude hate-speech is by Chief Justice Dickson from the Supreme Cout of Canada in relation to R. V. Keegstra. Section 319 of the Canadian Criminal Code prohibits the willful promotion of hatred, other than in private conversation, towards a section of the public distinguished by colour, race, religion, or ethnic origin. This is seen to conflict with s. 2(b) of the Constitution Act,1982 which guaran-

tees freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, includ-
ing freedom of the press and other media of communication. What
justifies an infringement on this fundamental freedom is s. 1 of
the <u>Constitution Act, 1982</u> which says that freedoms are "subject
only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demon-
strably justified in a free and democratic society." This means
that hate literature can be prohibited if it is in conflict with
a free and democratic society. Hate speech is not just offensive
it does harm, not only to the members of the target group but to
society in general. It is not just that it may attract allies and
cause conflict, but "the alteration of views held by the recip-
ients of hate propaganda may occur subtly, and is not always
attendant upon conscious acceptance of the communicated idea."
(Bickenback 1993 p.71) We may reject hate propaganda outright,
only to find that we end up feeling a revulsion towards the
minority group anyway.

Dickson argues that the prosecution of hate propaganda is
not closely related to the rationale behind freedom of expression
for three reasons

1) Allowing people to say their piece can further the
search for truth. Since it is not possible for the state to say
which piece is going to further that search, it has been argued
that we should allow complete freedom of discussion. Such an
argument would negate any restriction, even though lies can
impede the search for truth while the marketplace of ideas may
not overcome all falsehoods. "There is very little chance that

statements intended to promote hatred against an identifiable group are true, or that their vision of society will lead to a better world." (Bickenbach 1993 p.72)

2) Freedom of expression is also justified as self-development through the articulation of ideas. "Such self-autonomy stems in large part from one's ability to articulate and nurture an identity derived from membership in a cultural and religious group." (Bickenbach 1993 p.72) Since hate propaganda is such a violent threat to such human flourishing for all citizens, it cannot be tolerated by a free society.

3) A democracy must allow everyone the respect and dignity to participate in an open political process. This demands freedom of expression. However, we cannot allow the propagation of ideas to undermine the democratic process by withholding respect and dignity from certain identifiable members of the polity. "It is through rejecting hate propaganda that the state can best encourage the protection of values central to freedom of expression, while simultaneously demonstrating dislike for the vision forwarded by hate-mongers." (Bickenbach 1993 p.73)

Using the correct terms is not enough to erradicate hate-speech. It continues in another more "polite" acceptable form. One of the games played by advocates of political correctness is finding the right name for different minorities. In Ideology and Insanity: Essays on the Psychiatric Dehumanization of Man, Thomas Szasz M.D. explains why this game is self-defeating.

> In the relatively short, three-hundred-year history of
> psychiatry, the condition now called mental illness has
> been labeled and relabled as madness, lunacy, insanity,
> idiocy, dementia, dementia praecox, neurasthenia, psycho-
> pathy, mania, schizophrenia, neurosis, psychoneurosis,
> psychosis, ego failure, ego dyscontrol, emotional illness,
> emotional disorder, psychological illness, psychological
> disorder, psychiatric illness, psychiatric disorder,
> immaturity, social failure, social maladaptation, be-
> haviour disorder, and so forth._____With persistent usage
> - often after only a decade or two - the pejorative
> meaning of the term becomes increasingly apparent and its
> value as semantic camouflage diminishes and disappears.
> New psychiatric terms for "mental illness" and "mental
> hospital" are then coined, giving the public - and usually
> the medical and psychiatric professions as well - the
> impression that an important new psychiatric discovery has
> been made. When the fresh terms become familiar, they, in
> turn, are discarded and a new crop of therapeutic-sounding
> words is introduced. (Szasz 1970 p.58-9)

Relabeling a minority group may be more polite, and they do have

a right to be called what they want. However, since it doesn't

really change the reality of discrimination by itself, it is only

a matter of time until a **pejorative sense gets** attatched to a

label and a new term is needed. It is a revolving door of

linguistic camoflage that never resolves the issue. An added

problem is that people may not be able to keep up with the

current style. When they want to be polite, they may not know

what to say. It is a self-defeating ruse, merely switching terms

of disparagement and hate. One cannot lay down rules about

speech, obey them, and expect everything to be alright. This

procedural measure misses the mark and is easily criticized for

enforcing "McArthyism of the Left." Substantive judgement is

unavoidable and necessary. What is called for is sensitivity to

the nuance and style of the particular incidents and situations.

The substantive question is "what qualifies as hate-speech?" It should not include all criticisms, which may be valid and needed, of minorities or majorities along with their policies and agendas. Unfortunately, having an opinion is enough to upset <u>someone</u>. James Winn drew a distinction between "directed, irresponsible and ugly discriminatory speech as opposed to what people may take offense to in a teaching situation." (as quoted in D'Souza 1991 p. 141) Neoconservatives may complain that political correctness impedes their freedom of expression, but surely one cannot assume the right to be obnoxious or abusive. Since it is possible to critique others with tact, disrespect is unnecessary and may be deemed unacceptable by the academic community. It would cross the line of what a university should be.

According to multiculturalism what should a university be? While the neoconservatives are elitist, the multiculturalists are democratic. The university should enable minorities to situate themselves within the context of a larger tradition, while being a place to articulate a sense of themselves as valuable contributors to their community. The university should discuss what it means to be a minority, what is good about it, and what it is that needs to be heard. The morality of education should not be avoided but must be faced and the relevance of the university to society should be spelled out. The tradition of white male dominated thinking should be questioned and alternatives explored. Diversity should be the spice of the university, leading to experiences that are exciting, interesting, and eye-opening. I

would say that, according to the multicultural ideal, the university should be a place where people from all different racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds congregate in harmony and understanding. The university should be a leading example of what is possible.

While I believe that intellectual diversity and the raising of issues about the political implications of theory is a healthy contribution to the university, I am inclined to think that an excessive denunciation of the Western tradition has the effect of undermining the multicultural quest for tolerance and understanding. After having raised, through political correctness, the issue about how we treat each other, such a result would be unfortunate, as I will explore in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE DARK SIDE OF ACADEMIC POLITICS

In this chapter I will give a critical account of the academic politics of the Left as well as the Right. The Left may use the underpriviledged to advance their own careers. The Right, believing in the esoteric/exoteric double standard, may justify conspiracies for the sake of order. The culture war ends up with the two sides not speaking to each other, when we would be better off understanding each other, or should, at least, be critically listening to what the other has to say. The problem is whether we are to use force or communication to fight what we see as evil.

Bourdieu has defined social fields as organized struggles over scarce resources. Intellectuals compete for cultural capital; the power to define the legitimate form of cultural production. This war occurs primarily **between those who reproduce** and transmit accepted doctrine and those who try to innovate new ways of thinking - the orthodox and heterodox. They both assume a shared doxa which enables them to communicate without getting mired in rehashing irrelevant details. Given this common back-ground, intellectuals try to differentiate themselves; to stand out and be noticed. One's career depends on these battles over distinction. **"Book** contracts, reviews, citations, honorary rewards, leadership positions in professional organizations, academic posts, and the arduous route to tenure all involve fundamental decisions regarding one's position in the intellec-tual world." (Swartz 1997 p.227) The young researcher who tries

to gain entry and rise up the ladder is often frustrated by the slow process by which universities consecrate new forms of culture.

> I need only mention the astonishment of a certain young
> American visitor, at the beginning of the seventies, to
> whom I had to explain that all his intellectual heroes,
> like Althusser, Barthes, Deleuze, Derrida, and Foucault,
> not to mention the minor prophets of the moment, held
> marginal positions in the university system which often
> disqualified them from officially directing research.
> (Bourdieu 1988 p.xviii)

One may criticize the institution for not acknowledging them, but this only reinforces the importance of the university for the legitimation of discourse.

The widespread frustration of fighting for legitimacy may lead many intellectuals to the Left, uniting with other powerless groups. Those competing for distinction may opportunistically use the causes of the underprivileged to further their own position, while possibly introducing an anti-intellectual element into the struggle. On a wider scale, the economically subordinate position of intellectuals, compared to business, may lead to sympathy with others less fortunate. "The greater the investment in cultural capital and the greater the incongruity between cultural capital and economic capital, the more likely individuals are to contest the established order." (Swartz 1997 p.235) However, according to Bourdieu, intellectuals tend to be elites who have less material-istic concerns than the poor. This makes identification between intellectuals and the underclass problematic. The Left can be

corrupted by status, using the less fortunate for their own ambitions of prestige and fame.

The Right may be corrupted by their desire for a well-run system. A conspiracy theory would hold that some at the top may know that social construction is arbitrary, but keep up the appearance of certainty for the sake of social order. The-conservative political philosopher Leo Strauss is particularly important for inspiring and articulating this view.

> Philosophy or science, the highest activity of man, is the attempt to replace opinion about 'all things' by knowledge of 'all things'; but opinion is the element of society; philosophy or science is therefore the attempt to dissolve the element in which society breathes, and thus it endangers society. Hence philosophy or science must remain the preserve of a small minority, and philosophers or scientists must respect the opinions on which society rests. To respect opinions is something entirely different from accepting them as true. Philosophers or scientists who hold this view about the relations of philosophy or science and society are driven to employ **a peculiar manner** of writing which would enable them to reveal what they regard as the truth to the few, without endangering the unqualified commitment of the many to the opinions on which society rests. They will distinguish between the true teaching as the esoteric teaching and the socially useful teaching as the exoteric teaching; whereas the exoteric teaching is meant to be easily accessible to every reader, the esoteric teaching discloses itself only to the very careful and well-trained readers after long and concentrated study. (Strauss 1959 p.221-2)

Philosophy or science guestion all assumptions and accept only those claims which can be proven true as valid knowledge. However, not everything that society relies upon can be proven beyond a shadow of a doubt. Sometimes things have to be accepted to move on and get the work done. If we stopped to question

everything before we acted, we would never progress. Questioning could undermine the community's way of life and, according to Strauss, might justifiably lead to persecution, as it did for Socrates. Those who know better must communicate secretly among themselves by hiding the truth amidst vast amounts of boring material, using technical terms and a great deal of technical complexity. Quotations may also be used to express their opinions, using other authors as their mouthpieces to say things they would not assert in their own name. Strauss used all these techniques (Drury 1988). Only the most determined readers were supposed to be able to figure out the intended meaning after much digging, or those who were personally initiated into the secret teachings.

Not only could persecution be a problem, but undermining society could become widespread. And since **critique tends to** be dangerous and disruptive to society, philosophy must remain hidden. According to the father of neoconservativism, Irving Kristol ...

> If God does not exist, and if religion is an illusion that
> the majority of men cannot live without, then psycho-
> analysis and religion can be reconciled - if that is what
> one wishes - by the simplest expedient of a double standard
> of truth. Let men believe in the lies of religion since
> they cannot do without them, and let the handful of sages,
> who know the truth and can live with it, keep it among
> themselves. Men are then divided into the wise and the
> foolish, the philosophers and the common men, and atheism
> becomes a guarded, esoteric doctrine - for if the il-
> lusions of religion were to be discredited, there is no
> telling with what madness men would be seized, with what
> uncontrollable anguish. It would indeed become the duty of
> the wise publicly to defend and support religion, even to

> call the police power to its aid, while reserving the truth for themselves and their chosen disciples. (Kristol 1995b p.404)

Religion is thought by many to be necessary in order to secure morality. The object is to produce predictable patterns of behaviour among the masses that can be channelled for the "greater good". Those who would try to "enlighten" people indiscriminately should be considered subversive and annihilated with all of the resources available to a society. Meanwhile, the elite, or insiders, should occupy key positions not only in the university, but also in government, the bureaucracy, and the media. The esoteric few should have positions of influence and power which they must use to control perceptions of reality as well as who gets taken seriously as legitimate.

Following Brian Campbell (1995) I may say that those who believe in the esoteric/exoteric division agree with the post-modernists that information is reality, truth is subjective, and history is relative. Nevertheless, they criticize postmodernists for openly espousing their nihilism. For conservative discourse to be powerful, it has to appear homogenous, universal, timeless, value-neutral, impersonal, disinterested — objective. The elites can work bureaucracy to their advantage, adjust citations to fit any given thesis, research and investigate any given topic to produce the result they want, reinterpret history to justify their course of action, or take a room full of individuals and lead them to the same conclusions, all with impunity. (Campbell

1995 p.9) After all, they could say that if all the evidence pointed to one interpretation of events, then that is the "truth." (Campbell 1995 p.20) Of course they would keep knowledge of such sophistry to themselves, protecting their reputation while talking to "those who know" through code, like conspirators fabricating reality for the masses. Unfortunately, reality can only be pushed so far. Having people believe the unbelievable would be paradoxical. The "old boys' club" does not have to be insincere. They may come to believe their own fictions, and are likely to be even more convincing when they do.

Any conspiracy theory may itself be completely fictitious, but the threat that it could be true is enough to keep paranoia alive. Suspicion destroys community and collegiality. Those who work outside the approved canons of scholarship, who are not considered cutting edge, or who do not follow the **partyline, need** tenure as protection against the scholarly culture itself. The subterfuge of conspiracy involves a double standard of truth. Whatever ideal the university may be trying to promote, a double standard of truth is corrupt and can rot an institution from within. People may say they believe in their ideals and act accordingly, but those on the inside realize cynically that it's just rhetoric, posturing, politics, and social control. Those at the top may know that their social constructions are arbitrary, but put on a show of certainty and objectivity for the sake of social order. Neoconservatives do not want to admit the fallibility of their beliefs, while postmodernists do not want to

admit that they may be career men furthering their own ambition by coming to the aid of the unfortunate, and that their own social status and postition are at stake. Such cynicism and opportunism are byproducts of the culture war.

There are some interesting characteristics of the culture war between the neoconservatives and the postmodernists: it is one-sided. Postmodernism has become a favourite target for neoconservatives. They want a belief system that defends social order and morality. Postmodernists are popularly described as believing there is no truth. Irving Kristol (1995a p. 134) has said that postmodernism attacks rational humanism and bourgeois morality, undermining Western Civilization itself. Since Bennett and Bloom, there have been a string of publications about the university by neoconservatives and they all have had something nasty to say about postmodernists. Russell **Jacoby (1994)** has noted the lack of response from postmodernists. He explained this as the fact that they are not in the habit of defending the university they used to criticize in the Sixties. The line has clearly been drawn by the neoconservatives. Roger Kimball, the author of Tenured Radicals criticized Catharine Simpson's call for peace.

> She ... proclaimed herself 'baffled, baffled as to why we cannot be students of Western Culture and multiculturalism at the same time.' [Kimball's reply was] the idea of being 'students of Western culture and multiculturalism at the same time' is either an empty rhetorical gesture or a contradiction in terms. (Kimball 1992 p.82-3)

The neoconservatives have been the ones to adopt a zero tolerance policy against postmodernists and multiculturalists. They have been the ones to declare a culture war, while accussing the others of being the aggressors.

The two sides in this war do not talk to each other. The result has been that the neoconservatives do not realize how much their criticism has already been considered by some postmodernists. John Ellis (1997) criticized gender-race-class interpretations for being too narrow to fully encompass the rich complexity of literature. His argument is parallel to the contrast between Foucault's Herkunft and Bourdieu's Doxa. Multiculturalists may be interpreting an underlying unity of "systemic prejudice" behind disparate events, which may not be there. They may be relying on a metaphysics of stereotypes which colors the way in which they describe events. They could be finding that for which they are looking, as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Given that Foucault is critical of this metaphysics, it follows that not all the New Left is the same. The Right may be seeing postmodernism as a unity which may not be there: a stereotype which lacks foundation. Both the Right and the Left in their polemics paint a picture of the other side as a strawman; an enemy threat to be completely eliminated by all the resources at one's disposal.

Postmodernists fear that Neoconservatives want to impose total conformity and keep minorities subjugated. Neoconservatives fear that postmodernists would undermine any system of belief and

destroy civilization itself. Both sense the issue is thought control, hence, curriculum is a hot topic. They don't seem to realize that students have minds of their own with which to question the stories coming from either side. So each dreads the power of the other and works political manipulations against them. Each complains about being a minority, underdogs fighting the dominant hegemony of the other side, when they may be the ones actually pulling the strings. Tenure is one defence, but it can be revoked for "moral turpitude" or "general incompetence." It can become a weapon in the culture war.

Polemics are an essential part of the culture war. The atmosphere can be extremely tense. There is an ethics to discourse which involves our relation to truth and to each other. Foucault's criticism of polemics is worth quoting at length.

> It's true that I don't like to get involved in polemics. If I open a book and see that the author is accusing an adversary of 'infantile leftism¹, I shut it right away. That's not my way of doing things; I don't belong to the world of people who do things that way. I insist on this difference as something essential: a whole morality is at stake, the morality that concerns the search for truth and the relation to the other. (Foucault 1984e p.381)

> The polemicist ... proceeds encased in privileges that he possesses in advance and will never agree to question. On principle, he possesses rights authorizing him to wage war and making that struggle a just undertaking; the person he confronts is not a partner in the search for the truth, but an adversary, an enemy who is wrong, who is harmful and whose very existence constitutes a threat. For him, then, the game does not consist of recognizing this person as a subject having the right to speak, but of abolishing him, as interlocutor, from any possible dialogue; and his final objective will be, not to come as close as possible to a difficult truth, but to bring about the triumph of the just cause he has been manifestly upholding from the

beginning. The polemicist relies on a legitimacy that his adversary is by definition denied. (Foucault 1984e p.382)

It is unfortunate that this statement which was so important for Foucault has been ignored by many of his followers in America, who refuse to listen to another point of view since it is merely 'power masquerading as truth.' American Postmodernism suspects claims to objective truth as unacknowledged attempts at domination when there can be no basis for real rational superiority and discrimination. Statements claiming universal value are dismissed as only the perspective of a particular class, sex, or race.

With identity politics, the objective is to fight discrimination and prejudice. It is both partisan and polemical. Impartial objectivity can be seen as an obstacle to political engagement and the American Left tries to do **battle with prejudice** on controversial issues. Bourdieu questioned the identifying of intellectuals with the underclass, and multiculturalists have postulated that only women, blacks, or gays can understand what they are going through and only they can speak for their kind. Since intellectuals can be women, black, or gay they may teach classes on their subject, with their personal identity lending authenticity to their discourse. Others just can't quite understand and are therefore excused from the conversation. The problem for Bourdieu would be that there is not the distance between victim and activist that would lend credibility and legitimacy to knowledge claims. Knowledge, according to the Left,

inevitably carries an agenda. Collusion is unavoidable, and should be admitted openly. We may not be able to eliminate symbolic violence. However, some feel that symbolic violence may be fought with symbolic violence. That is, elitism may be undermined by giving a special status and protection to minor-ities; the victim's voice must be heard. Multiculturalists have been criticized for being militant and confrontational, not interested in peace and conciliation. There is an "us" versus "them" mentality without the possibility of identification and reconciliation. Criticism of the tactics of multiculturalism is silenced through being condemned as racist, sexist, or homo-phobic. While, parallel to this, complaints against prejudice can be accused of enforcing "McArthyism of the Left", a good way of silencing the "overly sensitive." Discussion can seem futile from either side in the culture war.

Given that what has been discussed in this chapter can be condemned, we may construct an ideal of university life. There would have to be a sincerity that is lost when the Left uses the underprivileged to further their career, or when conservatives pretend certainty for the sake of order. Polemics would have to be replaced with honest communication, without the defensive paranoia of conspiracy and opportunism. Just because people are not on the same wavelength, or do not understand, does not mean they can't learn this skill.

For Hans Georg Gadamer (1960), hermeneutics looks at what goes on in successful interpretation and understanding. If

everything goes smoothly we don't have to reflect upon our practice, the trick is to raise our implicit awareness to a theoretical level. Understanding is formed within the context of a pregiven relation to the text. It is part of a tradition from which we begin with certain expectations and questions. We need these prejudices, or pre-judgments, in order to have a context within which to situate the words so that they have significance. Every statement has its significance within the context of a question; so, understanding where an author is coming from is knowing the questions to which he wrote a response. With temporal distance we may objectify and know the background of the text; while our own background, derived from the tradition influenced by the text, will affect our understanding in ways not yet articulated and rationally evaluated. As we go along we may come across a difficult passage, then we become **aware of our precon-**ceptions. Though we may never completely objectify our background and know it exhaustively, we may have to adjust our overall understanding in light of the surprising text. This new under-standing helps to interpret the rest of the passage. Reading the particular in light of the whole and the whole in light of the particular is called the hermeneutic circle. It's a continuous dialogue.

The community of dialogue is more than the response and counter-response of two monologues in debate. We may ask ques-tions of the other to clarify our understanding, interested in how they would respond to problems that we have with what has

been said. If we are open, and this is a moral point, we may go beyond interrogating what the other thinks to use the text to question ourselves. By doing this, we are changed by our encounter with the other. There is a fusion of horizons which creates a common ground for conversation that then takes over and leads the conversation in whatever creative direction it will go, in search of a difficult truth. The art is to form the right questions.

Gadamer is a conservative who respects deference to tradition and authority. He suggests we treat people with the same reverence as a classic text. "We try to understand how what he is saying could be right. If we want to understand, we will try to make his arguments even stronger. This happens even in conversation." (Gadamer 1960 p.292) People may balk at treating others with the same courtesy as a **classic,** thinking that mere understanding is not critical enough. Instead, Foucault allows for more banter in conversation.

> I like discussions, and when I am asked questions, I try to answer them. ... The person asking the question is merely exercising the right that has been given him: to remain unconvinced, to perceive a contradiction, to require more information, to emphasize different postulates, to point out faulty reasoning, etc. As for the person answering, ... by the logic of his own discourse he is tied to what he has said earlier, and by the acceptance of dialogue he is tied to the questioning of the other. Questions and answers depend on a game - a game that is at once pleasant and difficult. (Foucault 1984e p.381)

Getting people to talk to each other may not be enough to

stop conspiracy or opportunism. How do we deal with true evil? In 1933, Adolf Hitler gave this advice:

> Only one thing could have stopped our movement - if our adversaries had understood its principle and from the first day had smashed with the utmost brutality the nucleus of our new movement, (as quoted in Hood and Jansz 1993 p.172)

A final solution against evil from a master of evil, a defence as ruthless as he was. Do we fight evil with evil, justified as the "good" side? Or do we try to live as an example of understanding? The fear of conspiracy and opportunism feeds ruthlessness, but feelings of community can inspire conciliation. Foucault's critical dialogue seems halfway between the two extremes of Hitler and Gadamer. There is respect for the other that a polemicist does not have, while asking hard questions. Is this how we should respond to evil?

The traditional theological problem of evil is that if God is all-powerful and loving, why does evil exist in the world? However, trying to explain evil can have the effect of reducing a perversion to a natural response by trying to make it understandable. I, for one, cannot understand true evil. Normally people try to do what they think is right, they may find that they are wrong, and in that case they change their minds. True evil doesn't care about right and wrong, it just wants what it wants. The real problem of evil is a practical one: how do we defend ourselves against it? If evil refuses to listen to reason, this threatens to reduce our rational ideals to a clash of wills.

Force may be legitimized with at least one side remaining honest — rationally critical of itself while defending itself. Disciplinary action may be called for within rational limits, but conspiracy and opportunism can operate within the limits of the law. We must not resort to their level and compromise our ideals, which for the university should involve rational dialogue. We may be able to soften their hearts, but maybe not. One of the greatest evils is a pride that will not admit that it may be wrong. This is the Asian vice of "saving face." We may still be able to prove that the other is wrong, they just won't listen. The university as an institution depends upon justifying itself, so the problem of pure evil may be marginalized. This does not mean that it may not still operate and we need to defend ourselves. How do we fight evil? We do so by exposing it for what it is. The problem remains that they may have the power to fight back and do damage. We take our chances. The danger is that the harder we try to fight evil the more we may end up demonizing intellectual opponents. "Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And when you look long into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you." (Nietzsche BGE 146) Such demonization undermines the ideal of any attempt at dignified dialogue, real respect, and honest understanding.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

The first requirement for a university of excellence is to ask itself the question, "What should a university be?" This thesis has dealt with four ideals, (neoliberalism, deconstructionism, neoconservativism, and multiculturalism). The first two may be discarded, while the other two should be focused upon. The neoliberal anti-versity is ruled out, since its only concern is with making the most profit from the least overhead. For them, pondering perennial questions is a waste of time. According to Derrida, the deconstructive ideal would be for the university to constantly and continuously ask itself about its own reason for being. However, he would not have this foreclosed by giving it an answer. Unfortunately, we need answers to guide our actions.

Derrida's ideal is focused on research and does not dwell on academic life. This is the concern of both the neoconservative and multicultural ideals. The former is elitist, while the latter is democratic. The former tries to protect high-brow culture from degradation, while the latter tries to include minorities and popular culture. The fact that the clash between the two can be so intense says something about the university and the importance of culture.

> The humanities tell us how men and women of our own and other civilizations have grappled with life's enduring, fundamental questions. ... These questions are not simply diversions for intellectuals or playthings for the idle. As a result of the ways these questions have been answered, civilizations have emerged, nations have developed,

> wars have been fought, and people have lived contentedly or miserably. (Bennett 1984 p. 17)

> It is simply not possible for students to understand their society without studying its intellectual legacy. If their past is hidden from them, they will become aliens in their own culture, strangers in their own land. (Bennett 1984 p.21)

Culture tells us what is important and situates people within a larger context. The narratives we learn offer pictures of who and what we are as members of a group. If the larger community to which we belong values us we have self-esteem; if it offers a dehumanizing and limiting self-image then we suffer. The neoconservatives pay homage to the Western tradition which gave us the university. Minorities would challenge this culture which has marginalized them. To disallow them to research their own niche and to develop an image of themselves as valued members would be oppressive.

The neoconservative response is revealed in Kimball's negative answer to Stimpson's call to be students of both Western culture and multiculturalism.

> What she did not say, of course, was that multiculturalism implied a complete politicization of teaching and learning, that its radically egalitarian conception of culture ruled out not only the notion of literary quality but downgraded the very idea of literature as a distinct realm of endeavor and experience; she did not mention that multiculturalism, far from being a means of securing ethnic and racial eguality, was an instrument for promoting ideological separatism based on all those differences she enjoyed enumerating: "age, class, ethnicity, institution, gender, nation, tribe, race, rank, religion, sexuality"; she did not dwell on the fact that the multiculturalism imperative explicitly denies the intellectual and moral foundations of Western culture-

> preeminently its commitment to rationality and the ideal
> of objectivity. (Kimball 1992 p.82)

To imply that teaching and learning are not already politicized is nonsense. Some of our greatest literature was written to make a political point, sometimes against great opposition. This has lent a heroic quality to intellectual writings. The clash between modern science and the Church is almost legendary. Neoconservatives choose to ignore the political element in Western culture, claiming objectivity. This ignores an important moral factor that would be useful in arguing for the tradition. For the multiculturalists to draw our attention to the political/moral element in higher education is a gain. Once the issue is raised, choosing to ignore it is negligent. To claim value-neutrality can be a dishonest way of hiding one's agenda. Objectivity has its home in the natural sciences, but in transferring it to humans, objectivity becomes a moral/political stance. To avoid being biased, it means that both sides are presented equally with all their strengths and weaknesses exposed. This is opposed to partisanship which will only show the weaknesses of the enemy and the strengths of one's allies. It is a matter of personal integrity not to be biased and dogmatic.

Openmindedness can go too far, according to Bloom, in making the inability to say one set of values are better or worse than another a moral virtue. Objectivity, therefore, does not mean having no opinion and the neoconservatives certainly have an axe to grind against relativism. However, abandoning standards is

more of a liability than an asset to a multiculturalism that tries to say their literature has value for the reader. Nevertheless, neoconservatives think multicultural studies undermine the high-brow culture of the university. Objectivity simply means that we study the "best", which just happens to be the writings of 'dead white Western males'. To question this, they say, is to politicize the university and to drop the notion of literary quality. Neoconservatives are prejudging and dismissing the possible excellence of entire genres. In their eyes, it seems, it is an insult for them to be compared with the others who are not considered "elite." To question this attitude involves an ostracism they accuse political correctness of promoting.

Neoconservatives accuse multiculturalism of denying the importance of rationality, but deconstructionists deny they are abandoning rationality. Foucault **states "If it is extremely** dangerous to say that Reason is the enemy that should be eliminated, it is just as dangerous to say that any critical questioning of this rationality risks sending us into irrationality." (Foucault 1984e p.249) The neoconservative picture of postmodernism may be an extreme stereotype, but there is real danger in the path they are criticizing. Some people may see the Western rational tradition as the enemy. This is shortsighted, since the tradition is so full of contrary ideas that there is bound to be something they can use. The fear that multiculturalism seeks separatism rather than equality may be applied to such self-segregation tactics. This extreme is equal to that of the

neoconservarive dismissal. There is much in the Western tradition that can enrich the soul, flawed as it may be. Bennett's praise of the teacher who can make the classics come alive while revealing the interconnectedness of ideas, (without being dogmatic, obscure, or distracting) is excellent. To say that we must either be for the tradition or against it is to try to put people into a box. The more openminded, or shall we say objective, scholar is going to realize that there is value in both, while each have their faults. Self-segregation is a possibility but not a necessity for the multiculturalist. A minority's genre may be situated within the larger context of the Western tradition.

What does all this have to tell us about the question "What should a university be?" Minimally, the question must not be considered a waste of time but must be answered, **however** tentatively. It is unavoidably a moral/political issue which recognizes the importance of culture for everyone, elite or not. It is to our benefit not to be dismissive while being rationally critical. This is being objective. The different ideals may not be perfect, because they are limited by their own nature. They each have a quality, style, or character, which emphasizes a particular perspective over other considerations. This is not a reason to dismiss an ideal, since it may still reveal important values that need to be balanced against other values. "What should a university be?" remains an open question with multiple answers.

What does the question say about ourselves? Given that neoconservatives claim "objectivity," complaining about the politicization of the university as a way of denying their own moral/political involvment, it may seem that postmodernists are correct in saying that culture, and the university, is a battle of wills and power. Claims to value-neutrality may be a way of denying one's agenda. As embodied agents caught up in the world, things already have a significance for us, before we have to think of them. Before we are knowing subjects, we are living beings coping with the world within which we find ourselves situated. Knowledge helps us to cope. Thoughts are relative to variable and contingent purposes and interests. As Gadamer said, we are on-going projects, we bring questions as expectations and prejudgments. We are always already involved in various projects, and we tend to see things as relevant **to** our **needs and interests.** Disinterested research is an oxymoron. It involves a lack of self-awareness.

When we are caught up in the moment we may not pay conscious attention to the way we are playing the game, since that would be a distraction. The result may be that there is more to our position than we are aware, calling for a hermeneutics of suspicion. Freud discussed the subconcious, Marx talked about false consciousness and ideology, Nietzsche talked about the will to power. It is possible to remain with a hermeneutics of suspicion, but Paul Riceour would have us balance it with a her-meneutics of trust that tries to understand the message behind

distorted communication, much like psychotherapy does. The ideals of the university are not just the conflicting ambitions of the elite and   the minorities, they project and justify images of the university that demand our critical assessment.

Moral claims may be confused and subject to correction, but this does not mean they can be reduced to cause and effect because moral feelings make ontological claims. They are not just knee-jerk reactions; we could be wrong. If we are honest with ourselves we will face challenges to our self-understanding. The danger, ironically, is that without a strong enough sense of self and morality, questioning ourselves may also make us susceptible to error. It is possible, however, to rationally evaluate our best ideas. If one idea identifies and resolves a contradiction or confusion,   or acknowledges an important factor not recognized by the other, then we may prove that it was **better than** another. This is only a comparison test of the best so far, not an absolute transcendental evaluation. If alternatives enable us to understand ourselves better, then we adopt them. What is left are our strongest intuitions where these have proven themselves against opposition. We may never reach a total development without a need for more growth, but it means our morals are more than a clash of arbitrary wills.   The response to the question "What should a university be?" should be more   dignified and less dogmatic than a grudge match.

Justifications are more than personal interests, agendas, or vendettas. Morals give content and meaning to shape the

contours of our actions that do not merely justify, but critique us. We can be criticized for not living up to our own ideals or failing to acknowledge other valuable ideals. Values make demands on us that rise above self-interest. Freud would explain this as the overly repressive demands of the superego, the rules society has implanted in us. Marx would say that our bourgeois morality is the rationalization of our class, a social stratification. Nietzsche would say that morals are the self-deception of the herd mentality; the superman rises above this in an aesthetics of self-making. They would all explain away morals as social indoctrination and control. But, morals are not merely following the rules like an automaton. In a substantive case it may need to be seen whether the rules apply and what the appropriate response is to the specific situation. In this state of indetennination, we make a choice about what kind of people we are.

This choice is more than aesthetic self-making because its claims on us are more serious and have more content than self-indulgent freedom. Living for something greater than oneself adds meaning to life and empowers us to be more than we would ask of ourselves. To deny this would show that our self-creation still tries to live up to ideals that can be very demanding on us. These ideals are greater than oneself. It is not just a matter of voluntary taste, but of important claims made upon oneself that can be very real.

What does this have to tell us about the university? The university is embedded within a history it has limited control

over. It finds itself within the historical context of a number of on-going scholastic traditions with competing demands. The institution embodies certain ethical world views, while world views within the university must be appropriate to the institution. A history of ideas, or a history of philosophy, would abstract ideas from social contexts. Its history comments on the way thinkers have criticized previous thought so that it recognizes some form of sequence, and while a thinker's life is sometimes presented as background, it is not an element in the evaluation of their writings. Sociology of knowledge, on the other hand, reduces thought to effects of social interests. Both extremes are not adequate to the rich complexity of the relation between social and intellectual currents.

Theories give organic expression to the assumptions of our social life, but preconceptual interests do not function independently of theories which prioritize, legitimate, or criticize them. According to Alasdair MacIntyre (1988), the rationality of traditions is not to be evaluated by abstract arguments but by historical narratives which show the capacity or incapacity to resolve its own problems and move beyond its previous state. According to MacIntyre a tradition may go through three stages. At first, certain expressions are referred to authoritatively without systematic questioning. At the second stage, these expressions are shown to support incompatible interpretations suggesting conflicting courses of action. Institutions may cease to be justifiable, or have become travesties. People may be

exposed to new ways of life and thought which challenge previous standards. Incoherence may be brought to light by new questions for which there may be limited resources for answering in an adequate or creative way. This is an epistemic crisis. The third stage involves a transformation, advancement, or abandonment of the tradition. It could be that a tradition may not be able to resolve its difficulties by its own standards and then is discarded. However, the successful survival of ways of life and thought through such crisis enable adherents to describe themselves and their history in a more insightful way. Traditions are inescapably fallible and as long as they survive they may, at any time, confront such a crisis which may end their existence or be a catalyst for further growth. It will always have its own agenda of unsolved problems and unresolved issues by which progress may be measured. Universities may be evaluated by **their creative** response to crisis and their ability to develop the sophistication of the social/intellectual traditions to which they belong. These involve historical contexts within which conflicts may derive their significance and meaning.

This thesis has looked at the politics of the university using only the ideologies recently shaping its existence. A more adequate overview would have to look at its development over time, and judge the weight and importance of these conflicts within its history. This would demand more extensive research and remains a possible line for further inquiry.

A university would have to determine for itself its own agenda within the values, limits, and possibilities of its historical existence. This has implications for answering the question "What should a university be?" Derrida said that there could be no universal model of the ideal university since compromises always have to be made and these can be different for each. Bennett said that a philosophy of education had to be catered to the institution, defining its unique character. This thesis will not go into detail about what I think a university should be. It is enough to show the central importance of the question, define its qualities, and illustrate the different ideals at issue between the contending parties. I have tried to show how the intensity of the culture war threatens the potential for genuine dialogue and understanding. Having brought this to our attention, it is up to us to **behave** in **a way that reflects** our developed awareness. This is practical philosophy.

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