The Crisis of the Human Sciences

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Centralization and over-professionalization can lead to the disappearance of a critical environment capable of linking the discipline to the “real world.” The humanities need to operate in a concrete cultural environment able to influence procedures on a hic et nunc basis and should not entirely depend on normative criteria whose function is often to hide ignorance behind a pretentious veil of value-neutral objectivity.

For example, in sociology the growth of scientism has fragmented ethical categories and distorted discourse between inner and outer selves, while philosophy is suffering from an empty professionalism current in many philosophy departments in industrialized and developing countries where boring, ahistorical, and nonpolitical exercises are justified through appeals to false excellence.

In all branches of the humanities absurd evaluation processes foster similar tendencies as they create a sterile atmosphere and prevent interdisciplinarity and creativity. An invidious technicization of theory plays into the hands of technocrats.

The authors, who came together at the Gulf University for Science & Technology (Kuwait) in March 2011 to discuss these topics, offer a broad range of approaches and interpretations.

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Technocratic consciousness reflects not the sundering of an ethical situation, but the repression of ethics as such as a category of life. The common, positivist way of thinking renders inert the frame of reference of interaction in ordinary language, in which domination and ideology both arise under conditions of distorted communication… The reified models of the sciences migrate into the socio-cultural life-world and gain objective power over the latter’s understanding. The ideological nucleus of this consciousness is the elimination of the distinction between the practical and the technical. It reflects, but it does not objectively account for the new constellation of the disempowered institutional framework and systems of purposive-rational action that have taken a life on their own. Jürgen Habermas, Erkenntnis und Interesse, 1968.

Introduction

Thorsten Botz-Bornstein

There is a lot of talk about crises in the media. The crisis we best remember is the most recent financial crisis commonly referred to as the Great Recession but we are also well acquainted with a whole range of other crises such as the crisis of religion, of society, the oil crisis, the housing crisis, the crisis of education, of the family, of ethics, the environmental crisis… New terms such as “crisis management” or “crisis intervention” appear on a regular basis. As Umberto Eco noted already in 1983: “Crisis sells well.”¹

Is there any particular reason to talk about the “Crisis of the Human Sciences?” The Crisis of the Human Sciences is a broad concept, which makes any in-depth exploration difficult. The Crisis of the Human Sciences deals with a crisis in education; some might hold that it deals with a crisis of culture. In any case, the Crisis of the Human Sciences is related to the crisis of science and the role science plays in society. What distinguishes the Crisis of the Human Sciences from all the other crises mentioned is that its

subject term refers to a more complex entity composed of two words and not only of one: “human” and “science.” The crisis might reside in one phenomenon or the other, or in both phenomena, or it might reside in their relationship or in the meaning that both phenomena convey when appearing together.

When hearing of the Crisis of the Human Sciences, most people will think of funding cuts in certain academic fields, of the decline of theory, or of falling numbers of students in some disciplines due to bad job prospects. However, all these parameters are relative and many might hold that the glass is still half full. Indeed, there remain many positive things to say about the human sciences: those students who study these disciplines are remarkably engaged and humanities departments continue offering opportunities for students and teachers to express themselves intellectually and civically. Half a century ago, intellectuals such as Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. and Lionel Trilling would speak to extremely large audiences, but so do Slavoj Žižek and AC Grayling today.

Other people will formulate a scathing criticism attesting that in the world of academia, centralization and over-professionalization are increasingly leading to the disappearance of a critical environment capable of linking academic disciplines to the “real world.” Absurd evaluation processes foster these tendencies and create a sterile atmosphere by preventing interdisciplinarity and creativity. Or they will point out that, due to the centralization of editorial power in the grip of large university presses of Anglophone countries, the content, quality, and range of modern publishing has become more and more predictable.

A further point of criticism is the increasing technization of theory, which can very easily play into the hands of technocrats. The growth of scientism tends to fragment ethical categories and to distort the discourse between inner and outer selves. In the field of philosophy, for example, many branches suffer from an empty professionalism excelling in ahistorical and nonpolitical exercises often justified through appeals to false excellence. These critics maintain that the human sciences should rather operate in a concrete cultural environment able to influence procedures on a *hic et nunc* basis. They should not entirely depend on normative criteria whose function can too easily become to hide ignorance behind a pretentious veil of value-neutral objectivity.
Introduction

The present volume reunites scholars working in different fields of the humanities all of whom are responding to what they perceive as a Crisis of the Human Sciences. All chapters are derived from papers presented at the Conference “The Crisis of the Human Sciences: False Objectivity and the Decline of Creativity” held in at the Gulf University for Science and Technology in Kuwait in March 2011. The authors concentrate on educational problems, on the philosophical foundations of the humanities within the entire building of the sciences, and on economical determinants interfering with the development or simply the survival of the human sciences.

Naturally, the teachers of the human sciences are most concerned with the decline of these disciplines. Most authors in the first section observe the decline of the educational standard of the student and indicate diverse reasons, among which are social homogenizations spurred onward by the boarder-crossing consumption of products (Gottschalk), group games and physical activities more resembling playtime than stoic academic rigor (Gottschalk) or the weakening of the mother tongue of the child which has become unable, due to the overuse of television translations, to master the necessary skills of the classical Arabic language (Satti and Akbar).

The volume has a regionalist emphasis as it deals with many concrete problems apparent in the region of the Arabic Gulf. Stephen Keck, for example, urges Gulf leaders to ponder the long range value of a place which would go beyond vocational education and offer its graduates a broader conception of the world. Kevin Gray points to the decay (or non-existence) of humanities instruction in the modern university in general and particularly in the Gulf.

The philosophical foundations of the Crisis of the Human Sciences are examined through the issue of objectivism vs. subjectivism and the question if subjective meaningfulness can be retrieved by science of any kind (Paya and Maduka), through a reevaluation of the role of philosophy in contemporary culture (Zavaliy and Pak), as well as through several other models.

Economic implications of the crisis concern practices of financial officers whose questionability in terms of ethics and professional standards can be revealed only by the human sciences.
The latter have “identified issues leading to the collapse of major corporations while the economic sciences [were] actively involved in manipulating financial results and financial positions within the confines of generally accepted practices” (Ankli, Palliham & Awwad). Similar defects – though in an entirely different field – are detected by Helen Lauer who shows that scientific forecasts which predicted the devastation of African countries through AIDS “have not been corroborated by facts on the ground. If the statistics were correct, populations would have plummeted by 2010. Instead, population figures continue to steadily increase in Uganda, Kenya, and South Africa.” Again, this shows the importance of the human sciences as well as the difficulties it has to make itself heard in the contemporary “scientific” environment.
Education
Chapter One

Science, Culture, and the University

Thorsten Botz-Bornstein

The compound term “human sciences” refers to those sciences that examine everything which is not nature. The human sciences examine humans, their histories, their cultures, and their behaviors and can appear in the form of anthropology, sociology, psychology, linguistics, comparative literature, musicology, etc. The task of all sciences, no matter if natural or “human,” is to reveal recurring generalities, to create concepts, and to establish laws and systems. Compared to the natural or “hard” sciences, the human sciences are able to engage in the examination of what remains immeasurable or of the ever changing dynamic present in the phenomena they observe.

Historically, the human sciences are indebted to German historical thought on the one hand, and to the French system of social thought, on the other. At some point, positivists and empiricists like Auguste Comte and John Stuart Mill imposed more exact and scientific standards upon these sciences. By gradually reducing the historical dimension of the human sciences, positivists and empiricists made the human sciences more “superficial,” but also more analytically refined.

The Human Sciences and Culture

The foundations of the human sciences have never been clear. The human sciences are cultural sciences in the twofold sense of the term: they examine culture while being themselves part of a cultural process. Culture is the intrinsically human component that turns these sciences into human sciences. Fernand Braudel
found that today we “more naturally tend to call some abominable misdeed a ‘crime against humanity’ rather than against civilization, although both mean much the same thing.”¹ Culture is human which is why the Crisis of the Human Sciences is related to a crisis of culture or might even signify a crisis of culture.

But what is culture? Culture is not simply everything which is man-made because in that case, the natural sciences’ scientific productions would be a part of culture too. Though some people adhere to this universal definition of culture, most generally we prefer for this extremely broad range of human activities the term civilization and not culture. Roughly speaking, culture is what the human sciences examine while the natural sciences examine nature. Still, the definition of culture is a tricky task that has led, during the last 250 years, to a large number of controversies making any unanimously accepted definition of culture so difficult that I will not even attempt it here. Let me rather quote Matthew Arnold’s account not of what culture is, but of what he believes culture should generate. In Culture and Anarchy, which is arguably the most important book on the notion of culture in England, Arnold points out that culture should foster “a fuller harmonious development of our humanity, a free play of thought upon our routine notions, spontaneity of consciousness, sweetness and light.”²

Things turn out to be even more complicated if we consider that the human sciences do not only examine “culture,” but that they are also transmitters of culture. Today there are even good reasons to argue that the human sciences are the main transmitters of culture because religion (at least in Europe), the family, and society are involved in deep crises of their own and have considerable difficulties transmitting culture. Are these difficulties linked to a simple decline of religion, the family, society, and the human sciences or are they linked to a general disinterest in culture? Allan Bloom, in his best-selling book from 1987, The Closing of the American Mind, believes that there is a decline of cul-

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ture, that culture is responsible for its own decline, a decline that will carry away towards its abyss also religion, the family, society, and, finally, the human sciences. This enables him to link the crisis of culture transmission and the crisis of the human sciences to the same root, which is the decline of culture: “The cause of this decay of the family’s traditional role as the transmitter of tradition is the same as that of the decay of the human sciences: nobody believes that the old books do, or even could, contain the truth. So books have become, at best, ‘culture’ i.e., boring.”

Lionel Trilling, at his time, like Bloom, an extremely popular “human scientist,” is of the same opinion and writes about the contemporary “disenchantment of our culture with culture itself.”

Any such reasoning equates the Crisis of the Human Sciences with the crisis of culture. If we accept this, the next step must be to find reasons for this crisis. There are many options. Some will attribute the crisis of culture to the absurd life style of capitalist consumer societies. Some will point to globalization and its standardization which creates a lack of diversity of cultural expressions. Some people will put, at last, part of the blame on the influence of scientific methods (readily adopted for the purposes of modern society’s “industrialism”) when applied to cultural phenomena. The Humanities are about “being human,” writes Keyan Tomaselli and “being human cannot be encapsulated in the relative crudity offered by numbers. Being human requires a soul…” The latter way of reasoning leads us to the question of the human sciences’ relationship with science, which is ambiguous to say the least, being locked up in an eternal dilemma.

The Human Sciences and Science

What relationship do the human sciences have with science? Let us continue Allan Bloom’s line of thought and suppose that the human sciences are branches of the body of science attempting to

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transmit culture (which he believes has become “boring”) in a more or less scientific fashion. Is this actually part of the crisis or is “science” the panacea able to solve or mitigate the announced crisis of culture? Many people have argued that the scientific treatment of culture leads to an *evaporation* of culture because it transforms tradition into bits of information. Already Tocqueville saw that “in a democracy tradition is nothing more than information. With the ‘information explosion,’ tradition has become superfluous” (from Bloom, p. 58). Tocqueville equates culture with tradition, which makes sense in the present context. However, if we equate culture with tradition, it turns out that even the precursor of science, the ever so cultural *philosophy*, has been rather critical of “culture.” Plato’s ideas of universality and rationality are strictly opposed to local, traditional, or “cultural” truths. For Plato, scientific (philosophical) truth must be universal and should not consider relativistic claims issued by “cultures.”

This dilemma becomes a major challenge in the Eighteenth Century as thinkers are facing immense difficulties when trying to reconcile the intellectual acquisitions of Enlightenment with tradition. Immanuel Kant solved the problem perhaps in the most elegant way by avoiding any talk of a “crisis of reason” but by formulating, in a more constructive fashion, an explicit “critique” of reason. For Kant, it does not make sense to speak of a crisis of reason simply because reason cannot be automatically associated with truth. Kant designed particular devices through which abstract (scientific) reason can function within a concrete “cultural” environment by constantly supervising itself. Reason is limited, but if we know how to handle this limitation properly we will never face a crisis of reason. Consequently, we will never face a crisis of culture either.

Today Kant’s ideas, as well as the subsequent project of German Humanism to combine Enlightenment with classical human values, might stand out as an ideal model of what the human sciences are supposed to be. We still hear the echoes of these thoughts pounding through contemporary Liberal Arts colleges. In the end, however, even the German thinkers of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries did not manage to reconcile two phenomena that modernity would conceive as increasingly antagonistic: culture and science.
In the Nineteenth Century, the advance of science, together with industrialism and free-trade, created what Matthew Arnold would call an “industrialism culture” (Arnold, p. 78), that is, a new type of culture clearly opposed to the “free play of thought” or to the “sweetness and light” so dear to Arnold. In the new capitalist economy, traditional literati (in the style of Baudelaire or Zola) will gradually lose the monopoly of intellectual trendsetting. The advent of new middle classes will spell the end of the traditional intelligentsia composed of “generalists” such as philosophers and poets and replace them with “experts” who will rely more and more heavily on methods, hard science, and technology.

From then onward, positions become rather extreme. Culture will see science as its enemy and deem it more and more necessary to limit any scientific invasion into its territory. Skepticism towards positivistic and scientific thinking receives an enormous push during and after World War I in Europe when the belief in “progress” is profoundly shattered. After World War II, the camp of the human sciences has definitely decided to define itself as eternally resistant. Jacques Ellul, in his famous writings from the 1960’s, regrets that “technique has taken over the whole of civilization. Death, procreation, birth – all must submit to technical efficiency and systematization.” For Ellul, technique in the sense of a “totality of methods” for achieving efficiency in all fields of human activity is a “coupling of rationalistic thinking (…) and a specific cultural value of efficiency” (128). Here it seems that science is no longer searching for enlightenment able to free humans from ancient constraints, but merely a technique working – blindly and presumably “value-free” – in the service of a restrictive system whose only recognized value is “efficiency.”

Some thinkers formulate the problems that emanate from the combination of “scientific” values with “culture” in terms of a “crisis of science,” though what is actually meant is a crisis resulting from the sciences’ incapacity to deal with culture. Edmund Husserl, in The Crisis of the European Sciences (1934-37),

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7 Edmund Husserl. Die Krisis der Europäischen Wissenschaften und die Transzendentalen Phänomenologie (Hamburg: Meiner, 1985)
plains that the scientific objectivity characteristic of natural sciences (which is a result of the increasing mathematization of nature) is bound to neglect the subjective, historical, and dynamic part of human life from which science once emerged. Yes, culture subsists, but it is affected by a scientific discourse relatively unable to sustain an idea of “culture” in the Arnoldian sense as “a fuller harmonious development of our humanity” or as the “spontaneity of consciousness.” In the 1970s, Jürgen Habermas defines the problem most aptly by speaking of the elimination of the distinction between the practical and the technical: “The reified models of the sciences migrate into the socio-cultural life-world and gain objective power over the latter’s understanding.”

**The Human Sciences and Values**

If we follow these authors that have been writing about culture and science over a span of one and a half centuries, it turns out that the real danger is not that culture will disappear. The danger is rather that one day its essence will be deprived of its intrinsic values or of its “sweetness and light.” Most probably culture will end up as a hopelessly overstretched notion. Seen through the scientific lens, everything can appear as culture. According to Allan Bloom there is “the drug culture, the rock culture, the street-gang culture” (Bloom: 184) which Bloom criticizes as “the lack of culture [which] has become culture.” Bloom’s point might appear as overly conservative but he does indeed raise an important question: Can “cultural values and virtues,” qualities that former “human scientists” had been able to spell out concretely, survive within this concept of culture? Within contemporary discussions of culture, it has become naïve to ask about those values. Clive Bell, in his pre-war works on culture and civilization, would single out civilization as “the flavor given to the self-expression of an age or society by a mental attitude.” Moreover, he would not hesitate to state “tolerance, receptivity, magnanimity, unshocka-

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bleness, and taste for, and sympathy with pleasure [as] prime characters of civilization” (168). Emerson, in his writings on culture says that civilization is supposed “to bring people to extreme delicacy of sentiment, as in practical power, religion, liberty, sense of honor and taste.” Today, the values that Bell and Emerson still dared to name, appear as too individualistic: they do not fit into any scheme of scientific, “value-free,” universal truths about “culture.” It seems that the only “value” left is the one that Ellul had called the “cultural value of efficiency” plus some general guidelines. Under the x-ray of science, cultural “sweetness and light” disappears leaving only a skeleton called “human rights” or “democracy.” Habermas summarizes this situation by saying that the “technocratic consciousness reflects not the sundering of an ethical situation, but the repression of ethics as such as a category of life” (1970: 113). This is what constitutes the Crisis of the Human Sciences.

Some people remain adamantly optimistic. In June 2010, the President of the British Academy, Sir Adam Roberts, declared the notion of a two-culture society where the natural sciences vie against the human and social sciences, to be “sterile and outdated.” Roberts is begging the question. How can a crisis that has such deep historical roots and which has been reinforced century after century, decade after decade, suddenly be outdated? Roberts seems to insinuate that both entities have fused or that they are about to fuse. But if that is the case, then this very concept of fusion refers back to the above relationship between the human sciences and natural sciences which represents a problem and not a solution.

Corporate Culture

In principle, specialization, quantification and formalization, and even the increasing impact of technology on any sort of investigation, do not make a crisis. To believe that it does is to confuse the

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symptoms of the crisis with its source. The crisis consists in the fact that an “industrialist” society treats specialization, quantification, and formalization as an end in itself and thus reduces culture to a skeleton. Unfortunately this tendency has also become current in academia.

About three decades ago, Arnold’s “industrialism culture” began to invade the universities, which also affected human science departments. Arnold Toynbee had complained about the “industrialization of historical thought,” but he could hardly imagine how bad things would become one day. Lewis Gordon has called the prophets of this new academic culture the “academic managerial class.” Among the most outspoken pieces of criticisms of the new academic economism is Frank Donoghue’s book, The Last Professors, in which the author explains how “corporate interests and values are poised to overwhelm the ideals of the liberal arts and to transform the university into a thoroughly businesslike workplace.” Lionel Trilling had noticed this tendency already in the 1950s: “More and more, as the universities liberalize themselves, and turn their beneficent imperialistic gaze upon what is called Life Itself, the feeling grows among our educated classes that little can be experienced unless it is validated by some established intellectual discipline, with the result that experience loses much of its personal immediacy and becomes part of an accredited societal activity” (Trilling: 10).

Universities have changed a lot within the last thirty years. In university X, only Coca Cola products can be distributed as a result of contractual agreements. Universities make contracts with brands like Nike, which produce T-Shirts with university logos (made in China). The current salary differentials of faculty inside some universities would be typical for big corporations and used to be unthinkable in institutions of learning. Branding and lobby-

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ing has become one of the main academic activities, not to speak of administrative obligations that nobody had ever heard of only ten years ago. Within this world of bureaucratization, transparency, efficiency, productivity, accountability, competition, ranking, over-evaluation of short-term output, and forced specialization, the academic (if we may still call him like that) seems to be playing the role of a zombie. In the departments of “Dead Human Sciences” the living dead are “doing their jobs,” but only few of them continue to manifest the appetite for the breadth of inquiry that typified earlier ventures in academia, nor do they seem to have the time or interest to develop personal intellectual convictions. There is very little, if any, support for true intellectualism and the people who still pursue this are stigmatized as bohemians or poets. Paradoxically, the specialization of scholars drags even the traditional academic monograph into a crisis. Today everybody is supposed to be a “specialist” yet able to write – for commercial reasons – for an audience that exceeds the limits of her field of specialization.

Thorstein Veblen recognized efficiency and productivity as foreign to the human sciences. Now these qualities are imposed upon the academic world in the name of some questionable utilitarianism. Few people seem to remember that the kind of specialization common in the natural sciences as well as in the corporate world contradicts the Socratic idea of wisdom as the most general knowledge of the good. When Matthew Arnold said that to know culture is to know “the best which has been thought and said in the world” (p. viii), his ideal of culture was highly compatible with philosophical knowledge. At present, the human sciences are moving further and further away from it.

**Philosophy**

Talking about my own field, philosophy, I should say that this crisis began long before the continental analytical divide and that philosophy has long ago lost the capacity to follow the Socratic idea of wisdom. Other branches of the human sciences fare much

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What philosophical idea could actually be more interesting and more powerful than the ideas of Freud and Max Weber? Nietzsche’s perspectivism, Wittgenstein’s ordinary language, Heidegger’s Being, Derrida’s écriture, or some highly abstract analytical notions? It is here, right before the First World War, that philosophy began to isolate itself even within the field of the human sciences. Afterwards, this process of isolation has been pursued in the most extreme fashion by analytical philosophy while continental philosophy survived much better by fusing with other disciplines of the human sciences. Living an isolated life and being submitted to purely scientific ideals, analytical philosophy can much more easily be integrated into the culture of industrialism. This development is known as the establishment of “philosophy as a profession,” which began in the 1920s and 1930s in the Ivy League universities and which is a rather sad chapter indeed.

**Conclusion**

The human sciences can only subsist if they establish themselves within a clearly defined niche where they can remain distinguished from the natural sciences as well as from the corporate university that is trying to win them over in the name of an industrialist concept of science. This does not mean that they should look only inward and isolate themselves from the world. The right balance between recreation and reinvention is the biggest challenge. Many liberal arts colleges are following this path: trying to remain inspired by a humanist ideal of the university as a privileged place cut off from the constraints of business and everyday politics in which they can enjoy freedom of inquiry and intellectual pluralism. Here the human sciences can continue working on the project to which they are linked by destiny: the reconciliation of culture and science, a project that begins with Socrates and by which philosophy and the human sciences remain defined.
Chapter Two

Reading “The Idea of the University” in the Gulf

Kevin W. Gray

In the chapter, I explore the question of the relationship between the self-understanding of the universities, and the decay (or non-existence) of humanities instruction in the modern university, particularly in the Gulf. In so doing, I am going to ask why we should care about the humanities generally. I will reflect on the relevance of Karl Jaspers’ (and others in that tradition’s) work on the university. I will argue, contrary to many, that the division between research and teaching (and perhaps research and the economic demands placed on teaching) is actually undesirable.

Looking around the Gulf region, it is hard to find universities which focus on anything other than the instruction of technical skills; even those universities which claim to be liberal art schools are often (if not always) engaged in teaching humanities courses in so far as they aid critical thinking and writing (at best) or (at worst) they offer humanities course because they are a useful-window dressing. It should go without saying that this conception of the university is extremely far removed from many of the most progressive discussions of the role of the university in the past and today.

I think that this can be traced to a series of problems. To start, the increased technization of the academy (of which I will say more later), increased competition between institutions for students, and increased funding pressures, have led to an emphasis on the training of students in technical subjects. These problems are well-known. However, I believe that in much progressive dis-
course on education there is another reason to be fearful for the future of the humanities.

If contemporary discourse in the United States about the crisis in the universities is to be believed, the principle task of the university (and the humanities in particular) is to educate paying students to think, read and write critically. To take but one example, in the recently published, much-discussed Academically Adrift, Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa treat the dismal findings of longitudinal surveys about student learning in the United States. In the study, many students report never taking courses that require reading 40 or more pages a week, or writing 20 pages a term; similarly, many often spend less than 5 hours a week studying.

The concern that what a university does should be measured in terms of student learning is hardly theirs alone, and dominates the literature. Derek Bok, for instance, the former President of Harvard, is quoted by Arum and Roksa, as saying that:

> With all the controversy over the college curriculum, it is impressive to find faculty members agreeing almost unanimously that teaching students to think critically is the principal aim of undergraduate education.  

Why students do not learn at university is central to the aforementioned study, and marks a good point of entry into my argument. Arum and Roksa’s argument boils down to the following: students do not progress at universities because of a toxic mix of student apathy towards education as a means to anything other than getting a job, faculty apathy towards teaching, faculty research concerns, and a pact between all involved not to rock the boat.

As to the former, that is apathy, many students go to university with what researchers call a “credentialist-collegiate orientation.” They attend school with the aim of getting a job. Moreover, the continuing rise in college tuition seems to exacerbate the problem. Students who will be heavily in debt must be able to pay off that debt (or at least make payments on interest) upon graduation.

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1 Arum and Roksa, p. 2.
2 Arum and Roksa, p. 70.
3 Arum and Roksa, p. 15.
As to the latter, it is well-known that student evaluations play an increasingly important role in decisions about retention, promotion and tenure. Faculty surveys consistently show that student satisfaction has become an important measure of teaching skill.\(^4\)

As a consequence, the faculty make courses less difficult in order to coexist with students. If faculty get better reviews by not pushing students, the authors ask, if “students are able to receive high marks and make steady progress towards their college degrees with such limited academic effort, must not faculty bear some responsibility for the low standards that exist in these settings?”\(^5\)

I do not find either of these problems particularly interesting; anyone who has taught recently at a university can recognize these problems. What interests me the most are the middle two problems identified by the authors: apathy towards teaching, and the importance of research (which they see, perhaps correctly, as correlated). At schools in the United States, even at what were formerly so-called ‘normal schools’ (i.e. teacher training colleges), faculty at college campuses report the increasing importance of publications.\(^6\)

At former land grant schools, where the change in identity has been perhaps the most pronounced, this has led to what Ernest Boyer, for instance, calls a change in faculty loyalty, which has moved “from student to the professorate, from general to specialized education, and from loyalty to the campus to loyalty to the profession.”\(^7\)

While these changes might be true, they represent a peculiar American understanding of higher education. I think tracing these problems to the actions of faculty is to miss the point. Unlike Arum and Roksa, I do not believe that these problems are peculiar to faculty (though blame should be apportioned to them perhaps), but are ultimately a result of the unfortunate evolution of the self-understanding of the university in the Anglo-Saxon world – an understanding that is becoming more dominant worldwide.

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**Jaspers’ Idea of the University**

\(^4\) Arum and Roksa, p. 7.

\(^5\) Arum and Roksa, p. 5.

\(^6\) Arum and Roksa, p. 7.

\(^7\) Arum and Roksa, p. 7.
Let us contrast this model of education with the German model. And here I want to turn to Karl Jaspers (and to some extent Jürgen Habermas as well). In 1945, Jaspers returned to his post as president of Heidelberg University, charged with the task of repairing the august institution after the war. In so doing, he took the reins of a university that had a proud tradition dating back six hundred years. Returning as president gave Jaspers a chance to reflect on the role of the university in a democracy and to return to a text, *The Idea of the University*, he had written in 1923, prior to the rise of National Socialism. A revised version of that text was published in 1961 to discuss the role of the university in German society at a time where rising tensions existed between students, faculty and the government at a whole. Jaspers authored an article published in *Die Zeit* in that year, wherein he summarized his argument. There, Jaspers, borrowing heavily from German idealist presuppositions, describes the relationship between the university and the city as follows. Jaspers writes:

The university is tied to a city, but a university is not possible is every city. Only there, where the university is a witness to the possibility of freedom through truth, can the city, when it wants to be free and to possess truth and is founded in such a way, want a university. Only when a city fundamentally identifies itself with the spirit of science and truth, is the idea of the university possible.\(^8\)

The university, and the scholars within it, can only be effective, Jaspers argues, and serve society, when the university is tied to the community as a whole. The university represents the idea of the age. Because of his other philosophical (read Hegelian) commitments, Jaspers sees the university as a physical manifestation of objective spirit. As Habermas remarks in his discussion of Jaspers’ book, “the philosophy of German Idealism by its very nature required a unity of teaching and research.”\(^9\) Similarly, and also as a result of German Idealism, the university is an example of an institution that, when separated from its founding idea, withers and dies. Again Habermas writes: “Once the unifying bond of its

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\(^8\) Jaspers, *Die Zeit*.  
\(^9\) Habermas 1989, p. 110.
Reading the “Idea of the University” in the Gulf

corporative consciousness disintegrates, the university too ceases to form a whole.”

Jaspers is still stuck in a bourgeois model of the university, where the university – as it has been since Humboldt’s time – exists as a training ground for the future generations of a country’s elite. However, what is interesting about this self-understanding of the university, besides the fact that it may at first glance seem inapplicable to the modern world, is how different it is from the American model of the university. Not only does it go against much recent literature on the university (i.e. the works discussed above), it goes against even classical American model of higher education, where classics works, such as those of Thorstein Veblen, see the university as a depoliticized entity. The depolitization of research, I will argue, encourages the unfortunate separation of teaching from research.

In the 1960s, two particular challenges Jaspers work emerged. First, conservative neo-Hegelian sociologists like Helmut Schelsky argue that the systemic character of the production of knowledge denies the possibility of overarching ideals that might unite the university. The development of multiple social subsystems meant that the university and research could no longer be governed by one set of internal values. Second (and on the opposite end of the spectrum), Jaspers text was immediately rejected by student activists in Germany, who argued that it was almost certainly too conservative. After all, the idea that a classical German university might serve as a bulwark of democracy was belied by the passivity of German universities in the face of the National Socialism Regime. Members of the German SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) argued that the death of over-arching ideals meant the universities were better served if they understood their mission as training students for contesting political power and navigating a fractured lifeworld. For these members of the SDS, the self-understanding of the university should be linked instead

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12 Arum and Roksa, p. 10.
13 Arum and Roksa, p. 17.
to the capacity for will formation (this is the so-called “democratization of the university”).

I accept these two critiques. And I believe, following Habermas and others, we can identify six changes in modern society that take us away from this model of university:

1. The rise of varied disciplines means a fragmentation of research into different centers that have little in common with each other, even if they exist inside the same organization. Some writers even go so far as to describe this as the inevitable result of the production of knowledge under conditions of post-modernity (though I do not believe we need to go that far – I think it sufficient to remark that the lifeworld has become fragmented into different realms of specialized knowledge);

2. There has been a shift away from pure science to the production of technically-productive knowledge. This corresponds to a change in the epistemic moment at which knowledge is produced;

3. As a result of one and two, universities are no longer seen as the repository of universalist (i.e. Enlightenment) values, which previously shaped all activities that occurred inside;

4. The tension between universalism and nationalism, always present at the university, which made the university a creator of national language and culture, has been vitiated by the globalization of knowledge and the university. Universities have become at most interpreters of culture generally;

5. Increased funding pressures have increased demands for the professorship to engage in economically rewarding research; and,

6. Following the Second World War, tertiary education has been opened up to the masses. This meant that students were no longer guaranteed (as they once had been) entry into the elite of society following a course of university study. Instead, the university came to exist to guarantee at most an occupation (the nature

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14 Habermas 1989, p. 118.
15 Turner, p. 73.
16 Turner p. 73-75.
of which, and thus the appropriate courses of study, have changed).\textsuperscript{17}

In Habermasian terms, I would like to conceive of this in terms of the development of different structures of rationality. The university has traditionally engaged in the reproduction of culture, the institutionalization of cognitive rationality, and institutionalization of instrumental rationality.\textsuperscript{18} The classic model of the university, posited by Jaspers, sees no separation between the three. Under that model, Cognitive and instrumental rationality are subsumed by the reproduction of culture; this is destroyed by the fragmentation of knowledge. The remaining question, for my final section, is what is to be done, and how any proposed solution might affect the human sciences.

**What Must Be Done?**

Obviously, Jaspers model is outdated. Nonetheless, I believe that it provides an important starting point for a discussion of what the university should be during a time of threat. I will argue that, importantly, both Jaspers and the student activists saw the university as a bulwark of democracy. Problematically, Jaspers assumed that there must be such a thing as an idea of the age (the objective spirit of the city, etc.) in order for the university to function; yet undoubtedly, as Habermas also has noted in his commentary on Jaspers’ book, this is no longer possible. As we ask what is to be done, we also must ask how these two ideas can be reconciled.

I want to argue that the possibility that there is not such idea, however, does not mean that the only possible task of the university is to impart technical skills and encourage the development of technically-exploitable knowledge. And I believe, moreover, that it is a good thing that the university does not represent the ideal of one age. After all, “the corporative self-understanding of the university would be in trouble if it were anchored in something like a normative ideal, for ideas come and go.”\textsuperscript{19}

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\textsuperscript{17} O’Majony, p. 51.
\textsuperscript{18} Delanty, p. 112.
\textsuperscript{19} Habermas 1989, p. 123.
This brings me back to my critique of the Anglo-American understanding of the university. It seems to me that if the debate about the role of the humanities is purely about the formation of students, then the defender of the humanities has ceded far too much to his opponents. Put quite simply, there is more to life then jobs, and the link between the university and employment is a relatively recent innovation (the link between the university and the governing elite, or the link between the university and the production of national culture in fact has lasted much longer).

Knowing these facts, what should we take from the six points that I listed earlier? First, I think we are right to be pessimistic about the future of the university. Some facts seem here to stay: the university will never again be (if it ever was) the producer of one nation culture; the fragmentation of autonomous fields of knowledge inside the university, alongside such similar fragmentations in the lifeworld, is also here to stay. Universities will always be large. What can change, however, is how the university expresses its own self-understanding of why it educates students.

To finish, let me return to the general theme of this paper: to the Gulf. What we see here, as educators is a version of the crisis in the humanities writ-large. Fees here are, if anything, higher than the United States; the pressure to get jobs is very high (particularly among non-citizens). Moreover, the universities here are all very recent innovations and quite often are exported (quite literary) from overseas (viz. the Anglo-Saxon world).

Finally, there is quite simply no conception of the university as a place that encourages political consciousness. In fact, one could argue that this self-understanding of the university is openly discouraged. That said, if the fragmentation of reason is a concern in modern society (and its fragmentation into multiple technical sub-disciplines each with their own ideological self-understanding), then this particular understanding of the university reflects both that concern and the prophylactic use of reason to overcome it. By failing to assert themselves, universities (and all who possess a similar communicative competency) allow for other ideologies to assert themselves. A neutral self-conception of the university, sadly, very rapidly becomes an economy self-understanding. And, thus, finally, any change that moves away from understanding education as the education of future employ-
ees and producers would reinstitute the humanities at the center of a politicized world.

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Chapter Three

**Ruskin, the Challenges facing Victorian Universities, and the Current Crisis in the Humanities**

Stephen Keck

The birth, development and maturation of new universities in the Arabian Gulf invites re-consideration of the practice and status of higher education in modern societies. The crisis of the human sciences has had and continues to have many dimensions, including articulating the place of the university in society. Situating the university into its broader social, national and regional contexts, will remain a perennial issue; connecting that larger set of requirements to issues involving the integrity and quality of thought (and the knowledge which is often produced along with it) means that the challenges facing academic organizations and institutions are even greater. These realities are well known in the present: the idea of a ‘crisis in the humanities’ is now commonplace. This paper will highlight the manner in which some of these issues were refracted in Victorian Britain in order to provide some historical perspective on the contemporary situation—as it is manifest in both the Gulf and elsewhere.

To that end, it is useful to recall John Ruskin’s (1819-1900) relationship with the university—principally Oxford—because it reveals both some of the salient issues faced by Victorian universities and also the way a major 19th century intellectual attempted to meet the challenges he perceived facing what later generations would call ‘the humanities’. Much of the scholarly attention which has been devoted to the British universities in the 19th century has focused upon these institutions because they can be un-
derstood to be harbingers of much greater social transformation. It is worth recalling that over the course of the 19th century Britain experienced social, economic and cultural alteration at least as profound as those which are shaping the GCC countries in the early 21st century. Most prominent, perhaps, were the changes associated with industrialism; some of its more positive products were displayed at the Great Exhibition of 1851 at the Crystal Palace; its many destructive consequences were chronicled by writers such as Charles Dickens. Therefore, it is instructive to study the trajectories of British universities in the 19th century because the ways in which these institutions developed might well inform the debate about the maturation of higher education in the Arabian Gulf. This is an immense (and interesting) topic in its own right, but a few salient points can be made about their growth. Since this conference is focusing on the crisis of thought, it makes sense to highlight the status of ‘liberal arts’ in each university setting. The existence of ‘liberal arts’ in GCC universities has been acknowledged from their beginnings; however, with the British universities they had always played a dominant role until the 20th century.

At the beginning of the 19th century there only a handful of universities (mainly Oxbridge and London) and they were not inclusive. Oxbridge required its students to be males who were also members of the Church of England; consequently, its denizens were invariably drawn from the aristocracy, leading merchant families and from clerical backgrounds. Against an 18th century conception of the university—in which they were largely ‘finishing schools’—reform (in the guise of competitive examinations) in the early 19th century began to connect academic rigor with these institutions. It should be remembered that the syllabus was in Latin and Greek, which further re-enforced the institution’s exclusivity—well articulated by the pathos of Jude Fawley in Thomas Hardy’s masterpiece Jude the Obscure. Despite the fact that these institutions were virtual islands from many of the transformative forces which were remaking the country around them, they were not immune to change. These conditions lay behind both Matthew Arnold’s emphasis on ‘sweetness and light’ as an end for modern education and much of John Henry Newman’s Idea of a University—which remains one of the strongest and most elegant endorsements of liberal arts in the university.
The changes which marked these universities were at once deep and wide-ranging; one way of assessing their impact is to realize their continuing relevance not only in the re-fashioning of British society, but also in discussion about the status and goals of university education in the 21st century. To put the matter broadly, these academic organizations became more inclusive, while becoming attached to meritocratic policies. These values were enshrined by a commitment to research: as Mark Pattison (1813-1884), the Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford, put it: let Oxford become the “first school of science and learning in the world”.\(^1\) It was evident that these institutions were interacting with the pressures which were involved in democratization and professionalization. Additionally, these trends coupled with the advent of near universal literacy provided the demand and rationale for the creation of many new universities (often affectionately called ‘red bricks’) so as to make tertiary education available to unprecedented numbers of people. In so doing, a couple of issues surfaced which remain relevant in the Arabian Gulf: namely, the content of education itself—would it be a liberal arts degree or a curriculum which was clearly vocational; again, would it be possible to open the university to new segments of British society, without undermining its academic integrity. More broadly, these changes ensured that universities could never really be isolated from wider social concerns—and as today in the GCC, satisfying ‘stakeholders’ while maintaining at least the relative autonomy of the university became a perennial challenge.

Connecting Ruskin, of course, to the main currents of Victorianism risks deploying a cultural cliché—as he has been frequently cited as an example of some of the more excessive things associated with the concept—nevertheless, by focusing on select aspects of his ideas and activities, it should be possible to recover a critical and influential response to the problem of situating the university in a dynamic and changing society. Admittedly, Ruskin’s ideas are complex and not easily analyzed in a brief conference paper and given the range of interest assembled by this fine

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\(^1\) Mark Pattison is cited in: V.H.H. Green, *The Universities* (Middlesex, 1969) p. 72.
event, it is possible that many here are not terribly familiar with his life and thought.

With that, a brief biographical sketch may be useful to not only introduce Ruskin, but to better contextualize the educational and university environments in which he lived. After limited formal education, Ruskin entered Christ Church (college) at Oxford in 1837, where he found himself surrounded by aristocratic students—many of whom were more motivated by conventional pleasures than by rigorous intellectual pursuits. Famously Ruskin’s mother accompanied him to Christ Church taking up rooms nearby. His ambitions included becoming either a geologist or a bishop, but not long after graduating from Oxford in 1842 he began to write the first of the five volumes of *Modern Painters*—a work which amounted to an enormous passionate defense of the reputation of the landscape painter J.M.W. Turner. *Modern Painters* would be complemented by *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, *The Stones of Venice* and many smaller works, which collectively ensured that Ruskin would be Victorian Britain’s best known and influential critic of art and architecture. For the most part, Ruskin was what might be called a ‘radical realist’ in that he assumed that the appearances of things were absolutely critical to the manner in which they were understood. Elsewhere I have argued that Ruskin was an ‘organic’ thinker and in this context it meant that the appearance of an object, landscape, and place had not only intrinsic importance, but could reflect a wider range of meanings about society, nature, morality and ultimately religious truths. Learning to see, then, mattered enormously. To cite one famous passage from the *Elements of Drawing* (1857), Ruskin explained that: the “whole technical power of painting depends on our recovery of what may be called the innocence of the eye; that is to say, of a sort of childish perception of these flat stains of color, merely as such, without consciousness of what they signify, — as a blind man would see them if suddenly gifted with sight.”

In essence, Ruskin was advancing the idea that seeing itself was a capacity

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and one that he grounded in a much deeper set of assumptions about humanity and the external world which had its roots in the rich tradition of British natural theology. To put this into perspective, Ruskin’s strong realist outlook might be taken to mean that recovering objective realities (to the extent that it was possible) was a necessary precondition for good creativity.

If Ruskin’s intellectual development had halted at this point, he would have still been regarded as an interesting and useful voice; however, it was his gradually developing insistence upon the connections between culture and society that pushed his thought to a much deeper and more significant level. That is, it was precisely the organic quality of Ruskin’s arguments which made his works compelling and suggestive. Studying art revealed lessons about history, society and ultimately reflected concerns which might be addressed through the immersion of religious traditions—especially, but not exclusively, Christian ones. To be sure, from about 1858 to 1874, Ruskin experienced a period of ‘unbelief’, which made his intellectual maturation much broader, but of more interest to subsequent generations was the tragic highlights of his personal life: a five and a half year marriage which was annulled on the grounds of non-consummation—later in his more advanced years he was nearly consumed by a fixation on Rose La Touche a young girl that he met when she was about ten and this relationship proved to be disastrous for both; finally, the emotional strain from these events (and other features of his private life) almost certainly contributed to the advance of mental illness which became acute in 1878 and came to dominate the last decade of Ruskin’s life.

For our purposes, it is useful to select aspects of Ruskin’s interaction with Oxford to examine his changing understanding of the modern university. To that end, attention will be devoted to the image of Oxford, which emerged retrospectively in The Stones of Venice, his efforts to develop the Oxford Museum and, finally, and most substantially, his efforts as Slade Professor—in which he attempted to mobilize the university’s resources to combat flawed and crass commercial design practices, promoted social activism (what we might call ‘civic engagement’) and attempted to combat the crisis of thought as the understood it (which might be regarded as a response to the ‘crisis of the human sciences’).
interrogating the organization and employment of knowledge and offering a substitute for it.

Ruskin’s initial experience of Oxford was that of a ‘gentlemen-commoner’ and unlike many of his fellow students, he was motivated by intellectual passions. He did not come to Oxford with any shared sense that the humanistic disciplines were in trouble, but, as we will see, his reflection upon his experience helped to clarify what he came to understand as a sort of crisis of the British mind. After great effort Ruskin captured the Newdigate Prize for poetry (which he would receive from William Wordsworth), but had to leave the university due to illness brought about by exhaustion. Eventually Ruskin graduated in 1842, but it was the conclusions which he formed retrospectively about the university which are useful for us today. By mid-century Ruskin had established himself as an authority on painting and architecture; since he had connected both of these subjects to much larger cultural, social and historical forces, Ruskin felt increasingly qualified to comment on the condition of his own society. In The Stones of Venice Ruskin set forth a complicated, but suggestive critique of contemporary ideas—to put it differently, he articulated a crisis in the humanities. Having made a uniquely detailed study of medieval and Renaissance art, architecture and sculptures in Venice, he proclaimed what might be regarded as a kind of critique of reason. The Renaissance, to put it simply, had introduced a new kind of instrumental rationality which could be gleaned from the crude mechanical sculptures which its artisans had left behind in Venice. The Renaissance represented impiety, imitation, insensitivity and crudity. One of the things which motivated Ruskin to call modern thought into question was its seeming inability to inhibit or prevent university educated Britons from converting to Catholicism. While the ‘Oxford Movement’ had been generating momentum while Ruskin was in Christ Church, it seems to have made little impression upon him. However, nearly a decade later he was distressed by what he perceived to be the movement’s results, view which he tucks into the final volume of The Stones of Venice: He complained that Oxford despised Religion:
that is to say, the “binding” or training to God’s service. There is much talk and much teaching in all our academies, of which the effect is not to bind, but to loosen, the elements of religious faith. Of the ten or twelve young men who, at Oxford, were my especial friends, who sat with me under the same lectures on Divinity, or were punished with me for missing lecture by being sent to evening prayers, [Ruskin’s footnote here reads “A Mohammadan youth is punished, I believe for such misdemeanors, by being kept away from prayers.”] four are now zealous Romanists,—a large average out of twelve; and while thus our own universities profess to teach Protestantism, and do not, the universities on the Continent profess to teach Romanism, and do not,—sending forth only rebels and infidels.\(^3\)

The failure to use Oxford to develop character meant that Catholic advances were more likely. The Catholic successes in Britain, which were embodied in the Oxford Movement, which had made less of an impression on Ruskin at university than they did later, were themselves indicative of a more pervasive pattern of secularization. In Ruskin’s view the failure of religious instruction at Oxford reflected a trend close to continental culture.

It was significant that in the same appendix Ruskin attacked instruction at Oxford for omitting or neglecting the physical sciences. In another revealing passage Ruskin remarked that Modern education:

> despises Natural History.—Until within the last year or two, the instruction in the physical sciences given at Oxford consisted of a course of twelve or fourteen lectures on the Elements of Mechanics or Pneumatics, and permission to ride out to Shotover with the Professor of Geology. (...) Unless a man’s natural instincts urge him to the pursuit of the physical sciences too strongly to be resisted, he enters into life utterly ignorant of them. (...) It leaves the greater number of men without the natural food which God intended for their intellects. (...) Deprived of this source of pleasure, nothing is left to them but ambition or dissipation; and the vices of the upper classes of Europe are, I believe, chiefly to be attributed to this single cause.\(^4\)

With reform on the horizon, Ruskin called for changes in the university’s curriculum in order to combat the trends towards Catholicism. During the 1850s Oxbridge was opened up to students who

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\(^3\) XI, p. 259.  
\(^4\) XI, pp. 258-259.
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were not members of the Church of England, but Ruskin had rejected this as desirable.

In that decade Ruskin’s more significant work involving Oxford was concentrated in two different but related areas: teaching drawing and the construction of the university museum. Ruskin is probably better remembered for the latter—he played a leading role in the design of the museum. More useful for us today, Ruskin created a drawing school in Oxford—which would be open to both students and the wider community. In this effort, he was building upon his experience with the Working Men’s College in London. With respect to Oxford, Ruskin aimed to enable his students to draw—so that they might see better. Ruskin, who might be regarded as a radical ‘realist’, assumed that the ability to draw accurately was a skill which could equip a person to better understand much more important questions regarding nature and religious teachings. To be able to draw accurately was to be able to celebrate the beauty of creation.

However, Ruskin’s agenda went well beyond natural theology as he was interested in the debate about industrial design. The Crystal Palace Exhibition had created a much larger debate about the production industrial products. Could the British produce commodities which were as desirable as those manufactured by the French or Germans? This question—which lay behind the creation and development of a number of museums in the second half of the 19th century—had impact upon the assessment of the value of art. By 1857 Henry Cole had developed the South Kensington Museum and it would be a place which would emphasize ‘design reform’. This institution had followed the creation of Museum of Ornamental Art in 1852—an event which clearly followed on the wake of the Great Exhibition and the fears that British industrial design might fall behind its continental counterparts. In particular, Cole had developed a ‘National Course of Instruction’, which included a 23 stage series of exercises—which could lead from elementary school to the qualification to teach at

the school in South Kensington itself. Promotion through the 23 stages could only be achieved through passing examinations. The aim was not to foster sensitivity towards art or painting, but to produce an army of designers. To generalize a bit, an instrumental view of art developed in which its value lay in helping to design consumer products which might be marketable.

Ruskin’s view of art ran counter to these ideas and his creation of a Ruskin School of Drawing at Oxford was intended not to turn students into artists (he believed that this was a much more difficult task), but to enable them to see and value art. That is, Ruskin sought to challenge the instrumental use of drawing which he believed to becoming dominant. It should be pointed out that Oxford already had the Oxford Art School which was a branch school of the Department of Science and Art. This institution which opened its doors in 1865 was aimed at townspeople thereby reflected Henry Cole’s enormous influence. Creating the Ruskin School of Drawing was to commence “open hostilities with Kensington.” Ruskin argued that design education—even if desirable—was unsound. In 1863 Referring to Royal Academy schools Ruskin argued:

The teaching of the Academy separates, as the whole idea of the country separates, the notion of art-education from other education, and when you have made that one fundamental mistake, all others follow. You teach a young man to manage his chalk and his brush—not always that—but having done that, you suppose you have made a painter of him; whereas to educate a painter is the same thing as to educate a clergyman or a physician—you must give him a liberal education primarily, and that must be connected with the kind of learning peculiarly fit for his profession.

To put this in perspective, Ruskin now regarded the university as a potential resource in the battle against the commercialization of art. Between the Oxford Museum and the Ruskin School of Drawing Ruskin viewed the university as a place where useful

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6 Hewison, Ruskin and Oxford, p. 33.
7 Hewison, pp. 33-34
8 Hewison, p. 20.
9 Hewison, p. 20.
10 Hewison, p. 21.
11 XIV, pp.479-480. See Hewison, p. 34.
knowledge might be preserved and students inoculated against some of culturally destructive trends of his time.

The third instance—also quite famous—stemmed from a third relationship which Ruskin had with Oxford.\textsuperscript{12} Ruskin returned to Oxford in 1870 when he was appointed Slade Professor of Fine Art. Ruskin found that the university had changed:

> When I returned to Oxford in the year 1870, after thirty years’ absence, I found the aim of University education had changed; and that, and for the ancient methods of quiet study, for discipline of intellect,—study of which the terminal examination simply pronounced the less or more success,—there had been submitted hurried courses of instruction in knowledge supposed to be pecuniarily profitable; stimulated by the frequency of examination, of which the effect was not to certify strength, or discern genius, but to bribe immature effort with fortuitous distinction.\textsuperscript{13}

This honorary post brought with it the obligation to deliver public lectures in Oxford and ensured that Ruskin would be active in the intellectual life of the university.

Ruskin made his priorities clear in the Inaugural Lecture (which would later appear in \textit{Lectures on Art}) when he attacked contemporary design practices: “I am able, to lay before you a brief general view of the existing state of the arts in England, and of the influence which her Universities, through these newly founded lectureships, may, I hope, bring to bear upon it some good.”\textsuperscript{14} With Cole and Kensington (and their influence) in mind Ruskin explained that the “impulse which has been given to the practice of all the arts by the extension of our commerce” has been negative. As Ruskin claimed the “immediate result (...) has

\textsuperscript{12} The extent to which this subject is rich and understudied becomes evident when it might easily be pointed out that this discussion could have been written from an opposite point of view, because it might as easily been framed as Ruskin’s persistent frustrations with Oxford (and more generally institutional education). Ruskin’s relationship with the university had been an uneven one; he had given many ‘Turners’ (which amounted to a massive bequest) and other means of support; he had served as the first Slade Professor of Fine Arts and he had tried to improve the quality of student life. Nonetheless, he would ultimately break with Oxford—over his discontent about anatomy.

\textsuperscript{13} XXXI, p. 29. See Hewison, p.16.

\textsuperscript{14} XX, p. 22.

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been to make us more jealous of the genius of others (...) and to make us rather desire to enlarge our wealth by the sale of art, than to elevate our enjoyments by its acquisition. More important, perhaps, Ruskin believed that British efforts to produce successful commercial art were doomed to failure:

But efforts having origin only in the hope of enriching ourselves by the sale of our production, are assuredly condemned to dishonorable failure; not because, ultimately, a well-trained nation is forbidden to profit by the exercise of its peculiar art-skill; but because that peculiar art-skill can never be developed with a view to profit. The right fulfillment of national power in art depends always on the direction of its aim by the experience of ages. Self-knowledge is not less difficult, nor less necessary for the direction of genius, to a people than to an individual; and it is neither to be acquired by the eagerness of unpracticed pride, nor during the anxieties of improvident distress. No nation ever had, or will have, the power of suddenly developing, under the pressure of necessity, faculties it had neglected when it was ease; nor of teaching itself, in poverty, the skill to produce what it has never, in opulence, had the sense to admire.

Ruskin aimed at more than an attack upon contemporary commercial design practices. Instead, he believed that the function of the Professorship was to lead campaign of national artistic renewal which includes the establishment of both a “professional and critical school of fine art for English gentlemen”. This might mean that the English outlook would be

practical, so that, if they draw at all, they may draw rightly; and critical, so that being first directed to such works of existing art, as will best reward their study, they may afterward make their patronage of living artists delightful to themselves in their consciousness of its justice, and, to the utmost, beneficial to their country, by being given to the men who deserve it; in the early period of their lives, when they both need it most can be influenced by it the best advantage.

This lecture was the first of many public events in which Ruskin helped to shape university life at Oxford in the last decades of the 19th century. Through his lectures (many of which became publi-
cations), work with individual colleges and support for the Ruskin Drawing School and Oxford Museum, Ruskin had an immense impact upon Oxford over the next 12 years. This story has yet to be adequately told, but two features of it stand out as relevant. First, Ruskin’s use of the public lecture as means to engage broader social and cultural issues. Second, Ruskin’s efforts to mobilize Oxford undergraduates to play an active role in the community provides an early example of an ‘outreach’ activity.

Ruskin’s lectures ranged over a number of topics, but they were memorable for those who attended and they led to a number of specific publications. These were at once detailed and open ended, specific and vast, angry and funny and profound and silly. Taken together they reveal something much more interesting: namely, Ruskin was attempting nothing less than to question, evaluate and criticize both the knowledge and the practices which produced it. In addressing Oxford undergraduates about topics involving painting, architecture or sculpture, Ruskin was prompting them to rethink the consumption of art, the public use of building (or ‘designed environments’) and the practices of anatomy. Ruskin was an organic thinker: facing the cresting of the wave of secularization (Ruskin detested Darwinism), the Slade Professor sought to reconnect human knowledge with the older religious and wisdom traditions.

These efforts were reflected in a stream of Ruskin’s publications. In works such as Love’s Meinie (1873-1881), Proserpina (1875-1886) and Deucalion (1875-1883) Ruskin sought to reconnect the visual world, itself made manifest by the traditions of natural science, with humanistic learning. Possibly the best index to Ruskin’s thought during this period in Oxford are his 1872 lectures published as The Eagle’s Nest. In February and March of 1872 Ruskin delivered a series of lectures in Oxford concerning the relationship between Natural Science and Art. By September these lectures, ten in total, were published as The Eagle’s Nest; a second edition was issued in 1880. The Eagle’s Nest is critical to understanding Ruskin because in those lectures he provided his audience with the means to grasp the organization and content of his thought. It is useful to remember that the difficult Oxford context stimulated

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Ruskin to articulate his views in a manner not inconsistent with the reading and listening habits of his contemporaries. *The Eagle’s Nest*, as such, constituted a savage attack upon the very basis of Victorian science, history, and literature; indeed, it even questioned the national role of the university.

Yet Ruskin was clearly using the university to combat what might later be called ‘the crisis in the human sciences’. In *The Eagle’s Nest* Ruskin was involved in explaining the connections between natural science and art. The content of the ten lectures made manifest his understanding of the ontology, function, and organization of knowledge. While exploring this text is beyond the scope of this paper, it might be pointed out that it is characteristic of Ruskin that he set forth his positions involving knowledge as part of a polemic against Victorian science and culture. What was at stake for Ruskin was ultimately a deep commitment to realism, which was made manifest in a deep rooted antipathy towards unmediated abstract thought. For Ruskin the crisis of modern thought was embodied in its liberalism, secularism, classification schemes and scientific practices. Ruskin literally wanted his audience to see differently suggesting that while they might be interested in knowing things—they were actually unable to do so. To put this differently, just as Victorians could only grasp the superficial appearance of things, so too, the implication was that their entire method of seeing and, therefore, thinking was itself fundamentally flawed.

Last, possibly the work of Ruskin’s student disciples—the Hincksey diggers—are the most famous image associated with his career as Slade Professor. These undergraduates, which included the young Oscar Wilde, followed Ruskin to the outskirts of Oxford to build a road which would allow people to appreciate the beauty of the local countryside. This project—an early form of outreach—did produce a road—but not one which was useful or even completed. Nonetheless, it does represent Ruskin’s conscious effort to capitalize on both the youth and the leadership potential of his students; he believed that their education was about more than competitive examinations (which he fiercely opposed) or narrow specialized scholarship or frivolous pursuits such as rowing—which was becoming a popular sport. As he explained to Acland, “I want to show my Oxford drawing class my notion of what a country road should be. I am always growling
and howling about rails, and I want them to see what I would have instead, beginning with a quiet by-road through villages;” but his more urgent aim was to teach undergraduates the value of physical labor: “My chief object is to let my pupils feel the pleasures of useful muscular work.” University education, instead, meant literally learning how to see. Those who could see might be those who could feel, imagine and think. Furthermore, Ruskin had come to see something which had not been so obvious when he was a gentlemen-commoner in Christ Church: namely, that the university was not an isolated place, but a place which itself was contextualized by the communities around it.

**Conclusion**

Ruskin’s experiences at Oxford were not typical, but they can be useful for highlighting a number of themes which may well speak to many of the issues facing newly emerging universities in the Arabian Gulf. Ruskin’s desire to remake the university to prevent the spread of Catholicism seems neither attractive nor forward looking. However, it does point to a typical experience of universities in the last two centuries in that they become key sites for contesting programmatic social reform. The rise of the nation state was not a preoccupation of Ruskin (though he was more nationalistic than many of his readers may have recognized), but like so many others he linked the training of a youthful elite to ideas of national reform. As Mark Pattison reminded us, over the course of the 19th century the British universities became less reflections of the power of the Church of England and were increasingly identified as national resources.

The commitment to teaching drawing appears to be comparatively positive and promising. However, it should be pointed out that Ruskin was actually challenging a number of the commercial design conventions of his day. Teaching students to draw was more than an aesthetic response to the commodification of the natural world; it was also an attempt to enable the next generation to develop greater awareness of beauty in life itself.

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19 XX, p. xli. See Hewison p. 25.
Ruskin’s lectures represented yet another vital experience of the modern university because he used it as a platform to challenge the conventions of science and modern thought. The success of these efforts may have been greater than what was achieved by the Hincksey diggers, but the outcomes would not have been obvious. Yet, what Ruskin was doing was to show that it was in the university—possibly only in the university—that the ideas, doctrines and assumptions which accompanied modern thought might be challenged.

In short, Ruskin’s idea of the university was a changing one, but one that grew and deepened over the course of his life. Ultimately, the university was a place where people might have the experience of thinking differently from those outside. That is, the university was enriched by its engagement with the forces outside and external to it. Paradoxically, the university might then make its greatest contributions by educating young men to then go out and change the world beyond.

Finally, what does all of this mean for the universities in the Arabian Gulf? These institutions have been framed from the outset with their ‘stakeholders’ needs foremost in mind. In most cases, liberal arts appear to be window dressing for institutions whose priorities appear to be dominated by commerce and engineering. However, Ruskin’s example may yet be instructive because his understanding of Oxford (and what it might mean for the nation) was that it could be a place where future leaders might experience the opportunity to think differently for a few years of their lives. From alternative thought might well flow new ideas, which might produce a wiser and, ultimately, more compassionate society. If Ruskin was right, Gulf leaders might do well to ponder the long range value of a place which would go beyond vocational education and offer its graduates a broader conception of the world. Ironically, they might also find that making space for education which does not have direct commercial application, might in the end prove to be even more useful.
Chapter Four

Pulling Teeth – Challenges to Student Creativity in the 21st Century

Christopher Gottschalk

Today’s theatre (which can easily be delineated into our modern forms of stage, screen, and radio) traces its origins back well over two thousand years to ancient Greece. Given that theatre’s nascent corresponded with the genesis of western philosophy it should therefore come as no surprise that core values such as critical analysis, rhetoric, and social criticism remain innate to theatre practice and study. As such, the dramatic arts have long been a main staple of Humanities course offerings at Liberal Arts universities and colleges. Though the last century has witnessed the steady erosion in the commercial popularity of live theatrical performance due in no small part to the prevalence of radio, cinema, and television as mainstream entertainment, institutions of higher education around the world in the Twenty-First Century continue to offer basic education in the dramatic arts as a means of building student competency in communication, reasoning, and creative collaboration. It is difficult to argue that such basic competencies aren’t beneficial to students who aspire to success in a myriad of career fields, nonetheless, the challenges of engaging the student’s creative mind for any sustained period of time has become increasingly difficult in the era of text messaging, Twitter, and Facebook where today’s students have attention spans which can perhaps best be measured in “tweets” and “status updates” rather than in seconds and minutes. As a result of this current climate that extols communicative efficiency over eloquence and expression, trying to inspire student creativity within the frame of tradi-
tional study in the dramatic arts and the humanities in general has become increasingly akin to pulling teeth.

A Brief Historical Perspective

The oral tradition of storytelling as a means of instructing cultural identity and history from one generation to another is probably as old as language itself. As vocabulary expanded to describe the world around us, so too did the manner in which words were presented in order to convey greater meaning. Though many poets would undoubtedly argue that the grammatical structure of sentences and metered organization of syllables dominates the power of any given message, as an actor I must also point out that the most profound forms of poesy are often achieved when word is married to speech; that it is the spoken word that most commands our attention and sparks our imaginative forces. If we were to consider Homer as the wellspring from which we initially based our models of story-form upon, it must be acknowledged that his enduring masterpieces The Iliad and Odyssey were passed down through the early centuries amongst a populace that was widely illiterate. It is almost impossible to imagine the telling of heroic feats done by Hercules and Hector commanding the attention of a listening audience without also imagining the impassioned emoting of the storyteller making use of both his voice and gesture. This marriage of written word with performance would be cemented by the 6th Century BCE when Athens began regular competitions for the best tragedies inspired by the ritual performance of dithyrambs – chanted or sung poetry based on Greek mythology performed by a chorus of dancers.\(^1\) Within a single century this rudimentary performance style rapidly evolved into the more familiar dramatic form exampled in the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides who would not only give their audiences relevant and immediate cultural insight utilizing then well-known mythologies but also, and perhaps more importantly for us, they expanded on one another’s works to create actors, dialogue, and dramatic structure. These methods of effective storytelling would

be codified only a century later by Aristotle\textsuperscript{2} and then further expanded by Lucius Anneaus Seneca\textsuperscript{3} as they created metrics for effective dramatic structure that have become the backbone for Western dramatic literature and performance ever since. But it would be remiss to not also acknowledge that the penetrating insights into the human condition offered by the classic masters were almost always paired with gross demonstrations of violence and bawdiness catering to the baser urges amongst us. As Aristotle and Seneca refined storytelling for greater efficiency and potency in the delivery of complex intellectual arguments so did the arena gladiators and street comedians develop means for theatrically quenching their audience’s thirst for blood and carnality.

Despite the decline of ancient Greece, the collapse of the Roman Empire, and the dark days of feudalism and religious expansion characteristic of the early medieval era in Europe that had little time for formal expressions of theatre and in fact encouraged the suppression of all theatre as examples of immorality and heresy, Western dramatic culture would once again flourish during the late medieval era and Renaissance. As commercial forms of theatre began to reestablish themselves as acceptable popular entertainment, Aristotle and Seneca would become prominent sources of study within the first liberal arts universities endeavoring to educate their students in the trivium: foundational instruction in grammar, logic, and rhetoric. If grammar and logic can loosely be defined as the mechanics of language and thought and rhetoric being the use of language for persuasion and instruction then it is no surprise that the dramatic works of the Greek and Roman masters were used as examples of synergy between the three disciplines. Young academics began to create their own dramas mirroring the structure of the classical examples they had been taught as academic exercise rather than with the intent to produce commercially viable entertainments. Nonetheless, it was these neoclassical academic playwrights who paved the way for the giants

\textsuperscript{2} Namely this was achieved in The Poetics (c.335-323 BCE), a compilation of Aristotle’s notes on poetry and drama he used to instruct his students.

\textsuperscript{3} Also known as Seneca the Younger (c. 1 BCE-65 CE), Seneca was a renowned Stoic philosopher and dramatist in the early years of the Roman Empire where he served as tutor and advisor to the emperor Nero.
Christopher Gottschalk

of Renaissance humanist drama to emerge like Lope de Vega, Pierre Corneille, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, and Ben Johnson, just to name a few.

Despite the explosive popularity of the Renaissance dramatists, theatre was not without its detractors who were quick to once again label its humanist themes as vulgar, immoral, and heretical. Just as other forms of art were under attack from catholic fanatics and protestant purists, theater houses across Europe found themselves being boarded and dramatists, actors, and artists alike began retreating to near underground existences as a matter of survival. One of the more renowned instances of such artistic purging was the infamous Bonfire of the Vanities instigated by Girolamo Savonarola in Florence, Italy. Though Savonarola’s attacks were much broader than to merely target dramatic works, the event is important to acknowledge as it vividly illustrates the destructive ends such zealots were inspired to go to in what they saw as spiritual cleansing. Fire would again be used to burn theaters in England over a century later bringing a dramatic and hasty close to the celebrated era of Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Johnson. Such religious ideology would continue to butt against the humanist explorations of scholars and artists in an enduring tug of war that would continue to rear its destructive head through the centuries. The early twentieth century gave rise to the particularly violent suppressions of the arts under Soviet Communism and German Fascism, both echoing the familiar medieval themes of sternly crushing any form of artistic and academic questioning counter to their visions of social order and appropriate systems of belief. Nonetheless, critical enquiry and its eloquent expressions thereof have endured as mainstays of a post-Enlightenment Western society that we today celebrate not just within the walls of our contemporary liberal arts academies but also in our expressions of art, literature, and theatre serving as a testament to the power of storytelling, in whatever form, as that ancient means of instructing

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4 Coinciding with the Mardi Gras festival, on February 7, 1497, Savonarola and his followers held a massive public burning of art, books, and cosmetics in Florence following the example set earlier in the century by San Bernardino di Siena. Undoubtedly, several works of Italian neo-classical drama were lost to the fire.
and forwarding our cultural identity and understanding of the ever-shrinking world around us. Or has it?

**Globalization, Drama, and the New Trivium**

A decade into the 21st Century few would argue that globalization is the dominant trend among human societies and it may indeed be we are entering into the era of globality – a period of mass social homogenization that has been achieved and is spurred onward by the boarder-crossing consumption of products brought to us by multinational conglomerate mega corporations owing no allegiance to any one religion, ethnicity, or nationality. Our modern forms of theatre (best evidenced in commercialized stage production, radio, film, television and now in the guise of videogames and streaming Internet amateur entertainments via YouTube) all reflect this trend of greater access to a macro-value system of consumption with spectacle-based entertainment made even more convenient by means of a Smartphone or other handheld wireless device connecting its user to the world at large resplendent with high-resolution banner advertisements brought to you by [insert the corporate sponsor of your choice here]. It’s difficult to ignore that these aforementioned expressions of modern-day theatre are becoming less and less driven by social inquiry and criticism and instead more and more by a desire to sate the increasing appetite of its short attention span audience with an easily digestible feast of digitally enhanced pyrotechnics, three dimensional graphics, and a multitude of variations on the time-tested comedic *lazzi* of a short but sweetly inspired kick to the groin. This shouldn’t be surprising since popular entertainment catering to the masses has always emphasized less highbrow intellectual examinations while focusing on means of escapism from the harsh realities of plebian and proletariat living. But remember, historically bloody spectacle and lewd slapstick was paralleled with refined offerings of culturally inquisitive dramatic works appealing to the desire for enhancing our moral, intellectual, and spiritual understanding of the world around us. If mainstreamed public entertainments are failing to provide the countermeasure to our baser yearnings then surely our liberal arts universities must be keeping the collective
striving for higher-minded understanding alive. The tragic reality unfolding seems to be leaning in quite the opposite direction.

As global commerce has fueled the economic reshaping of the world the underpinning ideology governing consumer-based societies is rapidly abandoning religious morality, ethical responsibility, and civic consciousness and is instead focusing quite sharply on reverence for the almighty dollar and the accumulation of wealth. Where once Western liberal arts universities might have served as a bastion of intellectual freedom and humanist exploration unfettered by concerns of profitability, now these same institutions are throwing off their identities as halls of free expression in favor of reinventing themselves in economic terms complete with corporate sponsorship and administrators vying for positions on those affiliated boards of trustees\(^5\). The resulting transformation breeds a new order of higher education catering to special interest masters while its students flounder under crushing tuitions and faculty find their research and teaching interests constricted by increasing pressure to conform to the new corporate values\(^6\). Fortunately, the basic tenets of liberal arts instruction seem to remain intact as at least general education curriculums continue to emphasize learning along the lines of our old friend, the trivium (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) before the invisible hand of a preferred economically viable field of study grips hold of the students. And as it’s been for hundreds of years, study in the dramatic arts continues to provide a synergy of language, understanding, and expression in which to engage the eager young mind. Unfortunately, this is where the proverbial second shoe begins to drop.

Study in the dramatic arts demands sustained concentration in order to effectively inspire the creativity of thought that ultimately drives theatrical performance both onstage and behind the curtain. It is not unusual for students initially embarking on dramatic study to experience frustration as they come to grips with


\(^6\) Ibid.
the understanding that their full attention is required to a greater
degree than that demanded by passively sitting through a lecture.
Quite often this is overcome early on in the classroom by theatre
teachers employing group games and physical activities more re-
sembling playtime than stoic academic rigor. While such methods
of instruction might strike some as being better suited to pre-
school rather than university, it is undeniable for anyone partici-
pating in or observing this pedagogical technique that it profound-
ly enhances the novice theatre student’s enjoyment of their study
while concurrently introducing fundamental concepts of listening,
physical awareness, and varying forms of communication that be-
come necessary for future work. The real difficulty of instruction
sets in when these games are followed by more complex lessons
in the techniques of dramatic storytelling intended to marry the
communication of cognitive themes with nuanced emotional and
physical performance. As theatre students progress in their train-
ing, sustained concentration and the ability for processing and
communicating long arcing thoughts become more comfortable;
however, it is not unusual for this process to take years of training
before the student reaches a level of repeatable competence. Giv-
en that the learning outcomes for a single general education cur-
riculum are structured for a few months of instruction rather than
years, it is a reasonable expectation that novice theatre students
grow to acquire an appreciation of the discipline rather than any
level of mastery after only a semester or two of dramatic training.
Nevertheless, it is during that short time that an enhancement of
the student’s language, analytical, and communication skills has
hopefully occurred.

This is all well and good if the students are ready for the in-
creased demand on their concentration. It is fair to argue that most
students entering into university will traditionally experience a
period of adjustment as they cope with the higher level of expec-
tations being put on them. However, this ability to successfully
adjust becomes significantly compromised when the mitigating
factors of 21st Century consumer based living and the corporate
university are factored in. In the United States alone teenagers
diagnosed with Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder
(ADHD) increased 22% between 2003 and 2007 increasing on
average 5.5% each year. It doesn’t take a licensed clinician to recognize that the exploding prevalence amongst this same age group for using video games, text messaging, and social networking (e.g. Twitter and Facebook) doesn’t help the situation of contending with a growing population of agitated and concentration challenged young adults entering their college years. Add to that the stressors of increasing tuition costs and a diminished job market after graduation limiting the selection of fields of study to a corporate-ready precious few, the recipe for creating generations of students incapable and/or uninterested in sustained creative humanist thinking is almost complete.

These mounting obstacles to not only study in the dramatic arts but to traditional liberal arts education as a whole, which extols the virtues of critical examination and eloquence of thought, seem almost impossible to overcome without a remarkable paradigm shift away from the current global values embracing unquestioning corporate driven consumption and communicative efficiency teetering on the brink of abandoning all together the long established rules of grammar. The new globality seems insistent on replacing the three ways of the old trivium –grammar, logic, and rhetoric, with something better suited to the corporate consumer macro society we live in. This new trivium might be founded on ‘tweets,’ greed, and attention grabbing banner ads all of which indeed seem to be entrenching themselves deeper and deeper into the everyday experience one finds living in the Internet connected world. Unless new generations of students can once again be nurtured to possess measurable attention spans greater than the seconds required for a Facebook status update or Twitter post, the experience of attempting dramatic arts and humanities-based education amongst the ranks of students seemingly superglued to their Smartphones and iPads will feel more and more akin to the frustration of a medieval barber struggling to loosen an aching tooth from a reluctant patient. The dramatic irony facing

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the liberal arts today is that all of our economically driven and technology enhanced modes of communication and consumption are slowly but surely undermining centuries of humanities inspired learning and understanding. If we aren’t vigilant in resisting this new trivium we may soon wake-up to find that the last five hundred years of humanities-based education has been resigned to history as a mere Wikipedia post with questionable citation.
Chapter Five

Crisis in the English Department: Relevance, Reaction, and Revolution

Ann Newman

In 1970, almost eight percent of all undergraduates were majoring in English, yet, in less than a generation, that number had declined more than 50 percent (Chace, 2009). Consequently, Ph.D.s in English declared that there was a crisis. While many have blamed crass commercialism for the crisis, this is an easy – and erroneous – explanation. A more plausible answer centers on relevance, reaction, and revolution.

Academics assert that what they teach – regardless of the discipline – is relevant. Many students disagree. They often point to a disconnection between what they are required to study and what “the real world” requires. In other words, they want to register for classes that are “relevant” in “the real world,” i.e. courses that will help them get jobs. Therefore, when seeking to explain the dwindling number of English majors, it has been easy – as well as understandable – that many academics have identified crass commercialism as the source of the problem, for, during that same 40-year time period, the number of students declaring a major in business climbed from 14 percent to 22 percent (Chace). In other words, more and more students who previously would have chosen English as a major have opted for business. However, that may be too simple an explanation, for during that same time period, “the decline in the number of humanities majors has been accompanied by a decline in the number of science and mathematics majors” (Connors). Since these two disciplines have traditionally produced graduates who are eagerly sought after by employers,
something other than crass commercialism must be at play when students select a major.

A closer look at students electing to major in business compared with students electing to pursue majors in the humanities, mathematics, and science reveals what may be a more compelling reason for the shift in majors. A study published in 1970 indicates business majors had significantly lower high school GPAs, with correspondingly lower SAT scores, than students majoring in the humanities, mathematics and science (Albanese; Bressoud). This discrepancy has not altered significantly in the last 40 years (McGinley). Therefore, it can be argued that increasing numbers of students have opted for business majors because of academic reasons rather than commercial reasons. The ability to express ideas in written form is linked to critical thinking and problem solving, yet SAT scores indicate that many college-bound students do not possess this skill (Quitadamo & Kurtz, 140-154). More specifically, many high schools are not graduating students armed with the critical thinking skills required for a major in English. In short, a lack of academic preparedness is a more plausible explanation for the decline in the number of English majors than is “relevance” of a degree in English in the job market (Figure 1).

Although the case can be made that a major in English better prepares students for employment after graduation, reaction to rising costs has played its part in the decline in the number of English majors, for education is expensive. Tuition, even when adjusted for inflation, has risen steeply since 1970. When this author attended Baylor University, a private school, in the mid-1960s, tuition was approximately $1,200 per academic year. It is now $26,966 per annum (Student Financial Services). However, students are not just facing rising tuition fees at private schools. There has been a sharp increase at public institutions as well. For example, tuition at the University of Colorado Boulder has risen a staggering 1,354 percent since 1972 (Table 1). Consequently, the National Center for Education Statistics reports that two-thirds of new college graduates face repaying an average student loan debt of $19,237 (“Student Grotto: The Inside Source at College”).

Equally important is the fact that the U.S. has encountered five major recessions since 1973. Traditionally, when the economy goes south, college enrollment increases, as some high school
graduates – many of whom would not have previously considered attending college – delay their entry into the job market by enrolling in college and some laid-off workers seek to upgrade their skills by returning to college. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that these students react by choosing majors in fields other than English that they believe will make them more marketable, for it can be argued that their reaction to downturns in the economy has affected what is important to them in life.

Alexander W. Astin’s research tells us that in the mid-1960s, more than 80 percent of entering college freshmen reported that nothing was more important than “developing a meaningful philosophy of life.” Astin, director of the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, reports that “being very well off financially” was only an afterthought, one that fewer than 45 percent of those freshmen thought to be an essential goal. As the years went on, however, and as tuition shot up, the two traded places; by 1977, financial goals had surged past philosophical ones, and by the year 2001 more than 70 percent of undergraduate students had their eyes trained on financial realities, while only 40 percent were still wrestling with meaningful philosophies (Chace, 2009).

In addition, the problems facing English departments have been exacerbated by two major changes. The first is dwindling sources of funding for programs. Because a weak economy means less tax money for education, most colleges have adopted a “pay-your-own-way” approach. Consequently, departments have been forced to tighten their belts and look for outside funding. However, most of the traditional sources of outside funding for English programs – endowments and grants – are disappearing, so departments have had to scale back their course offerings in response to budget cuts. The mainstay of most English departments is now the freshman writing program.

A second major change has been a shift in the perception of what a department should offer. Studying the plays of Shakespeare and other great literary works once meant examining the shared common experience of all people as they searched for meaning in life. Then, starting in 1964, the Western literary canon came under fire. By the end of the twenty-first century, the scholar activists – or political revolutionaries – appeared to have won the battle. Dennis Lewis, in “The North American ‘Culture
“Wars” writes that the current preoccupation with domination, which one scholar traces back to the late French philosopher Michel Foucault, refers to one thing only: the oppression of females and minorities by white Western males (2001). John M. Ellis goes even further by accusing the race-gender-class critics as believing that “politics is always the most important dimension” in literature (1997). Accordingly, political correctness is the measure by which literary works are now to be judged. “These scholar activists have erected a sort of hierarchy of oppression in which the merit of a writer’s or a critic’s work seem in large part measured by the degree to which he or she is judged to have been oppressed by the ‘Western hegemony’” (Lewis, 2001).

A closer look at the change in courses offered from 1964 up to 1997 will illustrate the dramatic shift in the education of English majors. In 1964, approximately 43 percent of an English major’s course work was comprised of survey courses covering major works, authors, and periods (Balch & Brasor, 1997). By 1997, that number had fallen to 17 percent (Balch & Brasor, 1997). However, even this number is misleading, for some of these “survey courses” are, in reality, theory courses heavily influenced by political correctness. For example, a compulsory junior-level American and British literature survey at Harvard concentrates on “critical theory and practice as it has been influenced by hermeneutics, feminism, psychology, semiology, sociology and the study of cultural representation” (Balch & Brasor, 1997). The National Alumni Forum asserts that some of the new courses look more like sociology or political science than English literature. At Indiana University, “Studies in British Commonwealth Culture” focuses on “Feminism, Nationalism, and Transnationalism.” At Georgetown, it is English majors, not sociology students, who are given “Black Women in the United States,” covering “health, violence, sexuality, work, and the family.” And “International Culture and the New World Order” looks as if it wandered over from the School of Foreign Service. It is little wonder that, with such offerings, English majors may have little time for Shakespeare (1996).

It can be argued that this change to the curriculum, more than relevancy and reaction, has contributed to the decline in the number of students majoring in English. Unlike the Western literary can-
on which was based on shared common experiences, this new canon seeks to exclude. While discrimination is never acceptable, neither is exclusion based on gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or nationality, i.e. white, heterosexual, Western male. Likewise, political beliefs come and go; therefore, they serve no purpose in deciding whether a poem, novel, or play is a great work. They are only useful for excluding readers who do not ascribe to the politically correct views of the day.

To conclude, it is not too late to reverse the decline in the number of English majors. While those numbers may never return to the pre-1970 level, they will increase, for students today are not that different from students in the 1970s. They still require skills developed by a study of literature, i.e. critical thinking skills and communication skills. Rather than arguing that the content of the courses themselves is relevant, professors must stress the relevancy of the skills developed to the job market. More importantly, English departments must avoid a politicized culture of victimization. People want more than to be told that they are victims. It is time to return to literature that celebrates a universal experience rather than a political creed.

References


Ann Newman


Appendix

Figure 1. SAT scores in 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tuition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>$400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>$1,842</td>
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</table>
# Crisis in the English Department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tuition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>$5,418</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Tuition per annum at the University of Colorado Boulder
Chapter Six

“I rated my humanity professor a straight F”: Digital Students Evaluation Patterns of ‘Analog’ Humanities Professors on “rate my professor” websites.

Steven C. Koehn

The formal student evaluation of teachers as a practice has been distinguished by different eras. In the 1920’s, early work in the development of a rating scale for teachers was conducted at Purdue University (Remmers, 1927) utilizing the advent of new psychometric research. This assessment process was generally voluntary at most institutions up through the 1960’s. In the 1970’s, a stronger emphasis started with regards to creating student evaluation instruments that demonstrated more validity for educational improvement of instructors (Allgozine & Gretes, et. al, 2004). This research continued from the 1980’s through the early 1990’s, as more importance was given to student evaluations as part of the tenure and promotional process at educational institutions (Greenwald, 1997).

At the end of the 1990’s, a new form of student evaluation of professors began to take form on the internet. The creation of student driven websites for their own assessment of faculty began utilizing web 2.0 technology. In a short time, a number of sites, such as, RateMyProfessor.com, RatingsOnline.com, Reviewum.com, and others (Foster, 2003; Stone, 2003) were letting students rate professors on student based criteria.

The research on the data of these student-focused websites has indicated that there are frequent integrity issues between the expectations of students’ responses on these sites and the ability
of the faculty member to create a learning experience for those students. Studies have found that students comments on these sites can be biased in favor of the instructor’s personality, grading leniency, ease of the course, and whether or not they are good looking (Cashin, 1996; 1999; Greenwald & Gilmore, 1997; Wilson 1998; Liaw & Goh, 2003). Feely (2002) and Felton (et al, 2004) discussed findings that suggested easiness and sexiness were associated with positive student evaluations. Otto (et al, 2008) noted that a large measure of studies of online student websites indicated that a “halo” effect (students either give professors a universally high or low rating of faculty performance) might be occurring, although their research indicated some validity to the student responses might also exist.

Although, it would be easy to discount online ratings because of the focus on categories that are not directed at learning itself, valuable findings related to professor behaviors and student learning are researchable. These online sites do contain a large quantity of valuable qualitative data that has not been studied in depth by researchers. Thus, to negate the value of the sites as areas for investigation could be detrimental. In looking at the studies of professor rating websites, the majority of studies are associated with the quantitative data reported by the website. The scores on “easiness” or “helpfulness” or “clarity” as in the case of Ratemyprofessor.com of the faculty member are the information utilized for many studies results.

Yet, the analysis of the student comments has yet to be fully undertaken in depth. Thus, this study is a content analysis of the student comments taken from a sample of the educational institutions rated in the top 25 and bottom 25 on Ratemyprofessor.com. The content analysis looked for themes identified with the ratings of humanity professors at these institutions. Earlier studies using conventional teacher evaluations have indicated that professors in the humanities fall in the high to medium categories in respect to student ratings over other fields (Feldman, 1978)

So, an analysis between prior analog data and newer digital data was undertaken to investigate any ramifications that might be observed in the qualitative data on these websites and its impact both on past research on humanity teaching behaviors and more recent digital student responses.
Method
The educational institutions rated as being either in the top 25 schools with the best professors or the top 25 schools with the worst professors as reported by the Center for College Affordability and Productivity from data on RateMyProfessor (O’Shaughnessy, 2010).

A sample was taken from each grouping of 25 schools that also incorporated the main types of educational institution from large public universities and private universities to small liberal arts colleges and small state schools. The student comments for the humanity faculty were analyzed for themes. The total number of faculty used in the analysis was 67. The total number of student comments assessed equaled 422.

Results
The results were placed into two categories, beneficial and detrimental. Those themes that related to teaching behaviors perceived as being beneficial by the students and those themes perceived as being detrimental by the students.

The results for detrimental behaviors or actions broke down into the following themes:

Beneficial
(1) Open Minded Instructor
This category or theme was developed due to a large quantity of comments that dealt with students’ appreciation of their own ideas. Instructors who allowed students to express their own views on a subject without penalty were valued. The inverse was true for instructors who “belittled” a student’s idea. It was clearly stated in the posts that reflected this category that students did not think highly of faculty who were very rigid in their own thinking patterns. Classes that were consistently “life stories” told by the instructor on a regular basis were not appreciated to a high degree. Also categorized in this theme were the comments that related to an instructor only presenting one point of view on content the matter. As some students consistently wrote, “one explanation, that’s it! AVOID THIS CLASS.”
(2) Love of Course and Institution:
The students’ comments showed that there were perceptions regarding both the instructor’s enthusiasm for the subject matter and for the institution. The faculty who demonstrated both enthusiasm for the subject matter and the institution received very good comments regarding their teaching abilities. Faculty members who knew how the school teams were doing and what the school organizations were involved in were identified in a positive manner. The teachers who “voiced” their displeasure with the institution or demonstrated it nonverbally were considered to be less effective as an instructor. In particular, the teachers who were teaching content that the students perceived the instructor truly disliked teaching were frequently tagged as courses to avoid.

(3) Spell it Out:
The frequency of the comments that created this category had as the central focus the ability of the professor to be very candid about what was required in the course. The ability of a professor to not “blind-side” the students during the course was frequently a critical component in their estimation of whether the faculty member was an effective instructor or not. Students could write scathing remarks. In particular, observations of the quality score of the instructor compared to the hardness of class score indicated that students did not down-rate a hard course if the instructor truly “spelled it out” at the beginning of the semester. Students were quite vocal in their comments on instructors who gave tests that did not reflect course content, lectures, or assigned readings. The instructor who was quite clear regarding expectations of the student in the course was considered to be effective and this approach was appreciated.

Detrimental:
(1) Organization:
Student comments had a wide range in this theme, but the core of their comments revolved around the lack of organizational abilities of the instructor. The students’ observations indicated that faculty members who do not have a strong reign on the classroom were deemed ineffective. This reign was spoken of in a number of ways. Instructors who allowed constant talking, cell-phone use
classroom, late arrivals, and the perception that certain students actually controlled the classroom were frequently identified with disparaging comments on the websites. On the opposite side of this view, teachers who were draconian were also felt to lack control of themselves in the classroom. Students were quite astute at determining if an instructor had control without having to resort to behaviors that showed a lack of respect for the student.

As mentioned earlier, the comments in this category were wide ranging and dealt with both in class and out of class issues. One particular issue that was discovered in the content analysis was the issue of faculty not returning papers or tests in a timely fashion. It was interesting in some students’ views that this is perceived as a universal plague of teachers, and they duly note those instructors that give back work quickly with glowing remarks. The comments revealed an extreme displeasure with instructors who held work until the end of the semester and placed the student in a situation of not knowing how they were doing in the course. Consistency was the operant word in the students, perceptions. Consistency on grading, on expectations of students, on the type of personality demonstrated in the classroom were important considerations revealed in their comments.

(2) Textbooks:
On some of the rate my professor websites the use of a textbook and what textbooks used is part of the evaluation process. Regardless, students had comments regarding textbook use by the faculty that extended beyond simple checkmarks on whether a book is used or not in the course. Student comments showed a high level of displeasure with faculty who assign books and then do not use them in the course. “Save your money” statements were frequently written regarding textbooks required for the course and whether or not to buy them. Students also demonstrated a high level of frustration with textbooks in general. This frustration ranged from cost to the boring nature of the books. Quite frequently, students left comments for students considering the course on how to get through the course without purchasing textbooks or reading them.
(3) Content, but no Context.
Courses that were content based only were frequently assessed as courses to avoid if possible by the student raters. Instructors who could not connect information to them in ways they felt empowered them were deemed lacking in ability. “Why do we have to learn this” comments were attached to courses that clearly indicated that the comment was also connected with the faculty member. Instructors that connected material to the students’ lives were deemed to be very intellectual, smart, and brilliant for this skill. The usual reference given was the teachers seemed to be disconnected from them and their world. This view was used in the title of this study, with regards to “analog” teachers teaching “digital” students.

Discussion:
This was a preliminary content analysis of written student comments on web based “rate my professor” type websites. The analysis revealed certain detrimental and beneficial teacher behaviors that students used in their perceptions of a teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom. The criteria used by these websites for evaluation are different than the student evaluation forms used by educational institutions and thus lend an understanding of students concerns with instructional behaviors and techniques by faculty members in a new and different light. It is hoped that this preliminary analysis of the patterns of student comments on such websites will enable instructors to better understand their students concerns in the classroom.

References:
I rated my humanities professor a straight F


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Chapter Seven

The Impact of Television Translations on Education in Kuwait

Mohammad Akbar and Mohamed Satti

Introduction

Television translation as a phenomenon and as a discipline has existed for at least the past few decades. With the recent advent of electronic media, translation has become an important part of television as a medium. This research attempts to analyze the role played by television translation in children’s programming. The examination of this role and its impact on education is to be assessed and scrutinized. Imperative in this assessment will be the appraisal of the role played by culture and values in impacting the education of children. Specific examples from a number of Kuwaiti schools are introduced to highlight the importance of language. This was done through surveys of Kuwaiti schools in order to evaluate the impact of television translations from other Arabic-speaking countries on the Kuwaiti dialect. This research therefore provides a discourse for the appraisal of the impact of television translation on Kuwaiti children and on Kuwaiti culture as a whole. The literature review provided with this research looks at a broader realm of text found in the field of translation in general, since there appears to be a scarcity of material on the topic, especially in the Arabian Gulf region. The methodology utilized in this project involved conducting a survey among school teachers in Kuwait, in order to assess their understanding of the problem as well as to record their feedback on the situation at hand. The
analysis conducted was based on information collected from the survey, and the researchers believe it provides an accurate reflection on how stakeholders view the impact of the issue of television translation on education in Kuwait.

**Background**

During the previous two decades, Kuwaiti children have been exposed to a tremendous flood of films and animations cartoons. The cartoons are mostly translated from English into either the Egyptian or the Lebanese dialect. Due to the undeniably strong impact of the vocabulary of the television and/or movie products on the language performance of children, many Kuwaiti families noted that the local Kuwaiti dialect of their children has become distorted. To make the matter worse, even the translation attempts, which can be designated as commercial translations that are originating from the Egyptian and Lebanese sources into what is supposed to be the classic Arabic, are also inlaid with dialectical vocabularies and phrases.

The claimed effect is not only limited to the weakening of the mother tongue of the child but also mastering the necessary skills of the classical Arabic language, which is not only the official but also the language of instruction at various levels of the educational system in Kuwait. It is supposed that the impact has contributed to the decline of the educational standard of the student. The task of the Arabic language teacher has been rendered harder than ever before. Currently, calls are being launched among the concerned parties, educators and parents to study the case and put forth suitable solutions to improve the situation.

**Objective**

While audio-visual translation as a discipline is a new field, it includes a broad spectrum of inter-disciplines. Studies in translation have traditionally been limited to text, but have increasingly been expanded to include translating across media forms. The advent of new media has accelerated the demand for translation from one language to another. As communication scholars living and working in Kuwaiti we find ourselves obliged to participate in the
quest for a solution to the phenomenon of children’s cartoons being translated into non-Kuwaiti dialects.

The concern is, therefore, to study and analyze the translation of children’s programming content from various languages into Arabic. At the very least, we could attempt to expose the real causes behind the deterioration in the standard of language amongst children in Kuwait. Imperative to this experiment is the increasing presence of foreign workers in the Kuwaiti labor market, with some estimates indicating that non-Kuwaitis constitute up to two-thirds of the total population. A crude generalization might conclude that the abundance of such a large number of expatriates adversely affects the quality of the Kuwaiti dialect, or at worst might lead to its disappearance altogether. Even though there might be numerous other factors that could be the cause of this decline, in this study we limit ourselves to the field of academia.

It is worthwhile to keep in mind that translation should be regarded as a discipline that falls under intercultural communication and should not be viewed solely as a linguistic study. Translation combines the study of both language as well as the specific medium on which a translated text appears. Thus, it represents a viable example of the convergence of two media forms. The case could also be made to view translation as a form of cultural study, since it combines language with cultural norms inherent to a particular society. A children’s program translation into Arabic in Lebanon for example, is expected to be influenced by the culture and values found in Lebanese Arabic. Similarly, Egyptian Arabic stands to influence translated text from that country. Such technicalities fall into one of three categories identified by Lewis (1980) – the linguistic, the cultural and the stylistic. In translating, one has to give as accurate description as possible in order to reflect the true meaning of the text.

**Review of Literature**

Keith Harvey (2000) commented that “translation is not just about texts: nor is it only about cultures and power. It is about the relation of one to the other” (p. 466). Translation represents an act that carries both a communication dynamic as well as an intercultural
perspective. It is a particularly important area to study due to the underlying cultural underpinnings that are associated with language. In translating one language to another, consideration has to be given to cultural representations as well as social values and norms. As Di Giovanni (2008) stressed, the interaction of culture and media “has been associated with the very translation of cultures, more than the transposition of linguistic signs” (p. 126). While translation and culture constitute an agreeable pair, multimedia translation is a relatively new field of study. In studying this discipline, attention has to be paid to the role played by culture in the translation process. Translating from one language to another does not simply imply the substituting of a word for a similar one. Often times, it involves the cultural background that goes into giving a meaning to the translated word. As Lefevere (1990) noted, “translation is not just a ‘window opened on another world’, or some such pious platitude. Rather, translation is a channel opened, often not without a certain reluctance, through which foreign influences can penetrate the native culture” (p. 2). The issue of culture and translation is therefore one that should neither be taken lightly or underestimated. Rather, it should be studied as part of the translation process and, if possible, its impact is to be assessed. The object of this study is to measure such an impact. As stated above, Kuwaiti children are becoming exposed, on a regular basis, to programming content that has been translated into a number of Arabic dialects, other than a Kuwaiti dialect.

This increased exposure is directly related to the significant demand for audiovisual products. As Cintas (2003) observed:

This upward trend is due to factors such as the explosion in the number of international, national, regional, and local television channels; the diversification of televisual products, through digital packages and television on demand; the diversification of transmission means (cable and satellite); a greater demand for distance learning; technological progress such as the DVD (Digital Versatile Disc); and the presence of multimedia products in our daily lives (p. 193).

The advent of electronic media has created an increase in the consumption of media products. This increased consumption is not confined to one country or to one region. Since Kuwait’s me-
dia production output is relatively weak (especially compared to Arabic-speaking countries), it relies mainly on imported media products. Both translated western media products as well as media products from Arabic-speaking countries contain a colloquial Arabic aspect that has an effect on the Kuwaiti dialect and culture.

If one could make a generalization with regards to the English language, then it has to be the realization that there is more or less a “standard” written and to a lesser extent spoken form of the language. The numerous different accents and dialect have to be considered as diversity within this particular language. It is safe to assume that no such generalization applies to Arabic. Like English, there is a standard form of Arabic. This standard format is used throughout media forms such as books, newspapers, broadcast news and documentaries, to name the most obvious ones. However, there is an “informal” or colloquial standard of the language that is both widespread and popular. This is not only in the street, but in media such as music and film.

As native Arabic speakers who have come across other Arabic speakers from different countries, the researchers find it both easy to distinguish and difficult to discern the numerous dialects spoken. While this contributes significantly to the diversity of the Arabic language, it adds another dimension to the language debate. One realization that could be made here has to do with how children, for example, perceive these different dialects. One assumption that could be made is that children might become confused due to the availability of several versions of the same language.

Alan Bell (1984) posited that all senders adapt their message to suit their receivers. According to him, there are four types of receivers: addressees, auditors, overhearers and eavesdroppers. Addressees are usually known to the speaker and therefore directly addressed. Auditors are known to the speaker but are not directly addressed. Overhearers are usually not confirmed participants, while eavesdroppers are not known to the speaker. In general, Bell continued, senders adapt their message more to the addressees and to the auditors than to the overhearers and the eavesdroppers. In audiovisual products, concluded Bell, the speakers adapt their message more to the auditors than to the addressees. Therefore, the initiative is taken by the speaker to effectively communi-
cate to the audience in the clearest message possible. In translating children’s cartoons into Arabic, the use of colloquial Arabic might be an effective way to communicate a message. Children are taught classical Arabic in schools, but might find the colloquial form more understandable, since this is the spoken form everywhere else. One problem that might arise is that the actual translation of these films is done in countries such as Egypt and Lebanon, who traditionally, have been centers for such activity. Kuwait, a country not known for its translating prowess, finds its children exposed to children’s programming that was either translated or dubbed in another Arabic-speaking environment.

Bartrina (2004) noted that audiovisual translation encounters a number of problems. These problems include the “inaccessibility of the original screenplay, the translated screenplay, the adapted screenplay, [and] the postproduction script” (p. 158). The subtitled film that we as receivers are exposed to on the screen represents the end product of a translated effort. The viewer is not exposed to the original text (in this case film) but only to the translated text. This represents a problem in that little comparison can be done between original text and translated text. The individual doing the actual translation, therefore, has the freedom to shape the translated text into the outcome that he/she desires. The translator is in effect a medium that not only carries the message but affects it as well.

In the translation process, “the relationships that exist between the rules of the abstract and modeling society and the idiosyncrasies of each translator” are known as norms (Cintas, 2004, p. 25). These norms provide a theoretical framework through which to study translation as a discipline. Norms also help us interpret the translator’s linguistic ability when translating text from one language to another. Cintas (2004) also pointed out that norms as a theoretical concept helps us to analyze translation studies. It also accepts translated text without making a judgment with regards to their detailed content.

While this paper is an attempt to study how television translation impacts education – and to a lesser extent culture – in Kuwait, little literature review is available on the subject. In this section, we therefore defined the concept of audiovisual translation, highlighting the role played by the translator in affecting the
The Impact of Television Translations on Education in Kuwait

translation process. Finally, a segment on how senders adapt their messages to suit the receivers was also included, in order to further illustrate the topic.

Methodology

As stated above, a lack of available literature on this particular topic meant that conducting a survey on public schools in Kuwait would provide sufficient data for analysis as well as to provide generalizable conclusions. A sample size of twenty participants was deemed to be adequate for this research. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) stated that “researchers do not need to depend on a particular numerical basis for generation of generalizations.” (p. 27) Additionally, Hignett (2005) noted that “the sampling strategy for any research project should be defensible with respect to the appropriate relationship (or logic) of the sample and the intellectual questions.” (p. 120) the sample size chosen for this project provided enough information to present analysis on the subject matter.

Each respondent took part in this research project at their own will and upon their consent. Participants in this project were given the time to consider their participation in the research and to ask questions about the research. Although respondents were not made to sign consent forms, they were made aware of the fact that this research was conducted for academic purposes only and to study and a new phenomenon.

The survey devised for this project consisted of a total of ten questions, which were all written by the researchers. The questions were short, consisting of a single line and were written in simple language. The survey was written in Arabic and the researchers carried out the translation into English. Each question had three possible answers and respondents were instructed to provide only one answer for each question. The survey was distributed to a total of 20 participants, who were asked to provide their answers in complete privacy. The results of the survey were collected in the last week of February and the first week of March, 2011.

All participants came from three public schools. The public schools chosen are located in Kuwait City, but in different geo-
graphical areas/neighborhoods. The wife of one of the researchers is an employee of one of the schools, and she facilitated our contact with the school’s administration. The two other schools were chosen randomly. This therefore represents an example of cluster sampling, since all respondents were ‘clustered’ in three locations. This was also a convenient sample as well, since the wife of one of the researchers is a teacher in one of the three selected schools. All surveys were completed within 15 minutes. Participants were not asked to provide their names or any other personal information. All that was known about the participants was that they were women, teachers and parents.

**Results and Analysis**

A sample survey studies part of the population in order to make generalizations about the entire population. In this research, we distributed our survey to a total of twenty participants. These participants were teachers in public schools in Kuwait. The participants were all females and they all had children. The survey was purposely distributed to this select category for two reasons. The first was that they were all educators and therefore came in daily contact with primary school children. The second reason had to do with the fact that since the participants were mothers, they also had the chance to observe the behavior of their own children at home. Thus, these teachers in effect constantly observed two groups of children – one at home and the other at work.

Since this was a project to study the impact made by television translation of children’s cartoons on children, it was imperative to receive feedback from adults who were in constant contact with children. We did not specify an exact age group for observation, but rather focused on primary school children. In order to do so, we aimed at collecting data that represented children between the ages of five and ten years. This age group in itself was too young to provide feedback on the survey and thus the choice of their teachers/mothers was deemed the most suitable.

The results of the questionnaire indicated that 70 percent of those surveyed pointed out that children tended to watch too many cartoons. Respondents were neither asked nor were they provided with an option indicating hours per day that their child viewed
cartoons. While this was a general question, it provided us with a clear indication that children’s television viewing was deemed excessive by adults. The interpretation, according to some parents, was that cartoons afforded children the chance to take a break away school work for instance. While cartoons gave children relaxation time, it took away from time spent playing or socializing with other children. Perhaps this is one cause behind the deterioration in the standard of language among Kuwaiti children.

One impact that watching cartoons has on a child is an increased level of aggressiveness, as indicated by 60 percent of respondents. While it might be difficult to accurately measure increased violence in children, past research has indicated the connection between media consumption and violence in children. Albert Bandura’s bobo doll experiment provides just one example, carried out as early as 1961. It becomes the responsibility of parents to provide guidance and to limit their child’s consumption of violence in media. Closely related to this aspect is the fact that 50 percent of respondents agreed that cartoons have a cognitive effect on children, while only 20 percent disagreed with that notion. This indicated that children who consumed cartoons were not only entertained, but were affected, at least in some way, by messages from these cartoons. Sponge Bob, Power Puff Girls, Power Rangers and even Tom and Jerry are examples of cartoons that are regularly screened in Kuwait, yet contain a high level of violent messages. Additionally, as the translation of these cartoons is not performed locally, the influence of a non-Kuwaiti Arabic dialect is one that cannot be ignored.

The relation between cartoons and language development was another one that was asked of respondents. A total of 65 percent of participants indicated that cartoons help a child to develop his/her language, while a further 30 percent pointed out that that was the case sometimes. This represented a clear indication of the link between cartoons consumption and language development by children. This relation is of particular interest to this project since the language used in translating these shows is distinctly non-Kuwaiti. The notion that cartoons are translated using non-Kuwaiti Arabic dialects but are consumed by Kuwaiti children will have an effect on the language capabilities of these children. While it may be difficult to measure and assess that effect, the
cultural aspects of these cartoons might be clearer to comprehend. As pointed out, translation does not mean the simple replacing of one word by another using a different language. Often times, it involves the cultural background that goes into giving a meaning to the translated word.

One of the questions that we asked in our questionnaire was whether or not cartoons helped in educating children. Of the total number of 20 respondents, six indicated their agreement with this statement, while the remaining 14 chose ‘sometimes’ as their answer. Not a single respondent disagreed. Cartoons have a high entertainment value attached to them and children often take a break from studying to view cartoons for amusement purposes. The fact that respondents attached an educational value to cartoons is indicative of the amount of influence that cartoons have on children.

The extent of educational value that cartoons have on children is yet another variable that might prove difficult to gauge accurately. For instance, asked whether children learn contradictory ideas and receive mixed messages about education, morals and values from cartoons, 35 percent of respondents agreed, while only 5 percent indicated disagreement. The majority of respondents (60 percent) said that that was the case sometimes. This highlighted the premise that cartoons do play an educational role, although that role might be in conflict with some cultural aspect of Kuwaiti society. This is explained by the fact that (translated) cartoons are predominantly made in the west, and therefore might have some inherent aspects that could be deemed unacceptable in Kuwait.

**Concluding Remarks**

Translation is not a new discipline, although its combination with media provides an exciting area of research. The challenges of developing this paper had to do with a lack of available literature addressing this specific issue. The researchers had to delve into the larger realm of literature involving translation theory in order to focus on the translating of children’s programming content. In doing so, aspects of culture and value had to be addressed, since translation does not exist in a vacuum. Cultural underpinnings
were integrated into this project so as to paint a clearer picture of the effect that translated cartoons have on children. Other aspects had to be highlighted as well, including the effect of media violence on children and the effectiveness of television as a learning tool. All in all, this represented a first attempt to address a significant issue that affects Kuwaiti society.

One limitation of this study was that all respondents were females. We should point out that most – if not all – teachers in Kuwait’s public schools are females and they were therefore convenient to approach for the purpose of this research. However, this meant that men, as potential respondents and parents, were entirely eliminated from this project. While we believe this does not significantly alter the findings of the research, it nevertheless represents a limitation that should be pointed out, or perhaps addressed in future studies.

References


APPENDIX I

Questionnaire

1. Your child watches cartoons all the time/continuously
   a. Agree
   b. Sometimes
   c. Disagree

2. Children watch cartoons due to the attraction and excitement factors.
   a. Agree
   b. Sometimes
   c. Disagree

3. Child watch cartoons due to curiosity and the desire to know/learn or to imitate.
   a. Agree
   b. Sometimes
   c. Disagree

4. Watching cartoons makes a child more aggressive.
   a. Agree
   b. Sometimes
   c. Disagree

5. Children learn contradictory ideas about education, morals and values from cartoons.
   a. Agree
   b. Sometimes
   c. Disagree

6. Cartoons have a cognitive (mental) effect on your child.
   a. Agree
   b. Sometimes
   c. Disagree

7. Do you think cartoons help in children’s education?
   a. Agree
   b. Sometimes
   c. Disagree

8. Cartoons help children to develop their language.
   a. Agree
b. Sometimes  
c. Disagree

9. Cartoons will develop in a child a sense of beauty, shape and color (aesthetic appeal).  
a. Agree  
b. Sometimes  
c. Disagree

10. Cartoons enhance positive values in children.  
a. Agree  
b. Sometimes  
c. Disagree
APPENDIX II

1. Your child watches cartoons all the time/continuously
   d. Agree
   e. Sometimes
   f. Disagree

Fig.1: Your child watches cartoons all the time/continuously

2. Children watch cartoons due to the attraction and excitement factors
   1. Agree
   2. Sometimes
   3. Disagree
3. Child watch cartoons due to curiosity and the desire to know or imitate
1. Agree
2. Sometimes
3. Disagree

4. Watching cartoons makes a child more aggressive
1. Agree
2. Sometimes
3. Disagree
5. Children learn contradictory ideas about education, morals and values from cartoons
   1. Agree
   2. Sometimes
   3. Disagree

6. Cartoons have a cognitive (mental) effect on your child
   1. Agree
   2. Sometimes
   3. Disagree
7. Do you think cartoons help in children’s education?
1. Agree
2. Sometimes
3. Disagree

8. Cartoons help children to develop their language
1. Agree
2. Sometimes
3. Disagree
9. Cartoons will develop in a child a sense of beauty, shape and color (aesthetic appeal)
1. Agree
2. Sometimes
3. Disagree

10. Cartoons enhance positive values in children
1. Agree
2. Sometimes
3. Disagree
Fig. 10: Cartoon enhance positive values in children

1. 15%
2. 75%
3. 10%
Chapter Eight

Accountability, Homogeneity, and the Surplus of Humanities Professors

Janet Testerman

They say there is a crisis in the human sciences. I don’t know. Things seem alright to me. Yet there are those who claim there is a decline in the number of students studying the humanities and portend the demise of civilization. Others decry the static nature of the institutions that produce social states of knowledge then predictably reproduce them in their own image. In addition, there is a great deal of consternation surrounding governmental initiatives, particularly in the US and UK, to hold universities accountable for knowledge production. They fear intervention in the academy may alter the academy. Antonio Gramsci (1971) argued that “bourgeoisie generally exercises ‘hegemony’ over the terms of ideology, through its control of the instruments of consciousness; but the proletariat can exert influence through its own cultural institutions.” In this case, the proletariat is, ironically enough, challenging the dominant academic ideology through governmental oversight. To whom are academics accountable? Unquestionably in modern times they are policing themselves. They are essentially a collection of arcane, exclusive guilds answerable only to the elite clones to whom they allow entry. Professors resent the recent banal Total Quality Management models being thrust on them by non-academics and governmental offices, preferring to monitor their own insular communities. Academic quality and freedom is not denigrated, but enhanced by oversight from outsiders. The higher education structures upon which new universities are modeled are hundreds of years old. They have
changed very little structurally since the turn of the century, yet demographically, intellectually, financially, and technologically, the world has changed drastically. The archaic structure of the academy is strained because it is no longer appropriate for today’s culture. Higher education leaders are immersed in the structure; it has become an internalized, thus unalterable mind-set. There is neither a crisis in the human sciences nor in the humanities. There are areas of concern, but even these result not from a decline in interest in the liberal arts, or from intrusion from outsiders, but from the gatekeepers themselves.

One pillar of the intractability of university organization involves academic disciplines which have an almost absolute power to control the criteria for entry, promotion and dismissal of participants in their areas. The needs of interests external to the discipline place a far second in importance to the principle of disinterestedness, in which the value of scholarship is determined through peer review. Unfortunately, (at least to those who are outside the community of experts) since it is the organization that sanctions the product, no one from the outside is considered qualified to rate the worth of the products the organization creates. Academic disciplines monopolize the production of knowledge in their fields while they monopolize the production of the next generation of academics. For example, you can’t study law on your own, then sit the bar exam and become an attorney. In order to be a lawyer, you have to be trained by other lawyers. In order to become a professor of literature, you have to have gone through the guild and been trained by other professors, who, to a large extent, recreate their charges in their own image. A critical function of the university is to become a forum for those without a voice, and to provide a diversity of thought and a space for ideas contrary to the dominant culture. University faculties today, however, create academics in their own image, to the detriment of civilization. An example of the homogeneity in academia is that in the American 2004 election, 95 percent of humanities and social-science professors voted for Kerry; zero percent voted for Bush (Lewis-Kraus, 2011.)

If one is an intellectual who does not fit the mold of a typical university English department, he has the option of becoming an independent scholar, but virtually no chance of publication in pro-
fessional journals. Never mind if he has a long list of popular publications (God forbid!), or even erudite, scholarly ones. Without the explicit endorsement from the dominant academic culture, his work will not be considered for professional consumption. The weakest academic who has suffered the lengthy initiation to the fold has a unique advantage over the strongest independent scholar.

Gaining entry to the world of academia is not for the weak-hearted (nor, apparently, for the politically conservative). Ironically, the less prestige the profession enjoys, the more restrictive the barriers to entry. You can become a lawyer in three years, and an M.D. in five, but the median time to earn a doctoral degree in human sciences is nine years (Menand, 2009). This time frame acts as a screening device which serves to maintain the homogeneity of academics in the human sciences. It is unlikely that students who have some interest in furthering their education, but may not be sure they want to be a professor, are going to risk nine years finding out. Thus students who go to graduate school already have the attributes for which the existing departments seek. This narrows the diversity of those entering fields which have become static because of this self-propagating recruitment.

There is, indeed, in one sense, a crisis in the humanities. No one is interested in hiring English professors, for example, because the humanities, the very foundation of civilization, have fallen out of fashion. This is one argument used by Marjorie Perloff to sound the alarm signaling the fall. But there have never been a larger number of students studying the social sciences, business and law than there is today. The same can be said for the humanities and arts as the following figures indicate.
Figure 1: Graduates from tertiary education, by field of education and gender, EU-27, 2008

![Graduates by field and gender](image)

![Source](https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cowebapp/sec/semms.htm)

Figure 2: Students in tertiary education, 2008

![Students by field](image)

![Source](https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cowebapp/sec/semms.htm)
Data from the UK Higher Education Statistics Agency suggest the humanities are actually thriving. There were 50% more humanities students (defined here as history, archaeology, philosophy and theology), in the UK higher education system in 2008/2009 than there were in 1996/1997. The number of philosophy students nearly doubled, and there are 40% more language students. This is not just because the total number of students in higher education has risen, but the proportion of British students studying philosophy in British universities has risen from 0.35% to 0.52%, while the proportion studying humanities subjects in general has leaped from 3.6% to 8.2%. The proportion studying languages has remained roughly the same, rising slightly (Baggini, 2010).

There was, nonetheless, a dearth of job opportunities for English professors. The decline in demand for literature professors is a creation of their own design. During the period from 1945 to 1975 the number of US undergraduates increased 500% and the number of graduate students increased 900% (Nerad, 2000). Two results of these phenomena were that universities made Ph.D.s harder to obtain and the market became flooded with Ph.D.s. Then in the 1970s there was a decline in the proportion of liberal arts students and an even larger decline, within that, in the humanities. No doubt students heard of the saturated market for humanities Ph.D.s and decided to pursue other interests. So there was a surplus of Ph.D.s trained for an incredibly shrinking undergraduate demand. Between 1989 and 1996 the number of starting positions advertised for Ph.D.s in liberal arts declined considerably:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent Drop in Ph.D. Positions Advertised 1989-1996</th>
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<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art History</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>Political Science</td>
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“Ph.D.s Ten Years Later” Berkeley (Nerad, 2000)

This drastic lack of correspondence between supply and demand curves caused a classic case of un- and underemployment and a concomitant disenchantment of a cohort of highly trained professionals in the humanities and human sciences. For instance, in
1970, 7.6 percent of all bachelor’s degrees were issued by English departments but by 2000 that went down to 4 percent (Nerad, 2000). Since the supply of English literature specialists far exceeded the demand, there were an abundance of overqualified professors available to teach the number-one subject, measured by credit-hours devoted to it: Freshman English Composition. In a Berkeley study of 5,854 Ph.D. recipients, surveyed and interviewed ten years after receiving their diploma, the number one recommendation for doctoral programs was to downsize their programs. The second most popular recommendation was to teach them how to teach. English Ph.D.s also reported they lacked workplace skills such as teamwork, collaboration, interdisciplinary work and organizational and managerial skills because their programs did not teach them. This is particularly important in light of the fact that, contrary to rumors of rampant unemployment of doctoral recipients, (only one percent of respondents in English were not in the paid workforce ten years after receiving their degree) fully 16% of these English Ph.D.s found jobs in the better-paid, more satisfying business, government and nonprofit sectors (Nerad, 1999).

The crisis in the human sciences is largely, therefore, a result of the academic departments themselves. If professors in the humanities and human sciences feel they are undervalued and underpaid compared to their more science-minded colleagues it is only because they themselves created an overabundance of professors in their respective disciplines. The use of waning interest in the humanities as an indicator of the decline of civilization is an untenable prong of the argument that the humanities are dying, because the opposite is true. There are more Ph.D.s in English, for example, than ever. They are undervalued simply because there are too many of them.

Professors do not like to be told what to do. Any hint that outsiders are holding them accountable are interpreted as assaults on their academic freedom, a crisis. In the UK, British universities are “under siege from a system of state control that is undermining the caliber of their scholarship” (Head, 2008). The British government is deploying management systems masterminded in nefarious places like MIT and Harvard Business School to evaluate government-sponsored university outputs. Scholars claim that
“this alliance between the public and private sectors is a threat to academic freedom” (Head, 2008). If, by academic freedom, they mean the opportunity to get tenure then relax, perhaps they have reason to be concerned. University faculty is further angered because the government expects professors to produce research with the speed and reliability resembling the corporate world (Head, 2008). They are being held accountable and they don’t like it.

Organizational systems such as Total Quality Management are being utilized, but the one with the greatest bearing is Balanced Scorecard (BSC) which integrates a series of statistical measures like grants received, number of graduate students, and research output to determine funding for universities. Every seven years the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) reviews the output of the 52,409 academics by using panels of ten to twenty specialists who spend hours reading and rating scholarly output. Professors complain that this evaluative exercise has resulted in “higher workloads, longer hours, finance-driven decisions and a greater pressure for accountability” (Head, 2008). These are negative outcomes? People working harder, and being held responsible for their work are, in the real world, desirable results. If academics were concerned their work was not being valued because its contents departed from the sensibilities of the dominant culture, the academy would have reason for alarm. But this claim has not arisen in reference to HEFCE studies. In fact, the only bias mentioned is that prestigious journals are preferred, and this “increases a tendency to play to what the journal likes, to not threaten the status quo in the discipline, to be risk-averse and less innovative, to concentrate on small incremental steps and avoid big-picture interdisciplinary work” (Baggaley, 2007). Prestigious journals are preferred by professors who publish not because they are under pressure by their institutions, but because prestigious journals are, by definition, popular, powerful, and influential; in a word, prestigious. Notwithstanding governmental oversight, scholars typically prefer to be published in more prominent academic journals because they consistently labor to produce work of the highest quality, with the greatest impact as a matter of pride, rather than a response to external institutional financial criteria. For those who do not self-impose some standard
of productivity, it is reasonable to require some basic criteria to which they should be held responsible.

There is no crisis in the human sciences. There are some internal problems in humanities departments which need to be addressed, but none are insurmountable. The oversight of university output by governmental agencies is not an infringement on academic freedom, rather it is a democratizing pursuit. The broader culture the university serves deserves to have a say in the life of the academic mind not only because they finance the latter, but because they have the most at stake. Humanities departments have become less vibrant and less able to inspire innovative thought because they need to view their mission from a new, less self-replicating, perspective. It is misguided to vet candidates for an English professorship through an absurdly long, expensive credentialing process centered on deeply arcane concepts, when the most likely outcome is that they end up teaching Freshman Composition 1. It would not hurt for Ph.D.s to learn a thing or two about how to connect what they teach to issues students are likely to confront when they leave university and how to capture the imaginations of students today who spend the majority of their time multitasking electronically. Humanities should stop considering themselves above being useful. The gatekeepers of the human sciences need to cast off the persona of a strikingly beautiful but lonely princess who weeps, lamenting her inability to find a groom because she never learned to cook.

References:


Accountability, Homogeneity and the Surplus of Humanities Professors


Philosophy
Chapter Nine

The Ethical Foundations of Logic

Paul DiRado

Philosophical argumentation is differentiated from other sorts of argumentation because of its insistence that persuasion be carried out responsibly. Rhetoricians take themselves to be successful when they get others to hold some desired conclusion, or carry out some desired action. A similar standard holds for bullies and thugs. To the philosopher, in contrast, the method of persuasion matters more than coming to a “right answer.” Even philosophical conclusions that seem true are rejected if these conclusions are not arrived at and defended in the right ways.

The philosophical discipline dedicated to studying which ways of arguing are “right” and which ways are “wrong” is called logic. This discipline discovers certain laws that regulate human accounts. However, these logical laws are taken to do more than regulate human arguments. These laws are also held to be the laws that all of existence, in some sense or another, obeys. When we affirm the law of non-contradiction, we do not only posit that it is a regulative standard for human speech, but also that it is a fundamental condition for anything at all that exists. Nothing in all of existence both is, and is not. Of course, we may be forced to clarify, or perhaps qualify, the sense in which this is true—the wood is both a table and is not a table, but at different times, and it is both heavy and not heavy, but in comparison to different things, and so forth. Nevertheless, the conclusion of the logician is that existence itself obeys these logical laws.

These two different dimensions of logic—that it both determines the rules governing acceptable argument and the rules obeyed by all of existences, are however importantly distinct. The
senses in which things are said to obey logical laws differ whether these laws regulate existence or arguments. The wood, insofar as it obeys the law of non-contradiction, hardly obeys this law freely. “Obeying” non-contradiction for the wood means something like being fundamentally constituted in such a way that it is impossible for the wood to ever not already demonstrate non-contradiction. The same is true of the overwhelming majority of human actions. Try however hard I might; I will never be able to speak and not speak, at the same and in the same respect—this being true even though I am in some sense free to speak or not to speak. Logical laws taken in this sense are compulsive, just as “obeying” the laws of gravity is compulsive for all physical objects.

But when we speak of logical laws as regulating human arguments, our accounts of the world are not compelled by any necessity to avoid contradiction. In giving accounts human beings violate logical laws all the time. We must actively strive to avoid violating them, and can fail to do so. For instance, someone could claim that it is wrong to kill any living being under any circumstances, but then also say that the death penalty is justified. Indeed, the reason we academics teach logic to students is precisely because frequently human accounts of the world do not live up to these acceptable standards for persuasion. If the table obeys non-contradiction as if it were a physical law, our accounts only ever obey it as if it were an ethical law. Let us provisionally call the dimension of logic concerned with discerning what must necessarily be true of anything that exists its necessary dimension, and the dimension regulating the in-some-sense free construction of arguments its ethical dimension.

In general, philosophers tend to give more weight and spend more time considering the necessary dimension of logical laws. Since the “birth” of the scientific study of logic in Aristotle, logical laws have been determined via a process of mathematically modeled formalizations of concrete arguments into abstract argument structures. The concrete sentence “Socrates is a human” becomes “x is A” in Aristotle, where x now stands for any object and A stands for any class of object. In modern logic this methodology has reached such heights that mathematics and logic are nearly indistinguishable from one another. On the basis of mining
these formal structures, various necessary relationships between
different classes, objects, and states of affairs have been deter-
mined, and it is these necessary formal relationships that make up
necessary logical laws.

However successful this methodological approach of deter-
mining the laws of logic has been, it can tell us nothing about the
freely regulative dimension of these logical laws. The laws of logic
do not bind human accounts with any necessity, and so no
study of necessity can explain the compulsory power of the ethi-
cal dimension of these logical laws. My goal in this paper is pro-
vide a satisfactory justification for why philosophers hold logical
laws to be ethically regulative for human conversations that are
free to violate them, despite the full force of necessity justifying
the logical laws in other contexts.

Once, while teaching an introductory logic class, a preci-
cious student asked me why he should have to obey the “arbitrary
rules” that I was saying all good arguments had to follow. What
if, this student wondered, he wanted to contradict himself? What
if he wanted to become an advertiser and make fallacious appeals
to persuade people to buy certain products? After all, these falla-
cious arguments will certainly “work”—indeed, it is precisely be-
cause they work that logicians feel the need to argue against using
and believing them. Indeed, fallacious arguments seem to be at
least as, if not more, persuasive in terms of actually molding peo-
ple’s beliefs and actions than logical ones. What right did I, and
logicians in general, have to determine that his argument was
“bad,” and to demand that he only make arguments in the ways I
insisted upon?

This student wanted me to provide the actual ethi-
cal/normative justification for why we ought to only make and be
persuaded by certain sorts of arguments, and not others. My ulti-
mate answer to this challenge is to suggest that human beings
ought to freely obey the laws of logic out of the demands of a
“conversational ethics”—that there are certain ways that ethically
responsible human beings ought to speak to one another and
themselves. While certainly all responsible arguments must funda-
mentally be in accordance with the constitutive structure of re-
ality—i.e. the formal/necessary conditions anything that exists
must demonstrate, with necessary logical laws—the demands of
conversational ethics can in no way be reduced to this requirement. Indeed, we will ultimately see that the formalizing orientation motivating the necessary dimension of logical analysis tends to obscure the more foundational general obligation to be responsible in argumentation. And responsibility entails far more than merely making formally sound arguments.

Let us begin by first considering the most common justification given for why people ought to be logical. In the Copi and Cohen introductory logic textbook, a brief forward argues that logic is the study that determines which sorts of reasoning reliably reach true conclusions. They differentiate the logically reasoned argument from following a hunch. Both approaches might ultimately get the “right” answer—a true conclusion, but the logical approach reaches true conclusions more often than the hunch, and this is preferable from the standpoint of correctness. A person should therefore obey logical laws insofar as they wish to reliably arrive at true conclusions. Though the authors do not explicitly make this further claim, presumably they would hold that everyone in fact wants to come to true conclusions. The person relying on a hunch does so because they mistakenly believe that the hunch is a reliable way of determining truth. But given that logical tools are more reliable, why would anyone that recognized the superior predicative success of logical argumentation ever rely on less successful methods? Someone can always obstinately refuse to acknowledge that logical laws are reliable. But this obstinacy does not mean they are using some other standard than reliability in judging arguments.

Logical laws are therefore tools—just as addition is the preeminent tool for adding numbers together, logic laws are the preeminent tool for reaching true conclusions. This approach has several things to recommend it. We do in fact frequently treat logic as the “toolset” philosophers use in making arguments—indeed, the very title of the Organon of Aristotle, where we first find a formal and systematic study of logic, precisely means “tool.”

However, this answer runs into two difficulties. This argument only seems applicable on the condition that everyone either making or evaluating an argument intends to discover what is true through the argument. However, there are numerous circumstance-
es in which the purpose of giving an argument is not at all to reach a true conclusion. An advertiser’s goal is not to accurately demonstrate that some product is the best, but to get consumers to believe that it is best, whether or not it is. A politician may not want to determine what policy is actually best, but rather to ensure his reelection. Moreover, the crowd listening to the politician may not wish to learn what is true, but rather to be comforted by familiar conclusions. Indeed, frequently rhetoric is used by people who precisely do not believe that what they are saying are true—liars. But in these introductory logic classrooms, we don’t tell our students that they should sometimes be logical, but that they ought to be logical in all circumstances—not just that they should avoid accepting fallacious arguments, but that they should avoid giving them too.

Moreover, while it seems accurate to say that certain inductive logical laws are obligatory because of their reliability—not much else compels us to accept the laws governing generalizations besides statistical accuracy—it does not seem adequate to obligatoriness of deductive arguments. Deductively valid arguments are not in any way supposed to “probably” yield true conclusions, but rather to necessarily yield such true conclusions. Even if we reduce deductive necessity to maximal, 100% reliability, this difficulty will not go away. For we can give numerous examples of arguments that have every appearance of being deductively sound, but which give conclusions that have every appearance of being completely false.

These arguments are called logical paradoxes. Zeno’s Paradox purports to demonstrate that all motion is impossible. The Debater’s Paradox purports to show that you can’t learn anything that you don’t already know. The Tallness Paradox purports to show that, no matter what a person’s size, that person is tall. Here, my student might feel validated, and say “See! These formal rules of inference that you demand I follow fail to live up to their own standards. It isn’t enough that they mostly or sometimes yield true conclusions—they would have to always work. But they don’t seem to work here—they are therefore not maximally reliable. So why should I accept them as my standard?”

Now of course, no philosopher—myself included—would ever accept this characterization of these paradoxes. While they
certainly seem to be an instance of sound arguments producing false conclusions, this appearance must be wrong. Maybe the seemingly false conclusion is true, or one of the premises is really false, or maybe the argument isn’t even valid, despite seeming to be. But importantly, the philosopher has to justify why this interpretation is superior to the one provided by my student. Many of these paradoxes are so difficult that, even after countless attempts to solve them, nothing resembling a satisfactory answer has been produced. Indeed, many of the proposed resolutions to various paradoxes appear to the non-philosopher to be entirely “crazy,” like when Zeno denies the existence of motion. Why does the philosopher have such faith in logic that, in the face of these absurdities, he would rather say something that seems crazy than deny the necessity of logical laws?

Indeed, consider how strange the philosophic response to these paradoxes seems outside the confines of philosophy. When I have endeavored to explain Zeno’s Paradox to friends and family, usually the paradox is treated as a riddle, or a puzzle, or a joke, some amusing anecdote to be briefly enjoyed. Still others genuinely grow perplexed by the difficulties Zeno sets out, but even still, upon becoming perplexed, do not feel any great compulsion to continue working on the problem. Even amongst philosophers, it is often quite difficult to find the difficulties raised by these paradoxes important. Why are we troubled by supposed proofs that motion is impossible? After all, it clearly is possible.

And in one sense this response is correct—it is not as if the paradox somehow causes all those who hear it to suddenly become incapable of moving. Yet, if philosophy is to be anything more than an idle practice, there must be some concrete importance and significance to these logical problems. Why even in this seemingly unimportant region of discourse must we be logical?

It is because the preeminent logical, and therefore in some sense philosophical, demand, is to be responsible in giving accounts. This claim should hardly be surprising—most logic textbook at least mentions that proper argumentation is a key feature of responsible citizenship and political life, for instance. I simply propose that this ethical root of logic be taken far more seriously than it usually is. No other justification of the obligatory character
of logical laws for human accounts seems adequate to what philosophers actually say and do. The remainder of this paper will explore what consequences would follow if this hypothesis is correct.

The demand for responsible argumentation goes back to the very beginnings of Platonic philosophy, if not earlier. It is the fundamental insight underlying all Socratic dialectic—indeed, the preeminent Socratic contribution to philosophy is to precisely thematize a person’s taking responsibility for what they say and why it is of the greatest importance in human life that we all do so. This field of study in Socratic philosophy has been given the label “conversational ethics.” What are our ethical obligations to one another and to ourselves in the course of giving accounts of the world? It is here, in this region, that logic (in its ethical dimensions) is rooted. Obedience to logical laws is one of the ethical demands placed upon all “conversers.”

From this standpoint, we can now see why the reliability of logical rules for reaching true conclusions is in fact a universal standard, applicable to all accounts, whatever the account givers purpose. Responsible arguers will always strive to reach true conclusions. To say the same thing, responsible arguers will want their account to match up with the fundamental metaphysical-formal structures that govern reality—they will want to be responsible to reality itself. We see here a first hint—though it is certainly no more than that—of the fundamentally unity underlying both the necessary and ethical dimensions of logic.

We can thus readily explain why those who do not care about the reliability of their arguments—the advertisers, dishonest politicians, and disruptive sophists—are wrong to do so. While it may not be true that everyone in fact is oriented toward reaching true conclusions, ethical responsibility demands that we take the greatest care in our arguments and accounts of the world, and it is impossible to show such care without being fundamentally oriented toward truth and falsehood at all times—both as arguers and listeners.

One vitally important factor revealed by this last point is that the demands of a conversational ethics are in no way exhausted by the strict demands of formally derivable logical laws. In the case of a concrete account, it is not enough, ethically speaking, for
the account to be sound, though it certainly ought to be to the best knowledge of the speaker. The case of the sophist and the advertiser indicates that some fundamental orientation toward truth is ethically necessary for all account.

That logical thinking and a striving for truth are ethically linked is hardly shocking—truth and logical rigor clearly go hand-in-hand. But even concerns that, at first blush, have nothing to do with logic as it is generally conceived certainly seem to be demanded by conversational ethics. Foremost amongst these, to Socrates at least, is that any converser must fundamentally want what is best for his-or-her fellows, or respect the rational dignity of everyone involved in a conversation. Thus, it is not enough that the things a speaker says are true, or the argument valid. A cruelly word, or mean spirited argument arising from some non-responsible motive, such as a desire for victory or to exclude different perspectives, no matter its formal-logical necessity, is not an ethically acceptable argument. Without explicitly violating the laws of logic, such an argument would still be irresponsible, and would still violate the very initiatory impulse that motivates the strict adherence to logical laws in the first place, as such an argument would not be responsibly oriented toward the well-being of everyone involved.

Even in the case of the logical paradoxes, which in many respects seem far divorced from practical ethical concerns, those of us who do give accounts about such difficult themes as motion, knowledge, predication, must still be responsible for what we say. Thus, when what we say produces a paradox, we are fundamentally obligated to take responsibility for our account and resolve it to the best that we are able. Far from being merely an idle puzzle, resolving paradoxes, in their own narrow sphere, has important ethical import for the thinkers that engage in such regions of thought. Even in the most abstract regions of thinking, fundamentally the demands for logical rigor are ethical—that we be responsible even when reasoning in the most abstract regions of thought.

Far too much scholarly discussion in the academic community seems to be abstracted from this ethical-logical foundation. The formal-mathematical logical laws are treated as if they were the only standards governing argumentation. But while their importance is unavoidable, in and of themselves these formal struc-
tasures cannot justify their own obligatory character in concrete instances of human accounts. Nor can the purely formal laws tell us, from themselves, how they are to be applied in concrete instances—logic insofar as it governs philosophy will look very different than logic insofar as it governs poetry, or insofar as it governs comedy. Its obligatory character, and how we it is to be applied in concrete instances, can only be justified through the initiatory ethical insight that human beings can be and take responsibility for their accounts of the world. Without this insight, we will be unable to respond to those that demand why they ought to be logical.

References:

Chapter Ten

The Liminal Intellectual: Protect and Sabotage

Paolo Bonari

In Michel Foucault’s opinion, critique belongs to philosophy but crosses its disciplinary boundaries: it is inside and outside of that discipline. Critique is a liminal space in-between philosophy and other disciplines. Building on this idea, I propose to attempt the creating of a new type of intellectual, who is a critic more than a philosopher, an intellectual who does not belong to any institutionalized discipline and stays in-between different areas of social knowledge.

Knowledge implies power, as Foucault stated: areas of knowledge are areas of power for every discipline creates its own field of authorized discourses. In this creation it is possible to recognize which discourses have been prohibited. By this, I refer not to false discourses, but rather dangerous discourses: dangerous for the very survival of that discipline of for its coherence.

Modernity is the age of critique: its consequence is that every intellectual has to be a critic. Who is a critic? Reinhart Koselleck’s book about critique and crisis is the fundamental work to understand the role of critique in our age. He discovered that critique is the cause of crisis and that we can still not escape from that spiral. If modernity has been characterized by a general disposition to overcome limits and can be called a “permanent

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1 M. Foucault, Qu’est-ce que la critique? (Critique et Aufklärung) in Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie, avril-juin 1990, 2, pp. 35-63.
liminality,” as Arpad Szakolczai stated, yet it also happened that some limits have been traced in order to establish a powerful epistemic order: social critics need to belong to one area of social knowledge and are authorized to criticize only some aspects of a social world. What happened to the social critics during the twentieth century? During that era, social history of intellectuals has almost been a history of crimes. Intellectuals have defended totalitarian regimes and have propagandized totalitarian ideologies.

If we look at our past century, we can recognize at least four ideas of who an intellectual is. The first one was created by Max Weber, who based his trust on competence. For Weber, social life needs the existence of competent intellectuals, professional scientists who are experts in their fieldwork. Antonio Gramsci’s vision of the role of the intellectual was characterized by his insistence on the necessity of a close cooperation between society and intellectuals: they needed to represent their social class and to express its tasks. The result of Gramsci’s theory of the intellectual has been that many intellectuals have become politicians, because they belong to a political party and they have lost intellectual freedom. Jean-Paul Sartre, a Communist like Gramsci, created a different type of intellectual, but if we look closely at his intellectual’s behavior, it would be similar to Gramsci’s. In Sartre’s opinion, an intellectual has to refer to humanity and not to social classes, but humanity, for a Communist like him, should be represented by proletarian classes. Sartre called his type of intellectual “general,” because he would have to be the one who represents every man’s voice and be able to express painful truths about every argument. Michel Foucault’s theory of the intellectual has been the last relevant attempt at giving a specification of intellectual’s duties. He criticized previous leftist theories, those that argued that “to be an intellectual means something like being the consciousness/conscience” of us all. As Foucault wrote,

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what must now be taken into account in the intellectual is not the ‘bearers of universal values’. Rather, it’s the person occupying a specific position — but whose specificity is linked, in a society like ours, to the general functioning of an apparatus of truth. In other words, the intellectual has a threefold specificity: that of his class position (whether as petty-bourgeois in the service of capitalism or “organic” intellectual of the proletariat); that of his conditions of life and work, linked to his condition as an intellectual (his field of research, his place in a laboratory, the political and economic demands to which he submits or against which he rebels, in the university, the hospital etc.); lastly, the specificity of the politics of truth in our societies. And it’s with this last factor that his position can take on a general significance and that his local, specific struggle can have effects and implications which are not simply professional or sectoral. The intellectual can operate and struggle at the general level of that regime of truth which is so essential to the structure and functioning of our society.  

Foucault, the French critic, called his favorite intellectual “specific” and tried to be faithful to it. A “specific” intellectual has to intervene in his field of knowledge to modify it and destroy some of his established dogmas. His struggles are local, but they are not less decisive. He would have to face many dangers, especially during our age:

Now the specific intellectual encounters certain obstacles and faces certain dangers. The danger of remaining at the level of conjunctural struggles, pressing demands restricted to particular sectors. The risk of letting himself be manipulated by the political parties or trade union apparatuses which control these local struggles. Above all, the risk of being unable to develop these struggles for lack of a global strategy or outside support; the risk, too, of not being followed, or only by very limited groups.

We can read that because he is fighting inside particular epistemic sectors the Foucauldian intellectual has not a developed “global strategy,” even if he would have tempted to develop it, in order to create a social consensus around his struggles.

I shall now propose the notion of the “liminal intellectual”. The concept of liminality comes from the works of two ethnog- anthropologists, namely Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner.

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Although they didn’t work together, Turner learned very well what Van Gennep meant about his rites de passage. Liminality is “the” in-between. That space is dangerous and transformative, as the one who goes through it will be changed by it. The type of intellectual that I propose is someone who does not belong to any of our institutionalized disciplines and because of that he is free to be a “parrhesiast,” that is to say someone who tells something that could be recognized by anybody else, but still is hidden. Why? It is hidden because of two factors: masses need more knowledge or more courage. These are two main causing factors of the situation: ignorance or fear.

Cultural debates and political struggles are not so different: similar mimetic mechanisms work in them. The concept of mimesis arises in René Girard’s works explaining how men behave when they are together. Girardian mimetic theory explains how men behave when they are together. What we have to defeat, for Girard, is the romantic idea of desire. If we follow the romantic tradition, our desires are free and pure, born outside of social constraints. Otherwise, if we accept mimetic theory, we must recog-

nize that every human desire is imitative and that it was born imitating other people’s desires. Major human fears are similarity and imitation. We can find those fears in ancient representations, organized in myths and ritual processes. Girard’s social theory goes against the majority of modern ones that have been formulated in order to overcome human differences, following the hope of social justice. Justice, in mimetic theory, implies an active defense of victims, even only of one victim, against the entire community. The innocence of the victim has to be defended, even against the entire world, if the entire world believes in the false, by giving credit to the executioners’ voice.

Struggles created by mimetic desires can lead us to a mimetic crisis, during which members of that community begin to look for a scapegoat, the one who will restore previous peace, after his expulsion or elimination. Scientific disciplines pass through similar crises, and to be captured in something like a scapegoat mechanism happens to heretic thinkers. If the world has to perish, to the extent that truth is unrecognized, then even our small disciplines could perish, without many damages for us, or just because the damages they create are better than advantages – damages for those thinkers who tell a truth that none had to reveal. Mass democracies created a never-ending struggle for originality, in the intellectual world. But the search for originality and mimetism is not contradictory: at the end of a mimetic process, people who were trying to distinguish themselves became indistinguishable because their acts were made in order to differentiate themselves, but they were constantly fighting over the same object, moved by the same desire, the desire to gain that object.

What is the role of a liminal intellectual? Why has he not to belong to any institutionalized knowledge, to any institutionalized power? By standing in-between disciplines, he lives in the place of danger, and his task is to denounce other people in danger, those thinkers who are surrounded by those who I would call “epistemic soldiers”: they should maintain their knowledge, that is to say they should maintain their power. A liminal intellectual by watching what is happening inside a field could recognize which truths are debated and attacked, by which weapons and by whom. He would have to defend his enemies, when they will be attacked by his own friends: in a victimary age, it is the most courageous
act he can decide to make. Just because he does not belong to institutionalized areas, he can see what happens inside them: he stays along the margins of division between disciplines. A liminal intellectual is a meta-critic, she has to criticize “simple” critics, those who create distant and useless images of power. Foucault talked about two contrasting forces, government and critique. Government is the attitude to govern people, to tell them what they have to do, how they have to behave, while critique is the art not to be governed – not to be governed at all, or not to be governed that much, or not to be governed at this price, when losses are bigger than advantages. Foucault did not try to define power as a substance, because he was sure that power was a relation and we can conclude that both fields are ruled by power. There may be powerful critics and critical governors and meta-critics will have both categories of people against them.

Defending our enemies from those who attack them in a mimetic way, even if they are our friends, is the most courageous act to make. It does not matter whether political contest is democratic or not. Democracies have not destroyed victimary plays. Italy is inside a victimary spiral and plays of persecution still work in it. In this type of spiral, victims become executioners of their own executioners. Probably, the entire West is inside a spiral of this type or is ruled by it, if we accept Girard’s thesis about the existence of an ideological discourse about victims. As he stated, we live in a world that saves the highest number of victims, but that world is even the one which creates the highest number of victims, and the most useful social strategy to live in this type of world is to present ourselves as victims of anybody else, thanks to the attitude of ressentiment. My point is that there is not only a way of life, the one which implies living by creating victims, and there are not only old ways to be an intellectual. If it is impossible to make an exit from the critical project of modernity, despite Michel Serres and his efforts, we can try to live in a different way, without creating victims and trying to criticize those who criticize random scapegoats in a victimary way.

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13 M. Foucault, Qu’est-ce que la critique? (Critique et Aufklärung), Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie, avril-juin 1990, 2, pp. 35-63.
Even Girard is a critic, but he is a critic of critics, a meta-critic, that is the most dangerous position, because he receives attacks from both directions: government and critique. Fields of knowledge are structured in a totalitarian way: they are similar to closed communities in which masses of people attack the one who has a “victimary sign,” something that marks him as different from other participants. The possession of truth can be interpreted as a victimary sign: someone who is a parrhesiast is different from other people and they cannot abide him. There is necessity of a personal conversion in Girard’s opinion to accept this preliminary step: everyone is mimetic and everyone is responsible for the never-ending creation of scapegoats. That conversion is even an epistemic one because it is a conversion about knowledge of ourselves. The next step will be towards social knowledge, knowledge of others: if one knows one’s errors, one will be able to recognize other people’s errors.

A liminal intellectual needs to be a critic of the government and of critique as power, because power exists in both fields: power is mimetism itself, the actor’s capacity to produce imitations of himself, to become a model, to let the negative mimesis start, mimesis moved by ressentiment and envy. In order to let the eternal circle of persecution, domination and submission end a liminal intellectual needs to have good eyesight: he needs to see what is happening inside epistemic areas, while remaining along the dividing boundaries. It may also happen that victims obey their executioners because they will wait for the moment when they will be executioners and there will be new victims. Now, they can learn how to be an executioner, while they are victims.

How do we obtain good eyesight? Through the “care of the self,” the Greek epimeleia heautou: to improve self, to be honest towards self, destroying every form of self-deception. The notion of askēsis in Greek philosophy, in Foucault’s opinion, is more central than the epistemic aim, the need to know ourselves, the imperative of gnōthi seauton.14 Here is why. Greek philosophers

14 See B. Han, L’ontologie manquée de Michel Foucault; Engl. trans. Foucault’s Critical Project: Between the Transcendental and the Historical, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 2002, p. 150. For a comprehensive view of Foucault’s philosophical trajectory, see E.F. McGushin, Foucault’s Askēsis. An Introduction to the Philosophical Life, Northwestern University Press, E-
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did not attempt to define what the self is: that question was abandoned or never fully addressed. Their main concern was that people take care of themselves. If we cannot know what our soul is, by following a substantive theory of the self, the best way not to waste our time is to modify ourselves: this is a processual view of the self, based on the idea that the unique moment in which we can catch what is the self is when the self is modifying itself.

The authentic task of an intellectual, in a post-victimary age, that is to say in a possible future, will be that of debating intellectual problems. For now, in a victimary age, the intellectual must fight against victimary spirals, neutralize those who create those spirals and help executioners, must fight those who are real conservatives, conservatives about reality. The intellectual sabotages what has been prepared by inauthentic intellectuals. A liminal intellectual is an authentic revolutionary, a “revolutionary by profession.”

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anston, IL, 2007: the author tries to rebuild Foucault’s philosophical project by starting from his last works, in order to reconsider his first ones.
Chapter Eleven

The Relevance of Philosophy as a Discipline in the Humanities

Andrei G. Zavaliy

My primary goal in this paper is to address the question of the role of philosophy as a discipline in the Humanities. But any attempt to discuss the relevance of philosophy in whatever context will inevitably lead to a more general and traditional question of the nature of philosophy itself. Philosophy is quite notorious among other disciplines for its never-ending self-reflective speculations, at all times trying to define itself and find its proper place in the family of other academic subjects. Indeed, this perennial feeling of insecurity about its proper status is what initially sets philosophy apart from the disciplines exhibiting a much more confident posture. Moreover, the ongoing crisis of identity, which one could perhaps tolerate in a new and immature discipline, seems to get worse with age. But before we can decide whether this apparent lack of confidence in the pronouncements of the philosophers regarding their own subject matter is the flaw of philosophy or its special advantage, it will be helpful to briefly outline several important developmental tendencies that philosophy has shown during its long history.

One may argue that among all the surviving disciplines in the Humanities philosophy has suffered the most unfortunate fate. Looking from one angle, the history of philosophy is the history of the continuous narrowing of its subject matter. Western philosophy originated in Ancient Greece as an all-encompassing yearning for wisdom. “Philosophy is born out of wonder”, says Aristotle, implying that any object that inspired that wonder, any puz-
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Zling state of affairs or any baffling question was the proper concern of a philosopher. The domain of Wisdom in those early years had no bounds; it included in its scope everything starting from the questions about the nature of distant stars to the issues surrounding the theory of government. Incidentally, the titles of Aristotle’s works are read today as the combined list of publications from all the different departments of a large modern university. His legacy includes works on Logic, Physics, Ethics, Meteorology, Psychology, Biology, Political science, Literary criticism, History, Rhetoric, and, of course, Metaphysics. Surely, there are enough wonderful things in each of these areas; hence, it is the philosopher, the ancients thought, the lover of wisdom, who should make an attempt at understanding as well as take the real risk of failure of his best intellectual efforts.

Traditionally, philosophy was characterized as the search for truth with the help of reason. Philosophy is a natural intellectual response to the universal and innate human desire to know. This is in part what has been attracting many young people to philosophy – its promise to provide plausible answers to the most perplexing questions of human existence. But the intellectual authority of metaphysics has been seriously challenged since the time of the Enlightenment by the rapid development of the new sciences and new methods of investigation. Writing in the 17th century, Isaac Newton considered himself a philosopher, who is primarily concerned with nature. Indeed, the title of his groundbreaking book reads as “The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy.” As late as in the middle of the 18th century, Immanuel Kant, considered by many as one of the greatest philosophers of modern times, published works on astronomy alongside his other books, which are generally studied only in the philosophy departments. It is during the late 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century that we saw an emergence of the profession of a philosopher, as a character quite separate from all the other scientists, who (we are told) deal with the “real world.” Psychology was one of the latest branches of philosophy that secured independence at the turn of the 20th century, followed by its close cousin, the cognitive science, and it was only a matter of time when the question could be asked of any student majoring in philosophy: “So, what exactly are you doing over there?”
Besides the purely intellectual inquiries with the goal of knowledge as the highest benefit, philosophy, in addition, was thought to have a particular emotional influence. Both the Stoics and the Skeptics of the ancient world clearly realized that having the correct understanding of one’s own place within the universe or identifying one’s epistemic limits eliminates the unnecessary worries and leads to a much more comfortable emotional state. Philosophy was thought to provide a path for tranquility of mind, and, hence, happiness. The well-known title of the most popular book of Boethius, a late antiquity figure, “The Consolation of Philosophy”, speaks for itself, and for the centuries to come this approach to philosophy as the source of reassurance in the adverse circumstances will be seen as a real alternative to the emotional comfort offered through the more familiar means, namely, through religion. This attitude was epitomized by Montaigne in the 16th century France in his famous motto: “To philosophize is to prepare oneself for death.” The idea was that our basic emotions, including fear of death, could be trained and controlled through a systematic intellectual effort, with the end result of an individual who does not lose his composure even in the face of the most terrible prospects. This idea, of course, can be traced back to Socrates’ speech in the Apology, but its echo can be found as late as in Tolstoy’s writings.

Yet even this modest function of philosophy was taken away from it in the 20th century by professional psychotherapists and psychologists. And now Bertrand Russell can condescendingly claim that studying the philosophers of the past is the process not without “the aesthetic satisfaction”, but would deny any other substantial value to the traditional ways of doing philosophy. Reducing the long history of philosophical efforts to a purely aesthetic enterprise did seem like a death blow to the discipline. If philosophy is neither the guide for the perplexed nor the comforter of the disturbed, then what exactly is it?

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1 Boethius, 480-525 C.E.
2 “There is the essential difference between the aesthetic satisfaction, which I allow, and the religious comfort, which I deny to philosophy.” (Bertrand Russell, “Seems, Madam? Nay, it is.” in “Why I am not a Christian?” Urwin Books, London, 1967, p. 81)
The crisis of identity of philosophy led to two different reactions in the 20th century. On the one hand, those philosophers who were particularly impressed by the success of empirical and mathematical sciences loudly announced “the end of metaphysics” in its traditional form, arguing that all meaningful questions that the philosophers could have formulated are now picked up by the special disciplines; and the ones which are not addressed by science are simply not meaningful and should be abandoned. Rudolf Carnap, one of the defenders of this attitude, wrote in 1934: “Philosophy is the logic of science, i.e., the logical analysis of the concepts, propositions, proofs, theories of science.” On this view, the role of the philosophers was reduced to servicing ‘hard’ scientists by supplying the necessary definitions and working out the logical implications of scientific theories. Having just recently emancipated itself from the service to religion, it was now enslaved by religion’s more agile successor, the natural science.

On the other hand, the continuous emigration of the various questions and problems out of philosophy into other fields of enquiry has prompted a strong defensive attitude and, as a result, further isolation of the discipline, with the professional university philosophers turning into a separate caste of gurus armed with their esoteric language, technical jargon of Greek or Latin origin, and a particularly condescending attitude toward all other departments. The hard partitions were erected to prevent the denizens of one department to interfere with the business of another, and even within philosophy one was not supposed to transgress the limits of a certain philosophical tradition. Philosophy has thus survived the wave of scientism trumpeted by Carnap and his colleagues, but at

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3Rudolf Carnap, “On the Character of Philosophic Problems.” *Philosophy of Science*, 1, no. 1, January 1934, p. 6
4Cf. Ayer: “For the philosopher, as an analyst, is not directly concerned with the physical properties of things. He is only concerned with the way in which we speak about them. In other words, the propositions of philosophy are not factual, but linguistic in character – that is, they do not express behavior of physical, or even mental, objects; they express definitions, or the formal consequences of definitions.” (A. J. Ayer, “Language, Truth and Logic”, Dover Publications, New York, 1936, p. 57).
the cost of being marginalized with respect to the mainstream academic development.

I personally had a rather unpleasant encounter with the reality of segregation of philosophy from the rest of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences at the end of my graduate studies. After spending several excruciating years writing a dissertation on the nature of morality, trying to make sense why certain individuals, the amoralists, position themselves outside the moral domain altogether, I finally arrived for my defense session, wearing the best ‘smart suit’ I could afford for the adjunct income. The defense was going in a relatively smooth manner, up until one member of the committee, a very respectable and well-known philosopher, stood up, indignant, and nearly screamed at me: “This is not philosophy, this is just psychology! Where is philosophy in all this? You should be defending on the third floor!” The third floor of the university was, of course, where the psychology department was located.

Needless to say, I felt like a criminal trespasser. I have crossed the sacred boundaries of philosophy proper, and dared to incorporate into my research the results and methods of another discipline. I have sinned against the modern dogma of complete separation and self-sufficiency of academic disciplines. Luckily for me, the other members of the committee came to my rescue and asked the objector the notorious question: “But what is philosophy proper?” The lively debate that ensued between the five professors present at the defense lasted for almost two hours and successfully took attention away from me and my all-too-psychological a dissertation.

That intimidating experience, however, did not discourage me from pursuing interdisciplinary research, but rather highlighted the pressing need for a fresh perspective on philosophy. It seems to me that understanding the proper place of philosophy in the humanities involves, first of all, settling the question of expectations, that is, of what one should realistically expect the philosophers to tell us about the world or ourselves. There is always a danger of expecting too much or too little from philosophy. No doubt, many tender minds are attracted to the subject in the hope of getting precise and authoritative answers to all the questions of existential importance after reading the first introductory text on
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philosophy. This initial enthusiasm is quickly curbed once the student delves deeper into the never-ending philosophical controversies, often giving way to feelings of disappointment and frustration. As one student of mine once exclaimed: ‘Professor, how can you evaluate our tests and papers and assign grades if there is no such thing as one correct answer in philosophy?’ One hopes, though, that with some patience, the extreme views on philosophy, as being either amorphous and totally unhelpful, or as containing the ultimate truths if one could only decipher the strange code of the philosophers’ jargon, would lead to a more moderate and more realistic set of expectations.

Bernard Williams once aptly defined philosophy as a humanistic enterprise of trying to understand ourselves. Now, there are a lot of things we might want to know about ourselves, and much of the information might indeed come from special sciences. If I am wondering why my body reacts in a certain way to certain foods, a dietologist or a nutritionist would be the best candidates for answering that question. Yet we may agree that the sum of all true statements about ourselves delivered by the empirical sciences will not exhaust all there is to know or to wonder about our nature. Questions of ethical value, problems of meaning and the quest for a general understanding of our place and our role within the universe immediately come to mind as specifically philosophical issues. But here I would like to stress yet a different aspect of philosophy, which concerns primarily its therapeutic functions rather than its substantive content.

Many of my students, who take an Introduction to Philosophy class, often complain that at the end of the semester they end up knowing less than they supposed they had known before they signed up for the class, whereas in all other classes their body of knowledge was definitely increasing. In all other classes students learn certain amount of facts which they now can claim as part of their belief system. But something else is happening in a philosophy class. We start by identifying beliefs which students hold to be true, and are, perhaps, quite convinced in their absolute truth. But a brief reflection on the origin of those beliefs as well as a critical analysis of the available justificatory patterns for those claims, often diminish the initial confidence. Ideas and conceptions that seemed quite simple suddenly become at the center of
controversy with no clear way out of the puzzle. The everyday notions often turn out to be the hardest to define. The world in general, including the social world, becomes increasingly more complicated; the comforting feeling of obviousness evaporates. And then, finally, frustration explodes: “Why, why do you have to make everything so complicated? Can’t we just go back to the initial simplicity?”

Now, I take this negative effect on the level of confidence in one’s ‘commonsensical’ beliefs to be one of the most important contributions of philosophy to the whole enterprise of liberal education. The students’ complaints, then, are only partially justified – they do end up knowing more after taking a philosophy class, but in many case it is knowledge of what they do not really know. Indeed, acquiring knowledge of one’s ignorance was one of the time-honored therapeutic functions of philosophy, from the time of Socrates to our own time. One’s ignorance is revealed when we realize that the complexity of the subject matter at hand fails to correspond to the simplified patterns of our thoughts about the subject. The process is especially painful when it touches the entrenched ways of thinking about the most familiar things and our dearest prejudices. Martin Heidegger, one of the most important philosophers of the 20th century, characterizes the function of philosophy in the following way:

It is in the very nature of philosophy never to make things easier but only more difficult. And this is not merely because its language strikes the everyday understanding as strange if not insane. Rather, it is the authentic function of philosophy to restore to things their weight.5

Restoring to things their ‘weight’ implies, first of all, restoring our lost sensitivity to the wonderfulness of the world, that quality, which, according to Aristotle, was at the root of philosophical inquiry. This, in turn, requires the capacity and willingness to look beyond the familiar surface into the deeper mysteries of things, however discomforting that experience might be.

It is only natural, then, that a discipline that postulates as its priority the decrease of confidence in everyday beliefs on the part

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of those who risk taking philosophy seriously, should be less than confident about its own status among other disciplines in the humanities. After all, philosophy should not be spared from the critical stance that it aims at other areas of life and research. If the established and familiar beliefs tend to shatter after being scrutinized by the intrusive eye of a philosopher, so must the much more contentious belief in the preordained division of sciences into separate departments with well-defined borders. The hard partitions between disciplines that we witness today in most universities result in part from a peculiar belief we all have inherited from the age of the Enlightenment. It is the belief that meaning is essentially atomic rather than holistic; the belief that one can partition nature and all other areas of human interest into convenient discrete elements, and study it separately. And once all the special sciences do their job and deliver the results, all that remains is to collect those results in a comprehensive encyclopedia, which would then function as the final reference for all possible inquiries. Those contemporary philosophers who accept this general picture work hard either to show that philosophy also has some positive results that deserve a modest chapter in the future encyclopedia of all sciences, or else proclaim that philosophical investigations are simply redundant in our present age, where the empirical sciences hold unrivaled sway over all aspects of human life.

But, of course, denying the value of philosophy is itself a philosophical claim of a certain value. This kind of claim presupposes a whole lot about the hierarchy of human needs and interests, about the nature of the world and the best ways of dealing with it, as well as a whole lot of other less-than-obvious assumptions. Both the denial of philosophy, as well as the affirmation of its supreme intellectual authority, requires some serious rational justification. This in turn cannot be accomplished without mastery of particular logical tools which are traditionally acquired in philosophy classes. There is a certain paradox in the fact that the grip of philosophy proves tighter than it first seemed – by denying philosophy and refusing to have anything to do with it, we thereby assume a philosophical position, perhaps, that of extreme scepticism or naïve scientism.
I do not want to suggest that the ‘destructive’ or critical side of philosophizing exhausts all there is to a serious philosophical undertaking. I quite agree with Bernard Williams, when he maintains that “there has to be such a thing in philosophy as getting it right.”\(^6\) Philosophy at its best is clearly not just about having a conversation with no concern for truth, as Richard Rorty and other postmodernists suggest. But as a discipline in humanities taught at the introductory level, philosophy should perhaps limit its ambitions to the goal of shaking up the customary thought patterns and opening up new horizons of fresh possibilities. If a student leaves the classroom realizing the existence of the various alternative ways of looking at familiar things, concepts and relations, even if he is not yet in a position to choose the most plausible way, his time in the class was not wasted.

So far I was talking about the role of philosophy in raising the skeptical awareness of the students, that is, in undermining the original confidence by training them to look beyond the façade. But as we all know, skepticism, once tasted, can be addictive. It can also be dangerous. As Simon Blackburn observes, the form of skepticism prevalent in our own times is quite different in its end results from the classic skepticism of the ancients: whereas the ancient skeptics, by discovering that the truth of their beliefs is less than fully demonstrable by the available logical and empirical means, took this as the reason for complete suspension of judgment, the moderns, by contrast, take this as a license for believing anything they feel like.\(^7\) I strongly feel that a proper philosophical education is also meant to guard against that latter extreme of indiscriminate acceptance of any wild opinion. There clearly is such a thing as being too open-minded, with no cognitive filters installed. The notion of a rational belief with the identifiable constraints on its acceptance should be at the center of any introductory course on the subject, however questionable the idea of objective rationality might turn out to be in the long run. Even if rationality is nothing more than a western, artificial, ethnocentric

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and a sexist construct, it should not be dismissed too easily, with a characteristic ‘freshman sneer’. One should *earn the right* to deconstruct such notions as rationality, truth and objectivity by travelling first through all the circles of hell of the philosophers’ debates. But this, of course, goes beyond the college level of education, and is a subject for a different paper.

Allow me to conclude with the quote from Martin Heidegger, which strikes me as especially perceptive. In a series of lectures, entitled “An Introduction to Metaphysics”, which he delivered in the 30’s, at the time when scientism and logical positivism were at their strongest, Heidegger begins by recounting a number of standard charges against philosophy, and then concludes with these words:

> It is absolutely correct and proper to say that ‘You can’t do anything with philosophy.’ It is only wrong to suppose that this is the last word on philosophy. For the rejoinder imposes itself: granted that we cannot do anything with philosophy, might not philosophy, if we concern ourselves with it, do something *with us*?

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Chapter Twelve

Is Philosophy Useless Vis-à-vis Science or Threatening to Religion?

Kenneth Pak

Introduction

I want to discuss two common attitudes that pose difficulties in making philosophy a worthwhile endeavor, particularly in the Arabian Gulf region: (1) philosophy is useless when compared with natural science and (2) philosophy is threatening to religious faith.

One day, I was talking to one of my students. He had become fascinated with several issues we discussed in philosophy and he wanted to study them further in the US. He discussed this prospect with his father. Guess what the father’s response was: “Philosophy? What good is philosophy?” Such an attitude is not new. Henry Adams, a 19th century American academic, for example, described philosophy as nothing more than giving “unintelligible answers to insoluble problems.” Philosophy, many think, gives no definite answer to any of the life’s real issues, that it does not produce anything tangible in the world.

This is interesting because ancient philosophers such as, Pythagoras, Democritus and Aristotle saw themselves as doing scientific work, as in opposition to religion which they thought was not very scientific. In modern days, however, scientific knowledge is linked mainly to hard natural sciences, the disciplines which do produce something—tangible goods. Philosophy,
then, is pushed aside and linked with religion as being not very scientific.

This, however, does not mean that philosophy is seen as a comrade of religion either. One day, in my philosophy class, we were discussing how the notion of God having complete control over the world might have certain implications on the issue of free will and determinism. A student raises his hand and says somberly: “Sir, we should not talk about such matters in this class”; i.e. we should not talk about religious matters philosophically. Many who hold deep religious sentiments see certain philosophical activities as a threat to their faith.

It seems that philosophy is in no-man’s land. As a discipline, it’s been pushed aside by the so called real sciences. In cultural significance, it’s been shunned by many in religion as a threat. As a philosopher, I find it a bit disheartening to live in a no-man’s land. I want to find a fertile land for philosophy. I want to advocate philosophy as a worthwhile activity, even in relation to science and religion. Such is a grand task, I know. For the present, I shall be content with reminding ourselves that philosophy is not useless in relation to science; nor is it necessarily a threat to religious faith. I shall discuss these two issues in turn.

**Is Philosophy Useless vis-à-vis Science?**

Philosophy is often perceived as inferior to natural sciences, especially in light of the advancement made in scientific knowledge. Knowledge in natural sciences seems to grow by leaps and bounds. As time goes by, deficiencies in earlier scientific knowledge are remedied by subsequent knowledge—from Ptolemaic to Copernican cosmology, from Newtonian to Einsteinian physics. And look at all the tangible goods that scientific knowledge produces. How can one not be impressed by science? Indeed, the advancement of scientific knowledge and the tangible goods that it produces gives great satisfaction to scientists as well as great inspirations to would be scientists.
In contrast, the history of philosophy, as Mortimer Adler admits, “is often an embarrassment to philosophers.”¹ There seems to be no uniform agreements among philosophers on any issue. Instead, there seems to be endless disagreements among philosophers. No wonder H. L. Menken described philosophy as: “consist[ing] very largely of one philosopher arguing that all others are jackasses. He usually proves it, and I should add that he also usually proves that he is one himself.”² In all honesty, can you name one tangible good that philosophy produces? Could it be that, Auguste Comte, a positivist, is right in thinking that science is the highest form of knowledge and that philosophy is mere speculation? I submit that this is not so.

In terms of advancement in philosophical knowledge, I want to say two things—very briefly. First, it is actually a great testament to Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle especially, that no subsequent generation could surpass their contribution. That is just my opinion, although I know that some German thinkers might challenge this opinion. But I think that Alfred North Whitehead’s comment that history of philosophy has been a series of footnotes to Plato is not without some truth. Secondly, I think that there has been significant advancement in philosophical knowledge as well. But it’s not the linear kind as in science. Rather, it’s more dialectical. But for lack of time, I shall not dwell on this.

Instead, I want to focus on the kinds of knowledge and the limitations inherent in science and in philosophy. The scientific method consists of investigation, either by experiment (e.g. chemistry) or by observation (e.g. astronomy). The scientific method gives us knowledge of the external conditions of the world. It gives us facts about the world as we experience it. In doing so, it aims at mastering these external conditions. It aims at developing technology, a means through which we can have power over nature. Science, for example, gives us knowledge of how to produce nuclear energy which could be so beneficial or so destructive to mankind.

¹ Mortimer J. Adler, How to Think About Great Ideas, edited by Max Weis- mann (Chicago: Open Court, 2000), 481.
An important question to ask at this point is: Can science tell us how to use technology? Can science tell us how to use nuclear energy? Can science tell us for what purpose or to what extent we should use this energy? Does science tell us whether we should or should not have used atomic energy in Hiroshima and Nagasaki? I am reminded of Lord Bertrand Russell. His enthusiasm for science has led him to argue that science is really sufficient “for the good life and the good society.” Yet, even he had to admit that it is impossible for science to solve even a single “question of value”. Science can never solve even one basic moral question. This is inherent in the very nature science. This is true, as Russell rightly admits, as long as “science remains science.”

Precisely where science reaches its limit, philosophy can play a useful function, a crucial role. For, the question of values belongs to philosophy. The question of values, the question of morals, and the question of meanings are essentially philosophical questions. The necessary role of philosophy in relation to science is nicely stated by Mortimer Adler:

> If the use of science through technology is to give us power over nature, is to give us the means to our end or goal, then the use of philosophy consists in giving us not the means, but the direction to the end, pointing out the goal, the things we should see, the things we ought to do, giving us the standards by which we can control our use of the means. And for this very reason, in a world which has more and more science and more and more of the applications of science through technology, it becomes more and more important to have philosophy and the use of philosophy properly respected. For power without freedom, the possession of instrumentalities without the understanding of how (i.e. why) to apply them and direct them, is, of course, extremely dangerous.

We must remember that the ultimate goal in science is to serve the humanity. We must also remember that human beings are value and meaning driven beings. In order for science to fulfill its goal of serving humanity, it must be guided by philosophy which deals with meaning and value. As such, philosophy is not only useful but is indispensable if science is to fulfill its function.

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4 Adler, *Great Ideas*, 462.

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Is Philosophy Useless?

Many who have strong religious orientation find that philosophy is a mere human invention and that it has no place in dictating what is and what is not possible regarding higher matters such as God and his ways. Many share the sentiment of Tertullian, a 2nd century Church Father who exclaimed: What has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What has philosophy to do with religion?

Many in the Islamic tradition share the same sentiment. One of the foremost was Ibn Hazm of Cordova (circa 1000 AD). He “reject[ed] out of hand all forms of deduction, analogy, opinion or imitation”; he insisted on truth coming from literal interpretation of the Quran. Another significant figure was Ibn Taymiyah (circa 1300). He strongly attacked philosophy and kalam [arriving at truth through dialectic and deduction as in philosophy] and insisted on returning to the ways of ‘the pious ancestors’ (al-salaf al-salih).” According to Majid Fakhry, a modern Islamic scholar, “this call was destined to become the slogan of all so-called ‘reformist’ and fundamentalist movements in Muslim lands down to the present day.” In fact, such efforts, continues Fakhry, “culminated [in] the rise of the Wahhabi movement, founded in the eighteenth century by Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, which became the official creed of the Saudi dynasty…. Even in Iran, just a few months ago, Reuters news service reports of a not so enthusiastic attitude concerning philosophy—and eleven other disciplines in human sciences.

How can a philosopher respond to such resistance to philosophy? First of all, it seems obvious that at least certain aspects of philosophy are not only useful but indispensable. Here, I refer to Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (circa 11th century). Al-Ghazali is known to have laid the most devastating assaults on philosophy. His criticisms notwithstanding, al-Ghazali distinguishes various elements

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5 Majid Fakhry, Islamic Philosophy (Oxford: Oneword), 2003), 126.
6 Ibid., 126.
7 Ibid., 128-9.
in philosophy. For our purpose, I want to note three: (1) logic, (2) politics and ethics, and (3) metaphysics. Al-Ghazali thought that logic had “no bearing on religion.” So, he found no difficulty in undertaking it. As for ethics and politics, Al-Ghazali thought that these should be approached with caution. Only metaphysics, Al-Ghazali thought, were found to be in great error and should be avoided.

Now, the usefulness or even indispensable nature of logic, even in certain matters of religion, is not difficult to see. Here, I refer to Abu Yusum Ya’qub al-Kindi (circa 900AD), an advocate of kalam. Al-Kindi uses Aristotle’s celebrated argument to defend using philosophy in the service of theology: “The study of philosophy is either necessary or unnecessary. If necessary, then we have no choice but to study it; if unnecessary, then we have to justify this claim and demonstrate its validity. Justification and demonstration, however, are part of the function of philosophy, from the study of which there is then no escape.” I have often seen that even those who argue that religious matters are higher and beyond the scope of philosophy, in trying to justify their claim, actually utilize techniques and standards of analysis and arguments that were developed by or used in by philosophy.

Secondly, I submit that much of philosophy’s illicit threat against religion is due to failing to be cautious, rather than philosophy per se. Here, I refer back to al-Ghazali. He urges that we need to be cautious when philosophizing about politics and ethics. Here, the key word is caution. What does it mean for philosophy to be cautious? I see it as philosophy being mindful of the method, the kind of knowledge, and the limitations inherent in each discipline. When philosophy forgets its own limits, when it ignores its own bounds, when it exceeds its own domain, when it trespasses on religious domain, then it becomes imperialist and becomes an illicit threat to religion. But it is the failure to be cautious, not philosophy per se, that poses threat to religion.

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9 The actual divisions are (1) logic, (2) metaphysics, (3) ethics and politics, and (4) physics and metaphysics. Fakhry, *Islamic Philosophy*, 87.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., 28.
I must add, thirdly, that the danger of failing to be cautious, the danger of being imperialistic, is not limited to philosophy. Such danger lies in any discipline, including religion. For, even religious truth claims can be an infringement on philosophy or other sciences as well. Many who claim to represent God’s revelation commit grave errors. The Church’s overstepping its boundary and trespassing into science, and denouncing Galileo for advocating Copernican cosmology is a case in point. When religion oversteps its boundary, when religion exceeds its limits and infringes on another discipline, then it too is a threat to other disciplines.

Fourthly, I submit that when philosophy is undertaken with caution, philosophy can provide knowledge pertaining to religion, albeit from different perspective. As we saw earlier, unlike science, philosophy aims to give knowledge concerning the questions of value and meaning. But religion does that too; it too gives direction to our lives.

The difference, however, is the starting points of their enquiry. As seen above, philosophy’s starting point is the experiences that we all have in common; or as Norman Kretzmann says, a philosopher’s starting point is “nothing more than what seems boringly obvious to everybody.” But the starting point of religion, at least for the three Western religions, is divine revelation, miraculous communication from God.

The different starting points entail different kinds of knowledge. In light of common human experiences, philosophy tries to answer, for example, whether the existence of the universe requires the First Cause or how human beings should live in light of what we normally see as human nature. The task of religion, however, is to interpret the divinely revealed truth faithfully and give us knowledge about what God is like and how God wants us to live. In this regard, even when dealing with the same subject, the kinds of knowledge that are derived from philosophy and religion are quite different.

Yet, when engaged with caution, both philosophical and religious knowledge can complement each other. After all, if God

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does indeed exist, then, as Thomistic tradition reminds us, God is the author of both philosophical and religious truths, and that only falsehood contradicts truth.

I hope that the foregoing presentation has made a step in showing that philosophy is neither useless in relation to science nor necessarily a threat to religious faith, but instead a worthwhile endeavor which contributes to both science and religion.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{13} By the way, as to the student who wanted to study philosophy, he is studying in the United States now. As per the student who said that we should not discuss religious matters in philosophically, at the end of the semester, he actually thanked me for helping him to understand more about his own religion and got many of his friends, including his brother, to sign up for my philosophy course in subsequent terms.
Chapter Thirteen

New Open Science: Rationality 2.0?

Volker Schneider

In the modern world, rationality seems to be a self-evident issue. However, inappropriate organization of social life destroys our societies. We shape the world at the expense of sustainability: poverty, oppression, exploitation of humans and nature, dangerous developments in climate change... Our management of technology is confronted with severe problems and any critique will mainly have to focus on these negative aspects.

On the other hand, rationality enables us shape the world in ways that make life easier and that help us to survive. ‘Rational’ technology gives us more comfort and we accept these ‘little helpers’ although they often have severe deficiencies. They give us a lot but what do they take in return?

The modern world is digital. Mathematics helps us to use natural resources adequately. It enables us to re-design nature and to create a new world. Nowadays, information is the key to this world. The permanently increasing flood of data overwhelms us. To store these vast amounts of information has become our obligation. Due to our natural limitations we succumb to these accel-
erating devices. Driven by economic forces this movement is endless. The driving force behind all these processes is growth.

The existing means to measure and to judge all these developments do not withstand the permanent pressure. The flood of information is too large; in order to contain this flood, data is collected with the help of technology. In the end, we lose control over our own natural life and experience. The natural ‘equipment’ of our bodies cannot compete with the puissance of technology. Being aware of this, a critique of rationality often comes up against the modern notion of objectivity entailed in the traditional idea of ‘nature’. The regaining of such a ‘nature’ is the proclaimed aim of this paper.

As people desire to retrieve the lost ‘real’ nature, they often turn towards traditional and long established belief systems. Religion, religious rites as well as proclaimed national identities resurface and come to fill the vacancies in the minds and the hearts of the most people. This return to the past commonly does not meet much opposition.

Reflection on a false notion of objectivity has to face this problem. If we want to avoid the destruction of all of the major achievements of the Enlightenment then we have to take action against this tendency. We should not plead for the abolition of the modern type of rationality but rather try to switch to a modernized way of understanding. On the other hand, defenders of the existing order of capitalism proclaim the ‘free market’ as a new religion.

To turn against all of these belief systems is truly a difficult task. If it is true that the ‘old’ rationality is obsolete and if it is true that we desperately need an updated form of rationality, it is necessary to take into account the existing barriers and to design a useful way of arranging and realizing the desired new form.

However, first we need to reclaim the front line. What is necessary is a progressive view of nature and of technology, but not a conservative one; we do not want a regression to “the good old times.” What happens in our minds when we think? Our brain does not only store information, it plays an active role in creating links between these items. The synapses themselves build networks of connected areal patterns that establish associations and connections at an extremely wide range. Brain research shows
that we tend to store information and experiences in different ways. When memories and events are repeated and accompanied by a deep impact (feelings etc.), they are stored in a way that lasts longer than ordinary memories and events. Eventually, this will install a permanent connection in and between the synapses of our brain. Thus our memories are laid down and situated in different qualities and levels. Starting from memory patterns, we can use that information, we can implement it to the new situation and gain a wider perspective. We obtain this new perspective without having to collect this information at the very moment with the help of our own senses.

Our memory is a tool that we use in order to exceed and to transcend the existing actual moment. We can imagine the past and shift from there to the future. We are thus able to detect and combine “things” that are absolutely new, coin expressions for items and ideas that have not existed in this world before. Our creativity in the arts, in technology or in social interaction has its roots here.

All this is prescribed and structured by our individual environment. We enter this world while we are growing up in the shelter of our mother’s body. We live in cooperation with her, are fed by her, but even then we are already in a separated state. Starting from conception, we are a single unit bound to leave, living our own life. As children we have to adapt to our environment in order to secure our survival. We need assistance and help as well as cooperation until we can do these things ourselves. We learn to judge impressions and impacts, to assemble information and to delete what seems to be unnecessary.

All these structures and forms create paths and networks of connected synapses in our brain. In a social context, we learn to behave and to feel like a “self,” we learn to be a person, create our own identity by building up a memory. The layout of this memory is structured by the depth of the connected paths in our brain.

This means: an impetus from outside will lead to a biological change. Our body changes by experience. And this then will be a part of us, of our natural and living structure. Then we create new nerves and connections on this basis.¹ Memory becomes a co-
crete structure with a certain layout in our cells. Thoughts and mind are bound to concrete organic wholes. Major research in this field in the past decade has led to the conclusion that we are definitively able to create the “new” internally in our body and our open-minded thinking is based on a natural capacity to develop and grow by experience. We are creators of our own dreams and potentials. We make the world we live in. Each individual is a single universe by the means of its own experience and by its own individually located existence.

Influences and impressions from the outside and the environment find their way into our memory by various means especially when they are accompanied by deep emotional impact. Then they will stay and create their own internal network of connections and the synapses will function like muscles. Repetition reinforces the paths of information and impulses travel through the landscape of our brain.

This shows that our biological structure is influenced, formed, and manipulated by our environment; our social life leads directly to a biological form that reacts to the impact first but will then become an integral part of us. The reality is that we change. All repeated impacts are laid down (in our memory) in a way that has tremendous influence and forms our cells. Our mind is formed by repetition. The view that rationality is behind the system and surrounds us, already lay down paths of judgment. Permanent experience leads to biological change because after being used several times, the “path” of informational transportation in our internal brain becomes a road and eventually a highway.

The connections that lead into multiple areas of our brain structure inspire these spaces and introduce a complexity leading to a fully embodied life. The “new” is a biological capability of nature; nature creates “the new” and in turn forms each organism demonstrated the tendency of synapses to grow and create cells and connections into open space. Utopia in our brain. Please note: to avoid weighing down the text with scientific explanatory notes, due to the limited space in this short essay, I will supply a list of books at the end, where you may check references. All details or questions of reference can be asked directly from the author or the Ernst-Bloch-Association (v.schneider@gmx.eu or via postmaster@ernst-bloch.net)

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on its own. A combination of synapses sets a reflexive network of impulses and influences to different areas of our brain, so the depth and width of an impulse is not only responsible for the strength but also for the diversity of possible thoughts. The variety of combinations depends on which area and regions are stimulated. The more areas of the brain participate, the wider the thought will be as a result of already stored memories.

What does this mean for our discussion of false objectivity? Quite a lot. Our environment is filled with technical gadgets and structures. The technical equipment surrounding us is based on knowledge and the manipulation of nature. Everything is under control: the engineer constructs the machine; also chemistry and biology see nature as an object. Descartes devised a rational method that posited that matter followed mathematical principles, as if it were a machine; the encyclopedist D’Holbach (18th century France) and later on La Mettrie reduced this to a pure mechanistic materialism.

Behind all this is the same basic layout. They focus exclusively on method, not content. Quantities and not qualities are relevant for the scientific structuring and analysis of nature. Descartes’ new paradigm of rationality defined concrete rules for the use and the creation of knowledge. The quality of this knowledge consists of criteria that were deemed to be universal and verifiable. This system of rules separates the object from the method and this division is – as an axiom – the base of the exact study via mathematical analysis. Necessarily, this will end up yielding results that take the shape.

The split is absolute and creates a self-sustaining and closed autopoietic system. It creates its own world. By using analytic operations we can only cover mathematical structures and imprint these onto material objects. The (de)formed nature causes the abstract design that was adopted at the beginning to become a real thing. This practice is the gateway for the mathematically limited structure to our world, but at the same time it enables us to envision the future and to produce change.

The German philosopher Ernst Bloch is one of those philosophers, who tried to get a grip on these dialectics. His holistic view insists on the so called ‘tendency’ which refers to Leibniz’ use of the French term tendence (tendency, leaning towards).
here has the meaning of direction. The determination and alignment of the process is in our hands, at least concerning the range of abilities to act. We check the frame of possibilities and detect these as real by thorough examination. Bloch talks of different levels of the category of “possibility” (Schichten der Kategorie Möglichkeit).

His so called “objective phantasy” entails combining objectivity (meant in a somehow vivid style) with imagination as an ability of mankind which enables to transcend in general. We will deal with this further down.

Another important fact: Our social life is dominated by financial interest. Money rules the world. This is not just a proverb but in these times it is a fact. The overall power of the finance system is outrageous. The volume (in terms of money) of speculation is many times bigger than that of real industrial production. The influence that this system can exert is appalling: hunger is dealt with on the stock exchange; the future of crops are only one of the aspects of those processes. The rise and fall of capital is the tide that counts, not the tide of the real ocean.

Due to this repetition we cannot avoid thinking in economic categories and ways. It is part of our way to see the world. As it has been shown by Kandel et. al., that the information and the impact on our brain that is repeated, is fixed by impressions and will be a part of us and change our brain. Surrounded by a money-driven world, several effects push our brain and mind into a direction that will follow those rules of accounting and balancing. Worth is always expressed and appears as price. This is the measurement that counts. Technology and science follows this direction. Science is structured and formed by a specific kind of thinking and rationality. Nature is an object and everything is analyzed in the same way. Karl Marx showed in his analysis of capitalism that we all tend to look at each other as a commodity. We are commodities to each other. The structure and layout of the system is part of us. By growing up in this environment, a specific view of reality is common and acquired and believed to be true, allowing no exception. Like our mother tongue we learn “economy” from the cradle to the deathbed in only one way. Money and balancing supplies the structure, efficiency and rational choice is the ‘main issue’.

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A permanent training – enforced by the virtual reality of the internet – makes this artificial world seem like real nature. A young child, growing up in our time, is confronted with this virtual reality without having a chance to check this – given by her own body or physical experience. The world on the flat screen is like reality to her mind. Nobody shows her and explains to her that this is only an artificial collection of elements presenting a digital version of an abstraction, showing only something that looks like things that this child has learned to name.

In this way, digital artifacts become reality and this ‘second life’ is real life for the consuming, passively observing child. There are direct impressions and experiences as well, but how are we to identify what is “real”?

Those individuals learn to act naturally with this information, but their ability to distinguish between advertisement and lies is shrinking. Nowadays thinking is learned and taught in a way that excludes our own natural self, we learn to behave and to treat ourselves like objects.

The surrounding world of each individual is filled up with materialistic aspects and economical rationality (rational choice and balancing) is hidden in each and every possession, relationship or commodity. We balance feelings, expectations, and dependencies like merchandise products. Marx was definitely right when he predicted that this commodity character will invade our personality, our relationships and our thoughts.

The global market longs for endless extensions to prepare new opportunities for investments. The exploding amount of free speculating capital is looking for an increase of its reproduction, and definitely, it needs this feeding. The internet surrounds us day and night and even the sky is filled up with “the cloud” of such data.

The so-called “second nature” is overpowering the first, the natural one.

No way out?

The existing nature shows some aspects of importance to be taken care of.

Contrary to Charles Darwin’s theories of natural selection, evolution has been enhanced by cooperation and integration. Organic life arose by immigration of bacteria into akaryotic mon-
eres. These bacteria emerged to nucleuses which initiated what we call evolution. The transfer of information and the development of chemical memory can be taken to be the beginning of organic life on this planet. This symbiogenesis is not based on competition, but on cooperation. Constantin Mereschkowsky and Andrey Famincyn studied this process of immigration of bacteria that went into plasma without a nucleus to create an organism. However, like other scientific discoveries in that period of the 20th century, it has been oppressed, because it does not fit the “religion of competition.” Darwinism seems to be a direct issue of the rule of economy. A specific type of science occupied the pole position of knowledge in the scientific community.

Symbiogenesis shows the cooperative aspect of organic life; cooperation is a basic component of our existence and of our identity as a person. Knowledge and identity are skilled attributes of our organism.

Based on the biological structure that exists behind every organic life and organisms on this planet, we can state a fundamental contradiction and antagonism between this organic nature and the system of competition and abstract demarcations. Cooperation is the initiator of the “new” and of the improvement of quality for the creatures. We are forced to step outside of the individual borderlines (cells) when we cooperate. We ourselves are – as a united cell structure – products of cooperation of these singular cells and we only exist as organisms when these cooperations keep rebuilding permanently and when they come together peacefully with each other. Otherwise we would break down. Cancer i.e. shows this: a cell does not cooperate any longer and tries to grow without taking care of the cooperation with the rest of the body. Development takes place on the front line, because we are searching and looking for the new by this biological intention of cooperation. The connecting synapses are only one example for that. The incompleteness, the lack of closure always has a direction. This direction is: forward. Constructively, not destructively. Creatively, in the truest sense of the word. Developed in the Renaissance, the technique of abstraction has many advantages, it creates structures that can be repeated, it is constructive because these building blocks can also build new ones. This new thing that we meet in the form of artifacts, objects and technology is a ‘second’ nature
that has to be accused, because: something is missing. The limitations that may prove to be of practical use have a critical error. These objects are dead. They lack the openness that is a specific feature of organic life.

These objects have a final form. And these final forms represent the wrong and false objectivity that we complain about. What does this form do? What does it mean? What is characteristic for that form? Organic objects, creatures, and organisms have a beginning, they start as cooperating initiatives consisting of something and they have an end. They are time-bound. They have a kind of intermediate form, an appearance and shape, which is flexible and can change. But in this form they exist as finite.

Technical objects exist as finite objects as well, but their life cycle is different, they are finished, when they are placed as objects into this world. Completed and clearly limited. While living things behave in open systems, closed artifacts are bound in form.

The fixed form of artificial objects breaks something out of context and forces it into a certain format. The line of demarcation that generates the shape cuts and divides from the surrounding environment. We can only recognize things that have a form, these are given names. We can work on and with these things as objects. Thus we can identify differences, put the world in order and rule over the world.

The starting point of this type of thinking and acting was the first abstraction: completed in the sky, geometry developed a framework that focused on the mathematical; and mathematics, that we are familiar with and know well, is the basis for our destruction of nature and the processing of it.

Ultimately, money, as the incarnation of this abstraction, is the symbol of this process and the functional element, which characterizes this form that we perceive as an extremely negative way of objectivity.

Some forms of technology for instance, nuclear or genetic technology, show the danger we are dealing with when technology is based on this concept of forming nature. At the moment we create artifacts, the disintegration of their form begins, and they come to an end. However, living things adapt, and reproduce themselves. Organisms are individuals, singularities. Artifacts, at least in their prescribed form (as essence), are created identically.
Here we encounter a contradiction: These artifacts are monads (singularities) in fact, but the abstractum behind them is something general. On the borderline between the technological and organic individuals, frictions appear, the location is fixed, the surrounding environment moves. The contradistinctions of the interests of the different organisms lead to a competition of resources. Born and arisen from cooperation, these are set against each other. Competition and war, mutual destruction and displacement become a target. During these conflicts the organisms learn about peace and cooperation again. On a higher level they identify: this is more helpful for survival.

But the separation of the abstraction made by the living organism itself, led to the emergence of this wrong system. The hidden essence that lies behind the objects is additive. That is it lives on by way of addition. This equality is compelling. And behind all this, money is the active subject.

The form lying behind all this, this form of abstraction (Alfred Sohn-Rethel has called it Real-Abstraktion) has a specific character: such an abstraction normally eradicates time, spatializes it and puts it in a limited form, like Descartes’ geometrical structure of nature. This is the immobilization of time. Simultaneously, this destruction and deformation of time is fostered in the form of money. Time is dismantled and arranged and assembled anew. Its openness occurs as lining up (accumulation) and in a trimmed form.

In the process of exchange G-W-G’, as stated by Marx in “Das Kapital” (money-commodity-money+surplus) something is bound to be the abstract. Worth occurs as an abstraction, as price shown in the value of money. But this value should mean something concrete, be real and look like a real thing.

The disguise of these circumstances generates opacity and produces this abstraction and makes the so-called ‘second nature’ appear in the guise of real nature. Behind the back of the working subjects something arises that seems to be intangible.

There is an pressing desire for growth, more, more and even more. The participants (the capitalists too!) become slaves of the system. Due to this effect of habituation and permanent training, our mind follows paths that look like we could never leave nor change this system.
Thus quantification has become a part of our way to look at the world, and has become a part of nature. Genetically engineered organisms e.g. carry this structure as a vivid part of themselves and take it into this world. The web-communities like Facebook/twitter and other so-called ‘social’ networks are digitalizing cooperation and filtering them. This appears as a ‘real’ possibility, though as one that offers itself to commercial use. The individual disempowers him-/herself. Mark Zuckerberg becomes the master of its data, and this shows again: profit-oriented thinking is entering the inner life of individuals. The community is a society of compulsion, a society and network that is addictive and that sets accumulation of numbers (of ‘friends’ or ‘followers’) as a benchmark. Again this is a triumph of quantification though a hidden one. The natural need for communication and cooperation is becoming addictive. It occupies our interior and our synapses change permanently. This is another brick in the wall against the new way of thinking.

Claims about false objectivity have to face this. But where is the troubled vantage point from which one can intervene – in an authorized and accepted manner – with a different kind of thinking? During the individual process of growing up and the permanent process of learning the abstract way of thinking and these thoughts enters into the structure of our brain, which is strengthened more and more while we are getting older. This is then sealed off further and against challenges that are met. Automated actions that render our capability to act within our surroundings continually block us internally against change. Due to processes of habituation, critical questioning is seen as threatening and thus reacted to by strictly biological defense mechanisms.

Denial of reality is the classic psychological pattern of reaction in such situations. The destructive element is defended as not dispensable and critique is taken as a personal attack and an act of aggression. It looks as if this kind of rationality is invincible.

But we know, we must change. This world is suffering from the wrong implementation of technology, politics and science. Ernst Bloch has developed several categories for a new – open-minded – way of thinking and engaging in this world of exploding complexity. A way that enables us to retain direction and content without being constricted and limited. His epistemology and theo-
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... of cognition introduced a direct connection between modern physics, cosmology, biology, and psychology. Known as the “philosopher of hope” he was at pains to show how the encyclopedia of cultures is filled with content that has not been discovered or exposed until now.

Differing types of rationality – on stage throughout the development of mankind and our knowledge of nature – show that there are alternative ways of thinking and treating the surrounding world. Bloch’s “polyphonic” dialectic and his open methods might help us to obtain sustainable and creative objectivity. An objectivity that re-installs values of humanity; an objectivity that is precise without bringing new slavery to false technological devices.

Bloch’s main thesis is that this world has not been completed yet. It is under construction, and we are responsible for the direction of the development. Our knowledge is still developing. To match this permanently moving scene we need categories that are flexible and that vary without being neither concrete nor precise.

Different levels (Schichten der Kategorie Möglichkeit) of the category of reality, shift between the past, the present and the future with precise and exact research. Analysis is seen as detection of “cold stream” and “heat flow” (Kältestrom and Wärmestrom) within the process around us. The starting point is the individual. Inside, deep inside, we are aware of being “nature” and part of nature as well as the surrounding world. Our reality is in-house-reality, which means everyone has a single and exclusive perspective. It is on this notion that Leibniz built his theory of the monad. In our interior there is still a treasure of not captured nature, feelings, and intentions. Looking outside from this perspective shows the difference: we are inflicted by the world’s problems. We see famine, war, stress, destroyed nature, exemption and accidents. This tells us that there is something wrong outside, that this world must be changed. And this also tells us that we ourselves have the means in us to identify what is wrong and what should be changed in this destructive world.

Bloch supplies exactly these categories that are missing to build up a “new,” different and less destructive type of rationality. His “Experimentum Mundi” presents open categories in an ‘open’ system. Keeping in mind that modern life has created modern in-
individuals with specific psychological structures, we can suggest the following: a change in general is only possible, if we can get individuals to move by themselves.

Only if individuals detect the natural tendence in their own bodies, detecting the dreams of summum bonum as a call and invitation to start working on cooperation and communication with nature as well as with the fellow man, only then can a new quality of ‘open’ rationality appear.

Unfortunately, a full translation of Bloch’s complete work into the actual lingua franca (English) is still outstanding. Communicating about some aspects can help meanwhile. The organic life on this planet has been started by and as a cooperation. “Naturallianz” (nature seen as an ally), alliance of, with and by nature, can be felt in our own bodies.

Where is the starting point for the new? We must not delete the existing ‘rationality’, but rather its place and function should be altered. A return of “quality” instead of “quantity” is the first important step towards a new rationality. A return of ‘natural’ reality instead of the virtual is necessary, too. And this should not be a return to ‘old times’. It has to be a new step forward. Forward to an alliance with nature.

Further Reading

On the Beginning of Modern Science of Nature:
Bruno, Giordano. De monade numero et figura, (1591)
Descartes, René. Regulae ad directionem ingenii (1628).
——. Principia Philosophia (1644).
Bacon, Francis. New Organon.

On Symbiogenesis:
Mereschkowsky, Constantin. Über Natur und Ursprung der Chromatophoren im Pflanzenreiche (1905) in: Armin

**On Communication:**

**On System Theory:**

**On Money and Capitalism:**

**On Memory:**

**On the Internet:**

**On Ernst Bloch:**
Ernst-Bloch-Assoziation: http://www.ernst-bloch.net/
Chapter Fourteen

The Misguided Conception of Objectivity in Humanities and Social Sciences

Ali Paya

Historical Background

Humanities and social sciences (HSS) have had a checkered history. They emerged in the nineteenth century under the long shadow of modern natural sciences (i.e. physical and biological sciences). Natural sciences had entered the scene two centuries earlier and had already produced a more or less impressive record in not only explaining some of the secrets of nature but also fulfilling, to some extent, Bacon’s dream of mastery of nature. ¹ The very existence of such a dominant and thriving discipline in the intellectual eco-system of the nineteenth century had made unhindered ‘growth’ of HSS very difficult if not impossible. It was inevitable that the newly emerged HSS would be compared with its powerful neighbor. This situation caused the early creators of HSS to move in two distinct directions in the process of developing it.

¹ Karl Marx in his Capital writes the following about Bacon’s dream: “…Francis Bacon looked forward to an alteration in the forms of production and to the effective control over nature by man, as a result of a change in the ways of thinking”, quoted in Karl Popper, “Epistemology and Industrialization”, in The Myth of the Framework: in defence of science and rationality, London: Routledge, 1994, p. 207. For a critical assessment of Bacon’s views apart from the article by Popper, cited here, see also Perez Zagorin, Francis Bacon, Princeton University Press, 2006. For a history of modern science and technology see John V. Pickstone, Ways of knowing: a new history of science, technology and medicine, Manchester University Press, 2000.
Positivists, which Auguste Comte, father of modern sociology and John Stuart Mill, the champion of ‘inductive sciences’, and logical positivists were their best known representatives in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, declared that HSS should be developed in the image of natural sciences. They maintained that HSS should imitate its strong and healthy neighbor in all aspects, including its methods and methodologies as well as its aims and

2 For Auguste Comte view on HSS see his The Course in Positive Philosophy, abridged English translation: The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte, freely translated and condensed by Harriet Martineau, Batoche Books, 2000. Mill has discussed his views on HSS in Book VI of his A System of Logic: Ratiocinative and Inductive, New Harper and Brothers publisher, 1858. The title of Book VI is “On the Logic of the Moral Sciences.” By “Moral Sciences” he meant all the sciences dealing with the mental, behavioural, and social aspects of human life. For logical positivists/logical empiricist view on social HSS see part three of The Cambridge Companion to Logical Empiricism, edited by Alan Richardson, CUP, 2007. It should be pointed out in passing that the ideal of unity of all branches of science was not the exclusive preserve of the positivists. It was part of the Enlightenment project to which many non-positivist thinkers subscribed and still subscribe.

3 The two terms, ‘method’ and ‘methodology’ are usually used in rather confusing ways in the literature. Many writers use ‘methodology’ as a synonym for ‘method’. This is particularly the case in social sciences, where authors of research projects in a section entitled ‘Methodology’, discuss a variety of ‘methods’ they have used in their research. However, the two terms are not synonymous. Methods are tools for obtaining data and testing the claims of theories. Methodologies are part of epistemology. On the one hand, they discuss the suitability of methods for the jobs in hand. On the other, they explore the epistemological implications of methods and introduce rules for assessing knowledge-claims. Sometimes ‘methodology’ is also called ‘scientific method’. For example, some departments of philosophy of science offer courses in ‘scientific method’ which of course means ‘methodology’. To avoid confusion, some writers have suggested using the term ‘technique’ for ‘method’ and ‘scientific method’ as interchangeable with ‘methodology’: “The claim has often been made in the past that the social sciences are radically different from other sciences because their pursuit requires a ‘methodology’ radically different from that required in the pursuit of other sciences. Too frequently, makers of this claim have done so out of a confusion between methodology and technique – a confusion that has vitiated either the significance or the tenability of their claim.” (Richard Rudner, Philosophy of Social Science. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall 1966, pp. 4-5). Problems of methodology are those related to the logic of scientific inquiry. On the other hand, scientific techniques are any procedures, including instruments or devices, that are used to make observations, experiments, or experimental controls. Examples of scientific techniques are
The Misguided Conception of Objectivity

objectives. In their view HSS should be part of the natural sciences. The main tenets of this brand of positivism can be summarized in the following way:

(a) identification of knowledge with science (natural and social) and mathematics, to the exclusion of other areas, e.g. ethics;
(b) empiricism in the extreme form of either phenomenalism or physicalism, i.e. the reduction of science to statements about directly observable facts and the elimination as meaningless of any sentence that is neither analytic nor empirical, e.g. of metaphysics;
(c) the reduction of philosophy to the ‘logic of science’ (philosophy of science) and of mathematics;
(d) methodological naturalism (naturalistic methodological monism), i.e. the view that the social sciences and even humanities have basically the same aims and methods as the natural sciences;
(e) sociological relativism with respect to norms, in particular ethical ones;
(f) the emphasis on the social value of science and on its practical applications.  

methods of measurement, statistical methods, instruments of observation such as the telescopes and the microscopes. These techniques of investigation are very important in the process of testing and formulation of new theories. As we can see, scientific techniques of investigation are procedures or, ways of doing things, and in this sense we can talk about them as ‘methods’. In other words, the term ‘method’ is used to refer both to general and to more specific (particular) procedures or ways of doing things.” (Carlos Verdugo, “Popper’s Thesis of the Unity of Scientific Method: Method Versus Techniques”, in Rethinking Popper, edited by Zuzanna Parusniková and Robert S. Cohen, Springer, 2009, pp. 155-160, p. 158).

4 Jerzy Giedymin, “Antipositivism in Contemporary Philosophy of Social Science and Humanities”, The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Dec., 1975), pp. 275-301. Ian Hacking has listed the main features of positivist approaches as follows: “(i) An emphasis upon verification (...): Significant propositions are those whose truth or falsehood can be settled in some way. (2) Proobservation: What we can see, feel, touch, and the like, provides the best content or foundation for all the rest of our non-mathematical knowledge. (3) Anti-cause: There is no causality in nature, over and above the constancy with which events of one kind are followed by events of another kind. (4) Downplaying explanations: Explanations may help organize phenomena, but do not provide any deeper answer to Why questions except to say that the phenomena regularly occur in such and such a way. Positivists tend to be non-realists, not only because they restrict reality to the observable but also because they are against causes and are dubious about explanations. They won’t infer the existence of electrons from their causal effects because they reject causes, holding that there are only constant regularities between phe-
The Positivists held natural sciences in such a high esteem that Comte went as far as claiming that his aim was to develop a ‘social physics’.  

Culturalism, represented by Dilthey, who popularized the term *Geisteswissenschaften* in contrast to *Naturwissenschaften*, subjective phenomenologists and hermeneuticists, and the interpretivists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, maintained that HSS should be treated as a completely different branch of knowledge whose aims and objectives as well as methods and methodologies are completely different from those of natural science.

The dispute between objectivists and subjectivists continued in subsequent decades. In 1966 a philosopher of social sciences (Paul Diesing) recorded the following observation concerning the ongoing dispute between the two camps:

The issue of objectivism vs. subjectivism has long been a topic of discussion among philosophers and social scientists. On the one side, the objectivists have argued that the scientific method requires publicly observable, replicable facts, and these are available only in the area of overt behavior. Subjective phenomena such as intending, conceiving, and representing can be studied only indirectly through their connections with overt phenomena. (6) Positivists sum up items (i) to (5) by being against metaphysics. Untestable propositions, unobservable entities, causes, deep explanation – these, says the positivist, are the stuff of metaphysics and must be put behind us.”


6 Other fellow culturalists such as Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Rickert and Max Weber suggested the term *Kulturwissenschaften* as a distinct title for HSS. See http://www.bookrags.com/research/geisteswissenschaften-eoph/


8 I use the term ‘interpretivist’ to denote those scholars who uphold the position that subjective interpretation and personal understanding of meaning of texts/events is the aim of research in the realm of human interaction.

behavior, if at all. On the other side, the subjectivists have argued that the essential, unique characteristic of human behavior is its subjective meaningfulness, and any science which ignores meaning and purpose is not a social science. Human action is governed by subjective factors – by images not stimuli, by reasons, not causes. Consequently an adequate science of man must understand action from the standpoint of the actor, as a process of defining the situation, evaluating alternatives in terms of goals, standards, and predictions, and choosing to act.\(^\text{10}\)

Having summarized the main bones of contention between the two groups, Diesing went on to suggest that the rift between the two camps is no longer reasonable. His argument was that developments in computer sciences have made it possible for both camps to explore phenomena in the realm of human interaction in a way which would satisfy the requirements of both:

In general, computers are information-processing and rule-following machines, and thus they are able to model theories which explain human action in terms of interpreted information, reasons, intentions, and decisions. As a result, it now becomes possible to specify these theories in completely unambiguous mathematical and logical terms, and to provide an exact connection between hypothesis and prediction. There is nothing vague about computer models, nothing private, intuitive, or unreplicable, nothing “mentalistic.” Consequently objectivists should be satisfied that computer models meet the scientific requirements of replicability and verifiability, while subjectivists should be satisfied because computers are adequate to human subject-matter to a large extent. So we find again that both subjectivists and objectivists can approve of the same method for quite different reasons.\(^\text{11}\)

**The Culturalists’ View**

In the same decade when Diesing was trying reconcile the rift between the ‘objectivist’ and the ‘subjectivist’ camps by introducing a notion of objectivity which was close to the positivists’ conception of the term, namely, ‘replicability and verifiability’ of the phenomena under consideration, a ‘culturalist’ (Isaiah Berlin) was doing his best to argue that the gap between the two camps cannot

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\(^{11}\) op.cit. p. 128.
be bridged because, there were, in Berlin’s view, real and irreconcilable differences between natural sciences and cultural sciences.

In a paper, titled, “History and Theory: The Concept of Scientific History,” \(^\text{12}\) Berlin, set out to show that why HSS, and in particular history, cannot become ‘scientific’. In his paper he spelled out some of the most important arguments introduced by culturalists for the thesis of inherent difference between HSS and natural sciences. Berlin’s arguments are worth repeating here, albeit briefly, since they shed considerable light on the way the culturalists view the differences between the two camps.

Berlin maintained that natural and cultural sciences differ in their aims and objectives as well as their methods and methodologies. \(^\text{13}\) While the aim of natural sciences is to explain similar, regular patterns of events in terms of general laws, such laws have no place in cultural studies. \(^\text{14}\) The aim of practitioners of HSS is to explain specific events in the realm of social reality. They are concerned about particular facts. \(^\text{15}\) Research in HSS is not informed by general theories, they are guided by the acumen and refined instincts of expert practitioners. \(^\text{16}\) Such experts mostly rely on their intuition as well as commonsense and not theoretical knowledge. \(^\text{17}\)

Scientific reasoning is logical, rule-based and capable of being processed by computers. In cultural sciences reasoning is not rule-based. It is based on personal abilities of the trained experts. \(^\text{18}\) Historical generalizations are mostly tautologous, or vague or inaccurate. \(^\text{19}\) In contrast, ‘scientific’ claims are exact and unequivocal: “In a developed work of natural science (...) the links between the propositions are, or should be, logically obvious: the propositions follow from each other; that is to say, the conclusions are seen logically to follow from premises either with

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\(^{13}\) Berlin, op.cit. pp. 9, 16, 23

\(^{14}\) Berlin, op.cit. pp. 8, 12, and passim.

\(^{15}\) Berlin, op.cit. pp. 8, 9.

\(^{16}\) Berlin, op.cit. p. 9.

\(^{17}\) Berlin, op.cit. pp. 10, 11, 25.

\(^{18}\) pp. 9-10, 30.

\(^{19}\) Berlin, op.cit. p. 11.
demonstrative certainty, or else with varying degrees of probability which, in the sciences which use statistical methods, should be capable of being estimated with a fair degree of precision. (...) this rule does not seem to operate successfully in history."20

Natural sciences use models, especially mathematical models. Use of models implies appeal to, among other things, abstraction, idealization and simplification of the phenomena under study. In cultural sciences (perhaps with the exception of economics), researchers do not resort to such techniques.21 This is because human situations which are studied in HSS are messy and complex. Contrary to the subject-matter of natural science which "is ‘thin’ and consists of deliberately isolated strands of experience”, human situations are “‘thick’ in the texture constituted by the interwoven strands.”22 Practitioners in HSS, contrary to the approach of natural scientists, do not dissect reality into isolated parts. They take a holistic approach to reality.23

Instead of representing a simplified, idealized picture of these complex situations, practitioners in cultural sciences weave together something like a Persian carpet, a complex web of different

20 Berlin, op.cit. p. 12.
21 "[S]cientific procedure is directed in the first place to the construction of an ideal model... But to construct a useful model will only be feasible when it is possible to abstract a sufficient number of sufficiently stable similarities from the things, facts, events... Only where such recurrences in the real world are frequent enough, and similar enough to be classifiable as so many deviations from the self-same model, will the idealized model (...) do its job of making it possible for us to extrapolate from the known to the unknown. (...) the more successfully we abstract, the simpler our model will be, the narrower will be the range of characteristics to which it will apply, and the more precisely it will apply to it; and, conversely, the greater the variety of objects to which we want our model to apply, the less we shall be able to exclude, and, consequently, the more complex the model will become and the less precisely it will fit the rich diversity of objects which it is meant to summarize, and consequently the less of a model, of a master key, it will necessarily be. (...) The more [the practitioner] wish[es] to put in, the more over-weighted and, in due course, cluttered up and shapeless, [his/her] model is bound to become, until it is scarcely a model at all, for it no longer covers a sufficient number of actual and possible cases in a sufficient variety of places and times. Its utility will steadily diminish. (Berlin, op.cit. pp. 14-16, italics added)
22 Berlin, op.cit. p. 23.
23 Berlin, op.cit. p. 17.
patterns and strands.\textsuperscript{24} They aim at including as much relevant information from various aspects of ‘human conditions’ (psychological, moral, economic, political, cultural) in their ‘representation’ of the situation under study, as possible. However, “as we go down the scale, sciences become richer in content and correspondingly less rigorous, less susceptible to quantitative techniques.”\textsuperscript{25}

Natural scientists try to deal with their subject-matter in a dispassionate manner. They take the position of ‘external observers’. But practitioners in HSS do their best to enter into the mind of the actors whose actions and intentions they explore. These practitioners try to share and internalize as much of the feelings, emotions, thoughts, ideas, and intentions of the actors as possible by means of ‘entering into individual human lives’ and use this ‘understanding’ to ‘reconstruct’ a picture of “the inter-related social whole” (i.e. the ‘human situation’) in which the actors were acting. In this sense, experts in humanities and social sciences are ‘internal observers’.

The aim of HSS is to understand other human beings’ actions and intentions. It deals with reasons, motives, emotions, etc. not with causes and causal explanations. The kind of ‘explanation’ used in HSS, “is akin to moral and aesthetic analysis, because it presupposes understanding of human beings not merely as bodies in space, obeying causal laws, but as active beings, willing, creating, pursuing ends, shaping their own and others’ lives, reflecting, imagining, in constant interaction.”\textsuperscript{26}

Berlin suggests that the difference between the two patterns of ‘explanation’ in natural sciences and in cultural sciences can be best displayed by comparing the senses of ‘because’ used in ‘explanations’ in the two fields. In the case of natural sciences “‘be-

\textsuperscript{24} “We, i.e. the historians weave together various logically independent concepts and general propositions, and bring them to bear on a given situation as best we can.” Berlin, op.cit. P. 11.
\textsuperscript{25} Berlin, op.cit. p. 15.
\textsuperscript{26} “[I]t is reconstruction in terms of a pattern, an inter-related social whole, obtained from “entering into” individual human lives, provided that they turn out to be “typical” – that is, significant or characteristic beyond themselves.” (Berlin, op.cit. p. 17)
\textsuperscript{27} Berlin, op.cit. p. 24.
cause’ is a symbol indicating a claim that a de facto correlation between [cause and effect] has, in fact, been established.28

Whereas in the case of cultural sciences the ‘because’ –is the ‘because’ neither of induction nor of deduction, but the ‘because’ of understanding – Verstehen:

If someone tells us, ‘X forgave Y because he loved him’, or ‘X killed Y because he hated him’, we accept these propositions easily, because they fit in with our general experience, because we claim to know what men are like, not, as a rule, by careful observation of them as psychological specimens (...) or as members of some strange tribe whose behavior is obscure to us and can only be inferred from observation, but because we claim to know what – in essentials a human being is, in particular a human being who belongs to a civilization not too unlike our own, and consequently one who thinks, wills feels, acts in a manner which (rightly or wrongly) we assume to be intelligible to us because it sufficiently resembles our own or those of other human beings whose lives are intertwined with our own. This sort of ‘because’ is the ‘because’ S neither of induction nor of deduction, but the ‘because’ of understanding – Verstehen – of recognition of a given piece of behavior as being part and parcel of a pattern of activity which we can follow, which we can remember or imagine, and which we describe in terms of the general laws which cannot all, or even for the most part, be rendered explicit (still less organized into a system), but without which the texture of human life – all that we call social or personal reality – is not conceivable.29

Berlin also compares HSS with artistic activities. While natural scientists, according to Berlin, apply rule-following, mechanical methods to produce ‘explanations’ of the observed phenomena, in the realm of cultural sciences, “explanation is to a large degree arrangement of the discovered facts in patterns which satisfy us because they accord with life as we know it and can imagine it. That is the difference that divides human studies – Geisteswissenschaften – from those of nature.”30

A few decades after Berlin’s attempt to keep the fields of cultural and natural sciences apart, postmodern writers pushed the debate concerning objectivity vs. subjectivity in knowledge claims to an extreme level by claiming that all knowledge claims

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28 Berlin, op.cit. p. 18.
are, in a sense, on a par, in that they are affected by ideological preferences and interests and values of those who are making the claims. In this sense, none of the knowledge claims, in whatever field of knowledge, can be regarded as ‘objective’. Each can only be regarded as ‘valid’ relative to its own particular framework of ‘validation’. Zygmunt Bauman, a postmodern sociologist, claims that “the postmodern perspective reveals the world as composed of an indefinite number of meaning-generating agencies, all relatively self-sustained and autonomous, all subject to their own perspective logics and armed with their own facilities of truth validation.”

In a similar vein, a political scientist, François Lyotard in Postmodern Conditions suggests that:

[Science] is obliged to legitimate the rules of its game. It then produces a discourse of legitimation with respect to its own status, a discourse called philosophy. I will use the term modern to designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse of this kind making explicit appeal to some grand narrative, such as the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth.

The game of science is thus put on a par with the others.

And a feminist philosopher argues that:

The belief that ‘feminist epistemology’ is an oxymoron—because real knowledge of reality involves ‘objectivity,’ and Objectivity just means ‘neutral,’ ‘non-ideological,’ and ‘distanced from any personal interests or idiosyncrasies’—collapses under scrutiny. It is ‘pure epistemology,’ ‘value-free inquiry,’ and ‘disinterested knowledge’ that are oxymorons. Mainstream contemporary epistemologists and metaphysicians acknowledge this in their own work, so why do they implicitly hold feminist philosophers to a different standard?

32 François Lyotard, Postmodern Conditions, Manchester University Press, 1984, p. xxiii
33 Lyotard, Ibid. p. 40.
The above positions and many more like them which can be found in the literature of HSS are a sad reflection on the unawareness of many of the practitioners in cultural sciences of some of the ground-breaking works which have been produced in this field with regard to the all-important issue of objectivity. A similar degree of unawareness could also be detected among those writers who still pursue positivist programs.

**Critical Rationalism à la Popper**

As early as 1945, in two of his major contributions to HSS, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, and *The Poverty of Historicism*, and in the context of two pioneering critical discussions of ‘Sociology of Knowledge’ and ‘historicist philosophies’, Karl Popper clearly and convincingly explained the accurate meaning of objectivity.

Despite the fact that both books made considerable impact among the practitioners of HSS and gave rise to many favorable and unfavorable comments, Popper’s idea of Objectivity did not seem to receive widespread acceptance. During the 1960s and after hitting final nails into the coffin of logical positivism, Popper

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35 The sociologists of knowledge, members of the Edinburgh School, who developed the so-called Strong Programme in sociology of knowledge, are a good case in point. They took the project introduced by Karl Mannheim in the first half of the twentieth century to its logical limits. While Mannheim had made a distinction between cultural and natural sciences and had accorded ‘objectivity’ (in the sense upheld by positivists) to the latter and regarded the former as only valid within their specific cultural contexts, sociologists of the Edinburgh School, inspired by the views of later Wittgenstein and Thomas Kuhn among others, claimed that all sciences, including mathematics and logic, are products of specific forms of life and therefore neither ‘objective’ nor ‘universally valid’. For the main aspects of the Strong Programme, see, David Bloor, *Knowledge and Social Imagery*, 1991/1976, 2nd ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Mannheim has discussed his views in *Ideology and Utopia*, Mariner Books, 2nd ed., 1936/1955.

36 This work was first published in three parts in *Economica* in 1944/1945 and only in 1957 appeared as a book.

37 In chapter 17 of his *Unended Quest*, entitled, “Who Killed Logical Positivism?”, Popper after quoting John Passmore’s observation on the fate of logical positivism, namely, “Logical positivism, then, is dead, or as dead as a philosophical movement ever becomes.” (John Passmore, “Logical Positivism” in
Ali Paya

turned his attention to the culturalists’ approach to HSS. In a paper entitled, “A Pluralist Approach to the Philosophy of History” and in the context of a discussion about the ‘method of history’, Popper spelled out some very important methodological points which shed considerable light on the issue of objectivity in HSS. The paper was a further expansion and development of a number of themes introduced in the concluding chapter of *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, titled, “Has History any Meaning?”

I shall develop my discussion of objectivity through providing a brief exposition of Popper’s view with regard to the methodology of HSS (in the context of his discussion of history) and also his views on objectivity (in the context of his discussions of the sociology of knowledge). However, I shall develop the discussion in a more general way and shall not limit it to the topic of history, unless there is some specific requirement to the contrary.

*Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Paul Edwards, Vol. V, p. 56) states that “Everybody knows nowadays that logical positivism is dead. But nobody seems to suspect that there may be a question to be asked here—the question “Who is responsible?” or, rather, the question “Who has done it?” (…) I fear that I must admit responsibility.” (*Unended Quest: An Intellectual Autobiography*, Routledge, 1974/2002, p. 99). In the interest of clarity and to avoid possible confusion, it must be emphasised, that chapters and page numbers of Popper’s works cited in this paper refer to the latest editions of his books/papers. However, to give the reader a sense of historical contexts in which Popper’s arguments/theses were first introduced, the dates of the first publication of each work are also given.


39 In his paper, Popper explicitly refers to Berlin, among other culturalists, whose view he criticises. Popper was especially keen to draw Berlin’s attention to the shortcomings of the methodology adopted by Berlin and to the merit of his own methodological and epistemological approach. For insightful evidence in this respect see Popper’s two letters to Berlin written on 17 February and 21 March 1959. The letters appear in Karl Popper, *After the Open Society: Selected Social and Political Writings*, edited by Jeremy Shearmur and Piers Norris Turner, Routledge, 2008.

The first, and perhaps the most important, point which Popper suggests with regard to the debate between the positivists and the culturalists is that both have subscribed to a radically mistaken view about the nature of the natural sciences. It is this mistaken image which has caused the two groups to adopt a mistaken idea about the notion of Objectivity and subsequently develop two different attitudes with regard to it.

The point about the mistake made by the culturalists concerning natural sciences is that apparently they had been led astray because they had bought the image of natural sciences which had been promulgated by the positivists. A similar mistake seems to have happened with regard to the notion of objectivity. Berlin’s views, which were briefly discussed above, provide a good case in point. They clearly show that the culturalists had/have fully accepted the positivists’ view about natural sciences and the definition/criteria of objectivity.

For the positivists natural sciences begin with, and are based on, observations from facts. The next stage in constructing natural sciences is producing hypotheses. These are inductive generalizations from patterns found in the collected data about facts and/or observations of regular events. Those hypotheses which receive confirmation in subsequent observations/empirical testing are elevated to the status of ‘laws’. Finally, groups of related ‘laws’ are combined and incorporated into general ‘theories’. A series of ‘correspondence rules’ provide the necessary links between the abstract concepts at the level of ‘theories’ and the concrete level of factual evidence. This hierarchical model represents the structure of science, i.e. natural science, which is regarded as the only valid form of knowledge, according to the positivists.  

Objectivity, which, for the positivists is tantamount to ‘Scientificity’, means empirical verifiability of the claims made about natural reality. It is no wonder that such an approach in the realm of HSS would soon lead to behaviorism. Human beings are natural systems with characteristic ‘system functions’. The behavior

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41 It must be emphasised that the above summary of the positivists’ view of science is a greatly simplified one. For a more detailed summary see, Frederick Suppe (ed.), *The Structure of Scientific Theories*, University of Illinois Press, 1977.
of these systems, i.e. the way they produce ‘outputs’ in reply to ‘inputs’ could be studied by means of their ‘system functions’ and in a factual, objective, i.e. allegedly verifiable, manner.

Popper, who already, and in a number of his important works, had shown the mistakes of the positivists, in his debate with the culturalists makes it clear that all sciences, whether natural or cultural, far from being based on inductive generalizations from ‘facts’, “start from myths – from traditional prejudices, beset with error – and from these we proceed by criticism: by the critical elimination of errors. In both the role of evidence is, in the main, to correct our mistakes, our prejudices, our tentative theories – that is, to play a part in the critical discussion, in the elimination of error.”

Popper, who has dubbed his approach to knowledge ‘critical rationalism’, suggests that the following schema as a general method for acquiring knowledge in all sciences, whether natural or cultural:

\[ P_1 \rightarrow TT \rightarrow CD \rightarrow P_2 \]

This schema is to be understood as follows. Assume that we start from some problem \( P_1 \) – it may be either a practical, or a theoretical, or a historical problem. We then proceed to formulate a tentative solution to the problem: a conjectural or hypothetical solution – a tentative theory, \( TT \). This is then submitted to critical discussions, \( CD \), in the light of evidence, if available. As a result, new problems, \( P_2 \), arise.

The above diagram neatly summarizes the meaning of ‘knowledge’ from the view of Popper and his fellow critical rationalists. Knowledge of reality, whether natural or socially constructed, consists of conjectures produced by us or other practitioners to describe some particular aspects of reality which are presented to us as ‘problems’. Such conjectures must be subjected to the severest critical examinations either by empirical means or by rational, analytic appraisal. Those conjectures which stand their grounds and defeat our best, most sincere, efforts to falsify them provisionally, and until better conjectures are found or more effective ways of assessment could be devised, are regarded as

our best candidates for knowledge about reality. Better conjectures are those which provide better, more comprehensive explanation of the phenomena under consideration, can unify more disparate phenomena in more effective and coherent ways, and can produce better predictions. More effective ways of assessments present themselves in the form of more sophisticated experiments or arguments which can expose the limitations or mistakes of our best candidates for knowledge.

From a critical rationalist point of view, knowledge, forever, remains conjectural. From this statement many corollaries follow. One such corollary is that ‘knowledge’ per se is not important, what is important is ‘the growth of knowledge’. Knowledge grows, by means of correcting the mistakes in our existing conjectures and producing more conjectures in the hope of finding out more about unexplored or unknown aspects of reality. A corollary of this claim is that our chances of improving our knowledge about reality would increase in a pluralistic environment in which various conjectures are introduced into the marketplace of ideas and then are subjected to severe critical assessment. Another corollary of the conjectural status of knowledge is that the pursuit of absolute, certain, indubitable knowledge which has been the aim of many epistemologists is futile.

All conjectures are man-made and therefore not infallible. Moreover, certainty belongs to the realm of psychology. Furthermore, from the above it is clear that our knowledge of reality, contrary to what the positivists and also many practitioners in HSS and (possibly) natural sciences believe, is neither justified true belief, nor reliable true belief, nor warranted or confirmed belief, nor highly probable belief, and so forth. As critical ration-

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45 Prior to Popper’s model of conjectural knowledge, some other epistemologists, e.g. Peirce, were advocating the idea of ‘fallibilism’. However, what was common among almost all epistemologists was the goal of achieving epistemological certainty. This is what John Watkins (*Science and Scepticism*, Princeton University Press, 1984, p. 129) has called the Bacon-Descartes ideal of certain knowledge: that our knowledge should be as certain as possible. Absolute certainty was an unattainable ideal, but increased certainty was not. It is still the ideal of Bayesians. I owe this point to David Miller.
alists argue, justification is impossible: every justification, in turn, needs to be justified.\textsuperscript{46} Confirmation, warrant, and their ilk do not add, even an iota, to the epistemic worth of the original knowledge claim for which confirmatory evidence is provided. Confirmation can, of course, provide psychological assurance. But, such an assurance has got nothing to do with epistemological worth.\textsuperscript{47} Moreover, approaches in which confirmation or warrant or high probability are used to argue for the value of a knowledge claim, are based on the mistaken view that knowledge is acquired by means of induction from facts.\textsuperscript{48}

A critical rational approach to knowledge, though conjectural and mildly skeptical, succumbs neither to relativism nor to radical skepticism nor to subjectivism. It is not a relativist approach since it regards Truth, or the true picture of reality, as the ultimate goal of all theoretical exploration of reality. For critical rationalists, truth is defined in terms of its correspondence to reality. Truth is not relative to forms of life, paradigms, traditions, cultures, civilizations and so forth. Defining truth in terms of correspondence to reality means for critical rationalists it is the reality which is the final arbiter in ascertaining the truth of claims made about reality and not as a Protagoras may claim, the ‘man’ or ‘individuals’.

Despite its mild skeptical attitude to knowledge claims, due to their conjectural nature, the critical rational approach is not radically skeptical. This is because although it maintains that we may never find the truth or even if we find it we may not be able to recognize it as such, nevertheless it emphasizes that it is quite possible to approach the truth about reality and also attain the

\textsuperscript{46} For the impossibility of justification, see “A Critique of Good Reasons”, chapter 3 of David Miller, \textit{Critical Rationalism: A Restatement and Defence}, Open Court, 1994.


\textsuperscript{48} There are several Bayesians who do not agree with this inductivism, and indeed ‘claim’ that Bayesianism has solved the problem of induction. Such claims are on showing how, without induction, we can learn from experience. However, Bayesians’ claim is untenable since it is based on a subjectivist approach to knowledge. For a critique of the shortcomings of Bayesianism see chapters 6 & 7 (Three Lost Labours of Deductivism; On the Maximization of Expected Futility) of David Miller’s \textit{Critical Rationalism}, introduced above.
true (though never all of it) by means of eliminating our mistaken pictures about reality. The systematic process of producing fresh conjectures and eliminating errors would lead to the emergence of a sequence of theories such as $K$ (Kepler’s three laws), $N$ (Newton’s theory of gravitation), $E$ (Einstein’s theory). Each of the theories in this sequence has more explanatory power and informative content than its predecessor. It can also account for the success of its predecessor.\(^49\)

A critical rationalist approach to knowledge about reality is also not ‘subjectivist’. It is ‘objective’ but not in the sense advocated by the positivists, including the logical positivists. In fact, it can be shown that the positivists/logical positivists approach would lead to subjectivism.\(^50\)

Popper goes on to explain why and how the mistakes made by the culturalists concerning the true nature of natural sciences has caused them to develop mistaken ideas about the role of ‘intuition’, ‘common sense’, and ‘understanding’ in cultural and natural sciences.

To get a better grasp of Popper’s explanations, some of his other works and other theories should also be consulted. In the case of intuition, for example, Popper explains, in a number of his works, that it assists all researchers in all fields of inquiry in two important ways: it can lead inquirers to forming new conjectures concerning the problems they are grappling with; it can also help them formulating ideas for critically assessing existing theories and conjectures.\(^51\)

With regard to common sense, Popper explains that all knowledge, in whatever field, begins from a commonsensical

\(^{49}\) See Popper, “Appendix 2” in *Objective Knowledge*, op.cit. 1979, p. 371.


grasp of reality.\textsuperscript{52} This is because knowledge cannot emerge in a vacuum. However, since we ought to constantly subject our conjectures to critical assessments, what has emerged out of our commonsensical understanding of reality would soon turn into more sophisticated explorations of deeper layers of reality, whether in the shape of a natural or social phenomenon or in the form of a text. Moreover, what is called common sense is itself, like all other phenomena, constantly changing. In the words of two critical rationalists, the frontier of scientific and technological knowledge of one generation could turn into the common sense of future generations.\textsuperscript{53}

Another aspect of Popper’s general theory of knowledge which is relevant to the current discussion is his theory of the Three Worlds. The theory says that we are living, simultaneously, in three worlds. \textit{W1} represent the realm of physical entities. \textit{W2} is the abode of each individual cognitive, emotive, and existential states. \textit{W3} is an emergent reality resulted from the interaction between \textit{W2} and \textit{W3}. It is the repository of all human intellectual constructs: theories, stories, pieces of music, blue-prints of technologies, including institutions and organizations, laws, norms, conventions, etc.\textsuperscript{54}

**Situational Logic**

To further highlight the culturalists’ and the positivists’ mistakes about HSS, Popper also introduced his model of ‘Situational Logic’ or ‘Situational Analysis’ which is devised for analysis of cases which deal with the ‘human condition’ and where, in Dilthey’s parlance, ‘life meets life’.\textsuperscript{55} Situational logic in the general con-

\textsuperscript{52} “scientific knowledge can only be an extension of common-sense knowledge...” Karl Popper, \textit{the Logic of Scientific Discovery}, Routledge, 1959/2002, p. xxiii. See also chapter 2 of \textit{Objective Knowledge}.


\textsuperscript{54} Popper, \textit{Objective Knowledge}, chapters 2-4.

text of critical rationalism provides a powerful tools for dispelling prevalent misunderstandings among the culturalists with regard to
the notions of ‘understanding’ and Objectivity in HSS. It also
provides an appropriate pattern of explanation for cultural scienc-es.

Popper and other fellow critical rationalists argue that
knowledge, in the sense of philosophically interesting knowledge
which could shed useful light on various aspects of reality, be-
longs to W3. Popper calls this knowledge ‘objective’. It is objec-
tive, in the sense that it is publicly accessible and assessable. Ob-
jectivity, therefore, from a critical rationalist point of view, is tan-
tamount to public accessibility and assessability. One of the corol-
laries of this definition is that Objectivity is equal neither to truth
nor to reality. Objectivity is an attribute of our knowledge claims
or conjectures. A knowledge claim could be subjective. It could
also be false.

Objectivity in the sense explained here is a stronger notion
than ‘intersubjectivity’ as used by some non-critical rationalist
writers. The latter could be embraced by relativists like Kuhn or
Feyerabend who maintain that intersubjective dialogue is possible
within specific paradigms or traditions or forms of life. However,
these writers deny the possibility of such dialogues between rival
paradigms or traditions or forms of life. Objectivity, as defined
above, means, intra as well as trans paradigmatic critical dialogue
or critical assessment. In other words it endorses ‘intersubjectivi-
ety’ across all cultures, paradigms and traditions. It thus rejects the
notion of incommensurability of rival paradigms, traditions and
cultures.56

From the above it is also clear that objectivity has got nothing
to do with scientists’ efforts to free themselves from their prej-
dices and biases and take a disinterested approach to the subject-
matter under study. Objectivity applies to W3 and to that part of
W2 of the scientists which can be expressed by means of lan-

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56 It must be emphasised that while Popper uses the term ‘intersubjectivity’ in the sense of ‘objectivity’ as defined above. See for example his Conjectures and Refutations (1963/2002).
language and concepts, i.e. is not part of pure existential experiences of the subject. No one can entirely purge his/her W2 of presuppositions, prejudices, and as ‘fore-meanings’, as Gadamer would say. But contrary to what Gadamer and Berlin and many other culturalists suggest, one may not even be able to be aware of all his/her prejudices and bias. W2 cannot be turned into a tabula rasa. But this state of affairs, far from being an impediment for acquiring knowledge, is a vital pre-requisite for it. This is because, as was stated above, we cannot think in a vacuum. Knowledge is attained by producing conjectures about reality. Such conjectures are based on what is already there in W2.

What is in W2, though it may be about reality, and therefore a knowledge claim, cannot be regarded as philosophically or sci-

57 “A person trying to understand a text is prepared for it to tell him something. That is why a hermeneutically trained mind must be, from the start, sensitive to the text’s newness. But this kind of sensitivity involves neither ‘neutrality’ in the matter of the object nor the extinction of one’s self, but the conscious assimilation of one’s own fore-meanings and prejudices. The important thing is to be aware of one’s own bias, so that the text may present itself in all its newness and thus be able to assert its own truth against one’s own fore-meanings.” Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. 238.

58 Most recent developments in neuroscience have shown that what Popper had suggested many decades ago concerning the way we acquire knowledge about reality was on the right track. Since there is always a delay in the transmission of sense data to our brains through channels of neurotransmitters, our brain, which cannot remain in the dark, anticipates future situations and prior to receiving fresh data, forms a (conjectural) picture of reality around us. It then uses the data it receives from the senses to correct itself and then move to make a better guess or conjecture about the surroundings. In other words, the mode of function of the brain with regard to knowing the ‘situation’ is ‘conjecture and refutation’. For recent development concerning the way our brains anticipate future see, G.R. Wylie, et al. “Jumping the gun: is effective preparation contingent upon anticipatory activation in task-relevant neural circuitry?“ Cereb. Cortex, 2006, 16, 394-404; J. Kong, et al. “Brain activity associated with expectancy enhanced placebo analgesia as measured by functional magnetic resonance imaging”, J. Neurosci. 2006, 26, 381-388; D.R. Addis, et al. “Remembering the past and imagining the future: common and distinct neural substrates during event construction and elaboration. Neuropsychologia, 2007,45, 1363-1377; K.K. Szpunar, et al. “Neural substrates of envisioning the future” Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U. S. A. 2007, 104, 642-647. Popper had discussed the idea in many of his works in which he had introduced his epistemological approach. See for example his Conjectures & Refutations (1963/2002) and Objective Knowledge (1972/79).
ciently interesting since it has not been exposed to critical assessment in the public arena. As long as it remains with the individual, it remains ‘subjective’. It is only in the public arena that our conjectures about reality could be purged from remnants of our prejudices and biases, cleansed from its mistakes and shortcomings, and get a chance of becoming a better representation of reality with the help of new suggestions and refinements. Knowledge proper is ‘objective knowledge’ which is part of W3, which is itself a part of reality.

Intuitions, flashes of insight, personal experiences, tacit knowledge, which all belong to W2 cannot be regarded as ‘knowledge’ (either subjective or objective) since they are not available for examination even for the individual who possesses them. They are pure existential states. Only when they are translated into linguistic and conceptual conventions, i.e. propositional form, will they, in principle, become available for inspection. They can also, in this state, serve the two purposes explained above.

The above discussion also makes it clear that contrary to what the culturalists claim there is no difference in kind between ‘understanding’ and ‘explanation’. They only differ, if at all, in degree. The latter is more publicly accessible and therefore more exposed to public scrutiny. The following diagram shows the place of ‘intuition/personal experiences/insights’, ‘understanding’, and ‘explanation’ in the critical rationalist epistemological approach. It shows that there is a continuous spectrum from ‘understanding’ to ‘explanation’. Personal understanding is of course enriched by personal experiences/intuitions etc. which are not propositional but existential.
Critical rationalism’s definition of Objectivity helps to clear many mistaken views held by both the positivists and the culturalists about this important notion. The positivists had, as we saw above, identified this notion with ‘verifiability’. But Popper, as early as 1934, in his first major publication on the methodology of science, had shown that no scientific theory can ever be verified: verification only applies to a limited number of empirical consequences of a theory. However, the actual number of such consequences is infinite.59

Against the culturalists who had repudiated the notion of Objectivity in favor of a subjective notion of ‘understanding’ in the sense of ‘putting oneself in the shoes of the other’, or to ‘re-enacting the thought processes which went through the minds of certain actors’, Popper and his fellow critical rationalists have argued that the goal defined by the culturalists is at once undesirable and unachievable. It is undesirable since what is ‘subjective’

59 See Popper’s argument against induction in his Logik der Forschung first published 1934 by Julius Springer Verlag, Vienna, Austria, and in his Logic of Scientific Discovery, Routledge, 1959/2002.
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cannot, by definition, add to our knowledge, which is a collective as well as cumulative entity. It is also unachievable since reproduction of the very thought went through the mind of an individual is not possible even for that individual let alone others.\(^{60}\) Moreover, understanding, as against intuition, flash of insight, personal experience, tacit knowledge and their ilk, and also as against emotion, feeling, and so on, is not ‘subjective’ in the sense of being unavailable to others even in principle. Understanding is the same as personal knowledge. It is propositional. Therefore, in principle, it can be subjected to public scrutiny.

In place of understanding as re-enactment, Popper suggested rational reconstruction of the behavior of the actors in the situation under consideration. This is done by means of ‘Situational Logic’ or ‘Situational Analysis’.\(^{61}\) The following diagram introduces the main elements in every situation:


\(^{61}\) Popper discusses ‘Situational Logic’ in a number of his works, including, chapter 8 of his *The Myth of the Framework*, 1994, entitled: “Models, Instruments, and Truth: the status of rationality principle in the social sciences.” This paper was first delivered in the Department of Economics, Harvard University, on 26 February, 1963.
To analyze a situation means to study the way the main actors act (in relation to other actors and the environment) and the impact and outcome of their actions. The first task of the analyst, who could well be an actor in the situation under study, is to define a boundary for the ‘situation’. He/she should provide reasons as to why such a proposed boundary is suitable for the ‘situation’ under consideration. After de-limiting the boundary of the situation, the analyst should specify the main actors and others whose action may influence ‘the situation’ in ways which are of interest/importance from the view of the analyst. To each actor is attributed a set of aims as well as a certain amount of background knowledge related to the situation and the aims they pursue. These attributions are nothing but conjectures produced by the analyst. For each attribution he/she ought to produce reasons as to why it fares better in comparison to some rival conjectures in the face of challenging evidence/arguments. The analyst should also identify the set of ‘Institutions’ (including laws, rules, regulations) as well as the physical environment (obstacles) in the situation under study which could influence the actions of the actors.

Each model of ‘Situational Analysis’ is also enriched by an empirical conjecture which serves as the major premise in the explanatory scheme of the model. Popper has dubbed this conjecture, ‘the rationality principle’. It simply states that actors in the ‘situations’ act in a way they think to be fit for their purpose. This conjecture should not be confused with the assumption that people are rational. The importance of this ‘principle’ is that it forces the analyst to do his/her best to find a rational explanation for the actions of the actors in a particular situation, even in the face of most adverse evidence. To ascribe the unusual actions of particular actors to their madness would not help to learn anything from the situation and the interaction of the actors in it. Mad behavior does not need rational explanation. It requires only causal explanation.

Situational analysis is not based on subjective features of actors, such as their hopes or fears, but objective problems which actors want to solve (or objective aims which they want to

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achieve). The analyst can ascribe various cognitive and emotional capacities to actors, on a conjectural basis. However, his/her conjectures must be empirically falsifiable. In other words they must have informative content. They must not be truisms or tautologies.

This model for analysis could be applied equally effectively to both texts and events. The outcome of the analysis would be objective since it can be scrutinized by other researchers. They can critically examine each of the claims made about the situation and the actions of the actors. They can also examine the assumptions made in reconstructing the ‘situation’. As a result of such critical assessments, the original account about of the situation under consideration could either be improved upon or discarded.

The approach introduced above clarifies further misconceptions on the part of the culturalists with regard to the differences between HSS and natural sciences. For example, as we saw in the case of Berlin, the culturalists suggest that while the natural sciences are interested in repeatable events, what happens in the realm of HSS is unique and unrepeatable. From here it has been concluded that general laws can be found only in natural sciences. The practitioners in HSS at best can only produce a detailed account of the unique scenes/events they are exploring.

Critical rationalism’s reply to the above claims is that whatever appears in the realm of being is unique. Heraclitus was right in stating that one cannot step into the same river twice. All phenomena are unique. Natural scientists study similar, and not identical, phenomena. Repeatability of the experiments is also not a general feature of all natural sciences. There are natural sciences in which passive observation of what is happening in reality is the most prevalent way of collecting data and information. Astronomy and ornithology are two cases in point. Moreover, in many of the experiments based on animal models (for example for developing new cures or new drugs) many of the specimens (for example mice) do not survive and the results of the original tests are repeated on fresh specimens. In other words, what is being repeated is not the same. Furthermore, computer simulation has made it possible to perform ‘experiments’ in natural and cultural sciences alike without putting subjects in harm’s way.
General laws, contrary to what Berlin and other fellow culturalists maintain, are also not the exclusive preserve of natural sciences. In fact, it is possible to transform specific observations about particular situations into generalized statements which could be applied to many other similar (though not identical) situations. The following simple logical rule (for material equivalence) does the trick:

$$
\exists x (Fx \land Gx \land Kx) \iff \neg \forall x (Fx \rightarrow \neg(Gx \land Kx))
$$

For example, suppose a political scientist who has studied political developments in Egypt for the past forty years prior to recent upheavals has concluded that Mubarak’s regime (x) is a dictatorship (F) which has been able to remain in power for a long time because of the support of a strong army (G) and a brutal secret police (K). By the above material equivalence rule he can generalize his conclusion: It is not the case that dictatorship regimes can remain in power for a long period without the support of strong armies and brutal secret police.63

Two other points usually cited by the advocates of cultural sciences in support of their claim concerning the distinct nature of these sciences are the so-called ‘hermeneutic circle’ and the issue of intentionality. The former refers to the claim that ‘human situations’ are undivided wholes and to study them the researcher must take a holistic approach. Such situations cannot be studied in analytic ways since the whole consists of infinitely many parts. To understand each part, its relation to all other parts must also be understood. But this is impossible. As Berlin puts it: “We cannot examine all the acts and thoughts of all (or even a large number) of the human beings alive during the age in question (or any other age): we generalize from samples. We integrate the results of such generalizations into what Taine calls the total ‘web’. In ‘reconstructing’ the ‘vanished threads’, we make use of chemistry, astronomy, geology, palaeontology, epigraphy, every scientific method known to us. But the objective of all this is to understand

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the relation of parts to wholes, not, as Taine believed, of instance to general law.\textsuperscript{64}

This is why such complex situations, Berlin emphasizes, must be studied by those who have: “the ability to ‘weave together’, ‘bring to bear’ various concepts.”\textsuperscript{65} This ability, “is an intuitive (and empirical) knack – often called judgment – (...) the exercise of judgment, [is] a qualitative, quasi-intuitive form of thinking dependent on wide experience, memory, imagination, on the sense of ‘reality’, of what goes with what, which may need control by, but is not at all identical with, the capacity for logical reasoning and the construction of laws and scientific models”\textsuperscript{66}

The issue about intentionality of the actors pertains to the fact that in HSS, objects of study, contrary to the objects of study in natural sciences, can consciously react to the situations they are in and thus change the set-up of the study. The result of both points about the hermeneutic circle and intentionality is that it is not possible to achieve Objectivity in the cultural sciences.

In the light of our discussion so far, it should be clear that neither of the above points can affect the notion of Objectivity as defined by critical rationalists. Our reconstructions of ‘situations’ always remain only approximate portrayals of the situations under consideration. Due to the limitations of our cognitive apparatus we have no option but to take the approach of ‘pick & choose’ with regard to any situation. The way each researcher/analyst makes his/her choice with respect to the details he/she puts into his ‘reconstructed model of the situation’ is directly related to the ‘problems’ he/she intends to tackle. The reconstructed model can constantly be improved upon when its strengths and shortcomings are discussed in the public arena.

The analyst can take care of both issues, of hermeneutic circles and of intentionality by ascribing (conjecturally) aims and objectives as well as background knowledge to the actors in a particular situation and then anticipating (again conjecturally) their possible reactions. In doing so, the analyst has preserved the ob-

\textsuperscript{64} Berlin, op.cit. p. 17.

\textsuperscript{65} Berlin, op.cit. p. 11.

\textsuperscript{66} Berlin, op.cit. pp. 11, 17.
Objectivity of his/her analysis: his/her claims are always available for public scrutiny.

**Objectivity – Once More**

The critical rationalists’ explanation for Objectivity has been available in the literature since 1945. Unfortunately many researchers in HSS have not been aware of it. This has contributed to the continuation of misguided discussions in the literature. However, while mistakes on the part of those who are not familiar with this approach is understandable, it is surprising to come across misguided views expressed by those who are not unaware of the critical rationalist position. A recent case in point is Joseph Hanna’s paper “The Scope and Limits of Scientific Objectivity” (2004)\(^{67}\), in which the author claims that none of the proposed solutions, including the one due to critical rationalists, could provide a satisfactory answer to the following challenge:

> How can one coherently reject the claim that science is an independently existing, objective reality, while maintaining that scientific methods can (and ought to) be neutral, non-ideological, and unbiased? If we cannot make sense of the notion of an external reality that is independent of our expectations, interests, and intentions, then how can we maintain that scientists ought to follow a method of investigation that is neutral and disinterested?\(^{68}\)

Hanna quotes Elizabeth Lloyd’s categorization of various meaning of objectivity in the literature\(^{69}\), namely,

- objective means detached, disinterested, unbiased, impersonal, (…) not having a point of view.
- objective means public, publicly available, observable, or accessible (at least in principle);

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\(^{68}\) Ibid. p. 341.

\(^{69}\) Elizabeth Lloyd, 1995, op.cit.

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- objective means existing independently or separately from us;
- objective means really existing, Really Real, the way things really are.\textsuperscript{70}

And suggests that “The first two conceptions identified by Lloyd are internal or methodological, having to do with the rational methods of science; the latter two conceptions are external or representational, having to do with the rational goals of science.”\textsuperscript{71}

He then goes on to propose his own solution to the above challenge, which bears striking resemblance to Diesing’s (1966) proposal:

Roughly speaking, the proposed ideal of scientific objectivity is effectiveness in the informal but technical sense of an effective method. Science makes objective progress when decision procedures requiring subjective human input are replaced by decision procedures that are automatic or mechanical. The most compelling metaphor for this notion of scientific progress and scientific objectivity is computerization—the increasing role that electronic computers play both in the collection, reduction, analysis and interpretation of data and in the formulation, articulation and testing of theories.\textsuperscript{72}

The task before us in the remaining part of this paper is twofold: to see whether critical rationalism’s proposal is incapable of rising to the above challenge and to see whether Hanna’s proposed solution to the challenge is adequate. But before that let’s have a look at the list provided by Elizabeth Lloyd to see whether her classifications are accurate and fit for the purpose.

Lloyd’s first definition represents the mistaken view of objectivity promoted by Francis Bacon and embraced by the like of Isaiah Berlin and his fellow culturalists. They have, as we have seen above, mistaken the disinterestedness of the researcher and his ‘lack of point of view’, which is humanly incompatible and incompatible with the objectivity of science which is, as discussed, both desirable and possible.

\textsuperscript{70} ibid. p. 340
\textsuperscript{71} ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} ibid. p. 341.
Her second definition partially, though crucially not adequately, covers the first part of what critical rationalists say about rationality. It only talks about public accessibility of claims, but does not say anything about their assessability (either empirically or analytically). However, it is the second part of the critical rationalists’ proposed criterion for rationality which is all important. Many publicly accessible claims remain non-objective. A favorite theory which has rendered immune to critical assessment by means of ad-hoc maneuvers is publicly accessible but not ‘objective’. To be regarded as ‘objective’, a claim must be ready to be brought in front of the tribunal of empirical/analytical assessment.

Lloyd’s third definition conflates definition of ‘realism’ with objectivity. The two notions are not identical. Phrases such as ‘objective reality’ and ‘subjective reality’ clearly show that by ‘objective’ we mean something different from ‘real’.

Lloyd’s last definition is continuation of the conflation revealed in the third definition.

It is interesting to note that Hanna not only has not noticed the grave mistakes made by Lloyd in her classification, but he has approvingly endorsed them and tried to further elaborate them.

As for the ‘challenge’ itself, it not difficult to see that it, too, is based, on some sort of misunderstanding. Critical rationalists uphold realism, the thesis that ‘something exists independent of our (or other sentient beings’) cognitive faculty, convention, languages, etc., as a conjecture which can better increase our chances of furthering our knowledge in comparison to other rival conjectures such as idealism and skepticism.

As was discussed earlier, critical rationalists argue that individual researchers cannot fully rid themselves of all their prejudices, biases, and background knowledge. What they ought not to do is to deliberately and consciously let their biases, prejudices etc., distort their judgment. In other words they must not knowingly and deliberately promote falsehood in place of truth. Such behavior goes against what Popper dubs ‘intellectual honesty’ and

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shows that it is one of the vital moral principle to which researcher should stick.\textsuperscript{74} To reduce the impact of our biases, prejudices, etc., we must present our conjectures to the tribunal of severe assessment (empirically and/or analytically).\textsuperscript{75}

Now, while the ‘challenge’ proposed by Lloyd/Hanna for objectivity appears to be a non-starter for critical rationalists, Hanna’s own proposal seems to be based on a positivist’s misconception of both objectivity and ‘knowledge’.

Hanna’s appeal to rule-based decision procedures confuses on the one hand, repeatability and assessability with objectivity. This we discussed above. But on the other hand, his proposal makes two further mistakes with respect to the issues of ‘knowledge-based’ decision making and rule-based decision making.

My argument here draws on a two papers by Hubert Dreyfus and David Miller.\textsuperscript{76} Machines, which are rule-based, cannot fully and entirely replace human experts in their decisions making processes. This is because, experts’ decisions, in critical rationalists’ parlance, are informed by their rich W2 and their access to W3. While machines may (though not necessarily) out do experts in the latter, for example, they can explore the web much faster and in a more comprehensive manner than experts, they have no equivalent of experts’ W2. Experts, by definition, are those who have a rich W2 and W3 with respect to the problem about which a decision needs to be taken. The richness of the reservoir of knowledge available to the experts with respect to the problems under consideration allows the experts to produce a wider variety


of novel arguments for better criticizing the conjectures proposed as solution for the problems.

Machines, which are relying on a set of rules, are no match for critical assessment of proposed decisions (conjectures) if the decisions which are supposed to be taken are less amenable to rule-based procedures. From here it follows that Hanna’s proposal leads to the undesirable conclusion that in such cases ‘subjective’ decision-making procedures are to be preferred.

However, as critical rationalists argue, there is no need to lower our objective guard even in the case of practical decision-making which seems to be more affected by one’s know-how rather than know-why. According to critical rationalists in deciding between rival theories/conjectures we should prefer those which make themselves more vulnerable to critical assessment. Shortcomings of such theories/conjectures can be more easily spotted. We can therefore learn more from them. In the case of practical decision making, the issue is more involved.

Hanna’s suggestion, in such cases, as we have seen above, is to rely on rule-based procedures. But since our reasoning is deductive, the conclusions cannot be more rational or more effective than the premises on which they are based. In the case of decision making procedures, such premises are the very rules fed to the machines by the experts. But rules, as Dreyfus has argued, cannot capture the richness of experts’ W2.

Here, a distinction made by Miller helps to rise above the challenge. Miller has made a distinction between the rational making of decisions and the making of rational decisions. He argues that decision making can be a rational process, but it does not follow that it produces rational decisions. In other words, while there is no guarantee that the decisions we have made are ‘rational’ it is possible to ascertain that we have we have come to them via rational routes or not. Making rational decisions consist in producing conjectures which in any given ‘situation’, are ‘rationally’ preferable to rival solutions. They are ‘rationally preferable’ because they have not been eliminated by criticism. Making rational decisions, in the sense, explained, has nothing to do with rule-based procedures. It has however, everything to do, with critical assessment. Here, ‘expert knowledge’ which is not necessari-
ly translatable to rules which can be fed to machines, can play an important role.

Summary and Conclusion

Objectivity seems to be a poorly understood concept among many practitioners in various fields of sciences, including, and perhaps especially, in HSS. Many writers who have discussed this topic have, as it were, barked up the wrong trees. Critical rationalists have argued that rationality has got nothing to do with either a move towards producing *tabula rasa* of researchers in terms of their biases and prejudices, or with rule-based decision making. It boils down to a simple maxim: public accessibility and assessability of our conjectures.

Acknowledgement: I have greatly benefitted from very useful comments made by David Miller, Karl Popper’s foremost student and colleague, who patiently read an earlier draft of this paper. I should like to thank him for his instructive remarks. I am however, solely responsible for any mistakes which may be found in the paper.
Chapter Fifteen

Can Contemporary Qualitative Research Traditions Adequately Solve Problems that Emanate from the Recurrent Positivist-Humanist Debacle in the Social Sciences?

Chukwugozie Maduka

Generally speaking, the social sciences comprise such disciplines as economics, political science, business studies, human geography, anthropology, education, psychology and sociology. Also usually included in this branch of human discourse are such other areas of study as history, international studies, diplomacy and religion which double at times both as humanities and as social sciences.

However, in much of contemporary discourse, sociology is often regarded as the archetype of the social sciences such that whatever obtains for sociology is held to be largely true of the other disciplines. Based on the above premise, this discussion will be considerably built on the evolution of knowledge in sociology though it will also touch on the other component disciplines of the social sciences. Incidentally, Auguste Comte who is usually credited with inventing the term sociology and regarded as one of its founding fathers was to provide a critical departure from the usual way of thinking about the social sciences. True enough, he inherited part of his thinking from Saint-Simon, but he certainly set out bold visions and principles for a true science of society which he called sociology, nay a positivist social science. Emile Durkheim, who was to follow after the tradition of Comte, held that if societies “are not subject to laws, no social science is possible.... However, since the principle that all the phenomena of the universe are
closely interrelated has been tested in other domains of nature and has never been proved false, it is also valid, in all likelihood for human sciences, which are part of nature” (Nibset: 48).

A turning point from the Saint Simon – Comte – Durkheim position was however to emerge from Max Weber who rejected positivist social science. Weber held that because human social action is purposive and meaningful, the explanation of social science must be related to the values and ideals of the actors it studies. Against positivism, Weber saw an ineliminable element of verstehen, or understanding of meanings in the methodology of human sciences. Weber’s articulation of his position opened up the debacle between positivist social sciences (with Saint-Simon, Comte and Durkheim as notable proponent and the humanist social sciences as represented by Weber), which was to last up to the present time. And not surprisingly, this debacle is such that either side of the divide seems grounded with considerable metaphysical, epistemological, value and methodological underlinings.

In this study, we shall first of all expose the philosophical and methodological groundings of this conflict as a preparation for the more rigorous second part which is indeed the core of this presentation. We shall thereafter explore the extent to which contemporary qualitative research methodologies of humanistic social sciences adequately make up for whatever shortcomings may inhere in the quantitative research methods of positivist social sciences. We shall commence by considering the metaphysical issues that underlie this positivist-humanist entanglement.

Metaphysical Considerations
Two metaphysical considerations that seem to play vital roles in this debacle are namely; ontological status of social entities that form the building blocks of the positivist and of humanist social sciences, notably social facts and social action respectively; causation in the social sciences.

Ontological Status of Social Entities
Social Facts: These are the building blocks for Emile Durkheim’s positivist social sciences. Durkheim counsels that social facts should be considered as things in the very same way as objects and events of the natural world. Thus, they can be directly ob-
served and measured objectively. Examples of social facts include the belief systems, customs and institutions of society. Since these social facts can be objectively measured (so it is claimed), it stands to reason that they must possess a reality of their own outside the atomistic individuals that constitute the society and are also capable of exercising, conditioning, controlling and accounting for the action of members of society. Not surprisingly, these claims have not gone bye uncontested by the advocates of humanistic social sciences. Max Weber, for instance, avers that the proper goal of sociology is interpretative, to understand and interpret social action. Social action is thus the fundamental building block of Weber’s sociology. Might we not inquire then into its ontological status?

**The ontological status of social action:** Firstly, it is important to distinguish an action from any other type of event. Max Weber provides an answer. As he assert as follows:

In “action” is included all human behavior when and in so far as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to it. Action in this sense may be either overt or purely inward or subjective; it may consist of positive intervention in a situation or passively acquiescing in a situation(from Schutz: 15):

Given this rendering, human action is necessarily purposive, intentional and teleological. But then, Weber’s interpretative sociology is based on social action, not merely human action. So, what does he say about social action? Again, he posits as follows:

Not every type of contact between human beings has a social character, this is confined where the action behavior is meaningfully oriented to that of others. For example, a mere collision of two cyclists may be compared to a natural event. On the other hand, their attempts to avoid hitting each other, or whatever insults, blows or friendly discussion might follow the collusion would constitute social “action.”(Schutz: 16)

This means that in a situation of social action, each actor not only harbors a subjective meaning of his own action but attempts on such basis to make out the other’s meaning and moves ahead to react to it from that perspective. Social action thus constitutes the primary reality on which interpretative sociology is built.
So much then for the ontological status of *social facts* and of *social action*. We shall next explore how causal relations can be established between social facts or between social actions, a relationship which is important if sociology either from the Durkheim’s or Weber’s points of view was to emerge as a science.

**Causation and Social Facts:** That causal explanations have a place in Durkheim’s positivist sociology is borne out from his statement that (Nibset: 66):

*when then the explanation of a social phenomenon is undertaken, we must seek separately the efficient cause which produces it and the functions it fulfills.*

He adds further (Nibset: 68):

*The determining cause of a social fact should be sought among the social facts preceding it and not among the states of the individual consciousness.*

Shortly after, he certifies (Nibset: 68):

*The function of the social fact ought to be sought in its relation to some social end.*

What this means is that social fact A can be the cause of(an can give rise to) another social fact B in so far as A is the most efficient way of fostering B to fulfill in the fullest degree its function in the social order. Without bordering ourselves at this junction with arguments for and against Durkheim’s position, we will move straight on consider how causation could be involved in Weber’s interpretative sociology

**Causation and social action:** The ordinary and more common form of cause and effect relationship cannot apply to interpretative sociology because, in part, meanings are constantly being negotiated, man is progressively and continuously creating new meanings and realities. Hence, strictly speaking, cause-effect relationship cannot apply.
However Weber succeeded in some peculiar sense to introduce the notion of cause into his discussion. He injected into the discourse the notion of causal adequacy meaning thus (Schutz: 230):

The interpretation of the sequence of events will..., be causally adequate in so far as, according to established generalizations or from experience, there is probability that it will always occur in the same way.

This means that in a given type of ordinarily purposive action, the means must be in the light of our past experience, appropriate to the goal. Accordingly, then, an ideal-type construct is considered to be causally adequate when it turns out to predict what actually takes place, in line with rules of frequency and probability. But can causal adequacy be taken to be strict causality? This question will be attended to later in our discussion. In the meantime, we will move swiftly to consider the epistemological issues connected with the positivist-humanist debacle.

**Epistemological Issues:** Epistemology, as commonly conceived, is concerned with knowledge claims: justification, mechanics, certitude, skepticism, solipsism and so on. Thus, in this section, we shall dwell briefly on the nature of sociological knowledge, how it is acquired and how it is validated. In particular, we will pay more attention to the conflicting knowledge claims of positivist and interpretative social sciences. But firstly, what are their common grounds?

**Empiricism as Common Epistemological Ground:** All strands of sociology are built on the empiricist doctrine of knowledge, whereby it is conceived that experience has to be the basis for knowledge and that knowledge has to be of observable phenomena of objects; dependable knowledge is the outcome of human sensual experience which is not mediated by consciousness. Of course, the question does arise that if social science is concerned with people, the empiricist view must somehow deal with the phenomenon of the human mind – that is people’s beliefs, desires, purposes, values etc. since they lack the sort of characteristics which only science can take note of. Response to this dilemma
has led to the emergence of varieties of schools in sociology, those who hold variously that: mental phenomena are not empirically observable and so should be ignored by social sciences; an empiricist social science can study mental phenomena because they correspond to overt phenomena (or behavior) which are open to empirical observation (behaviorism) like empirical observation. Husserl (and other phenomenologists) hold that mental phenomena can indeed be studied empirically, though phenomenological. So much for the common grounds. There are, however, divergence of views on how such empirical data can be used to explain social phenomena. Essentially, the positivist school embraces holism as a strategy for building knowledge out of empiricism while the other varieties of social science hold on to individualism. What do these positions stand for?

**Positivist Social Science and Holism:** In its simplest formulation, positivism extends beyond empiricism, it advocates two kinds of truths: empirical, factual truths of observation on which science is based and truths based on the meaning of words of which logic and mathematics remain paradigms. It then moves on to consider science as rational and objective because its method involves universal valid rules like those of formal logic. Thus, for instance, just as *modus tollens* (if P, then Q; not Q; therefore not P) holds whatever the sentences we use to substitute P and Q and we acknowledge the validity of this argument without making any specific empirical assumptions, positivists hold that similar relationships obtain between data and theory: for a given set of data, the formal and universal rules of scientific inference can be applied to determine if the theory is confirmed. In consequence, the scientific method is the logic of science and this logic is universal, formal and sufficient. Added to all these is not just the fact that four fundamental rules govern the positivist definition of knowledge namely: phenomenalism, nominalism, the non-empirical base of value-judgment, and the unity of the scientific method but the recognition that positivism incorporates verification and falsification. Thus, positivism replaces the sense certainty of empiricism with methodological certainty. As we observed earlier in this discussion, the elementary data employed in positivist social science are social facts. These social facts in turn comprise
of holistic structures on the micro levels such that they act as devices to enable us uncover how institutions and large-scale social structures influence the fate of individuals. Holists deny the adequacy and potency of individualist account of social structure. Durkheim (Nibset: 1975) thought that individual motives vary too greatly to account for large-scale social patterns. Holists believe that the true causal laws connecting social entities exist independently of individuals. Similarly also, holists believe *downward casualism* wherein social entities can account (as a cause) for individual people’s behavior. From the foregoing, it is clear that methodological individualism is on the losing end when it comes to positivist social science, but not so for interpretative social science.

**Interpretative Social Science and Individualism:** Here we are concerned both with Weber’s version of social sciences and also with some strictly phenomenological approaches to social sciences in so far as they all subscribe to methodological individualism. Put plainly, individualist social scientists point out that society does not exist independently of its members and that social institutions do not act on their own. Hence, according to them, all good social theory is reducible to individualist accounts. Methodological individualism, therefore, is a claim that no purported explanations of social phenomena are to count as explanations unless they are couched wholly in terms of facts about individuals. On the surface, it would appear as if there is a hundred percent symmetry between what methodological individualists are saying and what interpretative social scientists are claiming. Deeper reflection, however, will reveal that while methodological individualism exhorts us on what category of data to use in our social science endeavors, what exactly to do with that data is yet another issue. Should such data be engaged on the basis of its functional, motivational and probabilistic indices/potentials?

In any case, whether we settle for methodological holism or individualism, one problem we must come to terms with is the conflict between objectivity and subjectivity.

Let us first consider the place of objectivity and subjectivity with respect to the social sciences.
Objectivity, Subjectivity and the Social Sciences: In this section, we will attempt to expose what it means to demand that the social sciences should be conducted or perceived either as objective or as subjective enterprises. Such demands would be in keeping with the requirements of positivist and interpretative social sciences respectively. But first, let us consider the place of objectivity and subjectivity in the sciences generally.

Objectivity, Subjectivity and Science Generally: Israel Scheffler seems to have captured the critical features of objectivity in his authoritative article the Standard view of objectivity (1967:11-14). He considers that the following features, among others, are ideal of objectivity in science:

- observation as means of supplying empirical facts, hard phenomenal data;
- detachment of investigators;
- observational fidelity;
- general control of investigator’s dearest beliefs and against his/her personal wishes;
- susceptibility to independent checks;
- testing of claims by independent and impartial criteria;
- opportunity for differing persons to join in the testing of disputed conceptions in an effort of seek resolution;
- systematic public enterprise controlled by empirical facts.

Central among the features listed above is the claim that observation ought to lead to the gathering of data that is totally without bias and without any form of encumbrance. That data of such nature can be gathered in the first instance, however, has been a subject of perennial dispute from at least two perspectives—relationship between theory and observation, relationship between observation and values. Let us, firstly consider the argument that observation is theory–laden

Observation as Theory Laden: Hanson (129-146) holds that what people claim they perceive always presupposes some form
of theory. He provides a number of illustrations to drive home his point. In one such illustration he asks:

Let us consider Johannes Kepler: imagine him on a hill watching the dawn. With him is Tycho Brahe. Kepler regarded the sun as fixed: it was the earth that moved. But Tycho followed Ptolemy and Aristotle in this much at least: the earth is fixed and all other celestial bodies moved around it. Do Kepler and Tycho see the same thing in the east at dawn?

He concludes that to say that Kepler and Tycho see the same thing at dawn just because their eyes are similarly affected in an elementary mistake. It is true that the same configuration is etched on Kepler’s retina as on Tycho’s, yet it should be clear that a retina reaction to some sense – data is only a physical state. That Kepler and Tycho do or do not see the same thing cannot be supported by reference to the physical states of their retinas, optic nerves or visual cortices. Seeing is indeed for Hanson an experience which is different from a physical state. It is not just a case of seeing and interpreting later, it would appear that seeing and instantaneous interpreting are one and the same thing. At this point what is crucial is not that we agree or disagree with Hanson. What seems important is the realization that from the onset the often claimed “sameness of data” on which objectivity in science largely rests is itself in need of scrutiny. Interestingly enough, Hanson is not alone in holding to this position. Andrew Sayer (2000: 46-49) raises a number of fundamental issues. He asks:

- If empirical observation is theory-laden, can it provide an independent test of theory?
- If the world can be understood only through particular ways of seeing, can we still talk of ‘truth’ and ‘objectivity’?

What is more, the doubts cast on the possibility of unproblematic theory - neutral observation has constrained some scientists to move to the extreme position of ‘radical relativism’, according to which truth is relative to one’s theory, one’s ‘paradigm’. Some scientists have been led by this state of affairs to claim that “it all depends on your paradigm” or that such –and-such a concept is
employed not because it is claimed to be ‘true’, but because it is ‘useful’.

On the epistemic level, Sayer (47) points out that:

the invocation of ‘fact’ in popular discourse plays, upon a hidden ambiguity between ‘facts’ as states or properties of the world itself, and ‘facts’ as ‘factual statements putatively made about those states. A factual statement like “the Earth is spherical” is not that same as the thing to which it refers. One is a “thought object,” the other is a “real object,” something which exists regardless of whether we happen to know it. We can of course only think about the real object in terms of a thought object; as Neurath reminds us we cannot get outside language or knowledge to see how it compares with the object. The illusion of the appeal to facts in popular discourse involves collapsing statements into their referents, thought objects into real objects.

Sayer ends up claiming that when we appeal to facts, we behave as if we are talking about the world as it is, in an unmediated fashion, whereas we are actually appealing to a particular way of talking about the world in some conceptual system which could be contested. In consequence, he concludes that facts as factual statements do not have the authority generally claimed for them. And obviously, this deals a blow on our more common notion of objectivity. As if all these are not enough, the quest for pure objectivity at the level of natural science becomes even more problematic when we put value issues into consideration.

Value Issues and Theory Choice in Science Generally: No less a personality than Thomas Kuhn was to point out that every individual choice between completing theories depends on a mixture of objective and subjective factors. While the objective factors include accuracy, consistency, scope, simplicity and fruitfulness, the subjective ones include the scientists personnel experience, the scientist’s personality (e.g. his preference for originality and theory and hence his willingness to take risk; his preference for a comprehensive unified theory as against a precise detailed problem solving theory of a narrower scope).

The rationale here is that if these subjective issues affect choice of theory, they will in turn affect observation and also data identification.
So far, we have explored those factors that seem to affect somewhat adversely objectivity in science generally. It is important to note however that in spite of these factors, the business of the natural sciences continues to flourish and advance admirably. Surprisingly, some thinkers seem to have recognized the inevitability of values in the actual practice of science: Gunnar Myrdal (1970: 44) held the view that in actual practice scientists develop theories and gather data only after they have decided what are the interesting questions, meaning that it is not a scientific fact which questions they pursue. Rudner (1953: 45) viewed the adequacy of scientific evidence as always a matter of degree. He avers that at some point scientists have to decide if the evidence on hand is enough, whether the predictions from the theories correspond to the facts to warrant belief. Decisions to accept a hypothesis, it is claimed, depend on what would be lost by being wrong and gained by being correct. Thus, accepting a hypothesis as value-laden, Longino (1990: 46) argues that values are a necessary part of science. Indeed, Quine and many others, Longino argues, claim that data by themselves do not tell us what to believe, for their implication and even descriptions depend on background assumptions. Accordingly, no scientific method can ignore values in the scientific enterprise. Values are ultimately built into science, he claims, because they are part and parcel of the assumptions we make use in science.

So, if these same apparently unfriendly factors operating in the natural science are the very ones affecting the social sciences, it is important to uncover not only why positivist social sciences have not advanced correspondingly as the natural sciences and also why indeed there has been a persistent call from many quarters for the social sciences to abandon the natural science methodologies altogether. We shall attempt to answer these questions in the next section.

Objectivity, Subjectivity, Quantitativity and Positivist Social Sciences: Here, we shall consider whatever additional problems may inhere in objectivity, subjectivity, and quantitativity and which impinge on positivist social sciences. Since we had discovered in an earlier section that one central concern of objectivity is how to arrive at data which is devoid of bias, our first point of call
is to identify the sort of data positivist social sciences deal with. Firstly, there is the claim that mental phenomena (such as beliefs, desires purposes, intentions, moral principles, values) correspond to overt phenomena (or behavior) which are open to empirical observation. This is the view held by behaviorists. Durkheim goes one step further to distinguish between collective ways of thinking and ideas in individual minds. For him, the former are data for the social scientist while the latter are not. Durkheim’s reasoning was that collective ways of thinking can manifest themselves to sensory observation by assuming stable standardized forms such as written law codes, written creeds etc. Accordingly, they achieve the status of “things” as distinct from mere ideas and therefore acquire, as it were, the same status as natural science ‘facts’. However, in spite of efforts to objectify social science data, many have argued that the degree to which theories undermine facts in the social sciences are so acute that it negates any claims by them to be scientific. In this wise, Steven Lukes (93-107) holds that underdetermination of theory by data is more acute in the social sciences. He provides three reasons to support his stance. Firstly, he poses the question: “If it is true of physical theories that “observational criteria of theoretical terms are commonly so flexible and fragmentary”, how much more likely is it true of social sciences?” He argues: that there are probably few terms in the social sciences whose expunging from the lexicon has not been advocated by somebody, on the grounds of persistent disagreement and confusion over definition and application.

Examples include ‘class’, ‘deviance’ in sociology; ‘power’, ‘political culture’ in political science; ‘capital’, ‘consumer surplus’ in economics. The above situation arises, in part, as a result of inadequacy of social science data to meet the demands of scalar measurement, inherent difficulties in replication and experimentation, ineradicable experimental interference with the data, openness of systems. Attempts to solve these problems via the behaviorist approach have only been questionably successful. The data of the social sciences are already pre-interpreted and their observation necessarily involves a further process of indeterminacy. In sum, the objectivity of observational criteria of the theoretical terms of social sciences are acutely jeopardized (in a way those of the natural sciences are not) in that they invoke disputes, among
actors, among observers and between actors and observers. Besides, observation of social phenomena involves agents’ desires, beliefs and actions always.

Lukes observes that the second reason for holding that underdetermination is more acute in the case of social theories is that the interest of those who espouse them are divergent - they include methodological, epistemological, moral and political perspectives with all these at issue in theoretical disputes.

Lukes’ final reason for perceiving that theory underdetermination is more acute in the social science is that in so far as incompatibility between theories lies in their divergences over counterfactual claims, quite peculiar problems are raised about the validation of social inquiry.

Based on the above submission, Lukes concludes that the social sciences data are not properly suited for achieving scientific objectivity.

Now, the matter is not over. Even when we turn our attention to the attempt by behaviorism to rescue data of the social sciences so that they can be quantified and measured, a number of problems surface. We shall consider just a few of them.

**Problems Associated with Measurement and Quantification of Social Facts:** Firstly, we note that broadly speaking quantification amounts to delimiting the boundary within which an object has impact on one or more of our senses.

This is the case whether we are concerned with vision, hearing, smelling, tasting or feeling. And this means that typically, the candidates for this sort of perception are physical phenomena. In consequence, problems arise when the phenomenon we wish to investigate is not physical and therefore not susceptible to sense perception. As a way of overcoming this problem, mental or other phenomena which are not directly accessible to sense perception are attended to by the senses indirectly through their effects. This is exactly what behaviorism is about. The first problem then is - to what extent can the physical effect capture the totality of all aspects of the non-physical phenomenon. If I am sad, for instance, how can my overt behavior (e.g. shouting, fighting or what have you) capture all the dimensions of my sadness? Obviously, there is a problem here.
Quantification leads to measurement. In measurement, an attempt is made to answer the question - how much of the object in question has been quantified? This question of how much is answered by comparing different quantities with respect to the different senses. In each case one of the quantities is chosen as the base line for comparison with other quantities.

Based on the above theoretical framework, a number of measuring devices and strategies have evolved over time. Some modes (scales) of measurement consider the discrete nature of objects while others emphasize their continuous nature. Thus, if I wish to describe (measure) a quantity of apples, I may wish to consider their discrete nature by counting them one by one and noting how many apples are available. If, on the other hand, I wish to describe (measure) the width of my writing table, I could use a tape. I place the zero mark on my tape at one end of the table and extend the tape till I get to the other end of the table. In this case, the mode (scale) of measurement is continuous, not discrete. Use of these modes (scales) of measurement are not unproblematic in the social sciences. Suppose, we wish to investigate how many objects John dislikes or how many times John is sad in a week, the measurement could be a simple discrete one in so far as we have some overt way of knowing when John is sad or when John dislikes something. If, however, we are to describe the intensity of John’s dislike for a particular event, this would be more problematic. A system of continuous scaling is often devised by researchers wherein over a linear scale of three divisions, say, John’s dislike of an object can be designated and identified as one of marginally disliked, moderately disliked, and extremely disliked.

In practical terms, though these and other measurement strategies have been applied to operationalize (to make behavior more precise for purposes of observation and measurement) social facts, they have not been without problems. In this wise, consider, for instance, a research about “cost of living”. This term is rather vague and multi-dimensional. This means that it summarizes many different elements. In practice, it is impossible to keep track of all such prices; nor are all of equal importance. One would have to choose a few ‘important’ prices and weigh them according to their importance, and construct the index as a weighted av-
The specification of any vague, multidimensional concept requires similar choices and would be governed by values. To take another example, let us suppose that we seek to gather data to test the hypothesis: *the less a person approves of racial prejudice, the more likely he/she is a socialist.*

Suppose one were to put forward the following question as a way of measuring racial prejudice:

- would you avoid colored neighbors?
- are colored people inferior?
- should colored people be refused municipal housing?
- should private landlords reject colored tenants? (Lessnoff: 151).

It might still be wondered why important manifestations of racial prejudice in relation to marriage and employed are omitted. As a matter of fact, would it be really ever possible to compile a full definitive list of elements of race prejudice?

What is more, our problem does not get any easier in respect of the term “socialist”. The ideology called *socialism* welds together a complex of theories, versions of history, standards of good and bad, plans of action.

Besides, scholars in that field of study do not readily agree on just what socialism means given the variegated ways of looking at the word *socialism is used*. Asking the questions such as “Are you a socialist?” and “if so, how committed are you a socialist?” would elicit a flurry of unrelated responses. And all quantification and measurement issues raised also above would on the long run whittle down the objectivity of our positivist social science research effort.

In the wake of all these myriad problems that attempt to assail the objectivity of our positivist research efforts, might the qualitative research tradition not provide the much needed succor?

**Is Qualitative Research the Way Out?** In this last section of our discussion, we shall endeavor to examine briefly in the general principles of qualitative research and one or two current qualitative research methodologies in detail to see the extent to which
this type of research might help to overcome the problems encountered with the positivist approach. But first, how can we define the term *qualitative*?

**Definition of the Term Qualitative:** A plethora of definitions abound in the literature and Potter (1996: 15-22) provides an impressive array of such definitions. Potter classifies some of the available definitions as direct, contrasting, component, procedural, product. An example of each type will help to illuminate our discussion:

a. **Formal/Direct Definition:** Pauly (1991:2) held the view that qualitative studies investigated meaning-making. Lindlot (1995:21) asserts that “qualitative researchers seek to preserve the form and content of human behavior and to analyze its qualities, rather than subject it to mathematical or other formal transformations”.

b. **Contrasting Definition:** Wimmer and Dominick (1991) saw three main differences between the qualitative and the quantitative. First, they asserted that qualitative believes that there is no single reality, and that each person create a subjective reality that is holistic and not reducible to component parts. Second, qualitative believes that individuals are fundamentally different and that they cannot be categorized. And third, qualitative strives for unique explanation about particular situations and individuals.

c. **Component Definition:** Strauss and Corbin (1990:21) stated that “some of the different types of qualitative research are: grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenological approach, life histories, and conversational analysis”.

d. **Procedural Definition:** Lincoln and Guba (1985:8) offered two prime tenets: that first, no manipulation on the part of the inquirer is implied, and, second, the inquirer imposes no a priori units on the outcome.

e. **Product Definition:** Bogdan and Taylor (1975:2) asserted that “qualitative methodologies refer to research procedures which produce descriptive data: people’s own written or spoken words and observable behavior”. “…the subject of the study, be it an organization or an individual, is not reduced to an isolated variable or to an hypothesis, but instead as part of a whole”.

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A cursory of the various definitions provided above will reveal the following central features:
- use of social science data to create and understand meanings;
- uniqueness, autonomy, and supremacy of the individual and the world of his meanings;
- de-emphasis on quantification and measurement and even where they are engaged, they perform interpretative rather than the task of prediction and universalization.

With these core features in mind, it will be worthwhile to review briefly the underlying presumptions. Qualitativity and underlying presumptions: First, we will consider the core philosophical underpinnings and then the methodological assumptions.

Philosophical underpinnings: Basically ontological and epistemological position will be treated.

Ontological underpinnings: As we saw earlier, there are two types of thinking in the social sciences. Potter (p. 37) observes, that some scholars believe that human behavior is relatively fixed (or at least ordered) and can be explained in terms of general patterns. People are members of classes, and the meaning making across people in the same class is relatively similar. In contrast, however, there are other scholars who believe that there is no social world; instead there are many social words, each one a human construction that is non-rational and quickly changing. Accordingly, Potter avers that the major thinking in the social sciences can now be displayed in a continuum as indicated in Table 1 (Potter: 37) below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Ontological Continuum</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idealism Materialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solipsism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Epistemological Continuum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructivism Realism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pure subjectivity</td>
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</table>
Table 1: The major points of thinking across the alternative positions on the ontological and epistemological issues. (Culled from W. James Potter: *An Analysis of Thinking and Research about Qualitative Methods*: 37).

Across this ontological continuum there are five positions namely (Potter: 37-38):

- solipsism: the claim that nothing exists outside the mind of the individual and its constructed meanings;
- ideographic idealism: thing exists outside the individual only in so far as he can experience and interpret them. In consequence, understanding is subjective and multiple;
- actionalism: human beings are perceived as beings primarily oriented towards creating and pursuing of goals;
- dialectical: the claim that there is a material reality but that it is constantly changing;
- mechanical materialism everything has a physical existence and events in the world are determined by prior physical causes acting according to invariable laws.

Given the explication above of the ontological continuum, most qualitative social science theorists could theorists be classified to belong to idealism, the belief that human create rather than discover reality. Now, over to epistemological presumptions.

Epistemological underpinnings: The epistemological continuum provided in Table 1 above shows that the realists and the constructivists are at the two different extreme poles. Constructivists believe that the world is subjectively constructed by the meanings that people assign to observations. For them, since explanation is a construction, it cannot represent anything outside itself, but it should be internally coherent. Qualitative researchers are largely constructivists. Closely related to these philosophical underpinnings are some methodology assumptions.

Methodological Assumptions: In the literature the most common qualitative research efforts are built on phenomenology, hermeneutics, interpretation, naturalism and humanistic studies.

Basically, the categories identified above (Potter: 43-45) can be explained thus:

- phenomenology: the basic claim here is that investigation ought to be conducted without preconceived notions or a prior
expectation. The investigator attempts to penetrate the action’s mind so as to understand and explain how the actor constructs reality;

- hermeneutics: this requires that the world is viewed as an endless interaction between parts and wholes. The part is understood in the context of the whole and vice-versa;

- interpretation: this demands that the investigator is expected to provide his/her own interpretation of the situation even as she or she is trying to explore the point of view of the actor;

- naturalism: the research is required to study the world in its natural setting, undisturbed by the researcher. Lincoln and Guba (Potter: 44) expanded this notion to include five basic beliefs.
  - ontologically, there are multiple realities epistemologically, the knower and the known are inseparable;
  - the goal is to produce idiographic knowledge, not generalizable knowledge;
  - claims of causal linkages cannot be established since the phenomenon is in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping that makes it impossible to differentiate cause from effect;
  - inquiry is value bound;
  - human studies: Nord (Potter: 26) perceives it thus:
    - as a focus on human values to the question of what it means to be human;
    - a conception of the individual as a causal factor in human affairs;
    - the goal is to illuminate individual experiences, not to generalize.

To this should be added that the key contribution of the humanities to qualitative research is an empathic commitment to the studying of language of particular texts and genres in their social setting, as a presentation of a particular subjectivity and aesthetics. If we take our submission so far as a panoramic view of the purport, background and goal of qualitative research, what remains before can round up this paper is to x-ray one or two concrete research engagements in which the qualitative methodology has been applied to see not only the extent to which they achieved their avowed goals but how their outcomes differ from what
would otherwise be the case had positivist social science methodology being used.

Two Qualitative Researches x-Rayed: First, we will consider a research by Annette Lareau in 1989 and as reported by Lancy (1993: 74-77). Larean’s goal in “Social-classes and Parental Intervention in Elementary Education,” was to study the impact of social class on family/school relations. She chose two schools (Colton and Prescott) in Northern California. The schools were considered to be ‘good’ schools as were the teachers. Prescott was situated in a mainly white upper-middle class community while Colton served a mixed (Anglo, Hispanic, African and Asian-American) community. Colton, however, did not have the problem of massive unemployment, widespread doing abuse or violent crime.

Larean was a participant observer in the first-grade classes of the two schools in the first year. In the second year, she selected five children (with one from a single-parent from each school) for in-depth study in the second year.

Larrean methods included observation and the use of extensive recorded tape interviews. Analysis of her data revealed that:

- there was no institutional discrimination (no difference in teacher interaction with parents of different social classes);
- Prescott parents were conscientious about reading to their children. They also helped see the practical value of their education by integrating… “educational goals into virtually all aspects of home life”;
- Prescott mothers, without exception, were intimately aware of their children’s progress in school. Some of the mothers even served as volunteers to observe their children’s lack of progress;
- Colton parents preferred to turn over responsibility of their children education to the school, an action which the teachers resented;
- Prescott parents’ high status and substantial education gave them the confidence and resources to intervene very directly in the school experience of their children. They addressed teach-
ers on a first-name basis, entered classroom without permeable, freely criticized teachers among themselves and to administration;

- Colton parents, on the other hand, felt inferior to teachers;

- while Colton teachers continued to solicit parental involvement and assistance at every turn (student achievement improved with more parental involvement), Prescott teachers were sometimes resentful at the lack of respect from parents.

- there were no major differences in patterns of instruction in the two schools;

- the most intensive family-school relationships were not for the highest achieving students in upper-middle class families. These occurred in families whose children were at the bottom of the class (p. 38).

Now the question is “how would such a qualitative research have differed from an equivalent quantitative research? Suppose the quantitative research topic had been “The effect of socio-economic factors on student-achievement”, would the outcome be comparable? The answer is simple. The qualitative research outcome in this case clearly has more intensity, and more depth, was more natural. It is also more holistic for the group investigated. It gives a picture of what is happening in the schools and the homes as far as education of the young ones are concerned in a way a corresponding quantitative research cannot. The qualitative researcher ventured into her project without any prior presumptions. Thus, there was room for novelty and discovery even as statistics were not engaged and no generalization drawn.

So much for our first example, we shall now move on to the second example. This time around, however, we shall not go through the various component of the research. The focus would be to demonstrate that quantification of some sort could still play a role in qualitative research. This second research is an ethnographic one conducted by Jack Fraenkel titled: “A Portrait of Far Social Studies Teachers and Their Classes;” Fraenkel (484-509) sets out his theoretical underpinnings clearly thus:

I began this study without any specific question or hypotheses in mind, preferring to study the data inductively in order to reveal unanticipated outcomes. To the best of my ability, I tried to put anode specific expectations and preconceptions so as to minimize biasing what might be ob-
served. As insights began to develop from observations and filed notes, my observations and became more focused. Certain hypotheses grounded in the data, therefore did emerge.

He (and an assistant) observed four 11\textsuperscript{A} grade history classes and their teachers at least three times a week for six weeks. He renders the characteristics of the classes in table 2 (Wallen and Fraenkel: 485).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Teacher A</th>
<th>Teacher B</th>
<th>Teacher C</th>
<th>Teacher D</th>
<th>School</th>
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<tr>
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<td>U.S. History</td>
<td>U.S. History</td>
<td>U.S. History</td>
<td>Variety of social studies courses</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Gender</td>
<td>21 (60.0%)</td>
<td>18 (54.5%)</td>
<td>24 (67.0%)</td>
<td>21 (63.6%)</td>
<td>57.2% 42.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Male</td>
<td>14 (40.0%)</td>
<td>15 (45.5%)</td>
<td>12 (33.0%)</td>
<td>12 (36.4%)</td>
<td>52.1% 47.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic breakdown*</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish-speaking</td>
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<td>18.4%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other white</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
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<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other non-white</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Columns may not total 100% due to rounding.

Table 2: Characteristics of the Four Social Studies Classes Observed Compared with the school as a whole (Culled from Education Research p. 485).

He employed a variety of methods to obtain his data. A logbook was kept daily in which he recorded the activities, comments and behavior of students and the teacher. Rating scales, in-depth tape recorded interview, performance checklists were used as well as questionnaire which asked students to rate the frequency of occur-
Some of his findings seem to confirm some of the perceptions of other researchers with respect to the qualities of a good teacher at the high school level. Some other of the findings raised issues that were uncommon among other research outcomes. These later ones include the discovery that one of the teachers deliberately used eye-contact with students to hold their attention and maintain classroom central. Another was that one other teacher tried to learn as much as possible about her students’ backgrounds, so that she could tailor various assignments accordingly. A third was that some of the teachers encouraged and helped students to explore their own thought processes as they discussed materials in their reading assignments.

In his summary (Wallen and Fraenkel: 503) the researcher stated:

No attempt has been made, nor is there any intent, to suggest that the findings of this study are typical of what happens in most social studies classrooms.

The important point we wish to stress by presenting this study is that the researcher embellished his report with five elaborate tables (with quantified data). He did not use the data contained therein for generalization but to give some tabular picture of his description. And so, having exposed in some detail the theoretical debacle between the qualitative and quantitative social science traditions, having also presented some real life interpretative social science researches, it is time to take our last but one question.

**What is the Place of Qualitative Research Tradition in the Social Sciences?** Going by all the expositions made so far in this paper, it should be clear by now that the level of interphase between values and social facts, theories, investigators activities and subjects’ actions is the central distinguishing feature between positivist social science and interpretative social science. In positivist investigations, every effort is made to curtail the impact of values, but not so for interpretative studies. Accordingly therefore, qualitative research is the recommended type of research whenever
value configurations are dominant. Examples of such researches are those involving, life stories, journals, autobiographies, biographies, reminiscences, anecdotal accounts, personal chronicles, memoirs and dairies. Positivist social sciences hardly has a place in this domain.

A second province of research which ought to be a primary preserve of interpretative social sciences concerns investigations into goal-oriented activities which involve intentions, attitudes, intuitions and values.

An example would be an investigation into: Why do some active Christian families in Nigeria sponsor their daughters for prostitution in foreign lands?

A third type of study which is particularly suited for interpretive research would be those involving meaning creation and measuring discovery. Potter (323-370) lists many such researchers. One of them (Potter : 352) carried out by G., Tuchman is titled: Making news: A study in the creation of reality.

The primary focus of this work was to explore how “the act of making news is the act of creating reality itself rather than a picture of reality”.

Fourthly, qualitative research can furnish in-depth study of phenomena in the way positivist investigations cannot. Accordingly then, qualitative study is most suited for detailed study of phenomena like cultism, child abuse, child trafficking, prostitution, culture of assassination and kidnapping (now rampant in developing countries) and so on.

Finally, qualitative study can fruitfully combined with quantitative investigation in studies which have policy implication. An example would be a study on: Comparative impact of use of cell phones among urban and rural women. Part of the positivist aspect of this investigation would be to discover whether there is significant difference between urban and rural women in the incidence and use of cell phones. The qualitative angle would then involve detailed study of how each group of women actually use the cell phone. In this form of research, the quantitative aspect could also serve somewhat to check the credibility of the qualitative analysis.

If, as we have demonstrated above, qualitative research is so fruitful, ought we to abandon positivist research tradition entirely?
Ought Positivist Research Traditions in the Social Sciences be Abandoned Entirely? The answer to this question is definitely No. Firstly, as we have discovered in the last section, there are a number of research endeavors where quantitative research methods can be combined fruitfully with the qualitative mode of investigation.

Secondly, in a number of investigations, brief quantitative surveys could throw some light on areas needing the attention of qualitative investigation. In this wise, consider an investigation titled: Preferred orthopaedic treatment by rural dwellers. In a study like this, a preliminary quantitative study will reveal the different types of orthopaedic treatment available and the degree of patronage. Thereafter, qualitative work will study the modes of treatment rural dwellers significantly prefer.

Thirdly occasionally, it should also be possible for a qualitative research in the form of a few in-depth investigations to proceed a large scale quantitative study so as to provide check of the quantitative procedures (of validity, say).

Fourthly, and particularly relevant, is that in certain areas of research, quantitative investigation can stand on its own. Typical areas of study in this case would be the testing of course materials, programs effects and even the testing of goods. It is considered that the following topics could be most fruitfully investigated solely by quantitative research methods:

- Comparative study of the effects of programmed text Vs face-to-face teaching on student’s performance in mathematics.
- Comparative study of the use life span of car batteries made in China vis-à-vis those made in Germany (in commercial vehicles).

If what we have said so far in this paper is enough to distinguish between qualitative and quantitative research traditions, their basic philosophical and other assumptions, their potency in actual practice, then it is now time to conclude this study.
Conclusion

The outcome of this study revealed that qualitative and quantitative research traditions even although they are both empiricist have essentially different philosophical theoretical orientations. True to its positivist background, quantitative social science research traditions perceive social facts from methodological holistic stance as means of arriving at causal generalizations. Qualitative research traditions, on the other hand, being largely interpretative use meaning seeking social actions as elementary building blocks. Accordingly, adherence to methodological individualism and disinterest in causation and generalization standout as its hallmarks. The net result of all this is that the two research traditions generally pose and answer different questions. Indeed, one primary source of confusion therefore in the positivist-humanist debacle in the social sciences is the misconception that the two research traditions are asking and answering the same questions. Once this misconception has been cleared, it is then possible to explore how best the two research traditions can be engaged for a more fruitful understanding of social phenomena. This is exactly what this study does.

As a preliminary study, however, a lot of shortcomings must inhere in this work. To overcome such shortcomings, more studies need to be conducted involving actual field sole use of qualitative research traditions in various social science disciplines and in uses incorporative, quantitative methods.

But most importantly, it is expected that this study will help draw the attention of social science departments to the urgency of giving full attention to the use of qualitative research methods in their curriculum and in their field work. Presently, in Africa at least, there is a disproportionate emphasis on positivist social science methods in most social science and education departments. Publications from such departments show that less than one (1) percent of them use qualitative research methods. Yet, as has been demonstrated in this study, there are vast areas of inquiry where interpretative investigation is the only appropriate approach. It is now time for a new orientation to our social science research endeavors.
References:


Chapter Sixteen

Normative Biases and Creativity in Dilemmas

Anders Herlitz

On a dark and cold November evening in 2003, I was standing in a suburb of Gothenburg, Sweden, trying to help a good friend of mine remove the snow from the driveway outside his garage. His wife was pregnant in the 40th week, and they were frightened that they would not get to the hospital if they needed to with all the snow in the way. I suddenly received a phone call from my mother. My grandmother had been taken to the hospital after a car accident. Things looked bad and my mother wanted to let me know so that I could try to get to see her before it was too late. The weather conditions were bad so I did not know whether I would make it to the hospital on time even if I tried, and my friend was desperate. I needed to choose: either I would try to see my grandmother one last time, or stay with my friend and help him remove the snow. I needed to choose.

A core aspect of ethics, and moral philosophy in general, is concerned with how we ought to, and can, deal with normative dilemmas. One example is the situation that I found myself in in 2003; a different illustration of the ubiquity of the phenomenon is the growing field of applied ethics: Should we allow research on stem cells or not? Is abortion acceptable? In situations where it is likely that we can retrieve life-saving information by torturing a captured terrorist, may we do this? These questions are all normative dilemmas, and we do have to make choices, whether we like it or not: taking decisions is part of the human condition, or as Christine Koorsgard puts it: “The necessity of choosing and act-
ing is not causal, logical, or rational necessity. It is our plight: the simple inexorable fact of the human condition.”¹

The problem of choice in normative dilemmas echoes the Socratic question that was re-raised by Bernard Williams in his Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy: “How should one live?”² This question has come to be understood as: “How should I act?” in much of Western tradition...”³ i.e.: small “i” and big “W,” largely thanks to the Judeo-Christian tradition, as pointed out by Roger Crisp. It is here that normative dilemmas become central: how should I act when more than one alternative seems appealing.³ How should we act, how should we think, when we face situations where we are obliged (or in other ways supposed) to both act in a specific way and refrain from acting in that way? This is the question that is addressed in this article.

Following Gilles Deleuze and the views he ascribes to Spinoza, the question can be said to take up the space between morality and ethics. Deleuze argues that Spinoza draws a distinction between morality on the one hand, such as it appears as transcendent, imperative laws, and ethics that is concerned with qualitative differences of different ways of living, a typology of alternative modes of living, on the other.⁴ Normative dilemmas occur in the region where the agent as decision-maker faces what he or she believes to be moral commands and by making the decision between them engages with the ethical question of how he or she wants to live. The agent facing a normative dilemma engages with morality on the one hand, that is, how to deal with what is seen as

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⁴ Deleuze, Giles (1981): Spinoza: Philosophie pratique, Paris: Éditions de Minuit. Bernard Williams stresses the distinction between morality and ethics as well, although in slightly different terms, connecting morality to the Kantian tradition, and defends ethics as a broader notion that encompasses values that are usually not seen as part of morality, such as friendship, family and social justice; Williams, Bernard (1985): Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
imperatives, and on the other hand he engages with ethics, that is, how to rank the alternative courses of actions, the alternative modes of living.

I will claim that traditional approaches to normative dilemmas fail for a very particular reason: they presuppose the possibility of objectivity. Regardless of whether one addresses normative dilemmas as a utilitarian, as a Kantian, as a virtue ethicist, as a casuist or with a weighing goods approach, it is inevitable that one also, simultaneously, or even prior to it, addresses them with the subjective creative-interpretative thinking that we are equipped with as human beings, with what could, echoing Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s findings in the woods of St. Germain and Immanuel Kant’s epistemology, be called our transcendentalselves. Conventional methods of ethics presuppose the possibility of objectivity, and thus fail to assign appropriate importance to subjective interpretations and creativity. Not acknowledging this, the importance of interpretation, of the subject, is simplistic and will inevitably lead to flawed reasoning, because the presumption is false: objectivity cannot always be achieved.

To show this, my strategy is to illustrate what happens when we deny the importance of the subject. The argument goes via, on the one hand, how we encounter normative dilemmas, and on the other hand what the nature of reasoning is. By illustrating how we encounter normative dilemmas and some very basic assumptions, or ideas, about reasoning and how it takes place, it becomes evident that part of the decision-making process is completely neglected if proper attention is not given to what I refer to as the

creative-interpretative thinking that we apply upon the world. I start, however, with some clarifying distinctions.

The Choice Situation, Courses of Actions and Beliefs

A choice situation is a situation in which an agent stands in front of the choice of acting in different ways, of pursuing alternative paths. This, of course, means that any and all situations in which there is a conscious, somewhat capable agent are choice situations, as it seems we always have the possibility to act in different ways. However, the vast majority of them clearly seems unproblematic, not least so from a normative, or moral, perspective, and much of what I ascribe to these unproblematic situations is tacit in everyday life.

Further, I will refer to the different alternatives that an agent can choose in the choice situation as the alternative courses of actions that the agent faces, can pursue. These, being courses of actions, include more specific actions. Hence, in the example above, I faced two competing general alternative courses of actions. Both are, in some way, desirable, and/or both repulsive, some include the more specific action “going to the hospital to see my grandmother”, and some include the more specific action “staying with my friend and continue to help him clear his driveway.”

The alternative courses of actions that represent themselves in the choice situation will necessarily be based upon a perception, a notion, or a representation, of the situation as well as of the alternatives. This follows from the basic fact that we make choices based on beliefs, rather than based on the facts per se – I drink a glass of water because I believe it will dampen my thirst, not because it in fact will do so, etcetera. I will refer to this as the description or interpretation of the alternative courses of actions. I

6 The plurality, of course, arises since there were many different courses of actions that included turning up at the hospital to see my grandmother and there were many different courses of actions that included staying with my friend and helps him clear his driveway.

7 I am not sure this needs any kind of argument, but one could look at, for example, Kleindorfer, Paul R., Kunreuther, Howard C. and Schoemaker, Paul J. (1993): Decision Sciences: An Integrative Perspective, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
do not believe, and would not defend, that we all actually actively describe or interpret the alternative courses of actions in front of us before we make choices. Most of the times this happens tacitly, or even unconsciously. However, the term will function just as well as a heuristic metaphor in the cases where no conventional description or interpretation takes place. A normative dilemma appears to us as a normative dilemma because we describe it as such, because we interpret our situation in that way.

When we are to describe, or represent, interpret, courses of actions, we need to describe facts, and sometimes norms, or more precisely normative elements. That there are facts out there that we aspire to describe should be clear to everyone who is not a hard-core solipsist. That there are norms out there is more disputable. However, I am not defending the position that courses of actions necessarily include norms, or normative elements – but rather that we, or the agent, perceives of, identifies, believes that there are, norms, or normative elements in the situations. It is not a commitment to moral realism, but possibly to cognitivism. It is not a commitment to the view that there are such things as mind-independent moral facts, but possibly a commitment to the view that ethical expressions are propositions, or beliefs about ethical facts.\footnote{See, for example: Miller, Alexander (2003): An Introduction to Contemporary Metaethics, Cambridge: Polity; and Hooker, Brad (ed.) (1996): Truth in Ethics, Oxford: Blackwell.}

Describing facts, or what one holds to be facts, already has its difficulties. In the situation that I faced on that night in 2003 numerous assessments of facts needed to be made. How long would
it take me to get to the hospital? How much time did I have before my grandmother passed away? How would I feel if I missed out on the opportunity of saying goodbye? What would it bring my grandmother if I made it to her deathbed? What was the probability that the weather would better so that the snow on my friend’s driveway would melt away? What was the probability that my friend’s girlfriend would go into labor any time soon? And if she did, what would the consequences be for them if I did not stay and help them with the snow? All these questions are purely factual and they all seem relevant to the decision I was about to make, yet I have a feeling the list is not exhaustive of the relevant facts. Exhaustive or not, it should be clear that the production of answers to these questions is not something that is simple for a human mind.

Concerning the descriptions of norms, or elements of norms, a difficulty should be pointed out here. There is a problem attached to talking simply about conflicting norms, namely that it presupposes a specific understanding of the conflicts, a specific understanding that, furthermore, might affect the reasoning, and the outcome of the reasoning. There might very well be conflicting norms involved, but it is a simplification to say that that is all. This can be illustrated in the following way: one alternative course of actions that I faced included the act “go to see my grandmother before she dies”. There was, clearly, at least one normative element present here, and that ought to be included in the description of the alternative courses of actions that include this act. However, there are numerous possible descriptions of this normative element, and it seems far from clear which one is “objectively correct”. The normative element can be described in terms of respect, in terms of duties, in terms of good consequences, etcetera. Talking strictly about conflicting norms neglects the complexity entailed by the variety of possibilities attached to starting from the normative elements instead. This is especially problematic in normatively dilemmatic situations.

It might strike someone as strange to introduce elements that are seemingly very evasive in this manner; however, a further look at descriptions of pure facts might put this in a different light. Also specific non-normative facts can be described in numerous ways. A single item might be described as a table, as a
chair, as a utensil for reaching high spaces, etc., and this fact, the fact that these descriptions try to capture, is quite simple. In descriptions of situations and alternative courses of actions, acts need to be described, and it is clear that acts can be described in many different ways. Just think of situations where one is not certain about whether one has made a promise or just opened up for the possibility that one will do something.\(^\text{10}\) If we sometimes cannot even ourselves be certain of what actions we have done in the past, then it is of course very complicated to describe complex actions that will take place in the future.

To summarize: the choice situation is a situation in which an agent needs to make a choice between alternative courses of actions. In order to make such a choice, the situation, as well as the alternative courses of actions, need to be described – either explicitly, or tacitly. The description is the basis for the decision that the agent has to take. This description of the situation and the alternative courses of actions will have to include factual as well as normative elements.

It is to this – the described choice situation – that traditional different theories or methods are applied in order to solve, or resolve, the normative dilemmas. Either theories, or methods, are applied to choice situations in general, or theories, or methods, are applied to specific choice situations, in which the factual and normative elements have been given descriptions. Utilitarian methods ask what alternative maximizes aggregated utility; Kantian methods ask what choice would be in accordance with specific deontic criteria; virtue ethicists ask what choice would be virtuous; casuists would compare a situation at hand with paradigmatic cases and seek similarities and guidance that way; weighing goods methods would look at the merits of the alternative courses of actions, and weigh these against each other. No method says anything about how the description of the choice situation has come about.

\(^{10}\) G. E. M. Anscombe, of course, has discusses these problems, see: Anscombe, G. E. M (1958): “On Brute Facts,” in *Analysis*, pp. 69-72.
The Nature of Reasoning

The one tool that is available to us when we face normative dilemmas is our reasoning. But what is reasoning? The question goes back to Plato, and the answers have been plentiful ever since. One way of addressing the topic that shed some light to this is through dichotomies that throughout time in different ways have functioned as explications of how our reasoning works.

When Aristotle, who together with Plato is one of the first milestones in the philosophy of practical reason, discussed practical reason, he addressed the issue as solely a form of means-end reasoning, or so tradition has it. Practical reasoning is reasoning that is pre-occupied with how one achieves a desired goal, e.g. when I want to build stairs to my terrace, I use my practical reasoning to figure out how to construe these. This notion is often contrasted with theoretical reasoning, reasoning around what is the case. A question that becomes actualized is whether the issue of how to address normative dilemmas falls within the field of practical or of theoretical reasoning. This is a question that has gotten some independent interest. However, I will not indulge in it here, but rather point out some aspects of reasoning that seem essential to the notion I work with here.

Practical reasoning in the sense I address it when it comes to decision-making cannot be solely means-ends reasoning, and neither can it be reasoning that only concerns the goals. Rather, it must be reasoning concerning facts, reasoning concerning goals, reasoning concerning practical means-ends relations, and, what needs to be stressed in this chapter, interpretative reasoning, understanding and perception. On that November evening, I needed

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to reason around what I wanted (goals), about how alternative goals could be achieved (mean-ends reasoning), and I needed to think about what the situation I found myself in really was (interpretative reasoning).

Following Berys Gaut practical reasoning ought to be specified further, however. On the one hand, there is the need for an account of the relation between motivation and reason. Practical reason, it seems, ought to be able to motivate an agent to do what it prescribes. This is the motivational aspect of reason. The second aspect according to Gaut is the relation between practical reason and the good. It is this aspect that stands in focus when the purpose is to find solutions to normative dilemmas.

Gaut continues to make a distinction between on the one hand “recognitional approaches” and on the other hand value-conferral or constructivist models. The first, which he ascribes to G. E. Moore and Aristotle, claims that practical reason should recognize what is good, while the second one that he claims is the Kantian approach suggests that practical reason makes something good. Gaut himself subscribes to the recognitional approach, an approach he claims to be “Aristotelian in spirit, though not always in letter”.

I will follow Gaut and work on a recognitional notion of practical reason. While, however, instead of stating a substantial notion of what the good is as Gaut suggests, one can heuristically assume that there is a good decision to be made in the choice situations, or so I will argue. Gaut claims that: “we can construe practical reason as the capacity to recognize and be motivated by what has objective value. […] Thus practical reason cannot be specified

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purely formally, that is, by principles that lack ineliminable reference to value, but must be specified in evaluative terms.”\(^{17}\)

Practical reasoning must be specified in evaluative terms, but it is not certain that these need to be explicitly elaborated upon as goals. Practical reason, as I will use it here, is a tool that is applied in order to find what is a good decision – there are substantial values present that applies to how the process of reasoning ought to occur, but no stated goals such as “it should identify the action that maximizes utility”, or “it should identify the virtuous act”. The one ideal of practical reasoning that matters in this article is the notion of neutrality (there are supposedly other ideals as well, but I will not discuss them here): practical reasoning ought to be applied to normative dilemmas in a way that takes the competing alternative courses of actions seriously on their own terms, and that does not bias the decision-making in favor of either alternative.

The ideal of neutrality, the idea that the reasoning methods ought not to be tacitly, or implicitly, biased toward a specific stand on what decision one ought to make is a somewhat complicated ideal to give an account of. We might not be able to pose a positive account of when a theory is neutral – but we can see when an instantiation of practical reasoning is not neutral, when neutrality is violated, and that is what we need to work with. It suffices with a negative account in order for us to be able to criticize the existing theories or methods for failing to be neutral. If it can be shown that they indeed do fail according to the standard of what they should not do, they can be claimed to be bad theories or methods, or at least have some bad aspect.

Michael Stocker has discussed what sort of ideals one can pose on reasoning methods around normative dilemmas. But he quickly bundles what I have chosen to call “neutrality” in among other ideals, namely those of completeness and practicality.\(^{18}\) He does so by saying that what is required is not only a resolution to


the normative dilemma at hand, and not only a resolution that has taken into consideration the different reasons for acting in different ways, but what is required is a resolution that takes into account the strength of the reasons for the alternative courses of actions.\footnote{Stocker, Michael (1990): \textit{Plural and Conflicting Values}, Oxford: Clarendon Press: p. 90.} I think that Stocker on this point touches upon something very important without really noticing it, and I will assign quite some weight to this idea.

The form of neutrality that Stocker asks for, or depicts as an ideal for theories of normative reasoning, is less simple than what it first can look like. And, more disturbingly, it is less easy to explicate what it is supposed to be than it first can look like. It is easy to say that one, in evaluating alternative courses of actions, should take into consideration the strength of the different considerations, or the different reasons for acting in different ways, but what does this mean?

Let us address the issue from the perspective of lack of neutrality. What would make an evaluation non-neutral? Let us look at an example from a different field. Imagine one is to evaluate what of 1) Listening to Mozart, and 2) Eating a good dinner is the greatest experience. Now, if I approach this question with a weighing goods method that does not take into account gustatory pleasure, but only sensations of serenity and calm, then the evaluation I make will be biased toward Mozart, and the reason seems to be that one of the alternatives have been diminished by the evaluation method applied. Correspondingly, if I had assessed the alternatives of either staying and help out with my friend’s driveway or try to get to the hospital to see my grandmother without taking into account the specific relationship I had with my grandmother, but treated her as any anonymous human being, my assessment would not have been neutral.

It becomes a matter of perspective. Specific perspectives will inevitably take into account, or recognize, certain aspects of the situation in question, and of the alternative courses of actions that the agent is facing. And it seems to be inevitably so that an agent adopts one and only one perspective, at least at a time. The ideal of neutrality, in these terms, translates into the idea that the per-
spective that is adopted ought to be neutral – it ought not to create biases, and it ought to take all alternative courses of actions at their full value and not diminish them.

It could be stated that there for every reason to do something is a perspective from which one can create a representation of that reason’s strength to its maximum. This is what neutrality aims at: representations of all actualized reasons to their maximums. Practical reasoning is good practical reasoning if it is neutral. However, it also seems as if even if we cannot ever find a completely neutral theory or method, then we ought to go for the theory or method that is the most neutral.

Furthermore, some things need to be said about the form that reasoning takes. In order for reasoning, theoretical and practical alike, to take place, two parts are necessary. On the one hand, the reasoning needs matter – to put it bluntly, I cannot think if there is not something to think about. On the other hand, reasoning is some kind of activity, a mental process. This is as simple as the fact that I cannot write anything if I do not write about something, in some sense of that word. I could perhaps let my fingers as randomly as possible fly over my keyboard, and a text of some form would be produced – but that is just as little writing in any interesting sense of that word as dreaming is reasoning in the sense that we are interested in here.

It is an essential part of my argument that decision-making in choice situations where one faces a normative dilemma is related both to the process of reasoning and to the matter of reasoning. The way we think about normative dilemmas is important. And the matter for reasoning that normative dilemmas represent themselves as is important. It seems to me, far too little attention has been given to the matter of reasoning.

The form of the matter of reasoning is something that can be contested. Anyone who has thought about thinking knows that it is very difficult to figure out what the matter of reasoning really consists of. Some claim that they think in terms of forms, geometrical figures or other types of forms. I myself, for example, have noticed that I more and more often tend to think in lines similar to mathematical set theory. It seems indubitable, though, that a significant part of the matter of reasoning consists of words, con-
cepts, and conceptions; in other words: language, broadly understood.

There is a conceptual model being created as an agent faces a normative dilemma, if nothing else this arises when the agent identifies the situation as a dilemma, and it is the entity that creates this model that I refer to as creative-interpretative thinking. When I received the phone call from my mother that night, as I identified the choice situation as a normative dilemma, I created a conceptual model of what it was that I faced. This conceptual model is the first step, the first matter of reasoning that the reasoning around normative dilemmas works with. It is of course not a constant, additional information can appear for example, but it is the agent’s initial encounter with the dilemma.

Following what has been ascribed to Kant, it seems “there are no percepts without concepts”.20 I cannot perceive of my grandmother’s death without having a notion of death. Perception, memory and attention are connected so that:

When we get a drink of water, we have stored in our memory a schema for how this act should proceed and the objects (glass, faucet, etc.) required to accomplish it. Our attention focuses on these objects as a part of satisfying our thirst. When we have done so, all aspects of this process are reinforced (our schemata, our sense perception, and the rewards from focusing attention).21

Furthermore, I believe the following model quite accurately captures what goes on in our lives:

Suppose a potential problem is perceived. What will determine whether a decision maker confronted by this perceived problem will “accept” the problem as important enough to devote problem-solving energy to it? […] Decision makers

construct or obtain from their cumulative experience a conceptual representation (which we call a model or a schema), against which they judge the existing situation and potential improvements of it.²²

Reasoning consists of matter and manner, and the matter matters.

The Matter of Reasoning Cannot be Objectively Assessed

The main problem with conventional approaches to normative dilemmas, methods of ethics, is that they, often tacitly, presuppose that objective, value-free representations (objective conceptual models) of what it is they are supposed to solve exist. This is clear from the basic fact that they assign no importance to this part of practical reasoning.

There are two fundamental forms in which conceptual models of facts create biases and fail to be objective. There is a potential bias arising from the fact that we have limited possibilities to grasp things. And there are situations in which alternative representations exclude each other, and where the alternatives both imply biases.

First, we as human beings have limited possibilities to take in the outside world. A very basic way of approaching this is through perceptual limitations: we simply cannot perceive everything.²³ We need to somehow decide what is relevant.²⁴ This takes different manifestations. An example that comes to mind in our days of social networking is the so-called “Dunbar number”. The Dunbar number is the theoretical cognitive limit beyond which

²⁴ This can be compared to what Hilary Putnam says about how values will always be present since we need to settle on a way to approach facts. See: Putnam, Hilary (2002): *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy and Other Essays*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press: esp. pp. 34-43.
human beings cannot any longer maintain a social relationship.\textsuperscript{25} The existence of such a limit, it seems, will quite naturally create a bias when we deal with large numbers of agents that need to be taken into consideration – or when we deal with complete strangers, even when we ourselves believe that they ought to be treated the same way as our friends. A different example of a very similar phenomenon is of course the problem that utilitarians have with generations in the future, and how much weight that ought to be assigned to these.\textsuperscript{26}

A different form of bias related to representations of facts can be exemplified by the research that lately has been done within the field of behavioral economics. This is commonly known as the problem of “framing”. Since the 1980s, economists and psychologists have studied these phenomena and time after other reached the conclusion that human beings react differently depending on seemingly arbitrary changes in the representation of facts, e.g. whether the same policy to deal with a pandemic is presented in terms of lives saved or in terms of lives lost matters for respondents’ attitudes toward it.\textsuperscript{27} Or, if one measures risk aversion and changes the nominal terms in which the alternatives are represented but let the real terms be fixed, it has been shown that


\textsuperscript{26}See, for example, Parfit, Derek (1984): \textit{Reasons and Persons}, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

people change attitudes. Look, for example at the following claims taken from empirical research on how people react to risks:

[T]he way in which a problem is formulated, including its script, presentation, and response mode, affects people’s preferences in non-normative ways. Such context dependencies raise serious questions as to the construct validity of the NM [von Neumann-Morgenstern] utility function.29

Or consider an analogy presented:

[T]he apparent distance of an object is determined in part by its clarity. The more sharply the object is seen, the closer it appears to be. This rule has some validity, because in any given scene the more distant objects are seen less sharply than nearer objects. However, the reliance on this rule leads to systematic errors in the estimation of distance. Specifically, distances are often overestimated when visibility is poor because the contours of objects are blurred. On the other hand, distances are often underestimated when visibility is good because the objects are seen sharply. Thus, the reliance on clarity as an indication of distance leads to common biases. Such biases are also found in the intuitive judgment of probability.30

The simple fact that we do react differently to different way of representing the very same relation in situations where risk aver-
sion is measured at least indicates that these issues very easily affect us as human beings, and thus affect our practical reasoning.

One aspect that is exemplified in these studies on risk is that on occasion the alternative ways of describing a dilemma are mutually exclusive, and come with biases. The nominal numbers that one chooses to describe a situation with are of course mutually exclusive in these experiments, and they do seem to affect the outcome of the decision-makers.

The conclusions drawn within the behavioral science are not very uplifting:

The present results show that even the most elementary normative principles cannot be taken as descriptively valid. Although the information presented to all participants was the same, their responses vary widely depending on the format. To ensure reasonable decisions, serious consideration must be given to the framing of the problem, and this raises the thorny question of what is the “right” way to frame the data and the decision. Should we look at public policy decisions in terms of lives saved or in terms of lives lost? Should we think of the outcomes of treatments in terms of survival rates or mortality rates? There does not seem to be a simple answer to these questions.31

These studies can be seen in the light of the research that Wittgenstein undertook on aspect perception in the end of his life.32 This can be illustrated by an example that he famously discussed in the second section of his Philosophical Investigations.33

Look at the following picture:

32 For a general discussion of this, see Budd, Malcolm (1987): “Wittgenstein on Seeing Aspects,” Mind, vol. 96, pp. 1-17
At first, the image strikes one as being the depiction, a representation, of a rabbit (or, if one happens to be so inclined: of a duck). Yet, as one continues to look at the image, as one’s perspective changes, it becomes clear that it can also be seen as a depiction of a duck (or of a rabbit, depending on what one saw at first). The picture does not change, but the way we see it in changes, as we apply different perspectives.

Now, imagine that we are supposed to describe this without knowing for certain what the relevant aspects will be. Of course we can describe it as I have described it here: “depending on one’s perspective, it looks like a rabbit or as a duck.” However, we can never describe it as both a duck and a rabbit at the same time, because we cannot perceive of it as simultaneously a duck and a rabbit.

Since it is a phenomenon that is fairly common, we should not be surprised to encounter it also in choice situations where we face normative dilemmas, something that the studies on framing done by behavioral economists and others seem to further indicate. Whether or not these phenomena will be relevant for the decision or not is another question (it is not decisive with any certainty), but facts surely are relevant sometimes, and also the description of Wittgenstein’s rabbit-duck will be highly important for someone who eats birds but not meat and sees this image on a menu in a country where she cannot communicate with the waiters.

In normative dilemmas, it seems as if the decision-maker is not in a very different situation. There are numerous ways in which a situation can be described, in terms of lives saved or in terms of lives lost for example, and the way he/she/it chooses to
represent it to him-, her-, itself, the narrative discourse that he/she/it settles upon is going to affect the decision that he/she/it eventually makes.

This is something that needs to be taken into account by decision-makers, and it is something that conventional theories and methods fail to take into account. Necessary normative biases that result from biases that are connected to the representation of facts in the choice situation and also present in the alternative courses of actions imply that objectivity is absent, as it seems that objectivity leaves when arbitrary biases enter.

Possible Biases in Representations of Norms

Above I claimed that the practical reasoning about decision making in normative dilemmas is reasoning about representations of the situation and the alternative courses of actions in it. The previous section focused on how the representations of facts can create biases. Here, I will discuss the possibility that also the representation of norms can create biases. Facts are one aspect of the situation and the alternative courses of actions; norms are of course the other relevant aspect – norms in plural, because normative dilemmas consist of at least two.

A second type of bias that seemingly can occur in situations where alternative courses of actions in normative dilemmas are to be evaluated, or reasoned around, takes place on the level of how to represent the moral, or normative, entities that are present in the dilemma and in the alternative courses of actions. It seems the very reason for why normative dilemmas occur is that the agent that faces them have a plurality of normative frameworks. This can be exemplified by how for example we reason in distinct ways around normative issues, one of which resemble deontological reasoning, and the other resembling consequentialist reasoning – a claim that is supported by contemporary research in experimental psychology.\(^4\) Or it can be seen as if values have plural


Now let us imagine that an agent has two normative frameworks, $D$ and $C$. All of a sudden she encounters a situation in which both are instantiated, and where they stand in conflict with each other – the instances $d$ and $c$ conflict. There is here a risk that $d$ and $c$ can be described in two ways, and that the two ways are mutually exclusive. It is difficult to imagine a utilitarian representation of a duty that manages to represent the duty without reducing its normative strength.

There is a possibility that in some cases, it will be unavoidable to give descriptions of the different instantiations of norms that are present that do affect the evaluation of the alternatives. This seems to be the case, for example, when instantiations of norms need to be described in terms of the norm they are instantiations of and when there are at least two competing general norms that in order not to be reduced need to describe the situation as a whole, including the alternative courses of actions.

One can here think of for example what Walter B. Gallie and later John Rawls referred to as “essentially contested concepts”, \textit{e.g.} concepts such as liberty, justice, and democracy.\footnote{Gallie, Walter B. 1956: “Essentially Contested Concepts,” in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, vol. 56, pp. 167-198. Rawls, John (1971): A Theory of Justice, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.} These concepts are characterized by being appreciating, by having a meaning the description of which by necessity would be contested, by having valuable aspects that can be ranked in different ways and by being relatively open, in the sense that the rules about their use allow for different interpretations in new situations. If I face a normative dilemma that includes on the one hand a notion of lib-

normative according to which the basis for liberty is that I am able to do what I feel like doing, and on the other hand a notion of liberty where the basis is the lack of coercive forces, and where alternative courses of actions include the realization liberty but in different ways, it is hard to see how any one representation of this problem that includes one notion of liberty can be non-biased. It seems as if either way in which I represent liberty, the representation will affect, bias, my choice, and so the way I represent liberty will be part of my actual decision-making.

Biases and Normative Dilemmas

I have tried to show that there is a risk of biases when an agent tries to reason around, or evaluate, or compare alternative courses of actions in situations that fall into the category of normative dilemmas, and that this illustrates that it is foolish to presuppose that objectivity is possible. These biases have three sources. First, there is a limit to what we can perceive: we need to discriminate, and this can cause a bias. Second, there are situations where we need to choose among mutually exclusive possible representations of facts – and this choice can be of such a nature so that it affects our decisions. Third, the normative dilemma that we face can include norms of a form that makes it impossible to represent them in one form without biasing between them.

The extension to which this possibility is realized is however questionable. It could be that this possibility is realized only in very few cases, or it could be that it happens very often. It seems to me that when it comes to normative dilemmas, this phenomenon is very common. This is related to how we identify something as a normative dilemma. When something is perceived of as a dilemma, it means that the agent does not know what to do – there are reasons in favor of a plurality of mutually exclusive alternative courses of actions. Problems with biases arise here because of the tension between the alternatives. The biases can even be the very cause of why we think of something as a dilemma.

What is needed is the most basic form of creative thinking. As we approach and process normative dilemmas, we create a conceptual model of them – and this creation is decisive of what choices we make. Perception of facts might or might not be a
good source for knowledge, but it seems indubitable that it is one of our bases for decision-making. Wittgenstein and contemporary social scientists seem to confirm what already Protagoras stated about perception, that “man is the measure of all things” – there are different ways in which we perceive of the world around us, whether we want it or not. To believe that this has no impact on our normative decision-making is foolish, and it should thus be made an integral part of practical reasoning.

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37 For this view on perception, see: Plato’s Theaetetus: 155c-157c; Plato’s Timaeus: 45b-46c, 67c-68d; and Lee, Mi-Kyoung (2005): Epistemology After Protagoras: Responses to Relativism in Plato, Aristotle, and Democritus, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Chapter Seventeen

On the Integration of the Sciences and the Humanities

Donald V. Poochigian

“Hard” and “Soft” Science.

It is (...) now profitable to review the fundamental discussions so important to epistemology, of the difficulty of separating the subjective and objective aspects of the world. Many of the abstractions that are characteristic of modern theoretical physics are to be found discussed in the philosophy of past centuries. At that time these abstractions could be disregarded as mere mental exercises by those scientists whose only concern was with reality, but today we are compelled by the refinements of experimental art to consider them seriously.¹

Werner Heisenberg’s perhaps soulful judgment reveals the mistaken character of the often made distinction between “hard” natural and “soft” social science. This differentiation assumes the human is autonomous, and the inhuman is unautonomous. The autonomous is unpredictable in part and whole, and the unautonomous is predictable in part and whole. Therefore, the human is unpredictable in part and whole, and the inhuman is predictable in part and whole.

  Human society is the human in whole. Therefore, human society is unpredictable. The social sciences study human society. Therefore, the social sciences study the unpredictable. The study

of the unpredictable is “soft.” Therefore, the social sciences are “soft.” The natural sciences study the inhuman. Therefore, the natural sciences study the predictable. The study of the predictable is “hard.” Therefore, the natural sciences are “hard.”

However, distinguishing between “hard” natural science and “soft” social science is problematic when reasoning,

Science is regarded as objective because its overall progress is determined by the structure of an institution in which the rationality of single scientists can widely influence the opinions of other scientists. This is precisely not to hold that the course of science is subject to individual control, but to hold that any man who can propose new theoretical ideas or offer new experimental data can effect a change in the beliefs of other scientists insofar as they behave rationally.2

Hereby, more are deemed more rational than less. Thus, a society is more rational than a member. Science is a society. Therefore, science is more rational than a scientist. Intersubjective human verification being at least its distinguishing method, science is a human society. Human societies are the subject matter of the social sciences. Uniformly the social sciences do not arrive at determinate conclusions. Uniformly the natural sciences do arrive at determinate conclusions. Social science is distinguished from natural science by its subject matter. Therefore, human society is inherently indeterminate. As a science, natural science is a human society. Therefore, as a human society, natural science is indeterminate.

Well, not quite assuming,

under pressure from science, we are obliged to alter and correct the common-sense picture of the world—that is, that picture embodied in the categories and concepts of everyday life—why should we also consider suggested alterations and corrections proposed by nonscientists? This question is based on the assumption that corrections forced on us by those who have observed and experimented are more likely to be compelling.2

Accepting, “we still derive our inventory of what is real from what we find it convenient to talk about,” presumably, “we find it

convenient to talk about” the “corrections forced on us by those who have observed and experimented.”

Excluding climate deniers, then, who find it inconvenient to “talk about” manmade climate change, “alterations and corrections proposed by” natural and social scientists “are more likely to be compelling” because “forced on us by those who have observed and experimented.”

Now, science studies phenomena. Distinguishing natural scientific phenomena from social scientific phenomena is the phenomenal source. Natural scientific phenomena are the constant product of a constant object. Social scientific phenomena are the inconstant product of an inconstant subject. Assuming an objectively constant environment, objective phenomena are constantly sourced. Assuming a subjectively inconstant environment, subjective phenomena are inconstantly sourced. Constantly sourced, objective phenomena are constant. Being constant, observation of objective phenomena converges as inconstancies are excluded in taken clarification. Inconstantly sourced, subjective phenomena are inconstant. Being inconstant, observation of subjective phenomena diverges as inconstancies are included in mistaken clarification.

Assuming different things are unalike because instances of a discontinuum, however, natural scientific clarification devolves into casuistic particularity. Assuming different things are alike because aspects of a continuum, however, social scientific obfuscation evolves into analogical generality. Hereby, natural science is descriptive, and social science is predictive. Integrating natural and social science by identifying social scientific behavior as the constant product of a constant subject, then, cognitive science sacrifices prediction for precision.

However, there is no necessity in natural scientific particularism since,

> at the quantum level of accuracy the entire universe (including, of course, all observers of it), must be regarded as forming a single indivisible unit with every object linked to its surroundings by indivisible and incompletely controllable quanta.

\[\text{Ibid. 100.} \]
\[\text{David Bohm,} \ Quantum Theory (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1989), 584. \]
Relevantly, imaginable interceding two objects which are perceived as alike are innumerable disjunctives transiting from most like one object to most like other. When resolving these ambiguous imagined objects, particularism proceeds exclusively, and universalism proceeds inclusively.

A fuzzy set can be defined mathematically by assigning to each possible individual in the universe of the discourse a value representing its grade of membership in the fuzzy set. This grade corresponds to the degree to which that individual is similar or compatible with the concept represented by the fuzzy set.\(^5\)

Whether science is particular or universal, then, is nominal, distinguished by the investigator’s objective.

**True and false.** Truth and falsity presuppose appearance and reality. Discarding this distinction, nothing is true or false, everything simply is. Only by introducing appearance and reality are truth and falsity introduced. Reality is a subset of appearance, determined by some epistemological criterion. Proceeding in this way, what constitutes that state of being designated “reality?”

A proposed answer lies in David Lewis’s presumption,

A worthwhile theory must be credible, and a credible theory must be conservative. It cannot gain, and it cannot deserve, credence if it disagrees with too much of what we thought before. And much of what we thought before was just common sense. Common sense is a settled body of theory - unsystematic folk theory - which at any rate we do believe; and I presume that we are reasonable to believe it. (*Most of it.*)\(^6\)

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Lewis proposes conscientiousness as the means determining common sense, “The proper test, I suggest, is a simple maxim of honesty; never put forward a philosophical theory that you yourself cannot believe in your least philosophical and most commonsensical moments.” Complication occurs when Lewis intimates conscientious judgments can differ, “The incredulous stare is a gesture meant to say that modal realism fails the test. That is a matter of judgment and, with respect, I disagree.”

Perhaps explaining this apparent confusion is Lewis’s supposition that “our world” or “this world” composes certain commonsensical assumptions “opinionated mostly about what there is in the concrete realm,” so that in the “abstract realm (...), it seems, we have license to believe in what we please.” But is distinction between the concrete and abstract so clear in common sense? In respect to what is actual, Lewis concludes, “Common sense could have made up its communal mind where the analyticity resided (...) but it had no need to settle that question, so very sensibly it didn’t bother to.” Indeed, the question of where analyticity resides is in doubt when appealing to “common sense,” bringing into question the nature of “the concrete realm.”

Nominal character of the set of all real things is exhibited considering theoretical entities. So doing, as Richard Feynman observes, despite that, “There are no ‘wheels and gears’ beneath this analysis of Nature, if you want to understand Her, this [calculating probabilities] is what you have to take,” still, “the difference between pure mathematics and physics is that the equations of physics have a conceptual component.” Distinguishing “analysis of Nature” from mathematics is supplementation of science (“calculating probabilities”) by natural philosophy (“wheels and gears below this analysis of Nature.”)

7 Ibid. 134.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid. 133.
10 Ibid. 137.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid. 99.
13 Ibid. 100.
gears’), when science supplanted natural philosophy because theoretical character of natural philosophy goes “beyond the limits of experience.”

A theoretical entity is an absolutely unobservable entity with absolutely unobservable properties, whose effects are universally observable. A phenomenal entity is an individually observable entity with individually observable properties, whose effects are universally observable. Despite equivalence of theoretical and phenomenal entities, except for their observability, identity of the unobservable theoretical entity is affirmed, and identity of the observable phenomenal entity is denied. This is when affirmation of the observation of effects of a theoretical entity by another supposes phenomenal identity of the phenomenal observation of the other, when possibility of such observation is denied by the proposition observationally affirmed. Contradictory as such, presumption of identifiable theoretical entities and unidentifiable phenomenal entities is revealed as a priori, and not a posteriori.

**Real and unreal.** Subjectivity of reality is intrinsic. Countering Alexius von Meinong’s asserting “unreal things with being (...) can be objects of knowledge,” Bertrand Russell calls for, “that feeling for reality which ought to be preserved even in the most abstract studies.” Dismissed by Russell is the conditional being of modality.

Now suppose a world of only two sets, the set of all real things and the set of all unreal things. Presented by Russell’s “whole series of other perspectives” are disjunctives of the “two perceived perspectives which are similar.” Distinguishing these disjunctive “other perspectives” is their exclusive or inclusive resolution. Exclusively resolved, $A=B$, identifies a set with sub-

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sets, a conjunctive whole of distinguishable parts constitutive of an event, such parts determining instances. Inclusively resolved, \( A = A \), identifies a set without subsets, an implicative whole of indistinguishable parts constitutive of a process, such parts determining aspects.

Identity between real and unreal being a continuum “of other perspectives,” division between them is arbitrary. At any point in this continuum, more than one element most like real or unreal thing is possible. This can be eliminated by specifying only one such element can be considered at any such point. Doing so, application of an exclusive disjunctive operator to the constituents of the continuum from real thing to unreal thing identifies them as real or unreal.

This is decided by being analogically more like real thing or more like unreal thing, but not both. Differential arguments of this functional operation are possible. Individuals can disagree conscientiously as to whether an element is more like real or unreal thing. Possibility of differential arguments of a functional operator constitutes the subjective. Therefore, identity of the set of all real things is subjective.

If science is the identity of the real, then, there is no objective definition of science. However science is defined, its limit is ambiguous, concurrently constituent of the set of all real things, and the set of all unreal things. Thus, “philosophers of science (...) today (...) tend to regard the concept of science as a family-resemblance concept—a concept that applies by virtue of many partially overlapping areas of similarity.”\(^{19}\)

Assuming science seeks to identify reality, and is not coherent, a strict scientific reductivism fails. There is an infinity of conceptions of reality, depending on where the limit between the real and unreal is drawn. Assuming sought is to identify reality, and reality is not coherent, different conceptions of reality are identifiable.

Presented are alternative coherent resolutions of scientific ambiguity to be decided by communal agreement among scientists. Just as, “At any stage in mathematics, one’s definition of ‘logically rigorous’ tends to boil down to ‘it convinces me’;
though of course a professional logician takes a lot of convincing!” so too for science.\textsuperscript{20} Thus explained is, “the disunity of science, (...) the distinct practices and standards of evidence that have emerged in different scientific communities throughout history.”\textsuperscript{21}

**Value and fact.** Illustrative of the “family-resemblance” character of science is the nature of explanation. Physics presumes a mechanic explanation. Biology presumes an organic explanation. A mechanic explanation is causal, identity as a sequential terminus. An organic explanation is functional, identity as a sequential advent. Similarity occurs when identity of a causal explanation is considered as archetypal, not monotypal, converting it into a functional explanation. Thus, an event is mechanic, and a law is organic. Insofar as physics seeks a law-like representation of experience, then, it resembles biology. Insofar as biology seeks an event-like explanation of experience, then, it resembles physics.

Membership determined by similarity to a constant archetype, a recursive set contains no subsets. Membership determined by similarity to an inconstant archetype, an iterative set contains as many subsets as archetypes. Subset membership determined by similarity to inconstant archetypes, it is determined by similarity to different archetypes. Determined by similarity to different archetypes, constituency of different subsets is different.

A constituent of an iterative set being concurrently constituent of a subset, its identity is ambiguous. Ambiguous, identity of a constituent of an iterative set is governed by the axiom of choice. Hereby, “for any set whose members are sets that are non-empty and mutually exclusive, there exists at least one set having exactly one element in common with each of the sets belonging to the original set.”\textsuperscript{22} Constituting a limit, an element is identifiable as

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constituent of a set of one, separated sets of more than one, integrated sets of more than one.

Decided by choice, resolution of the axiom of choice is nominal. Nominal, resolution of the axiom of choice is a value. A value, resolution of the axiom of choice is an “ought.” Being an “ought,” every deduction of a resolution of the axiom of choice is an “ought.” Assuming, “we still derive our inventory of what is real from what we find it convenient to talk about,” when “what we find it convenient to talk about” is an “ought,” and “what is real” is an “is,” and an “is” is a fact, then a fact is an “ought.”

There is no essential distinction between value and fact, then, fact being value. There is an accidental distinction between value and fact. Conceptually, value is primitive, and fact is derivative. Value initiates a sequence or logic; fact concludes a sequence or logic. What initiates is primitive, what concludes is derivative. If primitive, a term or proposition is an “Explicit enumeration.” If derivative, it is an explicit demonstration. Product of an enumeration is designated an “ought.” Product of a demonstration is designated an “is.”

**Mind and body.** At the foundation of the mistaken distinction between “hard” natural and “soft” social science is ascriptive identity as “real” or “unreal.” As Descartes’ three doubt generating arguments illustrate, experience is immediately indistinguishable as “real” or “unreal.” Ambiguous as such, distinction is possible only by nominal identity.

Complicating material identity is whether what is considered is diffused or fused, parts or whole, definition or proposition, is observationally unapparent. Resolving ambiguity constituting normativity, the state of matter is nominal. Empirical awareness is preferential because nominal. Preference constituting free will, empirical awareness manifests free will. Free will manifesting mind as distinct from body, materialism presupposes mind as determining body.

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23 Earle 100.
Imaginable for every set is a constitutive meta-set from which it is deduced. Mind plays this role for matter. But, also imaginable for every set are constitutive meta-elements from which it is induced. Body plays this role for mind. Exhibited is how both idealism and materialism are an exercise in Edmund Husserl’s *epoche*.

Husserl’s concept of “bracketing” is supportive of mind and body as different hypothetical entities as source of the same experience. Understanding the phenomenal as mind, and the material as body, both are constituent of the same experience, mutually accompanying a common sensation of quality. They are separated only by “bracketing,” while still remaining “like the bracketed in the bracket.”

This is explained by their being hypothetical abstractions functioning like propositional attitudes, to “believe that.” A propositional attitude is a rule postulating existence of something from which experience and behavior occurring deductively follow. Mind and body are irreducible not because of their properties (effects), which are the same, but because they are different indivisible entities following from such rules. As simple primitives, neither can compose the other.

Mind and body being abstract identities, their properties are constituent of these identities. Encompassing these properties are not perceivable differences, mind and body being perceptually indistinguishable. Sensation and hallucination, for example, have same observational content. Thus, mind and body are constituent of the same domain—consciousness—ontologically convertible as so.

To what determinism and indeterminism come is substitutability of elements in a sequence. Mind and body are alike in being abstract elements distinguished by simple identity, and in the ele-

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25 “The attempt to doubt any object of awareness in respect of it *being actually there necessarily conditions a certain suspension (Aufhebung) of the thesis;* and it is precisely this that interests us. (…) the thesis undergoes a modification—whilst remaining in itself what it is, *we set it as it were ‘out of action,’* we ‘disconnect it,’ ‘bracket it.’ It still remains there like the bracketed in the bracket, like the disconnected outside the connexional system.” Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (New York: Collier Books, 1967), 97-98.
ments with which these simple identities can be sequenced. They are unalike in substitutability of abstract elements in sequences initiated by the abstract elements.

For any sequence initiated by any abstract body of a kind, the same sequence would have occurred if initiated by another abstract body of the same kind. But for any sequence initiated by any abstract mind of a kind, the same sequence need not have occurred if initiated by another abstract mind of the same kind. Bodies of a kind are freely substitutable for one another, but minds of a kind are not. Now natural scientific laws are universal and behavioral scientific laws are particular.

**Humanities**

**Sciences and humanities.** Although the distinction between hard and soft science may breakdown, certainly the distinction between the sciences and humanities does not breakdown. As D. W. Hamlyn observes, “In the past few decades the trend has been to defend a scientific metaphysics, one according to which reality is substantially what the physical sciences say it is.”26 Science limits itself to Albert Einstein’s alleged assertion, “The only source of knowledge is experience.” Implemented is “a special method” whereby “we can experience pure reality, uncontaminated by language (...) exactly isomorphic with (...) independent reality.”27

But how completely does science satisfy “the ontological urge (...) for objectivity?”28 Although super “strings are truly fundamental, (...) should strings fail to be the final theory, [they] could be made up of yet-smaller structures.”29 Science appearing incomplete, exhibiting “the desire to say something about the ul-

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28 “Thus science, far from causing metaphysical anxiety by destroying the old orientation, provides a way of satisfying—and, for the first time in history of culture, satisfying fully and securely—the ontological urge, the urge for objectivity” (Ibid. 4).
timate meaning of life,"⁹ويد the humanities disregard Ludwig Wittgenstein’s cautionary, “Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent."⁵⁰ Postulated are “things without being, possibilities, and even impossibilities”⁵¹ which present “false worlds of myth, superstition, and fancy”⁵² contorting language into “a distorting lens through which the knower peers in vain.”⁵³

Therefore, unlike the incoherent world of the humanities, science presents the coherent world of a conservation of energy constituted by a Big Bang of vibrating dense super strings of light as particle and wave discerned by spontaneous phenomenal observation induced by material brain knowable by a possible public language only knowable by an impossible private language where unreal species undergo real evolution.

Acknowledging these scientific achievements, Hilary Putnam and Richard Rorty

have argued, in effect, that a metaphysical view based on a distinction between appearance and an underlying reality is seriously defective and that a purely ‘scientific’ metaphysics is really no better than the wilder views of a hundred years ago.⁵⁵

Exhibited is the error of “‘scientism’– an exaggerated and ideologically explainable respect for a certain mistaken image of science.”⁵⁶ Putnam clarifies the “mistaken image” of “scientism” as belief in “an algorithm, a mechanical proof procedure, that (...) might exhaustively describe or ‘rationally reconstruct’ (...) all rationality worthy of the name.”⁵⁷

⁵¹ Grossmann.
⁵² Jones 4.
⁵³ Jones 6.

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An algorithm not to be had, it is the humanities which bring order to science. Critics of the humanities assume science an institution devoid of “myth, superstition, and fancy” constituted by beings disposed to “myth, superstition, and fancy.” Incredible, an understanding of science is incomplete without an understanding of the human implementing science provided by the humanities. Presumed composing literature, history, and philosophy, identification of the means by which the humanities bring order to science proceeds by considering the contribution of each.

**Argument against the humanities.** Challenge to the significance of the humanities descends from Logical Positivism which arose in the First World War’s aftermath. Science is assumed a human social institution behaving mechanically, not organically, reducible to the mathematical representation of an algorithm. Contrastingly, the humanities are a human social institution behaving organically, not mechanically, irreducible to the mathematical representation of an algorithm. Thus,

The quantitative imperative is the view that in science, when you cannot measure, you do not really know what you are talking about, but when you can, you do, and, therefore, qualitative methods have no place in [science].

Difficulty occurs considering “qualitative methods” are axiological, because axiological identity is ordinal. Assuming ordinal identity is numeric, then “qualitative methods” are numeric. Thus,

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38 “The UK’s Education Secretary, Charles Clarke, was recently quoted as describing medieval historians as ‘ornaments’ and suggested that the state should no longer pay for their activities.” Michael Asselmeyer, “Abstract: Response to an education minister who regards history as irrelevant,” *Architectural Research Quarterly* (2003), 7: 10-11.

39 Illustratively, in the film “Minority Report,” names of future criminals are recorded on wooden balls whose grain cannot be duplicated because developing randomly in tree growth. However, challenging impossibility of an algorithm of randomness is, “(…) [a world in which induction would fail as often as lead to truth] would not be disorder, but the simplest order; it would not be unintelligible, but, on the contrary, everything conceivable would be found in it with equal frequency.” Murray G. Murphey, *The Development of Peirce’s Philosophy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1961), 345.

Logical Positivism assumes the humanities are numeric, satisfying the requirement of “The quantitative imperative.” Now discrimination between the sciences and humanities can occur only if the sciences are cardinal and the humanities are ordinal, and “when you cannot measure [cardinally], you do not really know what you are talking about.” But this will not do.

Arithmetic is cardinal; geometry is ordinal. Since “Descartes (...) showed (...) every geometrical result could be turned into an algebraic result,”\(^\text{41}\) cardinality and ordinality can “be turned into” one another. This occurs by mapping either to the other because they are observationally indistinguishable. As observationally indistinguishable, cardinality and ordinality are interpretations of the same observational experience. That experience being indistinguishable, it is ambiguously cardinal or ordinal. Resolution of ambiguity being normativity, identity as cardinal or ordinal is normative. Therefore, both scientific and humanistic relation is normative.

Quantity being a relationship, when unrelated elements are observationally indistinguishable from related elements, quantity is not directly perceivable.\(^\text{42}\) Because not directly perceivable, quality is perceivable by “the mediation of ideas.” Therefore, by analogy, quantity is not directly perceivable; it is perceivable by “the mediation of ideas.” What “we perceive (...) directly” is real; what we do not “perceive (...) directly” is unreal. Therefore quantity is unreal.

Both quantity and quality are nominal. As nominal, they are subject to the same determinants. Now science and the humanities are indistinguishable as sources of knowledge. Distinction only occurs in the knowledge provided.

**Argument against literature.** Well summarizing the argument against literature is John Henry Newman who:

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\(^\text{42}\) “Mathematics, post-Gödel, is very similar: There are many different things we could mean by the word ‘number,’ all of which will be perfectly compatible with our axioms.” Jordan Ellenberg, “Does Gödel Matter?” *Slate*, Posted Thursday, March 10, 2005, at 4:27 AM Pacific Time, http://slate.msn.com/id/2114561/.
wrote in a sermon entitled ‘The Danger of Accomplishments’ that ‘[t]here are those persons who doubt whether what are called “accomplishments,” whether in literature or in the fine arts, can be consistent with a deep and practical seriousness of mind.’ The ‘danger,’ Newman supposed, was that liberal learning threatened to separate feeling from acting, that after reading a novel, ‘We have nothing to do; we read, are affected, softened or roused, and that is all: we cool again — nothing comes of it.’

**The genetic argument.** Something “comes of” science because a physical manifestation of phenomenal experience is essential to it since sensation is private, even if shared. Specific sensory experience constitutes scientific verification in an axiomatically constrained environment, assuming it would be shared by any other human sharing “normal” human sensory organs in the same environment. Science is inherently democratic in this way.

Provided is the criterion of testimonial knowledge. Social interaction is a condition of human species identity. Species sustaining species identity, the human species sustains social interaction. Human species social interaction is consensual. Probity is necessary for consensual human species social interaction. A species characteristic being sustained genetically, the human species sustains probity genetically. Probity constituting a set of characteristics, the human species sustains probity characteristics genetically.

Probity and prevarication share some characteristics, constituting ambiguous probity characteristics. All probity characteristics being shared by prevarication, probity is indistinguishable from prevarication, probity not existing. Social interaction being a criterion of human species identity, and probity being necessary for consensual human species social interaction, probity exists.

Therefore some probity characteristics are not shared by prevarication, these being unambiguous probity characteristics. Such characteristics are necessary for consensual human species social interaction resolving ambiguous probity characteristics. Thus, the

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human species sustains unambiguous probity characteristics genetically.

Geneticists observe,

When we examine the living world, we see (...) individual organisms are visually clustered into collections that resemble one another more or less closely and are clearly distinct from other clusters.\textsuperscript{44}

Species being nominal—"resemble one another more or less closely"—then species characteristics are nominal, determined by axiomatic truth functions. A truth function identifying species as real, and evolution identified as constituent of the species, then no property being shared by every species member is explainable as incomplete evolution. Accommodation is made by generally shared properties, designating their being absent abnormal, a pathological state. Following St. Augustine, an absent trait is presumed existing \textit{en potencia}, assuming induction within an evolutionary convergent universe constrained by conservation of energy.

\textbf{The testimonial argument.} Science is a social activity in which observational verification is distinguishing. Observation is private. "In what sense are my sensations \textit{private}?—Well, only I can know whether I am really in pain; another person can only surmise it."\textsuperscript{45} Being private, observation is knowable by testimonial knowledge. Because biological social creatures, presumably the criterion of testimonial knowledge has evolved in biological manifestation to foster social interaction.

These criteria are learned in human interaction, which practically has limited extent. Its primary extension is storytelling, which introduces private and public manifestations of human character in diverse circumstances, facilitating judgment of the probity and prevarication of human testimony. Indeed ambiguity


renders science storytelling, composing possible worlds made coherent by history and philosophy.

**Argument against History**

There are at least two arguments against history, the economic and scientific arguments.

The **economic argument.** Underlying rejection of the significance of history is an economic argument at whose foundation is the assumption of free will. Presumed is, "we can very freely call to mind (...) propositional (...) content," mind being "an active capacity, in that we can, within limits, employ it successfully at will." Accepting this, economic productivity is unconstrained by entropy.

Value being determined by exchange, then thought has value insofar as it is exchanged for another good, establishing intellectual property. Thought being emergent, something "we can very freely call to mind (...) successfully at will," it can increase unlimitedly. Exchange determining economic value, economic value can increase unlimitedly.

Thought as necessarily evolutionary is bound by the conservation of energy. Conservation of energy is evolutionary, the past determining the present by its disposition prior to its transmutation into its current form. Emergent, however, thought is undetermined. Descendent, matter is determined. Thus, understanding thought as necessarily determined by the past is a category error, confusing the immaterial with the material. The material is necessarily bound by the past, the immaterial is not, although it can be.


47 Audi 119.

48 Ushered in is Ron Suskind’s report of a 2004 conversation with an aide to President Bush who, said that “guys like me were in what we call the reality-based community,” which he defined as people who ‘believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality.’ I nodded and murmured something about enlightenment principles and empiricism. He cut me off. “That’s not the way the world really works anymore,” he continued.
Even assuming humans can freely alter their understanding, they are still disposed to not do so. Asserting African Americans have been taught “the wrong habits,” Newt Gingrich, Ph.D. history and former speaker of the United States House of Representatives, intimates this. Just as African Americans can have “the wrong habits,” others can have “the wrong habits.” And although humans might be able to spontaneously alter their understanding, they are more likely to do so when aware of the manner of their understanding. Indeed, this was fundamental to early analytic philosophers for whom, “The task of philosophy (...) is to replace false or mistaken assertions about the nature of reality by true ones, attained by means of rigorous analysis.”

The scientific argument. History is irrelevant unless identifying the truth. Identifying the false, history is irrelevant. The truth being eternal, that it was identified historically is irrelevant. Therefore history is irrelevant.

Challenge to eternal scientific truth occurs considering, The Criterion Argument. We cannot distinguish truth from falsity without a criterion or rule. Of course, that criterion has to

“We’re an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you’re studying that reality — judiciously, as you will — we’ll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that’s how things will sort out. We’re history’s actors (...) and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do.” Ron Suskind, “Faith, Certainty and the Presidency of George W. Bush,” The New York Times Magazine, October 17, 2004.


Deep-seated racial misgivings could cost Barack Obama the White House if the election is close, according to an AP-Yahoo News poll that found one-third of white Democrats harbor negative views toward blacks — many calling them ‘lazy,’ ‘violent’ or responsible for their own troubles.” Poll: Racial views steer some away from Obama: One-third of polled white Democrats harbor negative views toward blacks,” Associated Press, updated 10:04 a.m. CT, Sat., Sept. 20, 2008, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/26803840/.

Jones 93.
be true. Either we have no reason to think (...). It is true or we must introduce a second criterion that guarantees its truth. We have entered on an infinite regress.\textsuperscript{52}

Only, “In the (...) so-called axiomatic method, [where] an arbitrary, usually finite, set $X$ of sentences—an axiom system—is given,” is “an infinite regress” avoided.\textsuperscript{53} So doing, science proceeds by “peaceful interludes punctuated by intellectually violent revolutions” whereby “one conceptual world view is replaced by another.”\textsuperscript{54} Proceeding thus, though, there is no necessity in a complete break. Axioms of a science are likely to contain elements inherited from previous axiomatic conceptions, engendering “the distortions, the presuppositions, the built-in ‘evasions’ of” preceding axiomatic conceptions.\textsuperscript{55} Unaware of history, the concealed contradictions of an inherited scientific language remain unexposed.

Assuming science an axiomatic system whose limit is contiguous with the set of all non-science, contradiction occurs. This renders the limit of science ambiguous, constituent and not constituent of the set of science. Free will constituting resolution of ambiguity, then are integrated the economic and scientific arguments against the humanities. Science cannot constitute a determined world because its own limit is indeterminate.

Same phenomenon is understandable in different ways. Ambiguous, different scientists can resolve the indeterminacy differently. However resolved, the limit is ambiguous. Different scientists can resolve this indeterminacy differently, etc., scientists increasingly diverging in their understanding of science. Resolution is a unified definition of science, evolving from existing defini-

\textsuperscript{55} Jones 6.
tions, inheriting aspects of those definitions in no necessary manner.

Perhaps, but however so, science “works.” Pragmatically it is successful. Not always, though, sometimes it fails. Indeed, every empirical occurrence being unique, law might be thought impossible. Inconsiderate of one another, neither is their necessity in individual bargains being cumulatively consistent. Presuming cumulative consistency commits the fallacy of composition.

Accommodating failure by qualification, scientific laws are rendered “necessary” by casuistry, rule skepticism defeated. Still, science does not work for all. The economic solution is agreement; the scientific solution is qualification. Agreement is qualification, eliminating disagreement by qualification unto agreement, setting a limit acceptable to relevant individuals. Integrated is science and economics. Being a human social activity, science is reducible to human social interaction.

**Argument against Philosophy**

Concerned with identifying the objects of its sub-disciplines, philosophy is understandable as ontology. Implementing Russell’s program for a focus on “reality,” Keith Campbell concludes by best explanation, the philosophical inquiry takes its material from the sciences.”

Then asserting, “physiology is just a specially complicated branch of chemistry and physics—and chemistry in its turn reduces to physics,” Campbell introduces the supervenience of scientific reductivism. Thus assuming, “The content of the claim that an object is material is relative to the physics of the time it is made. This [is the] Relativity of materialism,” Campbell concludes, “What the claim to materiality amounts to changes as physics changes,” when “physics changes from one year to the next.”

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56 Ibid. 16.  
57 Ibid. 17.  
58 Ibid. 16.
On the Integration of the Sciences and the Humanities

The precision argument. Often asserted is, “Philosophers (...) will agree in nothing among themselves, and never unite but to dispute.”69 After all,

We can’t define anything precisely. If we attempt to, we get into that paralysis of thought that comes to philosophers (...) one saying to the other: ‘you don’t know what you are talking about!’ The second one says: ‘what do you mean by talking? What do you mean by you? What do you mean by know?’60

In contrast, science “works,” supplanting philosophy, despite that,

The essential feature of science was not its verifiability, but its falsifiability. Maybe science can’t be proved. But what makes it different from other modes of thought is its openness to experimental disproof.61

Hereby in,

modern times, (...) people started to ask questions of philosophy and wonder if it was good for anything given the apparent success of science; even philosophers began to insist that the experimental method was the only way to answer questions about the world and that philosophy could no longer be thought of as anything but idle speculation.62

Thus, supplanting philosophers’ inability to agree is scientists’ inability to prove.

The reality argument. Why “Philosophers (...) never unite but to dispute,” though, lies in the problematic nature of a strict adher-
ence to reality. Russell presumed the “theory of types” whereby type to “next (…) type” identity occurs by mapping set to set, David Hilbert’s “subject matter under study and discourse about the subject matter.” Thus, “One must at all times be able to replace ‘points, lines, planes’ by ‘tables, chairs, beer mugs’.” A set is only identifiable by mapping to another set, Wittgenstein making this explicit with, “the sign for a function already contains the prototype of its argument, and it cannot contain itself.”

Now suppose a world of only two sets, the set of all real things and the set of all unreal things. To deny the set of all unreal things, as Russell does when dismissing Meinong, then the set of all real things is unidentifiable when assuming the theory of types. Only by mapping to the set of all unreal things is the set of all real things identifiable. This proceeds with “a ‘model’ (or ‘interpretations’) for the abstract postulates of a system, so that each postulate is converted into a true statement about the model.”

Here arises “Frege’s Puzzle: how, if true, can ‘A=B’ differ in cognitive significance from ‘A=A’?” Tautology identifying something as itself, and the equals sign “=” indicating tautological

63 “(…) the very meaningfulness of sentences which try to speak about the membership of entities in sets other than those of the next (…) type. According to the theory of types, sentences which attempt to do so are neither true nor false, but are logically ill-formed: they are nonsensical sentences.” Stephen F. Barker, Philosophy of Mathematics (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), 86.

64 Nagel and Newman 31.

65 Carl B. Boyer, A History of Mathematics, second edition (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1991), 610. For a more extended discussion of this episode, see Stewart Shapiro, Thinking about mathematics: The philosophy of mathematics (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 151: “One result of this orientation is that anything at all can play the role of the undefined primitives of points, lines, planes, and so on, so long as the axioms are satisfied. Otto Blumenthal reports that, in a discussion in a Berlin train station in 1891, Hilbert said that in a proper axiomatization of geometry “one must always be able to say, instead of ‘points, straight lines, and planes’, ‘tables, chairs, and beer mugs.’” (see Hilbert 1935: 388-429; the story is related on p. 403) As for the Hilbert citation, refer to David Hilbert, (1935) Gesammelte Abhandlungen, Dritter Band (Berlin, Springer).

66 Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, nt. 3.333, 17.

67 Nagel and Newman 15-16.

identity, how can the tautological identity “A=B” differ from the tautological identity “A=A?” Acknowledging this puzzle, Wittgenstein concedes “I can’t myself say quite clearly yet what tautologies really are.”69 Russell echoes, “For the moment, I do not know how to define ‘tautology.’”70

Observing, between two perceived perspectives which are similar, we can imagine a whole series of other perspectives, some at least unperceived, and such that between any two, however similar, there are others still more similar. In this way the space which consists in relations between perspectives can be rendered continuous, wittingly or unwittingly, Russell points the way to “what tautologies really are.”76

Presented by “a whole series of other perspectives” are disjunctives of the “two perceived perspectives which are similar.” Distinguishing these disjunctive “other perspectives” is their exclusive or inclusive resolution. Exclusively resolved, A=B, identifies a set with subsets, a conjunctive whole of distinguishable parts constitutive of an event, such parts determining instances. Inclusively resolved, A=A, identifies a set without subsets, an implicative whole of indistinguishable parts constitutive of a process, such parts determining aspects.

Identity between real and unreal being a continuum “of other perspectives,” division between them is arbitrary. If science is the identity of the real, there is no objective definition of science. However science is defined, its limit is ambiguous, concurrently constituent of the set of all real things and the set of all unreal things. Assuming science seeks to identify reality, and is not coherent, Campbell’s strict scientific reductivism fails. There is an infinity of conceptions of reality, depending on where the limit between the real and unreal is drawn. Assuming philosophy seeks to identify reality, and reality is not coherent, philosophers map

different conceptions of reality, which is why “Philosophers (…) will agree in nothing among themselves.” Presented are alternative coherent resolutions of scientific ambiguity to be decided by communal agreement among scientists. Just as, “At any stage in mathematics, one’s definition of ‘logically rigorous’ tends to boil down to ‘it convinces me’; though of course a professional logician takes a lot of convincing!” so too for science.\footnote{Ian Stewart, \textit{Concepts of Modern Mathematics} (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1995), 9.}

\textbf{Conclusion}


Assuming the Cartesian distinction between appearance and reality, there is, “the difficulty of separating the subjective and objective aspects of the world.” Assuming the Augustinian distinction between infinity and finity,

at the quantum level of accuracy (…) to give all parts of the world a completely quantum-mechanical description, a person (…) would then have to regard himself as something connected inseparably with the rest of the world.\footnote{Bohm 585.}

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Only on the classical Cartesian conception do the natural and social sciences present a “distorted discourse between inner and outer selves.”

Integrating “the subjective and objective aspects of the world” necessarily incorporates the humanities into the sciences. Literature determines the epistemological content of science. Science being a social activity, testimonial knowledge determines the truth or falsity of its conclusions. Literature being a fundamental means of determining testimonial knowledge, it is essential to science. History and philosophy determine the ontological content of science.

Necessarily there is no necessary resolution of ambiguity. Science being a social activity, its content is requisitely determined by consensus of scientists in contextually unique circumstances. Dependent on participant values, which are accidental, there is no necessity in consensuses in different circumstances being consistent. Unidentified and resolved, inconsistencies of circumstantially unique social consensuses accumulate. History reveals inconsistencies of past resolutions of ambiguities; philosophy reveals consistencies of current resolutions of ambiguities.
Chapter Eighteen

Short Notes for a Meta-Gnoseological Analysis of the Problem of Scientific Objectivism in Husserl’s *The Crisis of the European Sciences*¹

Roberto Sifanno

*The Crisis of European Sciences*² is most certainly one of the books that established itself as a mandatory point of critical debate on the problem of objectivism and naturalism throughout the twentieth century. In this paper, however, we will use its “doctrinal” content to talk about the “specific approach” that Husserl’s text implements with the problem of the origin of scientific objectivism.

By engaging in a meta-gnoseological analysis of *The Crisis*, we intend to show how the actual thematic core of the Husserlian problem of scientific objectivism may be found behind those gnoseological and ethical matters more closely considered in the book. It could be objected that in *The Crisis* strong ethical remarks can be found that are almost ideological in their form of anti-modernist spirit. Nonetheless, we believe it is appropriate to highlight how the book’s phenomenological concept possesses the theoretical effectiveness for approaching the problem we are discussing in the framework of a critical analysis of the subject. In phenomenological terms, we could say that Husserl makes the

¹ I would like to thank Asher Kramer and Angela Arnone for comments on draft sections of this paper.
effort to regain the *intentional space* in which the problem itself might have originated in its initial form.

The advantage of approaching the issue (of scientific objectivism) in a phenomenological way is one which phenomenology has always claimed as its own peculiar feature: rather than starting from a conceptual a posteriori analysis (from what is already constituted), the phenomenologist understands the latter from its intentional structures.

This main principle of phenomenology is at the center of Husserl’s analysis from the start and we can see it fully developed before *The Crisis*, in the systematic analysis of the constitution of the idealities of consciousness, whether this be passive or active. Nevertheless, in *The Crisis*, this principle has the theoretical ambition of making clear not only the intentional space of the cogito and its idealities, here with concepts like *Lebenswelt* and *Ur-ich*, but also with the intentional space of two important historical events: *the origin of ideal geometry* and *the origin of modern physics*. These two events are directly linked to the problem of scientific objectivism.

In *The Crisis*, Husserl develops this intuition: if sciences (natural sciences above all and physics in particular, as it is considered the quintessential science of the world around us) generated the superstition of a true world in itself, independent from the subject (which, in fact, they do and continue to do), it is because they have progressively lost contact with the *limits that their gno-seological foundation gave them along with their tasks*. Therefore, according to Husserl, it becomes necessary to go back to the origins of modern physics and of ancient geometry to understand the meaning of those operations that gave science its peculiarity, in other words its accuracy.

Why is it necessary to consider the origin of geometry? What bond links modern physics with ancient geometry? For the first time in the history of Western civilization, geometry produced pure ideal objects, exact in themselves, that Galileo inherited and re-elaborated into modern physics, symbolized by the most representative image of scientific objectivism: “the great book of Nature, written in mathematical symbols.” To be clear, Husserl does not refuse to acknowledge the methodological use of Galileo’s physics nor does he dispute its theoretical and experimental value.
He does, however, dispute the shift from a methodological hypothesis (Nature can be studied through mathematics and geometry) to an ontological hypothesis (Nature is in its true form when written with mathematical and geometrical symbols).

Husserl’s intentions, consequently, are to explore the nature of Galileo’s main hypothesis and thereby understand which intentional operations generated the unorthodox ontology of Nature that, after Galileo, transformed into the dogma that “Nature is true in itself regardless of the investigating subject”. Right from the beginning of his research into Galileo, Husserl understood that if Galileo could make such an hypothesis, it was only because he inherited geometry that, within certain limits, he was able to apply in his studies of natural phenomena. This led Husserl to study the origin of ancient geometry, which is one core of Husserlian analysis of the origin of scientific objectivism as – along with mathematics – it is the first science to bring the idea of a universal validity of its objects. In this light, we would like to linger on an issue at the origin Husserl’s analysis.

To introduce such a problem, we must first see how, according to Husserl, the origin of objectivism stems from geometry – the origin of objectivism has its historical beginning with the origin of geometry. At this level one could find it more appropriate to study the origin of objectivism (in its link with geometry) in its historical import, rather than on its phenomenological one. Of what use – it might be asked – could Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology be in this case?

 Commentators who highlight the absence of historical analysis in Husserl’s investigations underrate what we could define as the most fundamental philosophical act of The Crisis. We believe that the act – or approach – we are about to introduce originated precisely from this question: how is it possible to engage in a historical analysis (but which, at the same time, is not merely historiographical) in correlation to a subjective-phenomenological dimension? It might not seem like an important issue, but it is. In fact, according to Husserl, we cannot take up the problem of scientific objectivism from the objective plane of historical facts; rather, we must place the problem on the only terrain that is valid and evident from a phenomenological standpoint. Even so, is the methodological clarification of the latter question not the first
matter to discuss in order to see the path towards an analysis of the problem of scientific objectivism, as well as the opportunity to recognize its own contradictions? This is the approach we will pursue in this paper.

We mentioned how the phenomenological problem of the origin has subjectivity rather than history as its starting point. By focusing on an implicit and yet decisive act present throughout The Crisis we should acquire more knowledge on the subject. This philosophically fundamental act consists of entrusting the two canonical figures of the history of science with two great counterparts in the realm of “subjectivity”, to paraphrase a well-known passage in The Crisis.\(^3\) These two figures are: “the first ideal geometer” and “Galileo Galilei.”

The shift towards such “subjective figures” is necessary in order to analyze the “historical” dimension of the matter at hand, without losing sight of intentional operations, which are transcendental and provide the phenomenological evidence needed for the analysis.

This conceptual shift moves our analysis from the historical figures of Galileo and Euclid (if Euclid can actually be considered the first “ideal geometer”), or on broader terms from what in history of science is called internal and external history, to the intentional history of consciousness, i.e. the history of the formation of sediments of the ego.

According to Husserl, the task is to regain sight of the origin of scientific objectivism by looking at the history of such sediments, which belong primarily to our subjectivity and in general to the history of Western peoples – to their wesen, as Heidegger would have put it.\(^4\)

Explicating this reduction to the “subjective figures” of the main themes of the origin of ancient geometry and modern physics should finally clarify the initial question on the special relation between Husserl’s book and the problem of the origin of scientific objectivism. We may momentarily put aside the answer and ask ourselves instead: what is the relationship between ourselves, the

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3 E. Husserl, The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology, p. 36
first ideal geometer, and Galileo? In other words, what is the relationship between the origin of scientific objectivism and our current condition?

If we analyze in more detail what we could label the “history of scientific innovation”, we must differentiate, as Husserl does, the static from the dynamic aspect. The latter is the “material” progress of sciences, the actual growth in theoretical and practical results. It is the history of all discoveries in the fields of geometry and physics, from Euclid to Riemann, from Aristotle to Einstein.

In the history of science thus understood, we should also consider epistemological fractures, paradigmatic crises, and outright conceptual revolutions (for instance, non-Euclidean geometries or heliocentric theory) that deeply modified both the scopes and the objects of science itself.

Now, according to Husserl, the historical development of scientific innovation exemplified by geometry is linked to a pervasive invariable meaning that will give foundation not to the theoretical sense of its objects (with regard to geometry), the properties that make them objects, but rather to the universal “objective” validity of geometry itself: “The Pythagorean theorem, [indeed] all of geometry exists only once, no matter how often or even in what language it may be expressed.”

Every geometrical – or in general theoretical-scientific – object beyond its specific technical properties also acquires the possibility of infinite reactivation (of its meaning). This means the possibility of its being understood transcends the anthropological limit of the context in which it was discovered.

Husserl’s intuition is particularly apt for the origin of geometry if, for example, we take primitive geometrical concepts such as the point, the straight line and the plane. These ideal objects can be reactivated an infinite number of times and repeated by the first ideal geometer as well as being accessible “to the actual and possible mathematicians of all peoples, all ages.”

Thus, if we can reactivate and understand the meaning of geometry’s ideal objects in the same way they were discovered, we

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5 E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, p. 357
6 E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, p. 356
can also claim, according to Husserl, that between our ego and the origin (of geometry) there is a direct relationship, since every time we activate the meaning of a geometrical or physical object, we directly replicate the operation that at origin founded the value of truth in geometry (if this were not the case, we would have as many geometries as historical periods that hand them down).

If a difference can actually be found between the replica and the operation that first generated ideal meaning in geometry, it is only a matter of degrees in the symbolic-intuitive intensity. It is apparent, Husserl writes, that Galileo’s operations and those of the first ideal geometer were still attached to the symbolic-intuitive sphere. It is only through the act of historical transmission that the symbolic strength of the first operations crystalized, transforming itself into an unconscious reply. In particular, Husserl characterizes what Derrida later called the dissimulation of the origin: “These ruptures, which at the same time are unveilings, (and also covering up, for the origin dissimulates itself immediately beneath the new domain of uncovered or produced objectivity).”7 In the shift from words to writing, “the writing-down effects a transformation of the original mode of being of the meaning-structure, [e.g.] within the geometrical sphere of self-evidence, of the geometrical structure which is put into words. It becomes sedimented, so to speak. But the reader can make it self-evident again, can reactivate the self-evidence.”8

Writing would then empty the symbolic-intuitive power of geometrical idealization entrusting it with a new body that, being written, keeps within itself only the object which is already constituted, not the operation which constituted it. In other words, according to Husserl, the initial creative power from the discovery is nullified by the objectification made by writing about the geometrical object that happens outside the inventor’s consciousness. The results of this initial process are a series of (geometrical) products ready to be used, self-evident in their technical definitions (the definition of the straight line, point, plane etc.), but no longer visible in their original foundation.

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8 E. Husserl, The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology, p. 361
This lack of visibility is responsible for the lack of objectivism in modern science, at least according to the famous definition of Nature given by Galileo:

“Philosophy [i.e. physics] is written in this grand book – I mean the universe – which stands continually open to our gaze, but it cannot be understood unless one first learns to comprehend the language and interpret the characters in which it is written. It is written in the language of mathematics, and its characters are triangles, circles, and other geometrical figures, without which it is humanly impossible to understand a single word of it; without these, one is wandering around in a dark labyrinth.”

Having clarified the main themes of Husserl’s argument of scientific objectivism, we would now like to consider two less clear points in this discussion: the first is the role of writing and the second is the role of the phenomenological subject and its recovery of (lost?) origin. In other words, our initial question on the relationship between the figures of Galileo and Euclid.

Let us start with the first question, which will lead us directly to the second. What is the problem of writing in Husserl’s argument? As Sini rightfully states, Husserl considers writing to be akin to a refrigerator. Writing would empirically maintain eidetic structures like geometry, allowing their divulgation beyond the anthropological contest of discovery. If Galileo was able to found modern physics, it was simply because he inherited a geometry handed down through history.

However, what Husserl really means to say when writing is mentioned is not so clear. On one hand, writing could modify an ideal object already existing in the mind of the inventor; on the other, writing could provide a new status of validity, making such objects objective. What do we mean by “objective”? Derrida, in his well-known essay Edmund Husserl’s “Origin of Geometry”: An Introduction, tries to answer these questions. Derrida claims (forcing Husserl’s text into saying what it does not really mean) that it cannot be fair to say that writing nullifies the symbolic-

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10 For this, see C. Sini, Scrivere il fenomeno, Morano, Napoli 1999, p. 213
intuitive strength of geometrical self-evidence. Conversely, writing frees such power from the empirical bond of the original linguistic community, i.e. from the bodily bonds of the linguistic living body (Sprach-leib), making it available as a universal theory.

Writing would then have an archetypical (taking note of all the philosophical implications of this term for Derrida) and a constitutive role, since it is the conditio sine qua non for access to geometry beyond the historical limits of its context of discovery. Derrida, reading the problems related to writing, thus wants to correct Husserl’s empirical blunder, committed right at the end of his life: he considered writing not as an element inside the transcendental field of work of phenomenology, but as just another empirical fact.

The fact is – we could say, and not without irony – that Husserl was not aware that phenomenology, right at the end of its programmatic scope of “transcendentalization” of the world, was leaving the world yet another fact that, as Derrida would probably say, gives solid grounding to Husserl’s whole transcendental enterprise (his ideal to clarify once and for all the genesis of eidetic structures), and that is writing.

If we were to ask Derrida if rational genealogy (like that used by Husserl) could be of any use to reach this origin, his answer would simply be “no”. The act of writing actually consumes the origin itself, its logos, making its genesis phenomenologically inaccessible. This is the debt Derrida pays to Heidegger (there is an origin that simultaneously reveals and hides itself, being the event of an alterity irreducible to the faculties of the transcendental ego). Writing for Derrida is not something “to be constituted”, according to phenomenology’s well-known saying (the world is something to be constituted or reconstituted for consciousness), but rather something “to deconstruct” through the philosophical method that takes the name of “deconstruction.”

The answer Husserl would give us, of course, is different. What is The Crisis if not the failed attempt to make this recovery of the origin rationally accessible?

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If for Derrida the origin demeans itself through writing (and by that giving birth to its history; e.g. the history of geometry), for Husserl, as we have already seen, what is fully humbled, or rather, absorbed within writing, is solely the self-evidence of the eidetic structure which, however, can always be reactivated.

The possibility of reactivation depends on the subject’s possibility of reawakening that same origin, something that Derrida would have denied. According to Husserl, to reawaken the origin means to regain a phenomenological method on the same subjective plane that is capable of relating to such a problem. This is the problem that brings us back to the first difficulty we encountered. It is as important to analyze the issue of scientific objectivism (from a historical point of view) as it is to show the method with which we can access its problematic nature. Husserl did not ignore this problem nor did he underrate its importance. As a matter of fact he writes: “But this knowledge, if it is not to remain empty talk or undifferentiated generality, requires methodical production, proceeding from the present and carried out as research in the present.”

Husserl here is writing precisely about the capacity of the subject to return to the origin of their knowledge, but this capacity is first of all an act the subject performs on themselves. For Husserl, reawakening what is “historically dormant” does not mean recovering a particular historical event if it has been forgotten by tradition, in the same way a philologist could find an ancient book, analyze its content and make it available to a community of scholars.

The point is that the recovery of the founding operations leads to a phenomenological understanding of that origin which does not show itself in a history supposedly independent from us.

However, according to Husserl, this does not imply a real inclusion of historical events regarding the origin of geometry or modern physics in our consciousness, but a “phenomenological inclusion” of those founding operations which, at the beginning, could constitute geometry’s idealities and then, with Galileo, the “exact” structures of Nature. The historical events of the origin of

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13 E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, p. 371
geometry or modern physics are thus not present in (our) subjectivity, yet the fundamental operations are, in the way we illustrated above. The methodological act performed by Husserl, mentioned at the beginning of our essay should now be clear and it is the same act that transformed the historical themes of the origin of geometry or modern physics into “subjective” figures. These figures are not the historical Galileo and Euclid, nor explanatory figures or even personalities of a Zeitgeist we need to recall. We, considered as possible scientists, are yet again the first ideal geometer and the first modern physicist. Gaining access to the ideal task of science we (re)constitute – yet again – the specific status of those objects repeating its operations directly. As Husserl wrote, feedback from these operations “could stay latent for factual reasons”, i.e. not be visible. To make these operations visible is the main task of phenomenology as presented in The Crisis. This is not the same, for instance, as psychoanalytical reawaking from a certain unconscious (some kind of Western collective unconscious containing the original operations of scientific thought now forgotten). The historical events correlated to the origin of objectivism are not real operations in our unconscious nor are objective and historical facts. Latency of meaning-giving operations we had to perform at least once in our own lives to understand the meaning of geometrical objects must be reconsidered, or rather, phenomenologically reconstituted. Still, is the phenomenological reconstitution of this history not what Husserl defines in The Crisis with the thematic label of Lebenswelt? In so doing, Husserl wants to show which future tasks of a “new” science are willing to give a new (phenomenological) foundation to the (latent) building of knowledge of the contemporary man as if it were a new beginning of knowledge itself. This is, however, another story: “The following reflections will show how much such material is needed when we no longer move on the old familiar ground of the world but rather stand, through our transcendental reduction, only at the gate of entrance to the realm, never before entered, of the “mothers of knowledge.””\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{14} E. Husserl, \textit{The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology}, p. 153
References


Economy and Culture
Chapter Nineteen

The Gap between Post-Modern Ideology and Achieving Social Justice: Britain as a Case Example.

Noreen Abdullah-Khan

Post-modern sociology in the industrialized core has focused on civil rights, equal opportunities, supported with movements such as feminism and multiculturalism. Globalization and free-market economies have led to cultural goals being increasingly difficult to attain. However, due to the pressure towards scientism, it is increasingly difficult for social scientists to assess the effects of such strain upon society, without being dismissed for a lack of objectivity. A value-free objective approach to analyzing the real world has resulted in disconnect to that real world.

Britain has committed itself to principles of social justice for all, trying to create an egalitarian society in which human rights, equality of opportunities and the dignity of every human being is duly considered and strived for. The establishment of the Welfare system of 1945 and progressive taxation are indicators of this commitment. The country has been pursuing progressive anti-poverty and social inclusion policies. The core principles of all major competing political parties have aimed for this egalitarianism. However, the responsibility for achieving social justice has been controversial. The far right for example, has argued that social justice can be best achieved by promoting individualism and economic competitiveness. The notion here is that with individual rights comes individual responsibility, for achieving social justice, and this has been the mantra of far right parties. In contrast, the left approach, particularly New Labor, was to focus on the deep-
ening inequality and poverty in the UK, with the responsibility being on the state to lessen the gap and provide equal life chances to all. However, despite its rhetoric, it has been clear that social justice cannot be achieved merely by redistribution amongst the poor – the huge disparities in income and wealth remain a key element of Britain’s inability to achieve social justice. In assessing the current position of Britain, this paper draws from the findings of a report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) entitled ‘How Fair is Britain’, published in October 2010. Social Justice for all is assessed in terms of Life, Legal and Physical Security, Health, Education, Employment, Standard of Living, Care and Support, and Power and Voice. This paper seeks to explore the relationship between these categories and that of Gender, Ethnicity, Age and Socio-Economic Status (SES). An assessment of the findings of this report in these areas is indicative of the successes of Britain in achieving a fairer society as well as highlighting its shortfalls.

The Experiences of Women in Britain

The importance of gender equality to maximize life chances has been extensively demonstrated in the Social Sciences, from the beginnings of feminist discourse up to the present day. It is evident that life expectancy can be used as one indicator of the impact of inequality. Early death in a certain group would suggest a failure by the state to protect the lives of that group, equal to another. In present day Britain, women have a higher life expectancy than men, (around 4 years) although the gap is lessening. Whilst violent and sexual crimes affect only a small proportion of the UK population, women experience rape, domestic violence, partner abuse, forced marriages, honor crimes and female genital mutilation whilst men experience physical assaults more than women. It still remains the case in Britain that women are more likely to be killed by a partner, ex partner or family member and that women are also likely victims of repeat victimization, especially to crimes such as domestic violence which largely go unreported. In terms of incarceration, women are less likely to be imprisoned than men, but the rate of imprisonment of women is increasing at a faster rate than that of men-many of these are for rel-
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 atively minor offences. In terms of health, the experiences of men and women are different but not necessarily unequal. Men less frequently go to see their GP’s whilst women worry about maternity services. There now exists a wealth of evidence in Sociology to demonstrate that Education is a key factor for life chances. Women are still less likely than men to study Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics – subjects that have stereotypically been seen to be for men. In terms of attainment, girls perform better than boys at age 5, 16 and at degree level. Despite their higher achievement levels in all educational qualifications, there remains a 16% pay gap between men and women, which rises to 27% when they are 40 years old. This pay gap also impacts the standard of living of women in relation to men since their lower income whilst working results in lower income in retirement. 60% of women reaching state pension age in 2008 were entitled to less than the full basic state pension, compared to 10% of males. Finally, in terms of Power and Voice, it is evident that women are more likely to vote than men. The proportion of women in Westminster remains below 25%.

The Experiences of Ethnic Minorities in Britain

Ethnic minorities are likely to die early from certain causes. For example, blacks are most likely to become victims of murder than non-blacks and a disproportionate number of black people die either during or immediately after contact with the police. Infant mortality is higher than average in Black Caribbean’s and Pakistanis though lower than average in Bangladeshi’s. With regards to physical and legal securities, ethnic minorities are still stopped and searched more than other groups. Blacks are imprisoned 5 times more than whites in England and Wales. Ethnic minorities are substantially over represented in the prison system – presently 1 in 4 inmates is an ethnic minority. Many who face sentences have mental health conditions, learning disabilities, have been in care or experienced abuse. Blacks are more likely to believe that their complaints against the police will not be taken seriously and they worry most about police harassment. The higher proportion of stop and searches against minorities as well as their higher pro-
portion in prisons are indicators that their concern is well-founded.

Pakistanis and Bangladeshis report poor health more than average and Muslims tend to report worse health than average. It is unclear if this is directly linked to their relatively poor socio-economic position.

With regards to education, the ethnic differences at GCSE level are narrowing except at the very top where the highest performing groups are Chinese and Indian students. 33% of working age Muslims have no qualifications, and only 9% are degree holders. The relationship between ethnicity, literacy and numeracy is very strong. Being black and male appears to have a greater impact on numeracy levels than having a learning disability. Despite progress, the British labor market continues to have high levels of occupational segregation: 25% of Pakistani men are taxi drivers. Black and Asian groups earn less than White British people with the same qualification level and in particular, Black male graduates earn 24% less than White British male graduates. This disparity in the labor market leads to a lower standard of living, including substandard housing conditions and concentration in poorer neighborhoods. Similarly, in assessing their Standard of Living, two thirds of Bangladeshi and Pakistanis lack savings and half of pensioners living in these households live below the poverty line, compared to around one sixth of the general population. Two thirds of Bangladeshi and one half of Black African children grow up in poverty in the UK. Furthermore, Bangladeshi, Black African, Black Caribbean and Pakistani children are more likely to have caring responsibilities for personal care of older people, compared to white British children. With regards to Power and Voice, ethnic minorities are still underrepresented in Parliament and are more involved in campaigning in local activities and community organizations such as providing services for the young, than white people. Presently there are only 12 black and Asian MP’s out of a chamber of 630 MP’s. There has never been an Asian female MP even though Asian women have lived in the UK for more than 200 years. There are no black or Asian vice chancellors in the 110 UK universities. In areas of medicine, black and Asian consultants are concentrated in the poorest and most isolated hospitals since they are unable to secure posts in the
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prestigious hospitals. There is one black Chief Constable in the British police force and less than 2% of the force is black or ethnic minority. From 150 local authority social services departments, there are no black Directors of Social Services.

In terms of religious differences, Muslim men have the lowest rate of employment of any religious group. Only 47% of Muslim men and 24% of Muslim women are employed. 42% of young Muslims are not in employment, education or training. Muslims make up 13% of the prison population in England and Wales.

The Experiences of Young People in Britain:

When considering Life chances in terms of age it is evident that older people in Britain fear becoming victims of crime more than the young, although in reality they are less affected by these crimes. Infants and young children are most likely to become victims of murder than other groups. (Infants under the age of 1 are more likely to be victims of murder than any other group). One child under the age of 16 died per week in England and Wales in 2008/2009 as a result of cruelty or violence – two thirds were under five years old. Furthermore, older people or disabled abused by their carers are most likely to encounter repeats of such abuse. In terms of experiences of incarceration there is a strong link between young people growing up in care and experiencing incarceration. It is clear that ex-offenders have difficulties in finding work and accommodation after leaving prison and the high recidivism rates suggest that better support for prisoners is needed if they are to reintegrate successfully into society. With regards to health, there is some evidence to suggest that health services sometimes deal with some older people in ways that they find humiliating or distressing. Ethnic minority children are more likely to have caring responsibilities in the home compared to White British children. This difference may be accounted for in terms of cultural differences in responsibility for the older generation. In terms of power and voice, young people are less likely to vote than older people.
Socioeconomic Status (SES) in Britain

It is an undisputable fact that socioeconomic status (SES) greatly affects access to opportunities in society the world over. Britain is no exception to this fact. The experience of poverty is closely related to poorer outcomes in terms of living conditions, overcrowding, crime in neighborhoods and destitution, leading to poor health and low life expectancy. Similarly, groups vulnerable to poverty and victimization show higher levels of mental illness. The evidence from the EHRC shows that those in the higher socioeconomic group have a 7 year longer life expectancy than those in the lower socioeconomic groups. People from a lower SES are more at risk of smoking-related cancers and suicide. There is a strong link too with SES and poor health. Those who have never worked or are long term unemployed have the highest rates of self-reported ‘poor health’. Additionally, routine occupational people are more than twice as likely to say their health is poor than those in higher managerial and professional occupations. People of lower SES have poorer diet and take less exercise. SES and ill health are closely linked to area deprivation where crime levels are also higher. Ethnic minorities, disabled people and religious minority groups are over represented in the most deprived neighborhoods in England. Similarly, these groups, most vulnerable to poverty and victimization show higher levels of mental illness. There is strong evidence to associate socioeconomic background to educational attainment. Two thirds of Bangladeshi and one half of Black African children grow up in poverty in the UK. Those in the lower SES group have a wider gap at GCSE stage in terms of achievements compared to those in the higher SES bracket. It is clear that those who fail to do well in school are greatly limited in their opportunities for employment. There is a huge gap between Britain’s richest and poorest people. The poorest 10% possess one hundredth the average wealth of the richest 10%. So the total net household wealth of the top 10% is 853,000GBP, almost 100 times higher than the net wealth of the poorest 10% which is 8,800GBP or below.

With regards to care and support, people from the lower socioeconomic group and those with disabled children are less likely to use formal childcare than others. This may be a reflection of
parental preference with regards to disabled children, or a lack of appropriate and affordable places. Finally, it is evident that SES affects people’s sense of power and voice. Professionals are more likely to vote, to hold elected office and feel that they can influence local decisions than people with lower SES.

**Summary**

The EHRC report of October 2010 confirms early sociological research on the links between experiences of poverty and outcomes in life chances in terms of living conditions, overcrowding, crime, destitution, poor health and low life expectancy. It is clear that whilst politicians may be advocating equality of opportunity, the outcome is not the same for all. The UK still has a poor record for reducing child poverty and the gap between the rich and poor has steadily grown.

With regards to physical and legal securities, individual as well as institutional racism are an ongoing problem in Britain. Racist and religiously motivated attacks are a persistent phenomenon in the UK. Non-Christians are approximately 10 times more likely to report being attacked or harassed because of their faith than Christians. A large proportion of hate crime victims remain reluctant to report these attacks, creating a gap in justice.

Infamous murder cases in the UK, motivated by racial hatred have documented that structural racism is an ongoing problem. Examples most famously include the killing of Steven Lawrence, a young black teenager, murdered by a group of young white racist boys, and the murder of Zahid Mubarek. Whilst the former case highlighted the failings of the police to respond appropriately to this hate crime, the latter brought attention to prison authorities which forced the victim to share a prison cell with a self-proclaimed racist thug who promised to, and eventually killed the victim. Post September 11th attacks in New York resulted in increased police powers in terms of S&S and imprisonment of suspects without trial or due process. The Home Office has itself admitted that such anti-terrorism laws disproportionately disadvantage people ‘of Muslim appearance’ (whatever that might be!). Indeed, Lombroso’s work in Positivist Criminology in the 19th Century tried to draw up physiognomic characteristics of
criminals to be able to ‘recognize’ them from non-criminals. Of course, later scientists including Charles Goring dismissed Lombroso’s ideas for being highly racist, sexist and unfounded. And so, by judging people to be criminals based on appearance hardly seems progress in terms of equality and fairness. Similarly, other contentious experiences of minorities in the UK have included unease at the wearing of the hijab at school or work. Allowing Muslims to have single-faith schools in Britain is regarded by government as a possible threat to social cohesion, despite the fact that single-faith schools for Christians have existed for hundreds of years. With these such points, achieving social justice for ethnic minority groups in the UK remains perhaps idyllic.

Despite the claim by the government that improvements have occurred for previously disadvantaged groups in society, whether that disadvantage be a consequence of racial discrimination, sexism, or class-based discrimination, these improvements have been painfully slow. It may be true that black people have a lack of aspirations to gain a university degree and this may be understood in terms of their knowledge that the reward for their degree would be lower income than their white counterparts. Similarly, income poverty remains persistent for some groups such as women, ethnic minorities and families with disabled members.

In conclusion, it is fair to state that whilst Britain is supportive of the ideals of equality and human rights for all, there is still great disparity in actual opportunities for all members of its society. This equality gap is caused by social, cultural and/or economic factors rather than by intrinsic human differences. The EHRC concluded that society ought to close the gap between the highest and lowest socioeconomic groups in health and life expectancy. It also concluded that the gap between ethnic groups for infant mortality must be closed if Britain is to claim that it is a society committed to equality. Each individual should be given the opportunity to learn and realize their talents to the full in the educational system and then also in the workplace. Ethnic and gender segregation also need to be reduced to encourage both groups into higher education as well as into non-traditional gender role subjects. Whilst these are sound ways forward presented by the EHRC, institutionalized and individual prejudice mean that unless real, affective solutions and systemic strategies are put into place,
the situation for marginalized groups is unlikely to improve at the rate that one would hope. Notions of assimilation and integration may be construed as a return to expecting minorities to surrender their culture in order to fit in. Social justice for all must be inclusive of all.
Chapter Twenty

Manufacturing Sexual Crisis: The HIV/AIDS Industry and the Forsaking of Science

Helen Lauer

Introduction

Nowhere is the contemporary crisis in human sciences more clearly evidenced than in the arenas of social and epidemiological research and theory as they adversely affect African public and community health policies. In this essay Ghana will be taken as a case example. Population control—through education leading to behavior modification—as a means of managing epidemics, has been a well-established theme throughout the history of medical practice since colonial times in West Africa.\(^1\) The educational approach to resolving threats of premature fatality presupposes that Africans in the main are ignorant, chronically irresponsible, morally lax, and lacking in social empowerment. Yet the effort to

\(^1\) Sander Gilman (235) interprets this as “reflect[ing] the general nineteenth century understanding of female sexuality as pathological: the female genitalia were of interest partly as examples of the various pathologies which could befall them but also as (...) a pathological summary of the entire individual.” He demonstrates that in the Great Evolutionary Chain of Being presupposed by the medical establishment of the 1800s, female Africans were ranked closest of all to the apes; empirical evidence was demonstrated by sketches of their excessively large private parts and buttocks, heavy facial structure, swarthy skin tone, body mass, ear shape, skull and jaw size. Just above them were European prostitutes of the lower classes. See also A. R. JanMohamed about demonizing the cultural Other.
monitor, correct, and control African sexual practice through behavioral modification programs has perpetuated incoherencies in Ghana’s public and community health policy and practice to this day, as will be shown.²

The following meta-theoretical questions arise concerning the quality and nature of the social scientific endeavor as an academic pursuit of truth: why are African public health care systems still dominated by foreign profiteering agendas, driven by racial metaphors? Why are the health needs of Africans still interpreted according to degrading stereotypes? Why are African health care units flooded with dangerous and expensive drugs, inundated with fantastic statistics and unsubstantiated theories? To answer these questions, hermeneutic scholars should be wary of global discourse that misleadingly traces the primary cause of contagion and premature death in Africa to procreative sexuality. Observations about the history of social theory and its influence upon delivery of health care services through all economic classes in African populations will be the focus of this essay.

**Social Science by Consensus**

The fact that most people trained in a discipline believe in a statement is not in itself a scientific basis for regarding it true. This is a crucial feature that distinguishes scientific hypotheses from dogmatic doctrine. Claims that are taken on faith or sustained by consensus cease for that reason to be scientific. Modern social science is meant to be driven by a competition among rival hypotheses, each pitted against the results of experiment and field investigation. Scientific claims are proposed provisionally, never supposed to be posited as indubitable certainties. Even the best explanation always stands open to revision or rejection in the light of new evidence.

By these standard criteria, the practice of raising specious alarm that procreative sex = HIV = death is unscientific. Rather, it is a lucrative marketing campaign to distribute the products of costly but virtually fruitless pharmaceutical research and develop-

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² These programs are initiated and endorsed by the WHO, UNAIDS, United States PEPFAR Initiative, the Gates Foundation, and the Global Fund.
opment, driven globally by the pretences of scientific rigor. As remarked by Etienne de Harven, cell biologist and pioneer in electronic microscopy, “maneuvering for major federal budget allocations, AIDS public health policies have been relying upon media amplification of fear.”

The HIV/AIDS industry is in many respects pseudo-scientific, amounting to a massive “public health fraud” sustained through “research cartels, media control and knowledge monopolies by financial powerhouses” (Kauffman 121).

None of the following claims have been established by confirming evidence nor have they been subjected to competition with rival hypotheses (Engelbrecht and Kohnlein 136). They are sustained instead by consensus:

- The existence of HIV has been proven.
- So-called HIV antibody tests and PCR (polymerase chain reaction) viral load tests as well as the CD4 helper cell count specifically diagnose HIV/AIDS.
- HIV is the sole or primary cause of the many diseases grouped together as AIDS.
- Anti-retroviral preparations are effective and prolong life.
- The AIDS statistics proclaimed by the WHO and UNAIDS are sound.
- Non-viral factors such as drugs, medications and malnutrition can be ruled out as primary causes of AIDS.

According to scientists challenging the HIV causes AIDS hypothesis, the existence of AIDS in Africa is not disputed. The existence of fatal contagious diseases well known to Africans but now dubbed ‘opportunistic infections’ is not in dispute. What remains in dispute is the causal link between immunity failure and a heterosexually transmitted virus. There is an increasing amount of evidence that directly contradicts several of the statements listed

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3 Etienne deHarven (71), as highlighted by David Crowe, president of the Scientific Group for the Reappraisal of the HIV/AIDS hypothesis, in personal communication. February 12, 2011.
4 See Rebecca Culshaw’s “Appendix A: Failed predictions of the HIV hypothesis,” (73-36).
above.\textsuperscript{5} The orthodox account of AIDS in Africa is suspect for several reasons, among them are the following:

(i) \textit{There is ambiguity in the official definition of AIDS.} In G-8 countries HIV tests have to be administered, typically more than one is used since the tests are non-specific and known to be unreliable. But since 1985 the received definition for Africans does not involve any HIV testing but relies instead on four clinically observable symptoms.\textsuperscript{6} This clinical definition was established at a WHO conference in Bangui, Central African Republic, to alleviate the barriers to studying immune deficiency in regions where electricity supplies preclude viable testing laboratories. The African AIDS definition doesn’t involve reference to HIV test results at all. Thus the range of AIDS defining symptoms and diseases purportedly caused by HIV (also called “the AIDS virus”) occur with the highest incidence rates in regions of the world where the presence of their purported cause cannot be detected in practice, and need not be detected by definition. Thus the statement ‘HIV causes AIDS’ at least in Africa is not a testable hypothesis. It is rather true by definition and is therefore empty of empirical content.

WHO and UNAIDS statistics and projections are based on this definition, whose vagueness has been inherited by statistical

\textsuperscript{5} Engelbrecht and Köhnlein (136).

\textsuperscript{6} The Bangui definition of AIDS first generated by the WHO and CDC in 1985 was updated in 1993, but remained independent of testing requirements, see E. Papadopoulos-Eleopulos, \textit{et al.} (1995 a: pre-publication typescript p. 7). Also see Rodney Richards (2001a) and Christian Fiala (1998). In Ghana presently two recently developed tests are used by the Ghana Health Service: the ‘rapid test’ (ELISA) and the standard Western Blot (WB) to back it up. But this has not always nor everywhere been required by the WHO or UNAIDS in collating data for annual statistical reports, and not typical of the continent overall. For instance in 1991 Tanzania and Uganda recorded AIDS cases without reference to tests at all (Fiala 1998), “Many Africans who qualify for an AIDS diagnosis—perhaps as many as 70%—turn out to be negative when tested for HIV according to the Western Blot” (Geshekter \textit{et al.} 2004, 10). On the recognized inadequacy of earlier generations of test kits, see N. Hodgkinson (358) where he refers to the 1994 study in Zaire by O. Kashala \textit{et al.} [“ELISA and WB results should be interpreted with caution when screening individuals infected with M. tuberculosis or other mycobacterial species. ELISA and WB may not be sufficient for HIV diagnosis in AIDS-endemic areas of Central Africa where the prevalence of mycobacterial diseases is quite high.”]
reports of HIV prevalence rates and AIDS related mortality in Africa that appear in publications and press statements released by the WHO and UNAIDS over the last 20 years. Since ‘HIV’ is synonymous with ‘the AIDS virus’ and at different times and places diagnosis has not required HIV antibody testing which are unreliable and proscribed by their manufacturers to diagnosis individuals’ state of health, the meaning of UN statistical projections remains utterly obscure (Geshekter et al. 2004).

(ii) Alternative hypotheses exist to explain the onset of immune deficiency in different high risk groups for AIDS apart from the standard accounts for the opportunistic infections—otherwise diagnosed as more than thirty conditions including repeated pregnancies, tuberculosis, pneumonia, lashmaniasis, lupus, malaria, Kaposi’s sarcoma, leprosy, yeast infection, pneumonia, and dysentery (Bauer, 6). The list of diseases associated as “opportunistic infections” increases over the years, according to the Cochin 1993 “cervical cancer [was] added to the list, (...) the purpose behind adding this disease was entirely political, admittedly to increase the number of female AIDS patients, creating an illusion that the syndrome is ‘spreading’ into the heterosexual population” (Duesberg 1996, 209, 665 n.60). In any case, being a syndrome, ‘AIDS’ does not refer to any particular disease; and “the virus and the syndrome correlate with near-textbook perfection [because] the connection was artificially constructed” (Duesberg 1996, 209).

(iii) The available evidence indicates that the genetic material defined as HIV is not sexually transmitted (Bauer 44). Data gathered from fifteen independent studies conducted over the last

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8 For instance consider the UN World Health Organisation’s press release estimating that “89 million Africans will become infected with HIV in the next twenty years if something is not done.” (UN Bulletin radio broadcast on BBC World Service March 5, 2005).
9 Many people with an HIV sero-positive test result never have and never will contract any of the symptoms of AIDS.
two decades involving heterosexual discordant couples in North America, Haiti, Thailand, Uganda, Europe, Kenya, Tanzania, indicate that, on average, the chances are less than one in one thousand for an HIV test-negative partner converting to a test-positive result on an HIV antibody test after sexual intercourse. On balance, studies show that the use of condoms appears to make no difference one way or the other to this low probability (Wawer 1406; Gray et al.). Overall, studies involving sex workers indicate that prostitution yields a high frequency of HIV positive test results only if it occurs in tandem with drug abuse; and the results of studies concerning the effect of male circumcision are comparably ambiguous (Bauer 46).

A community based study conducted in 2001 in Uganda involving 15,127 people confirmed that “there is no more heterosexual transmission of HIV in Africa than anywhere else, including UK, USA, Australia and Europe. So the explosive epidemic in Africa” cannot be explained by sexual transmission. Other studies corroborate this conclusion.12

(iv) The purported antibody test kits for detecting HIV were designed and prescribed by their manufacturers to screen blood, and explicitly proscribed on every package from being used as a

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13 Rodney Richards, a biochemist and founding developer of such test kits at Abbott Laboratories, stresses this in published interviews (2001a, 2001b) and in letters to editor of British Medical Journal (2003).
diagnostic tool for determining the status of any individual patient.\(^{14}\)

(v) *The tests themselves display a systematic and pervasive racial bias* with no variation across economic classes and social sectors within the US population. The high frequency of positive-HIV test results among African Americans fails to correlate with any particular lifestyle choice; so it must be indicative of some factor other than behavior pattern, possibly genetic (Bauer 50-79).

(vi) *HIV testing is notoriously unreliable.* There are 76 known false positive results for HIV antibody tests.\(^{15}\) A central fallacy generates from the mistaken belief that variations in ‘HIV prevalence’ rates can be reliably traced through surveillance studies. These prevalence rates are not reliable indicators of variations in sexual behavior as an independent variable. Yet the results of these antibody tests are nonetheless the basis for Ghana’s AIDS Commission’s prevention strategic plan. Such test results direct current efforts to eradicate epidemics in Ghana following the plan set by global policy which channels funding to fight HIV/AIDS in Ghana.\(^{16}\)

(vii) *UN World Health Organization (WHO) generates statistics about HIV in Africa which are misleading.* The samples used to collate HIV-positive test results are not representative of the populations from which they are selected. WHO statistics are country-by-country projections, based on data culled monthly from records kept about pregnant women in economic classes served by public antenatal clinics. This kind of sample yields a biased result for national populations, as mentioned by the Ghana Health Service in its HIV Sentinel Survey 2004 Report (38). The misleading bias is exacerbated by the fact that multiple pregnancies are known to yield false positive HIV test results. Agyei-Mensah (14) contrasts the inferiority of self selected sampling in Ghana’s sentinel surveys of HIV/AIDS, preferring the costs and

\(^{14}\) HIV antibody test accuracy fits only the type of population in the test sample. So in earlier generations the HIV antibody test kits developed in the West yielded different results for Westerners and Africans. See Johnson.


\(^{16}\) S. Agyei Mensah (22) “(...) decline in HIV prevalence is indicative of the intervention [behavioural modification] programmes in place.”
benefits of population demographic censes which are more expen-
sively and less frequently conducted.

The WHO and UNAIDS projections since the 1980s have
predicted devastation of African countries through a sexually
transmitted pandemic (Shenton 58, 154-175 et passim). But these
forecasts have not been corroborated by facts on the ground. If the
statistics were correct, populations would have plummeted by
2010. Instead, population figures continue to steadily increase in
Uganda, Kenya, and South Africa.

(viii) There are various ways to interpret the empirical data
that orthodox AIDS virologists identify with a single type of ex-
ternally contracted virus. For instance the genetic material detect-
ed by electronic microscopy may be interpreted as retroviral
fragments produced endogenously by everyone, the residue of
being a host to all kinds of viruses contracted over many years,
not an indication of the presence of a single foreign pathogen in-
troduced exogenously (de Harven 71, 73).

(ix) There is considerable evidence that in the early period of
HAART\(^17\) (a combination therapy involving multiple toxic drugs
administered in high dosages) caused the symptoms attributed to
HIV, with fatal consequences (Engelbrecht and Köhnlein 128-
144; Duesberg 1996; Kremer et al; Lauritsen). At the cutting edge
of top level viral genetic research in Ghana, the aim is to study
active components of indigenous herbal remedies as they impact
clinically upon phenotypically variant mutations of the HIV in
vivo.\(^18\) The anti-retroviral approach is not the current treatment
line of choice in Ghana.

(x) Apart from their high toxicity, the impact of anti-
retroviral drugs in Africa has been shown to increase virility of
HIV, because ‘the AIDS virus’ is not one virus but many strains
and subtypes. The media perpetuates the false assumption that the
field of viral material in question is a single phenotype of a virus
called HIV, which behaves identically over time and all geograph-

\(^{17}\) Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy

\(^{18}\) Herbal medicinal management of AIDS is one of the most recently
launched research proposals under the auspices of Noguchi Memorial Institute of Medi-
cal Research in conjunction with Mampong Plant Medicine Institute, now in its
final stages of development for ethical clearance and funding; as per discussion
with principal investigator, viral geneticist J.A.M. Brandful, October 30, 2006.
tical regions, infecting every population in precisely the same way, and is susceptible to eradication by a uniform intervention strategy applicable worldwide.\(^{19}\) This popular doctrine results in a grossly misplaced emphasis upon modifying sexual behavior, distributing condoms,\(^{20}\) and making invasive, toxic drugs (which do not cure AIDS nor eradicate HIV) ubiquitously marketable. According to some orthodox theorists in Africa, inadequate drug treatments contribute to proliferation of drug resistant strains of the virus by inducing mutation.\(^{21}\) As the geneticist J.A.M. Brandful emphasizes, “This is why local researchers should be keeping up a constant surveillance of the HIV in Ghana. But little attention is being paid to the necessity for such research.”\(^{22}\) It is not just an oversimplification, but fatally detrimental to African health, to sustain the (empirically unsupported) claim that one sexually transmitted virus is singularly responsible for causing immune deficiency and a wide range of illnesses, infectious and non-infectious, uniformly worldwide.

To falsely maintain that one anti-retroviral fits all chronic illnesses, has severe consequences for Africans in need of a wide spectrum of standard antibiotics to manage a range of well known diseases. Because of antiretroviral product marketing strategies, readily affordable drugs are sidelined in foreign aid delivery. And in the campaign to distribute ARVs, drug safety and efficacy standards are sidelined, as anti-retroviral preparations which are sub-optimal are imported by Ghana because they have been re-

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\(^{19}\) Big pharma’s billion dollar investments in creating international AIDS conferences sustain the orthodox HIV/AIDS ideology and the urgency of antiretrovirals as the singular solution to the HIV/AIDS crisis.

\(^{20}\) According to a comprehensive cost-effectiveness survey published in *The Lancet*, condom distribution is the cheapest of effective methods and therefore the preferred strategy for HIV prevention and control in poor countries.

\(^{21}\) For instance according to the orthodox virology, evolution of HIV in South Africa now is approximately 92% due to HIV-1 subtype C—as a pure strain. And in North America the strain is predominantly HIV-1 subtype B. But in Ghana the virus is reported as having evolved from HIV-2 so that the HIV-1 recombinants dominate now, to between 80% and 90%, with only a few pure strains co-circulating.

\(^{22}\) Head of Virology Department, Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, in conversation, 2004.
ported as effective to some degree for the short term in South Africa or in North America.

A rigorous scientific protocol concerning AIDS in Africa is impossible to sustain because powerful interest groups are keen to suppress any challenge to the mega-billion dollar industry invested in the consensus that HIV = AIDS = death. Foreign control of funding for research in Africa is restricted to anti-retroviral treatment regimes and behavior modification campaigns.

For instance, it would seem difficult to suppress research about an obvious link between immune dysfunction and undernutrition. Since the 1980s more than twenty-five percent of all African children have been under-nourished. What happens to the immune system of a person who is undernourished in utero and survives as a neonate in the midst of a famine? Immunity is well known to be hormonally dependent. What happens to the immune system of a young woman at the peak of her hormonal maturity if she was born to a famished mother? Is there any connection between children subjected to the pressures of structural adjustment, or those born just after the famine of 1983 in Ghana, and the sudden spike in mortality of young women with HIV positive test results twenty two years later, as was observed by Kofi Annan in 2005. Might the severe food shortage in Ghana throughout 1983 account for premature death or immunological problems encountered by these women when they reached their early twenties?

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23 It has been documented that the enzyme leptin, for instance, which plays a substantial role in the performance of the hypothalamus, can be disturbed by chronic protein deficiency of pregnant mothers effecting foetal development. Dr Simon Langley-Evans, reporting to the media (BBC June 13, 2005) on recent work published in *Cell Metabolism.*

24 But in Africa, infant and maternal mortality are not restricted to destitute classes; neither is malnutrition. A surprising statistical fact was unveiled in 1998 when nine percent of Ghana’s children were diagnosed as suffering from stunted growth (below-average height per age-group, skeletal underdevelopment, retarded cognitive and sensory development, and weakened immunity)—residing in high income neighbourhoods such as Legon, Jawalaruh and Asylum Down.

25 Then the UN Secretary General, Annan, speaking to a special forum on HIV and AIDS of the UN General Assembly, said that the greatest number of new cases of HIV infected deaths recorded in 2005 were of young women, many of whom presumably were born in Africa. They would have been born during the
No one in Ghana, at any rate, is receiving funds to find this out. For twenty-five years funding has been channeled instead into vaccine research, the manufacture and sale of anti-retroviral preparations, and behavior modification so young people will use condoms or abstain from pre-marital sex.

**The KAP Gap: Knowledge, Awareness and Practice**

High fertility rates and high “HIV-infection rates” and high premature mortality rates in West Africa have been attributed to the cognitive deficiency or moral incapacity of informants, evidenced by data interpreted as showing irrational inconsistency between belief assertion and chosen action, modeled as a measurable incapacity in decision making skills, and referred to in the literature as the gap between knowledge, awareness, and practice. Attention to this phenomenon has become so institutionalized that it bears its own acronym, “the KAP gap,” along with a package of custom-tailored survey techniques, questionnaire designs, and methodology to study it (Caldwell 1995, 1999).

Agyei-Mensah (22) comments on the KAP gap as the most compelling aspect of the failure in today’s HIV prevention schemes. “After more than two decades of educational campaigns (...) the chief puzzle facing scholars (...) is why knowledge and awareness of the epidemic is not translating into changes in sexual behavior [of young women].”

On the face of it, the answer to Agyei-Mensah’s fundamental question is obvious: informants say one thing as prescribed by the foreign worldview, while doing another prescribed by the world of their most important permanent relationships. Respondents to initial shock period suffered because of the infamous structural adjustment programmes of the early and mid-1980s. Prof. R. Biritwum, formerly the Vice Dean of University of Ghana’s Medical School, has been studying the long term impacts on Goma Fetteh villagers born before, during, and after Ghana’s 1983 famine. He measured a retarded menarche and generally slow rate of development in young women due to malnutrition. He agrees the relation between *in utero* malnutrition and HIV positive test results at maturity would be an important focus of investigation, but he knows of no actual research concerned with linking malnutrition to AIDS. In conversation, Prof. R.B. Biritwum (2004) Vice Dean of University of Ghana’s Medical School.
KAP questionnaires in Ghana will be aware that sex is very explicitly transactional in their communities, that sex is hardly casual or recreational, and rarely anonymous. They will be aware of the conventional preoccupation with honor and family name, of the extreme taboos against female adventurism—typically, these include the pressure not to travel abroad, not to pursue advanced education, not to show up their husbands economically or otherwise. Women will know they are pre-empted from sexual curiosity because they have mutilated or missing genitalia. They may be aware that those soliciting participation in questionnaires provide the sole opportunity of receiving any health care services at all. If the respondent is also aware of the convictions about HIV/AIDS that dominate the global arena since she has undergone an HIV/AIDS awareness training program, then she will be aware of the prudence in providing ‘correct’ answers—correct in the sense of being the answers that she believes are expected by the investigator.

But in HIV/AIDS research in Africa, theoreticians do not presume that informants are exercising their rational capacity to resolve contradictions characteristic of post-colonial social settings, even though this would be an inference to the best explanation. Instead, Africans’ purported deficiency in practical reasoning skills continues as a focus of cutting edge research. So for instance, according to a recent study supported by the US National Science Foundation involving 181 residents of Eastern Ghana, the researchers’ reasons for chronic illness in rural Ghana centre around the inferior quality of thinking that they regard as predominant in the region:

Given that sub-Saharan Africa is home to both the largest unschooled population in the world and the largest HIV-infected population in the world, we need to better understand how to design effective HIV-prevention programs (...) that train people how to think, to use their knowledge to plan for the future (...) to help them make better choices (...) We found that the value of education wasn’t so much in teaching facts, but in teaching people how to think.  

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Currently, when theorists who rely on KAP questionnaires confront evidence that conflicts with the received hypothesis that immune deficiency is caused by sexual licentiousness, the discrepancy is explained by presuming the informants are cognitively deficient or deceitful.\textsuperscript{27} For example, in 2005 the Harvard School of Public Health’s Department of Population and International Health collaborated with Korle Bu Teaching Hospital’s Department of Ob/Gyn, and the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), University of Ghana, Legon. The team drew their conclusions from a “community based study [in Accra].” Their results “confirm[ed] the need to target young, sexually active women [with] a strong public health initiative.” Strangely, the “strong public health initiative” that they advocated was not to provide young women with vitamin supplements, nor to train them in nutritional food-crop productivity. The initiative was rather supposed “to increase awareness of the risks and the link to [sexually transmitted infections] (…) to prevent the further increase in HIV prevalence and the resultant HIV-associated illnesses.” When these researchers were confronted with evidence from their survey in Accra that HIV prevalence did \textit{not} correlate positively with syphilis as expected, and that HIV prevalence did \textit{not} correlate with the number of sexual partners reported by informants, they inferred that the absence of correlation was likely due to either the women lying about their sexually transmitted infections and their number of sexual partners, or that they were ignorant of carrying sexually transmitted infections (Duda et al. 22, 63, 65).

\textsuperscript{27} Caldwell, Caldwell and Quiggan (1994, 138) attribute to Africans a view of sexuality incommensurable with Judeo-Christian values, e.g. Africans’ attitudes towards adultery reveals their “lack of guilt about sexual relations.” See also Stillwaggon (137-140) who analyses in detail the Caldwellian genre’s treatment of African sexual norms as those of an exotic species, whose alien belief systems and practices are isolated logically and culturally from Eurasian thinking (See Caldwell 1977, 1995, and Caldwell \textit{et al}.1999).
It is not a novel supposition that solving health problems requires delivering just the right educational program to cure Africans’ dysfunctional cognitive processes and character deficiencies. Such a principle has guided policy making since colonial times. In 1917 infant deaths were documented in Ghana at a rate of nearly one in three. Although sanitation was documented as appalling throughout the colony since 1870, the cause of infant mortality was attributed to mothers’ ignorance of modern hygienic practice. This is still the norm. In 2005, the National Malaria Campaign Program issued an announcement to introduce a new prescription for malaria. Pregnant mothers’ recalcitrance and indiscipline is portrayed as the reason for the fatalities following from chloroquine’s ineffectiveness, even though it is widely recognized that drug resistance of the malarial parasite has rendered chloroquine ineffective, no matter how assiduously the dosage is taken. In two local free health education newsletters the announcement reads that “all pregnant women were expected to take two tablets of chloroquine each week from conception to birth. Most women found the tablets bitter and few adhered to the treatment with the result that nearly nine percent of all deaths in pregnancy is due to malaria.”

Apart from blaming illness upon Africans’ cognitive and moral incapacities, the tendency to regard African reproductive activity in itself as a threat to national security, public health, and economic development took center stage in the 1960s during the global escalation of Cold War politics, long before talk about a fatal sexually transmitted virus purportedly circulating in gay

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28 Through the 1870s and 1880s the Gold Coast was the only colony in West Africa without any drainage system. There were neither roads nor city plans laid except for the capital city Cape Coast until 1877. By 1910 sanitary reforms were launched in Accra (Addae 82, 126).

29 CARETalk Newsletter, ed. D.E. Mensah et al, December 2004, vol. 1. no. 1 ISSN 0855711X. Also in Ndoro, published by the Catholic Pharmaceutical Service April 2005 volume 1, no.3, ISSN 0855 5877. A subsequent issue of CARETalk (vol. 1 no. 2) no longer invoked mothers’ failure to adhere to a drug regime which was useless.
clubs of California fixated White House attention in the early 1980s. During the US Cold War’s offensive against communist terrorism, global health resolutions and population control projects became the medium for neutral engagement with US allies by non-aligned African nations. The US foreign policy agenda motivating these collaborations was population monitoring and intelligence gathering.

In the 1980s external control was maintained through the Bretton Woods strategies of ‘structural adjustment’ that cut government spending programs in the 1980s. It was very convenient at that historic moment to have at hand a pathogenic entity, whose destructive impact could be appealed to in order to explain the profoundly negative effects that have emerged very clearly among the long term legacies of South African apartheid, and the more recent legacies that the West and East African structural adjustment cutbacks imposed in the early 1980s.  

In more contemporary times the eighth of the UN Millennium Development Goals adopted in 2000 ensures that African ministries are bound by convention and diplomacy to comply with global health initiatives.

One can detect parallels between the research agenda of the population studies literature from roughly 1960 to the mid-1980s on the one hand, and today’s HIV/AIDS surveillance and prevention campaign literature from the mid-1980s to the present. Both genres feature modifying the behavior of procreative women as a goal for improving community health and advancing socio-economic development. Both of these literatures document and then lament over the notorious ‘gap’ between the knowledge that individual women disclose about effective contraception methods and its various benefits, versus what the informants actually do to curtail their reproductive behavior.

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31 In accord with UN Millennium Development Goal number 8 adopted in 2000, African governments are mandated to partner with international business marketing initiatives; MDG target 8E specifies that this requires cooperating with the major pharmaceutical companies, the richest and most powerful conglomerates in the world.

32 S. Agyei-Mensah (22); R. Appiah (57).
It is not surprising to discover such remarkable parallels, for in fact there was no break in the preoccupation with mass behavioral rehabilitation among prominent statistical research teams working on African populations. In Ghana, continuity was maintained even in the personnel that staffed the teams of demographers initially proselytizing planned parenthood in the 1960s, and then later organized community-based surveillance projects launching a grass roots fight against HIV/AIDS in the 1980s. A demographer based in Canberra Australia, John Caldwell, remains widely influential in Ghana’s public health philosophy over the last fifty years. His Ghanaian trainees now run West Africa’s research institutes and provide consultation service to Geneva’s UN World Health Organization (WHO). Reading Caldwell’s reports and expository analyses published over four decades, one detects a seamless transition from the surveillance and data analysis of fertility related behavior to surveillance and data analysis of behavior associated with so-called HIV infection rates. Much of the same data is referred to in his later publications as in the earlier ones. Data analysis collated for studies done in the 1970s was reassembled by Caldwell for theorizing about what he posited as the uniquely African pre-logical “social context of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.”

In modern day Ghana, the single assertive corporate sector to come forward and advertise its contribution to fighting AIDS is again the mining sector. Ashanti Goldfields prided itself in November 2003 for supplying four condoms per month in the pay envelope for all workers. Tuberculosis, especially acute in the mining sector for over a century, is known to yield a false positive HIV test result; but this fact was ignored when hypothesizing about the reason for the purportedly high frequency of positive HIV-test results in the Obuasi and Tarkwa vicinities. Instead, miners were presumed to be a high risk group for ‘HIV infection’ because they have more ready cash than farmers or fishermen.

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34 Reported in November 2003, by Kwaku Sekyi-Addo of the BBC Worldservice. Sekyi-Addo conducted interviews with the miners themselves to publicize the causes in the area responsible for AIDS symptoms (i.e. anemia, weight loss, severe diarrhea, chronic fever, tubercular and upper respiratory infectious symptoms).
with which to engage with sex workers. Yet no actual study has ever been attempted to exhibit any statistically significant variance in sexual behavior throughout the different regions of Ghana. More generally, Prof. Charles Geshekter, a political historian of Africa who has served on the South African AIDS Advisory panel observes:

No one has ever shown that people in Rwanda, Uganda, Zaire, or Kenya (the so-called AIDS belt) are more sexually active than people in Nigeria, where only 1,148 cases of AIDS are reported out of a population of 100 million, or Cameroon, which reported 3,072 cases out of a population of 10 million.  

Geshekter notes more realistic ways of accounting for immune breakdown in these same countries, where it is well documented that social welfare systems (of Rwanda, Uganda, the DRC, and Kenya) have been undermined since the early 1980s by years of political terror, war-torn dislocation, and a variety of related socio-economic dysfunctions. He observes:

no continent-wide sex surveys have ever been carried out in Africa. (…) So there is little evidence to support Western perceptions of African sexual promiscuity. Africa is a continent of 11½ million square miles and fifty-three nations, a far more culturally, linguistically, religiously and socially diverse region than North America or Europe. (…) How can we possibly generalize about risk taking behavior across such a huge and internally diversified continent? In many African societies, where strict modesty codes are enforced for women, chastity is by far a more cardinal virtue than it is in the modern West.

In the words of Dr. Christian Fiala, an ob/gyn physician based in Vienna with many years of experience observing AIDS patients in Uganda and Tanzania:

The supposedly ‘hyper’ sexual behavior of Africans is frequently alluded to by the WHO and the Western medical establishment. But apart from the fact that the first European Christian missionaries in Africa held this belief (…) and a long Christian tradition of fantasizing about the supposedly licentious sex life of Africans, there is absolutely no scientific evidence for this view. On the contrary, Americans lead the world as far as

35 C. L. Geshekter (1995, 10)
changing sexual partners is concerned. They are followed by France, Australia and Germany. In contrast, South Africa like Thailand are well below the world average, according to an international study published by the condom manufacturer, Durex.36

Thus a precedent continues to this day of HIV/AIDS association of risky sex and early mortality which was set late in the eighteenth century by the European medical establishment. This view of African sexuality as the threat to civilized progress was reinforced by the Victorian colonials a century later, and reified in Ghana by the Caldwells, their colleagues, and trainees in the mid-twentieth century, of supposing that chronic illness and early mortality in Africa are caused by continent-wide, incongruous sexual behavior patterns that reveal a perplexing moral incontinence or gender specific oppression peculiar to the plight of African women. The colonial administration depended upon strategies of oversimplification and volunteerism by appealing to the religious and moral virtuosity of the public. The cost saving mechanism of deflecting attention from known causes of epidemics, focusing instead on blaming and educating the victims of contagion, began with British colonial policies long before the 1960s, as we will review next.

Public Health Policies in the Gold Coast

In the late 1800s it was commonplace to blame malarial infection upon the indiscipline of those falling ill from the contagion. Mass education publications remain a feature of public health policy in Ghana since colonial times. Although this was the Gold Coast administrators’ practice in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, they were aware that poor sanitation and septic dwellings, not negative attitudes, were in fact causing the spread of contagious diseases including yaws, tuberculosis and other upper respiratory illnesses, dysentery, mosquito borne yellow fever as well as the infamous malaria. The need for overall municipal works to improve housing infrastructure, water source protection,

street and public space sanitation upkeep were well known. Yet infrastructural development to protect against contagions in the urban centers remained conspicuously inadequate. In 1883 and 1884, Ghana’s first medical officers instituted bye-laws and regulations to ensure the construction of latrines and cemeteries, routine public cleaning, water sourcing, regular reporting of diseases. But these rules were rarely enforced. Instead, from the early 1900s education campaigns urged attitudinal change and conversion to what is now called ‘positive living’ in the discourse of HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention.

Through the early decades of the twentieth century, moralizing about behavior was treated as the essential key to reducing the incidence of malaria, yaws, guinea worm and infant deaths. The source and responsibility for growing death rates due to malaria were placed squarely in the moral domain of the individual blameworthy sufferer. In 1913 the Principal Medical Officer Hopkins claimed that contagions were caused by those colonial administrative officials’ own “indolence and recklessness.” Medical historian Stephen Addae (49) recounts how Governor Clifford decried the “scandalous laxity (...) and contempt for malarial prophylactic measures,” of his European officers, urging that risky behavior should attract a penalty discount in salary. Regulations to improve drainage, sanitation and environmental hygiene were put into effect but not enforced. Ghana was the only colony in West Africa whose urban centers had no drainage system as of

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37 Ibid. p. 86. In 1900 it was known that yellow fever was spread by mosquitoes, and that infestation was exacerbated by the septic and congested living quarters that the majority of Gold Coasters lived in. Disease carrying agricultural pests, biting insects and worms that thrived under substandard living conditions and in polluted waters were under investigation in Kumasi and Accra over the last hundred years, as were industrial related illnesses generated in the mining sector. Cerebrospinal meningitis in the north was already under study in 1907 (1996: 181, 182). The etiology of major killers today, including tuberculosis, dysentery and malaria, were under scrutiny as major killers since the early 1900s. The need to clean streets and improve housing ventilation were known prevention strategies to subdue tuberculosis.

38 Ibid. p. 113. Until 1877 no settlement in Ghana had streets, town plans or drainage except in the capital Cape Coast.

39 Addae (1996: 361). People were fatalistic about contracting yaws, and this attitude was blamed for contributing to its spread.
1870. Yet the impact of chronic illness on economic productivity was promulgated in official Gold Coast government publications, so the lack of adequate sanitation infrastructure was recognized as counterproductive to colonial rulers’ interests. They did not follow up this awareness with appropriate municipal projects to improve the drainage systems of even their major settlements.

By the 1920s disease prevention was located among the responsibilities of individuals by improving their personal lifestyle habits. Information pamphlets, posters, and lectures about environmental hygiene and sanitation were distributed through brigades to control mosquitoes and campaigns to control venereal diseases.40 Through house to house visits, volunteers in the 1930s stressed behavioral change by lecturing and counseling mothers on infant care and hygiene.41

Public and social health policy in these years went on record as successful when it effectively motivated individuals to self-care in the home and self-help in the community. Native Authorities were urged to assume responsibility for building their own village dispensaries. Initially Government “suppl[ied] building materials, drugs, equipment, and trained personnel.”42 The colonial state’s knowledge of contagious disease grew steadily through vigorous and prolific programs of medical research. But the state’s practical implementation of such knowledge in order to fight epidemics for the majority of the population remained largely dormant. Despite an active and celebrated track record for the Gold Coast in tropical medicine research, emphasis remained upon public education rather than infrastructural development and hospital treatment or primary care delivery in the early part of the twentieth

40 Addae (1996: 92, 86, 143, 146). Sexually transmitted disease education campaigns were organised in 1922 and 1923 by doctor and historian C. E. Rein-dorf. Health Days and Weeks were organised through schools.
41 In 1932, this initiative was institutionalised as the Gold Coast League for Maternal and Child Welfare.
century. A plague outbreak in 1908 prompted the authorities to revisit substantive plans for sanitation reform. This move mandated new administrative posts for the purpose of promoting urban sanitation by reducing housing congestion, organizing refuse disposal, building drains and sewage systems, lagoon management, mosquito control and nutritional protection of mothers and infants. But again the plans were never brought to fruition.

Some community outreach programs that work splendidly in Ghana date back to colonial times, but they have had little or nothing to do with sex education. One beneficial British initiative was the decentralization of health care delivery through Medical Field Units before World War I. This model proved effective when it was brought back again in 1970-1990, significantly lowering childhood and infant mortality. But it was abandoned in the early 1990s to mobilize mass vaccination campaigns to which Ghana signed up in obedience with international conventions. The shift of funds to vaccine programs correlated dramatically with increasing rates of infant and toddler deaths. Nowadays community outreach is advocated under the label “functional service delivery points” in the jargon of HIV/AIDS Community Management training manuals. Another so-called neo-liberal innovation which actually mimics policy that dates back to colonial times is the practice of private/public partnerships to fight contagions. In the Gold Coast it was the mining companies and the church missions that were the frontrunners in building hospitals and complying with the central state sanitary regulations. In response, the colonial government was considerate of the mining companies’ profit margins in bearing responsibilities for sanitation in the residential areas of Obuasi and Tarkwa, Ghana’s major mining mu-

43 Addae (146, 181, 182, 392). Medical research enjoyed well publicized breakthroughs beginning in 1899, so there was no shortage of understanding that a mental attitude is not sufficient to sustain an epidemic.
44 Addae (118-119).
45 S. Helfenbein (2004). Addae (1996) pp. 86-88, 169. The 1950s marked a brief heyday of expanding and enriching Medical Field Units in rural areas. MFRUs were developed in earnest from 1960 to 1966 when Nkrumah was deposed. MFUs successfully controlled epidemics for the first time in the country: yellow fever most famously, yaws, leprosy, smallpox, leprosy, malaria, onchoceriasis, and trypanosomiasis.
nicipalities. The companies assumed the duty of securing their labourers’ protection against contagions through sanitation control around the workplace, while Government corresponded by building sanitation infrastructure and decent housing units in the mining towns’ residential zones. These partnerships helped to reduce incidences of TB, other upper respiratory infections, hookworm, and silicosis (Addae 156-167).

**Segregation as a Key Prevention Strategy**

Beginning in the 1880s the colonial government was responsible for protecting Europeans’ health exclusively, and the initial response to epidemics by foreign administrators was to safeguard themselves through exclusion, using bylaws enforcing separation from those regarded in various respects as inherently threatening (nowadays referred to as “high risk groups”). Governor Griffith in 1889 decided to stop spending on public sanitation, reserving safe drinking water in metal tanks exclusively for European use. Even from the very earliest construction of British hospitals, the arrangement of medical services followed the principle of preserving foreigners from contamination by natives. Racial segregation in social clubs, shopping venues, businesses, and in residential areas, was urged as early as 1893. It was enforced strictly until 1925, when too many non-Caucasian military personnel in the British service confounded the basis for prohibiting ordinary citizens from enjoying the government hospitals, markets, and other public spaces on the basis of skin color. Government spending and allocation of resources remained in reserve for centers calculated to be sufficiently central and important enough, whereby the degree of concentration of Europeans in residence determined a region’s centrality and importance.

A recurrence of the segregationist approach to urban renewal emerged in the Ghana government’s recent 2000 plan for the Modernization of Accra, steered by the Ministry of Tourism and

46 Addae (29).
47 Addae (115, 117).
48 Addae (41, 46, 47).
49 Addae (61).
Manufacturing Sexual Crisis

Diasporan Relations. A central enclave in the city was zoned off for special rehabilitation with streamlined world class commercial facilities to attract foreign investors, and gleaming antiseptic public toilets to suit Japanese visitors. Re-routing public transport was planned and open markets would have been relocated, so that the central area of Accra would be effectively off limits for the average Ghanaian worker who rides to and from work by tro-tro and buys live chickens on the way home.\(^{50}\)

Nowadays racial discrimination in the name of health and safety is not overtly practiced, but the same principle of securing salvation through segregation of the pure and clean from the unworthy infected, is regarded as central to the orthodox formula for solving the HIV/AIDS pandemic.\(^{51}\) According to the Voluntary Testing and Counseling scheme currently encouraged by foreign experts and their local agents (Health Management Sciences, 2002), one should curtail one’s choice and number of sexual partners to avoid sinful self-indulgence that leads to self-contamination and self-annihilation.

**Conclusion**

The challenge to HIV/AIDS orthodoxy is not merely an in-house theoretical conflict between experts who follow the divergent methodologies of virology, microbiology, electronic microscopy, epidemiology, and clinical practice. Money is diverted away from sustaining primary health care delivery where and how it is needed most,\(^{52}\) in order to comply with international conventions. This undermines public health by inhibiting research and development of access to affordable, useful drugs, particularly those preparations derived from local bio-diversity. The challenge to the Afri-

\(^{50}\) As explained to a workshop of foreign diplomats addressed by Hon. Minister J. Obetsebi-Lamptey in Accra, June 2003.

\(^{51}\) For details in the analysis of the Manichean duality, see JanMohamed (1985).

\(^{52}\) A comparable undermining has occurred over decades for child health, due to the pressure on Ghana government to comply with world-wide vaccine initiatives, sacrificing well established and clearly effective community outreach programmes set up by Ghana’s Ministry of Health. In conversation February 2004 with Dr. Phyllis Antwi, School of Public Health, University of Ghana.
Helen Lauer

can HIV/AIDS edifice is not merely practical, either. It is also an intellectual revolt from an historic pattern of foreign-driven expertise and profit-driven intervention that continue to undermine African wellness and integrity. The challenge is waged through the personal courage and moral integrity of men and women in all economic and educational brackets and all countries—from Canada to Kenya, from the United States to Uganda. Some of these women find themselves facing legal summonses and court trials because they have rebelled against a misdiagnosis and refused life-threatening treatment regimes. They stand accused for the sort of rebellion that raises alarm and indignation among authorities whose power serves the elite of society by suppressing any resistance to the status quo.

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Chapter Twenty-One

Comprehending False Objectivity in the Economic Sciences through the Human Sciences

Ralph Palliam, Robert Ankli and Rawda Awwad

―Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts.” (Einstein)

Introduction

Alice in Wonderland tended to give herself very good advice (though very seldom followed them through). At one time Alice recalls trying to box her own ears for having cheated herself in a game of croquet she was playing against herself pretending to be two people. Later she despised this as she felt that there was hardly enough of herself left to make one respectable person. Businesses throughout the world find themselves in wonderland. How often have lies been converted into half-truths? The human sciences have been quick in identifying corruption as a great cause of annoyance and misfortune. They continue to argue that if good governance is the hallmark of progress, corruption is its bane. The recent spate of corporate scandals worldwide has raised serious concerns surrounding governance standards. The credibility of chief executive officers, the accounting profession and the chief financial officers is in serious doubt as human sciences continue to question their ethical obligations and professional standards. A universally accepted fact is that the economic sciences are obliged to establish meaningful benchmarks for certain financial complex-
ities and also to ensure that there are checks and balances in their implementation. It was indeed the human and social sciences that first identified issues leading to the collapse of major corporations while the economic sciences was actively involved in manipulating financial results and financial positions within the confines of generally accepted practices. It has become clear that performance and progress statements that do not accurately capture the reality of an entity affect numerous stakeholders. With specific reference to financial intermediation, surplus spending units (providers of funds) and deficit spending units (borrowers of funds) were enticed into misallocating scarce financial resources. On the other hand long serving and committed company employees were duped into providing their skills to entities that had a limited future. Moreover, there is an element of distrust that pervades modern commerce and modern commerce has yet to recover from the stigma of deceit. The question that the affected public is asking: What lies ahead? There is a strong belief that the human sciences are driving businesses to act in a manner beneficial to the community in which and for which they function.

In this Prentice (2003:421-422) seeks to broaden the interdisciplinary approach of economics to legal analysis with behavioral explanations. Economics, or social science, more broadly has followed the same path moving from the idea of fully rational economic behavior and profit maximization to behavioral and psychological explanations of why people do what they do. In any case, Prentice uses the behavioral explanations to explain what occurred at Enron. Undoubtedly, he adds power to the explanations of what happened and why it happened, but Enron was but one of several firms that engaged in unethical, but not necessarily illegal activity. The Sarbannes-Oxley Act was to “solve” the problems of Enron, WorldComm, Waste Management, Cendant, and others, but, now, less than a decade later, we have gone through the subprime financial crisis in the housing mortgage market and the recently government published Financial Crisis Inquiry Report mentions Sarbannes-Oxley Act only once. Angelides and his fellow Democrats blame “more than 30 years of deregulation and reliance on self-regulation,” “a systematic breakdown in accountability and ethics,” “dramatic failures of corporate governance” and “egregious and predatory
lending practices among key drivers behind the panic.”

English Literature and Finance seem to be two entirely unrelated subject areas—and for all practical purposes they are. We are trying to relate to and respond to a study of false objectivity in the economic sciences in literary terms or through the lens of literature. Our ongoing investigation is to determine the extent to which the inclusion of literary history and criticism is sufficiently pragmatic to measure current economic outcomes and conduct.

We began by arguing for the importance of producing an explanation of this phenomenon that is not limited to the current understanding of business and economic practices, but considers systemic trends that include social relations, and culture. One way of maneuvering through such a conversation is by looking at 19th century English literary text and criticism as it registers the outgoing feudal system and the incoming predominant middle-class culture grounded in a democratic political framework and informed by modern capitalism. The question that we chose to raise is whether false objectivity is a systemic problem that demands a system overhaul or whether it can be addressed through the implementation of a range of checks and balances. The other question we raise is the degree to which false objectivity has been codified as an acceptable cultural behavior, and the reason why society flags the problem only at a point of crisis. Equally, the second part of the presentation deals with narcissistic leadership: the question again that we would like to pose is to what extent narcissistic leadership in the world of business has been accepted as a cultural norm, and is only problematic when it begins to affect us professionally and financially. Does the economic system itself promote the sort of social relations that make these behaviors acceptable? And to what degree does the questioning of such business practices become a mere extension of our own hypocrisy and deception?

Case in point, when Mrs. Bennet raises the question to her husband, Mr. Bennet, as to whether he would pay a visit to the bachelor Mr. Bingley, the new leaser of Netherfield—one of the stately homes symbolic of Aristocratic life and culture—his response was simple: “what for?” Jane Austen’s famous novel Pride and Prejudice clearly foregrounds a thematic consideration
of class dynamics: a middle class mother obsessively plotting to arrange the marriages of her daughters to wealthy men. Her response was equally clear: he is a single man of large fortune, “four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!” Although on the surface level, the reader or viewer is captivated by the love story, the underlying theme is one that depicts the prying open of the aristocratic stately home to a middle class sensibility and sensitivity. For Lizzy, marrying for love was her sole motivation, and Darcy the man of 10,000 pounds could not resist falling in love with her despite himself and his status.

One can argue that Austen’s novels valorize middle class sensibility over and above the prejudice of aristocratic culture. However, they also lay bare the hypocrisy of the new emerging middle class. A closer reading of the text begs the question as to who in this novel is proud and who are those with prejudice? Austen mediates between the social classes which are thoroughly informed by the outgoing feudal system that is replaced by an emerging industrial and capitalist system and culture. Although Austin’s writings register the politico-economic environment of late 18th century England, they equally register the shortcomings of middle-class culture and economy. Both Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy, the eligible bachelors, are valued in monetary terms not only by their own peers but also by the very class that admires them, on the one hand, with respect to their culture and lifestyle, and that despises them, on the other, with respect to their culture and lifestyle. Austen’s aristocrat is not decadent. However, Austen’s aristocrat is losing the power of privilege as he is diluted and mainstreamed into the middle class.

Note the representation of these men in terms of their value 5000 and 10,000 pounds respectively. Their monetary value is reiterated throughout the novel often enough. Their wealth remains unquestioned as long as they remain eligible bachelors. They are also deserving of their wealth as long as they remain eligible bachelors for middle class women with no means.

Another question that one could raise is the degree to which romantic love, very much a middle class concept, is in and of itself deceptive and to what extent does the morally superior representation of middle-class love truly distinguishes itself over and above the one that Mrs. Bennet espouses—for cause at least,
and the one that the aristocracy defines as a means of assuring the continuation of pure bloodlines.

19th century industrial England moved in tandem with an ever evolving and maturation of democratic principles, and an ever expanding middle class. Democratic principles and capitalism & industry promised more equitable opportunities and standard of living. Yet, even in its beginnings, the new political and economic systems that are gaining traction and taking root are not flawless. As industry and mechanization begin to take over the English political, economic, and social landscape, we begin to see the publications of social problem novels by authors such as Dickens, Hardy and Elizabeth Gaskell. One of the more famous novels which have been popularized over the past century the Xmas Carol serves as a good example of the way in which liberal thinking informed the latter part of Victorian life. We have here an example of an egotistical professional Ebenezer Scrooge who is abusing his white color employee. By placing him into a hypnotic stance through the Xmasses past, present and future, Ebenezer Scrooge becomes more socially conscious and is infused by a need to contribute to charitable causes and share his wealth with those who are less fortunate. The world at the end of the novel is a better place as the community comes together to celebrate long held traditions, and a more active conception of what it means to behave humanely evolves.

The Victorian social problem novels address these issues head on. What they call for in the end is for Captains of Industry to become more socially responsible, and accountable for their own actions. Most of the Victorians do not call for a radical systemic shift but find ways to mitigate between what seems a system that is quite capable of being abusive to a system that is undergirded by laws and regulations so that it can continue to operate with its moral dimension intact.

The Victorians became aware that the capitalist system required its own checks and balances for it to remain socially and ethically viable. Child labor laws, minimum wage laws etc. were part and parcel of an attempt to provide stability to an economic structure that had the potential for abuse. Critics have often questioned the sustainability of such measures and the capability of law to control abuse. But even then, going back as early as
1829, social critics such as Thomas Carlyle seem to have a more honest grasp of what we were going to be confronted with down the road with respect to the rapidly changing world of industry and mechanization. In short, Carlyle calls for an honest examination of the workings of culture with the context of changing systems may they be political or otherwise in order to explain social relations and human nature. For critics such as Carlyle, Ruskin and Arnold, only to mention a few, a discussion that informs socio-cultural considerations of past history, present systemic contexts, may enable progressive and positive change that includes perhaps a sustainable change in the way in which we chose to relate to each other economically.

**Accounting and Pressure from the Human Sciences**

The selective and acceptable reporting of economic events by different accounting systems, compounded by alternative accounting methods and estimates, make financial statements an approximation of economic reality. The tendency to delay accounting recognition of some transactions suggests that financial statements lag behind reality. The difference between reality and imaginary is often referred to as the agency problem. Powerful incentives act upon agents as they exercise their judgment, particularly when the judgment can trigger a stock market response that will, in turn, affect the firm in numerous ways. The responsibility of agents is to manage earnings. From a principal’s perspective not all of the methods used to achieve this goal are equally desirable. Agents can either increase productivity or they can strategically manipulate accounting choices to affect earnings. The latter method need not come with any associated changes in productivity. Consequently, there is misstatement of the financial results and position. Reliable and comprehensive information on the companies’ financial condition is fundamental to effective corporate management, market discipline, and official oversight, and thus should be a very high priority. If such information is not available, management decisions may not be conducive to sound governance principles.

Moreover, managers and owners (especially in cases where ownership is widely dispersed) may not be aware of the true fi-
nancial condition of the institution or, if they are, they may wish to conceal it; and the public may thus be misled. Ultimately, this prevents the market discipline from working. Typically, tasks at a corporation involve the following: Firstly, a big picture of the corporation’s mission and goals are established. Secondly, an application of this big picture to specific product, service or program is formulated. Thirdly, a program of activities is considered for the corporation to fulfill its strategic initiatives. Within the confines of each of these tasks the human sciences presents ethics and integrity as a major issue arguing that a strong sense of ethics and integrity is critical to maintaining trust and credibility associated with each of the tasks identified above. With specific reference to tasks associated with the accounting function, media reports have exposed executives engaged in a wide array of fraudulent accounting practices and other misconduct. The cumulative net impact of these fraudulent actions is still being determined. When each of the tasks identified above fosters an aggressive “numbers driven” corporate culture obsessed with meeting financial projections, CEOs impose and demand compliance with unrealistic revenue and other targets. CEOs communicate this to different executives who are expected to achieve these figures by any means necessary. Until recently, failure on the part of executives to achieve unrealistic objectives, the accounting function was brought to help in the rescue. The fraudulent practices through which many corporations manipulated its financial performance are a result of simple accounting entries made by accountants to merely conform to the unadjusted and quarterly results thereby meeting the CEO’s projections.

The collapse of major U.S. corporations illustrates the dangers of corporate ‘unaccountability’, and the interrelationships that exist between big business, government and the professions whose job it is to hold them to account. However, it has also raised a number of specific issues that hold lessons for the implementation and enforcement of anti-bribery legislation. At a time when 30 countries are re-assessing their national measures for deterring bribery and corruption, so as to ensure compliance with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development Anti-bribery Convention, then it is important to take the opportunity to review and learn from any lessons that were
experienced in the U.S.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is a unique forum where the governments of 30 market democracies work together to address the economic, social and governance challenges of globalization as well as to exploit its opportunities. The Organization provides a setting where governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practices and coordinate domestic and international policies. It is a forum where peer pressure can act as a powerful incentive to improve policy and which produces internationally-agreed instruments, decisions and recommendations in areas where multilateral agreement is necessary for individual countries to make progress in a globalized economy. Non-members are invited to subscribe to these agreements and treaties.

Evidence from around the world suggests that Multinational Companies (MNCs), operating in a range of sectors, engage in bribery and corruption not only as a result of solicitation – but also as a choice strategy. The World Bank presents research, carried out in the transitional states, and concludes that ‘bribery pays’ are used either to secure large-scale procurement contracts, or to buy influence. The existence of powerful economic incentives, makes bribery all the more difficult to address and underlines the need for rigorous enforcement of anti-bribery legislation. Concerns with corruption, over and above the moral and ethical discourse, include:

- **Impact on development and the poor:** bribery and corruption inhibit development as it is the poor who pay for the costs of bribes, either through higher prices, or lower quality services. Bribery also creates a democratic deficit as key decisions affecting citizens are made away from the public arena for reasons outside the public interest.
- **Impact on markets:** bribery and corruption distorts competition.
- **Integrity of public services:** today’s privatization and liberalization policies are increasing the opportunities and incentives for bribery and corruption undermining public
confidence in the integrity of public services.

- **Impact on workers and whistleblowers:** Whistle-blowers provide a mechanism for increasing the chance of detecting bribery and thus potentially provide a powerful tool for deterring corruption. Whistleblowers need to be properly protected both by national legislation and at a company level, through the establishment of appropriate disclosure channels.

Since 1977, the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) made it a criminal offence for USA companies – as well as those foreign companies whose securities are listed in the United States – to pay bribes to *foreign* government officials. Moreover, the FCPA was adopted following an SEC investigation in which over 400 USA companies admitted making questionable or illegal payments in excess of £300 million to foreign government officials, politicians and political parties in an attempt to restore public confidence in the integrity of U.S. business conduct. Other OECD countries, however, did not have equivalent legislation. This raised concerns that the FCPA had created an *un-level* playing field, as companies falling outside the scope of the FCPA could secure commercial advantage, through the payment of bribes, in a way that those subject to the FCPA could not. This need to ‘level the playing field’ provided the motivation for the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions, which came into force in 1999 – over 20 years after the FCPA. Signatories, include all 30 OECD members, as well as 5 non-members. The Convention requires signatories to enact national legislation that criminalizes the act of bribing a foreign public official. The FCPA represents 20 years experience of implementing and enforcing anti-bribery legislation. It also provided the basic legislative framework for the OECD Convention. As such, it potentially offers valuable lessons for the implementation of the OECD Convention. The FCPA consists of two basic parts:

- **Anti-bribery provisions:** which prohibit American companies, citizens and residents from making illicit payments to foreign officials to procure a commercial
benefit;
- **Accounting provisions:** which requires public companies to make and keep books and records that accurately reflect the transactions of the corporation and put in place
- strict accounting controls aimed at uncovering and deterring corruption. These were designed to operate in tandem with the anti-bribery provisions.

Violation of either the FCPA’s anti-bribery or accounting provisions carries potential criminal and civil penalties. The FCPA is jointly enforced by the US Department of Justice and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Overall, however, there is a means to assess the effectiveness of the FCPA in deterring international bribery. Whilst to some extent the prosecution of cases can be assumed to send the signal to companies that it is ‘no longer business as usual’, it is impossible to know the frequency or level of bribes that have been paid despite the FCPA. Indeed, disappointingly perhaps, research on the behavior of OECD MNCs in the transitional states found that USA companies were no less likely to engage in the payment of procurement kickbacks than MNCs of other OECD countries.

**Decades of Greed**

The bankers-did-it-all narrative is unsatisfactory not because there is never any greed and foolish risk-taking in business, but because there always is. It’s hard to top Enron and WorldCom in the late 1990s and early 2000s for case studies in the reckless pursuit of wealth. As for management failures, one can study Penn Central’s bankruptcy in 1970, or Texaco’s in 1987, or GM’s in 2009. And one can pick a decade of greed. Prentice (423) indicates that the rational model suggests that such behaviors should never occur because individuals understand it is not in their self-interest to pursue such strategies or tragedies. Therefore, we argue, the notion that corporate managers will act rationally, and that their firms will act rationally is simply wrong.

What does this mean? Do firms then deliberately act irrationally? Perhaps the answer is that firms want to act rationally
but somehow they do not know how to do tithe “behavioral” argument may give us some insight as to why they do not act rationally despite their efforts to do so, but adding behavioral explanations is not enough. This section includes revisiting the rational argument, expanding the “behavioral” assumptions, and introduces “stupidity” into the discussion.

Jennings (2006) argues that no one wakes up one day and decides, “You know what would be good? A gigantic fraud! I think I’ll perpetuate a myth through accounting fraud and make money that way.” Nor does anyone suddenly wake up and exclaim, “Forgery! Forging bank documents to show lots of assets. There’s the key to business success.” When and why do these events keep recurring? One would think that illegal or unethical “white-collar activity should rarely occur because the results always seem to be the same: the “bad” guys get caught. Or do they? Perhaps Jennings (2006) is wrong. Perhaps a good proportion (all?) of us are ethical egoists. It’s only about me. When one looks at the people making the decisions, one sees people brought up in situations where cheating is common and may often be expected. If ethics are developed and learned in school, or for that matter, if ethical standards result from what happens to those who bend the rules in business, we are definitely in trouble. Pfeffer’s (2005) report on a survey of 50,000 undergraduates on some 60 campuses found that 70 percent admitted to some cheating, and there is evidence that both plagiarism and giving unpermitted aid on examinations or assignments are increasing. This continues into the workplace. Research shows that cheating among business school students exceeds the rate of cheating of any other college major (Pfeffer 2005:189). Jennings (2006) cites James Stearns of Miami University and Shaheen Borna of Ball State University who interviewed three hundred incarcerated inmates at three minimum-security prisons and compared their responses with those of students at eleven MBA programs. The inmates showed just as much integrity, or more, when presented with ethical dilemmas. Inmates were more concerned about customer service while MBAs were more concerned about pleasing shareholders. Inmates were also less likely to pirate employees from other companies than were the MBAs. Perhaps white-collar workers are
the true criminal class. Markopolos (2010) was surprised from the very beginning of his career at the level of corruption which was simply an accepted way of doing business. Markopolos (330-347) informs one that Bernie Madoff wasn’t a complete aberration; he was an extension of the cutthroat culture that was prevalent from the day he started.

In the full ten years from 1992 to 2001, according to Transactional Records Access Clearing House (TRAC) data, SEC enforcement attorneys referred 609 cases to the justice Department for possible criminal charges. US Attorney decided declining to prosecute just over 64% of them. Of those they did press forward, the feds obtained guilty verdicts in a respectable 76%. But even then, some 40% of the convicted starched-collars didn’t spend a day in jail. It may not be the money though, that drives them. To be sure the money serves as a scorecard. “One is better than another because one made $5 billion last year and the other made $4 billion. Business lives in a win-lose world. A true ethical position in such matters would be to put oneself in the other person’s shoes and ask if one would be satisfied if another did the same thing to one. But they don’t see it that way. In other words, Enron’s executives didn’t need to feel any qualms about burying JEDI in a footnote, because sophisticated investors would spot the disclosure and buy or sell Enron stock until its price was accurate. Thus, efficient-market theory reinforced a culture of following the bare letter of the law in complex financial transactions. This turns into a contest of who is the brightest and they get to set the rules. Jeff Skilling was the intellectual father of Enron’s business strategy. McLean and Elkind (2003) describe him as follows:

When people describe Skilling they don’t just use the word “smart;” they use phrases like “incandescently brilliant” or “the smartest person I ever met.”

But the authors of The Smartest Guys in the Room added: Without question, Skilling’s formidable intelligence had a lot to do with turning Enron into a company that was successful—at least for a while. But he also had qualities that were disastrous for someone running a big company. For all his brilliance, Skilling had
dangerous blind spots. His management skills were appalling, in large part because he didn’t really understand people. He expected people to behave according to the imperatives of pure intellectual logic, but of course nobody does that (including, it should be said, Skilling himself).

This is where stupid gets in the act. Whitney speaking of the subprime crisis wasn’t saying that Wall Street bankers were corrupt. She was saying they were stupid (Lewis 2010). These people whose job it was to allocate capital apparently didn’t even know how to manage their own (Lewis 2010:116-121). But this was only one form of stupidity. Enron’s risk-management manual explicitly encouraged employees to adhere to the letter of the accounting rules, even if they were contrary to economic reality. It stated: “Reported earnings follow the rules and principles of accounting. The results do not always create measures consistent with underlying economics. However, corporate managements’ performance is generally measured by accounting income, not underlying economics. Risk management strategies are therefore directed at accounting rather than economic performance.” In other words, Enron managers were encouraged to focus on the accounting effect of their decisions more than their real economic impact.” (Partnoy, 2003: 304).

This is stupid, but this is only one side of the equation. Why were the buyers of Enron stock also stupid? Prentice (2003) argues that the economic model doesn’t work because people do not have complete information, but why not? Analysts had argued for years over whether or not Enron’s business was a “black box” – which begs the question: “If you don’t understand it, how can you recommend it to your clients?” (Culver 2002:204). If they were investing with Bernie Madoff, why wouldn’t they perform due diligence?

Jeffrey Pfeffer wrote a book in 2007 entitled: What Were They Thinking. He explains that there are three themes that (...) help explain how companies make poor choices: Firstly, the importance of considering feedback effects—the idea that actions often have unintended consequences. Because the lenders sold many—though not all—of the loans they made to other investors, in the form of mortgage bonds, the industry was also fraught with moral hazard. “It was a fast-buck business,” said Jacobs. “Any
business where you can sell a product and make money without having to worry how the product performs is going to attract sleazy people. That was the seamy underbelly of the good idea. (...) That was our job: to figure out which of the characters were the right ones to pull off the big idea” (Lewis 2010:269-275). Secondly, the naive, overly simplistic, almost mechanical models of people and organizations that seem to dominate both discourse and practice—if a price went up yesterday, it would go up today; and thirdly, the tendency to over complicate what are often reasonably straightforward choices and insights (Pfeffer 2007). Due diligence or just common sense would have prevented many of the problems that developed. Sometimes just talking to each might provide needed information.

Physicist Richard Feynman who served on the Rogers Challenger Commission, provided one example when he asked a group of engineers to estimate the probability that the shuttle’s main engine would fail, their estimates ranged between 1 in 200 and 1 in 300. The comparable estimate from higher-ups: 1 in 100,000 (Pfeffer 2007). People thought they understood their models and their risks, but it simply wasn’t so. Partnoy (2003) explains one way in which this happened. He (Infectious Greed) believes there have been three major changes in financial markets during the past [two decades]. First, financial instruments became increasingly complex and were pushed underground, as more parties used financial engineering to manipulate earnings and to avoid regulation. Second, control and ownership of companies moved greater distances apart, as ever sophisticated investors could not monitor senior managers, and even diligent senior managers could not monitor increasingly aggressive employees. Third, markets were deregulated, and prosecutors rarely punished financial malfeasance (Partnoy, 2003).

Assuming he is right. Why would someone risk a large part of their wealth to invest in a process that they didn’t understand? How could they believe that the gains would never end? Hasn’t every boom come to an end? Don’t stock prices fall as well as rise? Could Enron expect that the Enron stock that guaranteed SPEs would continue to rise and never fall? Why would “intelligent” investors continue to invest in Madoff’s operations? If he actually was purchasing these options, we would have seen
the footprints of his trades. “At the volume he had to be trading to produce the results he claimed, his trades should have been reflected in the market activity. But there was no sign of his presence in the market. He supposedly got in and got out, bought and sold, without leaving a trace” (Markopolos 2010:843-845).

Markopolos continues: “But then I began doing the math. I knew that there was in existence a total of $9 billion of OEX index put options on the Chicago Board Options Exchange (CBOE). Madoff claimed to be hedging his investment with short-term (meaning 30 days or less) options. You can realistically purchase only $1 billion of these, and at various times Madoff needed $3 billion to $65 billion of these options to protect his investments—far more than existed” (Markopolos 2010:845-849). Because this operation was so secret, everybody thought they were among a select few whose money he had agreed to handle. Madoff had not registered with the SEC as an investment advisory firm or a hedge fund, so he wasn’t regulated. He was simply a guy you gave your money to, to do whatever he wanted to do with it, and in return he handed you a nice profit. He was the Wizard of Oz, and he made everybody so happy that they didn’t want to look behind the curtain (Markopolos 2010:785-791). We had never realized that Madoff was accepting individual accounts (Markopolos 2010:3942-48). Madoff’s clients believed he was exclusive to only a few investors, and that he carefully picked those few for their discretion. They felt extremely fortunate that he had agreed to accept them as clients. When I started speaking with his investors, I discovered that they felt privilege that he had taken their money (Markopolos 2010:792-795). According to what we were able to piece together, Madoff was running at least $6 billion—or three times the size of the largest known hedge funds. He was the largest hedge fund in the world by far—and most market professionals didn’t even know he existed! In the end it amounted to somewhere around $65 billion (Markopolos 3261-65). How could so many smart people not have known? How could he have fooled the brightest people in the business for so long? The answer was that he didn’t. The fact that there was something strange going on with Bernie Madoff’s operations was not a secret on Wall Street. As soon as I started asking questions, I discovered that people had long been questioning Madoff’s claims
for a long time; but even those people who had questioned his strategy had accepted his nonsensical explanations—as long as the return kept rolling in. The fact is that Madoff’s accountant for 17 years, beginning in 1992, was David Friehling, who definitely was not his brother-in-law. Friehling operated out of a small storefront office in the upstate New York town of New City. It seems likely that Madoff claimed he was a relative because it was the only plausible reason he could think of to explain why a sophisticated multibillion-dollar hedge fund would use a two-person storefront operation in a small town as its auditor. Brother-in-law or not, this certainly should have been a major stop sign. As I was to learn over the next few years, the SEC had been created to monitor the stock market and it really had never evolved with the industry. Its investigators had neither the experience not the training to understand something fairly complicated like fixed income, for example, an array of investments that yields a specific return on a regular basis but is much more complex than it initially appears.

**Conclusion**

Already in 1997, the Business Week reported that higher education is changing profoundly, retreating from the ideals of liberal arts and the leading-edge research it has always cherished. Instead, it is behaving more like the $250 billion business it has become. A liberal arts education rich in the humanistic sciences becomes crucial to a healthy national economy. This paper has shown that there is an implicit demand for a well-rounded commerce graduate with a broad liberal education. The question is: who are the ones that are recognizing the value of the human sciences in the economic sciences particularly when freshmen indicate that their primary reason for going to college is to get a high paying job. The current conduct of today’s business leaders destroys the moral fiber of society. While top management has incentives to over-report earnings, revenue recognition must feature as a malice that is going to be increasingly used in the coming years. The determination of the quality of earnings is a task that needs to be taken more seriously. Perhaps it is the human sciences that would give a more holistic picture of quality.
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Chapter Twenty-Two

The Identity of Motivation in Self-Determination Theory: From Principal-Agent Theory to Practice

Robert Ankli and Ralph Palliam

Introduction

Decci and Ryan (2002), Deci and Flaste (1995) and Ryan (1995) present self-determination theory (SDT) as a theory of personality development and as a theory of self-motivated behavior change. Fundamental to this theory is the principle that one has an innate organizational tendency toward growth, integration of the self, and the “resolution of psychological inconsistency” (Ryan, 1995). Change in behavior as a result of motivation is widely reported in every field of endeavor, education, business, the will to live and the determination to excel in even sport (Bennis, 1996). An introductory sport analogy considering motivation at play philosophically places this study into perspective. One hears of stories about rousing speeches that coaches give at half-time and how losing teams respond with an effort in the second half and the teams go on to win the game. This suggests that motivation is something that can be given to one from the outside and it is therefore mechanical. One may argue that should the coach neglect to give the speech, the players may not have improved their effort in the second half and may have gone on to lose. The question that arises: why was the pre-game speech not as effective? A literature survey of Baard (2002) and Kohn (1993, 1995, 1996) would deny any explanation to this question as a compelling one. Even the team players who do make the big second half turnaround may contend
that the coach did not really do or say anything at half time other than perhaps to remind them of why they were on the field. The team players may argue that each player examined his/her own attitude. An inter-play of exogenous and endogenous factors sustains any winning conduct and therefore it becomes important to identify the conditions under which an individual can be self-motivated. The difficulty arises when one has an ambivalent attitude towards an endeavor and when one forgets an ideal, an objective and a principle.

When one extends Drucker’s (1985) seminal work on management, tasks, responsibilities and practices one could identify the following attitudinal relationships towards work: work versus play, work versus leisure, work versus out-of-work, work versus idleness, work versus retirement, work versus rest, and meaningful work versus meaningless work. Each of the work attitudinal relationships would connote a certain level of motivation depending on the attitudinal relationships to work and play which can further be explained as follows: One plays chess, but one works on chess problems, one plays tennis, but one works on one’s backhand, one works with children, but it may just be child’s play. Work could become impersonal as much as it is personal and to a point where work and play become indistinguishable. This will be the defining characteristic of work in the twenty first century. Shaw in his literary masterpiece Pygmalion demonstrates that a happy person is one who can make a living by one’s hobby. When such a situation arises, the classical motivation literature becomes inadequate to address the nature of work in business.

The traditional theories associated with motivation and the classical definition of work relate to: the need hierarchy theories of Maslow (1965), as modified by Alderfer, the acquired needs theory of McClelland, Herzberg’s two-factor theory, equity theory of Stacy Adams, Victor Vroom’s expectancy theory, Albert Vandra’s social cognitive theory, and the goal-setting theory of Locke and Latham. While these models are presented in a scientific manner there is very little discussion of which one(s) might actually provide a better way of looking at the current problem of motivation within a contemporary definition of work. These classical theories overlap to some extent. In general the discussion of all these models centers on what incentives can be provided that
will motivate an individual or groups of individual resulting in a change in behavior (Pfeffer, 2006).

Each of the theories presents a set of incentives and specifically identifies the role of human resources management to formulate a combination of proper incentives to motivate employees. Maslow’s (1965) hierarchy of needs theory alludes to deficiencies an individual experiences at a particular time. The deficiencies may be physiological (a need for food), psychological (need for self-esteem), or sociological (a need for social interaction). Needs are viewed as energizers and trigger certain behaviors or attitudes. The implication is that when need deficiencies are prevalent, the individual is more susceptible to a manager’s motivational efforts. Drucker (1985) cautions that when one determines the needs of others one may be mistaken. He goes on to add that it may be very short-sighted to think that one can adequately determine the needs of others. Following the same trend of thought, the expectancy theory focuses on two relationships: effort leads to performance, and performance leads to outcomes. In this regard Lawler (1994) contends: the stronger the relationships, the more motivated one will be in providing incentives that generate outcomes that one desires.

The positive psychology or happiness psychology begins with the work of Seligman (1991) and now includes many others Ben-Shahar (2007) Hitt, Black, and Porter (2005) who see motivation in relation to sustaining behavior. They also continue to consider motivation as a product of either external or internal forces. This does not reflect the view that external and internal motivations are significantly and fundamentally different in their use. Perhaps even more important, this definition is breaking into the middle of the argument. Firstly, beginning with Aristotle’s view of human nature, people are assumed to possess an active tendency toward psychological growth and integration. Secondly, some reject this by arguing that there is no tendency toward growth, but rather behaviorism explains people’s actions. A third explanation is that there are a multitude of selves, or personalities, and finally one could see a post-modernist view of a fragmented self that best explains the self. According to Prendergast (1999) should “motivation” be seen to be useful for the manager, it is
necessary to assume that there is some reason to expect that people are capable of psychological growth and development.

Crumbaugh (1997) analyzing Frankl’s presentation of logotherapy: the theory of ‘will to meaning’ suggests that it is not one’s intention to gain pleasure or to avoid pain but rather to see a meaning in life. In this regard Crumbaugh (1997) continues to suggest that an attitude towards a situation creates meaning for one to sustain survival strategies and even to achieve flourishing outcomes. Seligman (1991) suggests that the degree of success may depend upon whether one is an optimist or a pessimist. Should there be a multitude of selves, or a fragmented person, it would become difficult for one to be motivated (Leider, 1998). How does one determine if one had an optimistic and successful life? Philosophers would probably recommend that life is a journey and that one should seek to live, to learn, to love, and to leave a legacy Crumbaugh (1997). Following this broad theme, Leider (1998) suggests that one should look to retired people for what insights they have gathered over a lifetime of employment. Leider (1998) conducted more than 1,000 interviews with people who were successful in their jobs. The findings of Leider’s (1998) study suggest that should one live one’s life over again, he or she firstly, would become more reflective. Leider (1998) contends that human beings are so caught up in the doing that they often lose sight of the meaning of doing and get referred to as “human doings.” Secondly, Leider (1998) argues that if one could live one’s life over again, one would take more risks. One of the least honorable motivations for seeking a job in the public sector is the avoidance of risk particularly when one considers employees in the public sector are offered higher job security and less volatile wage compensation. In relationships, Leider (1998:31) contends that many employees would have been more courageous and as a result most go to the grave with the music still inside. Third, Leider (1998) found that if one could live one’s life over again, he or she would understand what really gave one fulfillment. Leider calls this the power of purpose: doing something that contributes to life, adding value that extends beyond oneself. Purpose is always outside oneself, beyond one’s ego or one’s financial self-interest. Fulfillment comes from integrity, from fully expressing who one is. This has little to do with one’s job description or the
specifics of one’s work. It has to do with how one brings oneself to one’s work, regardless of what that work entails. Leider goes on to show that most of individuals do not put money as the objective of one’s life work.

What one says or how one acts, determines what may transpire in one’s life. In this regard Cousins (1989:32), in his seminal work *Head First: The Biology of Hope* concludes: “I have seen too many cases these past ten years when death predictions were delivered from high professional station only to be gloriously refuted by patients for reasons having less to do with tangible biology than with the human spirit, admittedly a vague term but one that may well be the greatest force within the human arsenal.” It should be noted that there is a casual sort of empiricism which says such things happen. Kouzes and Posner (1995) add in this regard that limitations and beliefs that are self-imposed retard the growth of one’s self. Should one get to think optimistically, a change in behavior would be the consequence. The main paradigm for understanding human life which can be expressed as an inter-play of genetics and the environment omits something essential, namely the particularity one feels to be positive (Kouzes and Posner, 1995). By accepting the idea that one is the effect of a subtle buffeting between heredity and societal forces, one reduces oneself to a result. The more one’s life is accounted for by what already occurred in one’s chromosomes, by what one’s parents did or did not do, and by one’s experiences of one’s early years, the more one’s biography becomes a story of a victim. One comes to live a plot written by one’s genetic code, ancestral heredity, traumatic occasions, parental unconsciousness, and societal accidents (Kouzes and Posner 1995). Should one have the capacity for responsible actions and should one have a natural desire to learn and understand things, one has the desire to do good work. Self-motivation, rather than external motivation, is at the heart of this good work, creativity, responsibility, healthy behavior, and lasting change. Exogenous pressure together with endogenous counterparts can sometimes bring about compliance. With compliance come various negative consequences, including the urge to defy.
Self-Determination Theory

The Self-Determination Theory provides a more robust description of how to think about motivation. This theory is in line with several developments in modern psychology. Deci and Ryan (2002:5) presents the theory “by embracing the assumption that all individuals have natural innate, and constructive tendencies to develop an ever more elaborated and unified sense of self.” SDT characterizes a tendency towards integration as involving both autonomy (tending toward inner organization and holistic self-regulation) and homonomy (tending toward integration of oneself with others). Notwithstanding this tendency, there are clear and specifiable social-contextual factors that support this innate tendency, and there are other specifiable factors that thwart or hinder this fundamental process of human nature. Their overall conclusions presented by Deci and Ryan (2002) are that tangible rewards decrease intrinsic motivation so long as they are expected, but that verbal rewards or praise enhance rather than undermine intrinsic motivation, though subject to how the praise is given. However, should one wants an activity to be sustained the withdrawal of a reward may cause the action to cease. Deci and Ryan (2002) posit that there are three fundamental psychological needs that are essential for successful integration: autonomy, relatedness, and competence. While these are needs, they are unlike the needs advanced by Maslow (1965) in a sense that these needs are never permanent and therefore never stop motivating. It is the striving that is the key. The psychological well-being of a person correlates positively with psychological need satisfaction – primarily the needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Autonomy as a Psychological Need

Autonomy refers to the perceived origin or source of one’s own behavior. Deci (1995) argues that any occurrence that undermines a person’s feeling of autonomy, reduces one to a lower level of control and consequently reduces the level of intrinsic motivation. Autonomy concerns acting from interest and integrated values. When individuals experience autonomy, their behavior as an expression of the self becomes paramount. It should be pointed out that autonomy is often confused with, or melded together with,
the quite different concept of independence (which means not relying on external sources or influences. According to Baard (2002) behaviors that support autonomy include optimizing subordinate’s control or influence, ameliorating internal and external pressures, reducing or eliminating excessive rules, allowing self-selection for tasks, when possible, permitting failure, taking subordinate’s perspective, at least, initially, even if you believe it to be inaccurate, providing feedback in a non-controlling manner, choosing an assertive communication style rather than using controlling (aggressive) language, and avoiding manipulative incentive systems. Giving people the choice is in fact what modern management is about.

**Relatedness as a Psychological Need**

Relatedness refers to feeling connected to others, to caring for and being cared for by those others, to have a sense of belongingness both with other individuals and with one’s community (Deci and Ryan, 2002). Relatedness reflects the integrative tendency of life, the tendency to connect with and be integral to and accepted by others. The need to feel one-self as being in relation to others is thus not concerned with the attainment of a certain outcome or a formal status, but instead the psychological sense of being with others in secure communion or unity. Moreover, relatedness also entails an employee in a group setting seeing the value of his/her contribution in relation to the overall mission of an organization. According to Baard (2002) managerial behaviors that support relatedness include holding regular meetings, setting reward structures that support cooperation, avoiding triangulation, sharing information whenever feasible, and conducting team-building exercises when appropriate. The need for relatedness leads to competence.

**Competence as a Psychological Need**

Finally, competence refers to feeling effective in one’s interactions with the social environment and experiencing opportunities to exercise and express one’s capacities. The need for competence leads one to seek challenges that are optimal for their capacities and to persistently attempt to maintain and enhance those skills and capacities through activity. It is an affirmation that one’s life
is worth living. Competence is not an attained skill or capability, but rather is a felt sense of confidence and effectiveness in action. Friedman (2005) recently wondered why people were willing to work “for free” in the “open-source” community. He discovered that people who are very bright wish to reveal to everyone just how bright (competent) they are. Friedman (2005) also concluded that the whole operation of work is nothing more than a peer review. Managerial behaviors that would support competence include training, preparing, and supporting subordinates, removing barriers to efficient performance, agreeing on achievable goals, helping subordinates determine reasonable goals, helping subordinates determine reasonable ambitions, providing optimal challenges, allowing feedback to occur regularly, keeping critical comments in perspective, and encouraging self-discovery of errors.

Overall Deci and Ryan (2002) conclude that motivation must be intrinsic to be successful (useful), but that individuals may internalize extrinsic motivators if they are consistent with one’s beliefs. One will also be willing to do onerous tasks (unmotivating or demotivating tasks) if this contributes to the overall goal. For example, a person may hate to clean tables, but accepts doing it if he or she is working in a restaurant and clean tables are necessary to encourage patrons to visit. Another example would be reading and commenting on a professor’s research findings. The important thing about this model for managers is that one can take actions that will increase competence, autonomy, and relatedness. This is also consistent with previous motivation theories that have been used in a business settings.

Relating Self-Determination Theory to Herzberg
Herzberg’s two-factor theory is consistent with the idea of self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 2002). Most of the points which Herzberg discusses are further extended to include competency, autonomy, and relatedness. However, Herzberg’s two factors have been variously called the dissatisfiers-satisfiers or the hygiene-motivators or the extrinsic-intrinsic factors. The original research which led to the theory gave rise to two specific conclusions. First, there is a set of extrinsic conditions, the job context, which result in dissatisfaction among employees when the condi-
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ations are not present. If these conditions are present, they do not necessarily motivate employees. These conditions are the dissatisfiers or hygiene factors, since they are needed to maintain a level of “no dissatisfaction.” Dissatisfiers include salary, job security, working conditions, status, company procedures, quality of technical supervision, and quality of interpersonal relations among peers, with superiors and with subordinates. Second, a set of intrinsic conditions, the job content, when present in the job, builds strong levels of motivation that can result in good job performance. The factors in this set are called the satisfiers or motivators and include achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, the work itself, and the possibility of growth. Thus, these conditions result from feelings of competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

Being in Flow and Motivation
Csikszentmihalyi (1991) described the concept: being in flow. It is a state of being able to achieve total focus and can be applied to almost every field of activity. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1991:87), flow involves “being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away. Time flies. Every action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one, like playing jazz. Your whole being is involved, and you’re using your skills to the utmost.” When one achieves a state of flow, one is able to achieve more as a result of one’s thoughts and energy is focused on the task in hand. To get into a state of flow, one needs to eliminate interruptions and distractions from one’s environment. Moreover, one needs to empty one’s mind of worries, anxieties, negative thinking, and all those little mental notes that dart in and out of one’s consciousness.

Csikszentmihalyi (1991) argues that strongly motivated people will be in flow which he defines as the process of achieving happiness through control over one’s inner life. His description of “being in flow” also seems very much like SDT. He finds enjoyment has eight major components. When people reflect on how it feels when their experience is most positive, they mention at least one, and often all, of the following. First, the experience usually occurs when one confronts tasks one has a chance of completing. Second, one must be able to concentrate on what one is doing.
Third and fourth, the concentration is usually possible because the task has clear goals and provides immediate feedback. Fifth, one acts with a deep but effortless involvement that removes from awareness the worries and frustrations of everyday life. Sixth, enjoyable experiences allow people to exercise a sense of control over their actions. Seventh, concern for the self disappears, yet paradoxically the sense of self emerges stronger after the flow experience is over. Finally, the sense of duration of time is altered; hours pass by in minutes, and minutes can stretch out to seem like hours.

The combination of all these elements causes a sense of deep enjoyment that is so rewarding (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). One feels that expending a great deal of energy is worthwhile simply to be able to maintain one’s focus on finding solutions that result in a state of self-fulfillment. Should one be in flow, one begins to work harder. Consequently, one becomes more involved and committed, all as a result of having more control and management over one’s self. This high performance management practice encourages the building of skills and competence. Being in-flow facilitates the efforts of people in actually applying their wisdom and energy to enhancing organizational performance. By placing more responsibility in the hands of people farther down in the organization, the organization saves on administrative overhead as well as other costs associated with having an alienated work force in an adversarial relationship with management.

Principal-Agent Theory as an Economic Approach

The economics approach to the topic can be explained in terms of a principal-agent (PA) theory. Pink (2001) suggests that the basis of principal-agent theory is that an individual (the agent) acts on behalf of another individual (the principal). The actions of the agent are not observable or at least are not completely observable and it is hypothesized that the agent may provide less effort on the principal’s behalf than what the principal desires. The premise is that “effort” refers to some activity that the individual would rather avoid. This is the key to the theory which rejects Aristotle’s view of human nature. The theory assumes that one is not capable of working without the promise of a reward or the threat of pun-
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ishment. The basis of the theory is that people respond to incentives. The objective is then to find the proper incentives, so the agent will perform as the principal desires. If the efforts of the agent are observable then the two parties could simply contract on the action to be taken. Wearing (2005) lists several reasons why a contract may not happen: the future is unknown and it would be difficult to foresee all possibilities; it may be hard to negotiate successfully a satisfactory outcome, especially when there is a lack of prior experience; and it may be difficult to write a contract that can be clearly interpreted by an outside party such as a court or an arbitrator.

These models see man as a machine (Hirshberg, 1998). Managers are attracted to these economic theories because they control money and believe they can design systems, using money, to motivate workers. They see the worker as a machine, a passive agent who must be turned on by management. These managers believe that one’s willingness to act is a function of scarcities and surpluses of financial benefits despite numerous theories suggesting that financial resources by itself does not motivate and ultimately does not lead to productivity.

Prendergast (1999) who reviewed models that focus on the provision of incentives in firms, points out that many of the models are actually one period models, so that in these models there is not even the possibility of re-contracting or changing jobs if the agent is unhappy with the outcome, or that the agent could be fired if the principal feels the agent is not performing in a satisfactory manner. Prendergast (1999) discusses two period models in which younger workers are underpaid in the first period and older workers are overpaid in the second period. Prendergast (1999) concludes that agents respond to incentives and that they are capable of actions that are privately beneficial at the cost of overall efficiency.

Roberts (2004) provides a thorough description of the principal-agent model. He considers whether either party is risk-averse or risk-neutral, financial constraints, the choice of performance measures, manipulation of performance measures, tournaments, multi-tasking, group performance pay, subjective evaluations, reputations, and organizational architecture. While his discussion is interesting and provides several insights, it does not seem to be
useful in discussing motivation. In fact, one can agree with Kohn (1993a) that rewards and attempting to measure the outputs that determine rewards undermine interest in the activity itself. One becomes more interested in the reward than in the activity and consequently looks for ways to collect the reward. It is for this reason that Kohn is opposed to giving gold stars in primary school. It is an indication that the activity itself (reading for example) is not worthwhile unless you are given a gold star. It also causes the reader to seek shortcuts to get the prize.

There are conflicting findings associated with the principal-agent theory. Many discussions on this topic refer to a seminal work by Lazear (2000) on motivation at Safelite Auto Glass. Safelite switched compensation from an hourly rate to a piece rate. Productivity increased by 44 percent, half due to working faster and half due to selection effects. The Sears Roebuck auto repair case gives a different result (Paine, 2002). Sears also changed its compensation from hourly to piece rate, but now the worker was responsible for deciding whether a repair or replacement needed to be performed. Since the new hourly rate of pay was below what was adequate to provide an adequate income, workers did repairs that were unnecessary and Sears paid huge fines when this practice was discovered (Lazear, 2000).

Roberts (2004) describes growth and organizational change at Nokia and British Petroleum. According to Roberts (2004) high commitment human resource management systems are especially attractive when it is difficult to measure performance accurately. Roberts (2004) cites examples where workers are “happily-badly paid.” After reviewing of research studies, Caggiano (1992) determined that people want the same things they have always wanted. Even though job security is increasingly tenuous, regardless of industry or location, “interesting work” has a dramatic twenty-two-point lead over “high income” when it comes to importance to workers. These answers which include working with good people and having a say about what one is doing in addition to interesting work are not rewards. They are not offered conditionally, on the basis of satisfying someone who has more power than one does. A survey of *Industry Week* readers, Caudron (1993:2) found that quality of leadership, namely “working for a leader with vision and values” means more than “pay raises and
bonuses.” This certainly becomes a source of motivation for today’s workforce.

Finally, there are additional reasons for dismissing the effectiveness of rewards (Kohn 1993a). Deming’s (2000) experience after observing and advising organizations suggests that “Pay is not a motivator.” Hock (1999) adds that money motivates neither the best people nor the best in people. It can move the body and influences the mind, but it cannot touch the heart or move the spirit. Kohn (1993a) amends this declaration by reminding one that money can nevertheless be a demotivator. If one asks people what they care about, they never rank salary first. However, it is interesting that the very same people believe that money motivates others. Should one reduce salary by half there will certainly be a revolt, however should salary be doubled productivity may be unaffected. Furthermore, rewards may diminish the intended purpose. Kohn (1995) argues vigorously that punishments, like rewards, are cut from the same cloth and the agents see rewards and punishments as bribes. The principal, who is in control, uses bribes to change the behavior of the agent. Should agents not get rewards that they expect, agents become embittered and rupture relationships resulting in agency conflict? Performance appraisal systems that rank individuals make co-workers competitive and do not enhance team learning. Even team appraisals can cause problems if team members feel that one or more persons are preventing them from getting a reward, and, in Herzberg’s (1966) terms, one will be demotivated. Giving rewards allows one to avoid asking why something is not working. It also allows one to ignore feedback, social support, and the other things that workers need to accomplish. Rewards discourage risk-taking. Why should one try something that may fail when it is possible to get a good reward for merely doing things the same as always?

Finally, the problem is not with compensation, per se, but with pushing economic benefits as a motive for accomplishment. The more closely pay is linked to achievement, the more damage is done. A recommendation in this regard would be that employers pay workers fairly and then do everything possible to help them forget about pay. A preoccupation with pay distracts employers and employees from the issues that really matter. The principal-agent model is linked to the hypothesis of profit maxi-
mization, with the assumption that all stakeholders should benefit in a virtuous market that allocates resources efficiently and one that avoids self-interest and agency conflicts.

**Self-Fulfilling Prophecy and Self-Determination Theory**

Motivation is both internal and external (Herzberg, 1966). However, SDT holds that verbal rewards and praise enhance rather than undermine intrinsic motivation. When one considers a self-fulfilling prophecy, the work of the “Pygmalion Effect” comes to mind. George Bernard Shaw’s “Pygmalion,” was based on Prince Pygmalion in a Greek mythology. Pygmalion sculpted a maiden (Galatia) and fell in love with her. Aphrodite brought the statue to life and, as the story goes, “they lived happily ever after.” In the original play, later made into “My Fair Lady,” Professor Henry Higgins transformed Eliza Doolittle from a cockney flower girl into a well-spoken young woman, obviously of superior upbringing. In this regard, Livingstone (1969) applying Pygmalion in management considers the reasons for work and contends that self-expectations influence behavior. Eden (1990) following the same trend of thought as that of Livingstone (1969) argues that the self-fulfilling prophecy consists of three stages. First, an individual believes something, which is false at the time. Second, this belief causes the person to engage in some new behavior that he or she would not have otherwise done, except for the false belief. Third, the prophecy is fulfilled. Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) showed that the intelligence quotient of a randomly selected group of students were raised four points over a control group when the teachers were told that these students were “late-bloomers.” There was no other intervention. Subsequently it was discovered that the teachers’ smile and other nonverbal positive feelings encouraged both the teachers and students to engage in more challenging material producing superior effort. In this regard managers expect of their subordinates a certain sense of responsibility and the way they treat them largely determine their performance and career progress. A unique characteristic of superior managers is the ability to create high performance expectations that subordinates fulfill. The argument is that if management provides an atmosphere of autonomy and relatedness, competency
workers will emerge highly motivated. This is consistent with the SDT view.

**Revisiting Pay within the Self-Determination Theory**

While high wages are considered a dissatisfier in Herzberg’s (1966) terms, one must be careful not to de-emphasize pay. In labor markets, as in other markets, there is a tendency to get what one pays for. If one wants to recruit outstanding people, and wants them to stay with the organization, paying more is helpful, although not absolutely necessary (Herzberg, 1966). Once one decides what one wants to do, one will always prefer more pay to less pay, but it is not the economic rewards that attract one in the first place. High wages tend to attract more applicants, permitting the organization to be more selective in its hiring. This selectivity is important in finding people who are going to be trainable and who will be committed to the organization. Paying more makes turnover less likely, as there is less chance that someone will be able to increase his or her income by moving. Perhaps most important, higher wages send a message that the organization values its people. According to Pfeffer (1995), Nordstrom typically pays its people an hourly wage higher than the prevailing rate for retail clerks at comparable stores. Coupled with incentive pay for outstanding work, Nordstrom salespeople often earn twice the average retail income. Pfeffer (1995) cites Ricketts report in the *Oil and Gas Journal* that some oil refineries paid its workers 35 percent more than oil workers in the same region. They were able to hire better qualified workers and trained them in multiple skills. This resulted in maintenance outlays being 25 percent less than the next leading refinery. Pfeffer (1995) concludes that workers whose wages were higher than might be predicted based on standard demographic and human capital factors expressed higher levels of job satisfaction, were less likely to quit, and indicated that they would work harder for the company. Before one accepts the proposition that it is just the monetary rewards, one must also ask what else such firms are doing to make work a pleasant experience. In another study of business units of major U.S. companies, Pfeffer (2006) discovered a positive relation between changes in wages and changes in productivity. Moreover, the increase in
productivity from an increase in wages was approximately large enough to pay for itself. Thus, there is systematic evidence, as well as case examples, that support the efficiency efforts of paying more.

At the same time, one must be careful not to overemphasize pay. If the only attraction a firm has is a higher salary, then the successful hire will be equally susceptible to a better offer in its broadest sense at some time in the future. Some organizations refuse to discuss salary until an individual agreed to join the organization. The response to pay inquiries was that they paid a competitive wage. According to Rogers, Taylor and Foreman (1992) companies do not offer big raises for people to join their company, nor do they pay extra to keep people. People who do technically good jobs will get promotional opportunities. Peer recognition becomes important. If an organization produces greater returns by un-harnessing the power of its people, justice suggests that some proportion of those gains should accrue to those who have produced the results as opposed to going solely to the shareholders or management. If people expend more effort and ingenuity, and organizations observe better results as a consequence of that effort, and at the same time workers receive nothing, they would likely become cynical and disillusioned and to stop trying or may leave. Since people are motivated by more than money, things like recognition, security, and fair treatment matter a great deal. However, it is also true that fairness and justice virtually dictate that if people are responsible for enhanced levels of performance and profitability, they will want to share in the benefits. Contingent compensation helps to motivate effort, because people know they will share in the results of their work. Merit pay made on an individual basis is also controversial. Some believe that it actually harms performance. Deming (2000) believes that the merit rating nourishes short-term performance, annihilates long-term planning, builds fear, demolishes teamwork, and nourishes rivalry and politics. However, regardless of one’s position on merit pay for individuals, it is possible and indeed desirable to reward performance, if not on an individual level, then on the basis of performance by groups, subunits, or even the entire organization. A comprehensive review of the literature on profit sharing,
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which includes gain sharing, concludes profit sharing and productivity are positively related.

Conclusion

This study considered motivation within the context of SDT. The study shows that an individual can be provided with external motivation, but it will only be effective if the individual internalizes it. An underlying assumption associated with motivation is that people have the capacity for responsible actions, that they have a natural desire to learn and understand things, and that they have the desire to do good work. Therefore, motivation within this framework assumes a different dimension. It was therefore necessary to consider issues associated with autonomous motivation, controlled motivation, and motivation as a predictor of performance. This study recognizes the importance of SDT as a model to successfully motivate an organization’s workforce within the agency theory. SDT provides a more robust description of human conduct within an organization. Any self-imposed limitations and beliefs tend to retard the growth of self. The study recommends that the “self,” rather than external motivation is at the heart of creativity, responsibility, healthy behavior, sustained growth and most of all continued success for stakeholders in a principal-agent governed organization.

References


Literary Criticism
Chapter Twenty-Three

The Crisis of Literary Criticism in Arabic Culture: Platinum Criticism, a Preliminary Definition

Ayman Bakr

In some chemical experiments, platinum, like some other chemical elements, only stimulates, there is nothing that can influence it, platinum will remain the same after such chemical experiments. On the other hand, a chemical interaction that needs the stimulating effect of platinum cannot be done without its mediation. This function of platinum, as I suggest, is comparable to some critical writings or practices in the field of literary criticism in the Arabic culture. This paper explores the main characteristics of this kind of criticism, which I call it from now on “platinum criticism.”

Platinum Critic/Criticism.

A platinum critic¹ is one who is interested in understanding, relocating and clarifying critical terms, categories or methods. Such terms, in the case of Arabic culture, have been originally created in some foreign culture, always in Europe or in the United States. This type of critic usually adopts the most common interpretations of literary terms and thoughts. Second, he will transfer, through

¹ A definition of platinum critic was published in Arabic in:
أيمن بكر، المفكر الرقاصة: من تفاصيل ثقافة منهارة، الدار للنشر والتوزيع، القاهرة، 2007، صص 51-56.

translations and university lectures, these terms and thoughts into his/her culture. The platinum critic will spend the last stage of her/his life repeating the same understanding of these critical ideas with almost no modifications. A platinum critic plays, in the field of human sciences, the same stimulating role that platinum plays in chemical experiments.

When a theoretician, thinker, or critic, repeats a few ideas for a long time, using the same interpretations and verbal forms of these ideas over again, s/he will most probably get united with them, which means that this critic will perceive her/himself and the world mainly through one perspective dominated by the same group of ideas. Therefore, the platinum critic will define her/himself as “the holder and deliverer of specific extremely important critical thoughts.”

However, this type of critic is far from being unimportant. S/he plays an important role in helping other scholars when they try to recognize or analyze the common understanding of a specific theory or a critical category within a specific period. In other words, platinum criticism is a factor that gives critical theories and methods a chance to keep on doing.

The platinum critic is one of the most famous, most appreciated and most powerful persons in Arabic culture. In universities, for example, the most respected professors are those who spend many years collecting and explaining critical thoughts coming from a foreign culture, and subsequently, introduce literal applications of these thoughts, most of the time by using famous literary works for pedagogic purposes. Thus their applications find their way into common cultural life, as the main critical movement in the Arab world has had the universities as a point of departure.

**Critical Tools and Conventions**

When different critical movements or theories develop their own tools through a dialectical process based on many factors including the conventions and purposes of literary criticism, in that case, critical conventions and purposes are expected to be fed by a variety of critical thoughts from different disciplines, such as philosophy, psychoanalysis, and sociology. But when critical thoughts stem from a foreign culture it becomes more difficult to discuss
and develop them into real creative tools able to enrich critical thinking and to develop them towards deeper reflections upon the conventions or functions of criticism. If this is the case, the easiest investment of literary criticism will be to apply readymade critical tools or thoughts to the national literature, which is the main subject of interest of platinum criticism in the Arabic culture.

In addition, the applications of platinum criticism may lead us to define a serious problem characterizing modern Arabic criticism in many of its practices, as most “platinum critics” believe that they are, in their own cultures, the source of various critical thoughts or methods. The problem is that most of the platinum critics fail to reference the thinkers or critics whom they read in foreign languages and who have crystallized some critical ideas. Therefore, many academic conventions will be ignored as the platinum critic will claim for himself the status of some sort of authenticity. In the coming paragraphs, I will try to analyze what I believe to be a famous example of platinum criticism in Arabic culture.

**Platinum Criticism in Narratology**

In one of his books, considered to be distinguished, the well-known Egyptian critic Salah Fadl explains that determining the narrative rhythm in a novel depends on “the speed of the narration as a process”\(^2\) that will, of course, be compared to the speed of the events as we might imagine them in everyday life\(^3\). Therefore, the

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2 Salah Fadl, The Styles of Narration in the Arabic Novel, Soad al-Sobah Publishing, Kuwait, 1992, p. 20. I will depend on my translations of the quotations, as this book is published only in Arabic:

صلاح فضل، أساليب السرد في الرواية العربية، دار سعاد الصباح للنشر، الكويت، 1992.

And I will refer to this book after that as (Fadl).

3 On this point Fadl decides to clarify the relativity of this rhythm by giving an example of how people measure speed in general. He states that “if the rhythm of a novel means, first of all, the speed of its events, then this requires a comparison between two sides so we can measure the speed. We cannot say that the speed of a car is eighty kilometers unless we understand that it crosses this distance in one hour. Otherwise, a turtle might cross this distance in a year though it would not be as fast as a car” (Fadl, p. 20). Simplifying things to this degree yields the impression that Fadl is concerned, perhaps unconsciously, with pedagogical purposes, to the degree that it makes the reader feel like a student.
main rhythms of a narrative text could be categorized as follows: ellipsis, summary, scene, slow down, and pause (Fadl, 20-21). The explanation of these terms takes up almost 4 to 6 lines for each term. After that Fadl applies the previous category of narrative rhythm to a novel by Najeeb Mahfouz.

Before he applies the previous narrative speeds to the novel, Fadl tells us that

This is a simple model of the main factor of narrative rhythm, which is time. This model exists before other factors emerge from the narrative itself and join it. Therefore; it [rhythm] shouldn’t be the only unchangeable tool in front of literary works, but we should modify and redirect it to fit the nature of literary works, and to bring into view its structure. (Fadl, 22)

It seems clear in the previous paragraph that Fadl is aware of the flexibility that should be associated with critical tools. This kind of awareness is the most sophisticated argument a platinum critic can propound. A platinum critic does not apply critical category or tools inappropriately. On the contrary, as in the case of Fadl, he shows that she/he very well understands all the terms he applies.

But, a serious problem occurs here: the platinum critic does not refer to the source the category s/he is establishing. It seems clear that this classification of the narrative rhythm is derived from the French tradition of narratology. We can find the same terms in Mieke Bal’s *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* first published in 1985. This example is not rare in platinum criticism’s applications of critical terms or thoughts. We can consider it as the main activity of a platinum critic in Arabic culture, in the field of literary criticism.

It is clear that the main concern of Fadl’s exercise is to see that narrative terms be applied correctly, and that they be understood by the readers/students. There is no discussion of the difficulties of such a categorization of narrative speed, its relationship with the relative sense of time in everyday life, and the scientific ambitions of some disciplines in the human sciences, such as structuralist narratology, disciplines which develop methods that follow the model of the natural sciences. The labeling of narrative

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rhythm in structuralist narratology raises the claim of structuralist narratology as an “objective” or “scientific” discipline. Shlomith Kenan declares:

The infiltration of interpretation into what had seemed a separate activity, often called “description,” is (for me) both distressing, because of the doubt it raises as to the “objectivity” or “scientific nature” of narratological research, and liberating, because it opens a new area for research, namely the relations between narrative phenomena and interpretive strategies.5

“Objectivity” and “scientific nature” seem to unfit the labeling of narrative rhythm. On the contrary, the speeds of a narrative are more problematic and subjective. In his *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (1988), Gerard Genette raises some important questions about the *duration* of a written narrative. The problem is not only in the comparison between pages and imaginary period of time, but also in the measurement of the personal duration of reading.6 However, a meta-criticism argument could not be offered by platinum critics, because they used to be mere users of creative thoughts not producers of them. Literary critics, in the Arab world, are not motivated to be creative in establishing theories, or in discussing sophisticated ideas, simply because of the weakness of the institutional sponsorship for scientific research. Moreover, critics can reach the highest position in their cultures, only by using readymade theories.

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Media
Chapter Twenty-Four

A Crisis of Media Rights, Regulations, and Responsibilities, or When Freedoms of Press and Speech Meet Technology

Ray E. Weisenborn

 Freedoms of speech and press are often identified as a foundational basis of an enlightened society. The freedoms evolved as human rights, generally Western principles overlaid on diverse cultures. A difficulty of the resulting application of principles is difficulty understanding the diverse culture norms that regulate them. We sometimes assume that the freedoms are universal.

In concert with the situational nature of media freedom is the exponential growth – explosion, if one wants – of new communication technologies (NCT) and their impact on sociopolitics. What were the pro forma methods for pushing forward non-violent change only a generation ago have evolved to NCT.

This writing overviews Middle East press media structure from the 1970’s, moving from its Egyptian “heart and soul,” to a more recent player, Kuwait. The sociopolitical difficulties of Western understanding of media freedom in less understood cultures is a case presented vis-à-vis Kuwait. A transitional watershed is noted with the People Power toppling of the United States’ backed regime of Iran in 1979, followed with a discussion of media structures and sociopolitical causes recently integrated through NCT.
Middle East Media

Middle East media generally function within authoritarian structures.1 While a Cultural Affairs officer at the United States Embassy in Egypt during the late 1970’s, William Rugh began developing a more detailed, specific, and functional assessment of Arab mass media. Rugh categorized Middle East newspapers into sub-units of the Seibert, et. Al. (1963) authoritarian model. His categories are: mobilization, loyalist, transitional, and diverse.2

Rugh suggested researching the sources of Egyptian English language newspaper articles, to initially determine the extent to which they were impacted by foreign media. Two media investigations described a Middle East media structure characterized by uncertainty, censorship, government suppression, and a degree of inward ambivalence.3,4 That characterization is accepted by media scholars as generally true today for Middle East countries.

Within the Middle East there are pressures against basic freedoms for the press. At the December 2006 “Media in Danger” Conference in Beirut Ibrahim Issa of Egypt’s Al-Dustour seemed to sum up the gathered Middle East journalists’ frustrations and perceptions regarding the disintegration of free press in the region: “I thought our situation in Egypt was the most dangerous one. But I see that many people are facing these problems – arrest, censorship, harassment.”5

Press freedoms are interpreted quite differently viewed from culture “inside” or “outside” perspectives. In “A Dialogue Amongst Mutes,” Jihad Fakhreddine stated the lack of understanding between the Arab world and the West, particularly the United States: In an age that prides itself for super communication in content and channels, the cross-cultural communication exchanges … resemble horrifying images of medieval conflicts. The media on both sides are acting as the live battleground, with the potential for breeding disproportionate levels of misunderstanding and mistrust.6

Kuwait Press Environment

In 1956 the first press law was passed and the 1961 restructured Press and Publishing Law has fine and imprisonment sanctions.
The Iraq invasion of Kuwait in 1990 eliminated the media, and its subsequent redevelopment has 14 Arabic and 3 English-language daily newspapers, all privately owned. The 1991 Kuwait Constitution provides for freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press; however, there are limits for being critical of Islam, the prophet Mohammed, the government and its rulers, other Arab states, or allies of Kuwait. There are ongoing resolutions considered by the government to variously loosen or restrict the media. However, the Kuwait Emir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah made the government stance quite clear when addressing the national journalist’s association: “Say what you want, but do not cross lines that are not in favor of Kuwait.”

Kuwait walks a press freedom tightrope because of its ongoing relationships that distribute allegiance between its Arab counterparts and Western countries, particularly the United States. It is a constitutional monarchy with an elected parliament. It cannot have freedoms of the press comparable to a republic, nor will it lack them as dictatorships do.

Mohammad Abdulhassanen resigned as Minister of Information in November 2005; his successor, Anas Al-Rasheed resigned in April 2006, following the January death of Kuwait’s long-time Amir, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah. The political turmoil resulted in the suspension of Parliament, legally provided for in the Kuwait constitution. Mohamed Al-Sanoussi was named Minister of Information in April 2006.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah called on the press to be objective and urged local dailies to be “cautious and accurate and comply with professionalism and objectivity.” The Amir spoke out in response to Member of Parliament Faisal Al-Musalem initiating a grilling request to Parliament for Minister Al-Sanoussi in October 2006. Al-Sanoussi accused journalists of distorting facts and called them fools, then resigned in December 2006 to avoid the grilling over charges he curbed media freedom.

Current press activity seems to challenge freedoms of the press on the one hand and co-opt them on the other. When Arab Times Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah wrote to be critical of the United States, it was done by developing a “downside” toward Kuwait public attitudes. Pondering why Kuwaitis don’t like
Americans and vice-versa, he said there was no answer to this question because hating America has become a common feeling and one of Kuwait’s national duties. Those are potentially “anti-ally” comments, or a challenge of press freedom. He then co-opted to be within acceptable parameters: “This situation has to be changed, especially since the US exists among us and has the key to our future and the fortune of the region.”

One press editor voiced the frustrations of many journalists, but did not challenge government limits: “Kuwait has given its people a lot of freedom – including the right to free speech. This has made us professionals only in talking and delivering nice speeches.” With the limits of free press being quite clear regarding Islam, the Emir of Kuwait, and the country’s allies, numerous recent instances do point up the challenges to media freedoms. Kuwaiti press laws have been enforced in a number of cases: a female reporter was given a three month suspended sentence in December 2006 for insulting judges; a publication viewed as lending support to Iraq was banned from Kuwait; an incident in which a university professor was sentenced to prison for allegedly defaming Islam and others were fined for allegedly writing immoral poetry; an incident in which a television station was banned for insulting the Emir; an offense against the Kuwaiti Constitution; and an incident when the editor-in-chief of a leading daily newspaper was sentenced to prison for allegedly insulting the Divine Being. And, an Al-Rai Al-Aam journalist was sent on assignment to cover a symposium, “Sunnis of Iraq.” At the last moment the government banned the meeting and Al-Sulaimani was arrested and handcuffed by the Kuwait State Security.

Al-Sayassah reporter Khaled Al-Obaisan was sued by the Kuwait government because he published pro-Saddam Hussein statements: “the American decision to execute the legitimate president of the Republic of Iraq, Mr. Saddam Hussein, is a medal of honor for him. It is also a stigma for the US administration in the Arab world.” Mansour Al-Mahareb, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Abraj Weekly Newspaper was charged and to be interrogated for violating the Press and Publication Law after publishing “Another Step in Corruption.”

How does the general Kuwait public react to negated freedoms such as these? Marzouk Al-Heyt’s comment on government
actions may be commonly held: “When Interior Ministry officials stormed a seminar addressing the foundations of the State (Kuwait), I was shocked and asked myself if this was really happening in my country.” Middle East and Kuwait examples are presented in a negative light. The same is easily seen on a large scale in United States. For example, the U.S. government complained that “secret profiles commissioned by the Pentagon to rate the work of journalists reporting from Afghanistan were used by military officials to deny disfavored reporters access to American fighting units or otherwise influence their coverage.” The Department of Defense bought and shredded 10,000 copies of *Operation Dark Heart* as its content was determined to be dangerous to American security. The text was already available in digital format.

If a Western interpretation of Kuwait media freedom would be that it is harsh, restrictive, and oppressive, setting its case alongside other Arab/Gulf states may be enlightening, or foreboding. The World Press Freedom Index (WPFI) is developed annually by the French-based organization, Reporters Without Borders. The 2010 report identified threats to independent media in 178 countries and territories and noted worrisome trends in the Middle East and North Africa. For comparative purposes, its rankings placed Finland #1, the United States #20, followed by Arab/Gulf state rankings:

87-UAE  
87-Kuwait  
121-Qatar  
124-Oman  
127-Egypt  
133-Algeria  
135-Morocco  
144-Bahrain  
157-Saudi Arabia  
160-Libya  
164-Tunisia  
170-Yemen
It is important to consider the Kuwait case being similar to Arab/Gulf state conditions, though its media environment operates in a relatively open and unencumbered environment.

**Traditional Media vs. NCT**

In the months preceding the ouster of the Shah Pahlavi of Iran in 1979, the “new” media technology that subverted state press freedom restrictions was cassette recordings. They were smuggled in and primarily distributed to thousands of clerics who eagerly passed on the information. When Russian generals’ coup was sent adrift a decade later, the culprit was a simple, not thought of, mobile phone left in a Gorbachov aide’s briefcase. Old generals remembered that revolution was tanks and force; controlling radio, television, and press was a minor second step. Even in Egypt the tradition methods of forced media compliance were being done; in advance of the November 2010 Parliament elections, the government’s NileSat shut down twelve private cable television channels, warned twenty others and revoked the broadcast licenses of five. This was done, according to Information Minister Annas Al-Fiqi, to protect the Egyptian and Arab viewers from offensive information.\(^{18}\)

But youth have changed the times. Before Google, Facebook, Flickr, and Twitter, NCT was at work developing PeoplePower from odd locations. Young Arab intellectuals were drawn together in 2005 by texting emanating from Qatar. The April 6 movement based in Egypt, Kefaya – or Enough – quickly developed with NCT and began coordinating multiple location strategies and schedules. Peripherally there have been isolated cases of governments attempting to directly “attack” the NCT phenomenon. Malaysia arrested and charged an internet blogger with aiding blogs by other individuals which were inciting to riot – and expanded the charges to include the internet server company.

Initially peaceful People Power demonstrations were countered by harsh government reaction in Nepal 2005 and Myanmar 2007. Perhaps remembering Tiananmen Square, China’s nonviolent response was the initiation of the Golden Shield in 2009. In the end, demonstrator actions proved ineffective when countered with blunt force. Fewer media journalists were killed on duty dur-
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...ing 2010 than 2009 (94 to 139), but those losses are replaced and increased by civilian casualties from government responses to stop ever-growing PeoplePower activities: Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, and Yemen have had substantial losses. United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently urged countries “under pressure” to learn how to balance NCT transparency, confidentiality, free speech, and security.

Some countries have tried to curb demonstration thought to be NCT controlled. Iranian authorities slowed Internet connections to a crawl or choked them off completely before expected student protests to deny the opposition a vital means of communication.

Even given the ineffectiveness of clamping down on its television providers, Egypt struck hard on January 28 at 12:08 am with what has been called technologically unprecedented – shutting down the entire country’s internet system within one hour. The impact was staggering for Egypt Telcom’s servers rely on out-of-country providers. The shutdown was estimated to be over 90% effective and unfortunately, included everything from general government documentation to banking. A colleague from the American University in Cairo reported all e-mail, mobile phone, and radio frequencies used for security teams were down, with only the institution’s internal server website operational. Blackberry and NCT team players were working and combine with other “trickery” the protest crowds grew. After five days of ineffective shutdown, Egypt Telcom relented and flipped the switch on. And, it is most likely that the PeoplePower NCT switch will not be effectively turned off again.

James Katz, Director of the Rutgers Center for Mobile Communication Studies, said what those on the outside know and those on the inside are coming to fear: “This is the dagger at the throat of the creaky old regimes that through the manipulation of these old centralized technologies have been able to smother the public’s voice. Now there [there are these tools] that have empowered each person to make these dramatic changes.”
Conclusion

Arab/Gulf state examples presented may seem negative, but keep in mind an arch enemy, America, is also negative. This is purposeful to clarify the situational nature of media freedoms. It has been stressed throughout this writing that East and West see issues differently, and structure their media parameters according to socio/economic, religious, and political values. When viewing freedom of press incidents from an “outside” perspective, a comment might be, “How can they do that?”

Egypt adapted from Tunisia and the learning curve continues. The NCT impact is sophisticated enough that demonstrations planned for similar times were delayed in Yemen to maximize media effectiveness for a “partner” country, Bahrain Within Arab/Gulf states and beyond, the ranks of People Power emerging, growing, and becoming more effective before are swelling. In February 2011 following Tunisia and Egypt -Serbia, Qatar, Bahrain, Jordan, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and Thailand joined the fray.

Why should I care what your media say, and now, how they present it? Yemeni president Abdullah Saleh thought he had the answer when he recently contended that the foreign media agenda is spreading chaos in the Arab world. Actually, the answer may be in simple irony: The cacophony of cassette tapes brought down the Shah of Iran on February 11, 1979, and thirty-two years later to the exact date – the silence of NCT texting sent the same ultimatum to Egypt’s Mubarak.

References

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10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
About the Authors

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