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Defending Liberal Education: Implications for Educational Policy

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DEFENDING LIBERAL EDUCATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICY

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by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis advocates for the inclusion of liberal education in discussions of college and university missions and mandates in North America. It is conceived with the purpose of influencing policy thinking and generating the theory and ideas required for sound education policy decision making. Research into liberal education is a special and atypical kind of inquiry and requires innovative theoretical approaches. Liberal education is foremost a philosophical problem and requires philosophical approaches; the method used is, therefore, conceptual in nature and drawn from analytical philosophy.

My research approaches liberal education conceptually in three ways: historically, philosophically, and politically. Historically, all explanations of liberal education remain partial, debatable, and fragmentary. Philosophically, liberal education brings into focus fundamental questions and problems with a universal significance. Liberal education is perhaps best characterized as an ongoing argument, discussion, and debate. Politically, liberal education is relevant to many of the challenges facing North American society. Liberal education is civic in nature, aimed at producing responsible citizens able to contribute to democracy and the continuation of democratic institutions.

The contribution to knowledge made by this research is the development of liberal education towards idealism and universality. Universality provides the meta-principle needed to ground the inclusion of liberal education in the missions and mandates of North American colleges and universities. The synthesis of the three conceptual approaches (i.e., historical, philosophical, and political) produces a new justification for liberal education, one based in objectivity and rationality as universal values. My argument is that the values of objectivity and rationality are the best explanation of the universalist understanding of liberal education and its processes and goals.

KEYWORDS

Liberal Education, Policy, Relativism, Idealism, Universality, Objectivity, and Rationality..

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, education is a given; in the Western world, even post-secondary education is considered a fundamentally important basis for a democratic way of life. But the world, and education, continues to change, never more rapidly than in our own times. In this new world, the time-honored notion of a *liberal* education seems to fit less and less comfortably.

Liberal education has a long history that can be traced back to ancient times and to the founding of the university as an institution. Liberal education is (or, at least, has been) part of the soul of the university, the product of a vast intellectual tradition. In this dissertation, I argue that liberal education is eminently justified in a modern world, and I advocate for the return of liberal education to a position of central importance in post-secondary education. My goal is to explicate a rich theory of liberal education that can influence policy thinking and sound decision making in higher education and support the inclusion of liberal education in the missions and mandates of North American colleges and universities.

In Chapter One, I address some key issues. To begin, I examine various definitions and conceptions of liberal education and begin to generate theory that is consistent with both its history and its place in a modern world; a theory that can take us forward through the 21st century. Secondly, I provide a rationale for addressing the issue of liberal education at all, attempting to justify its significance in a modern world and, in particular, referencing what some critics go so far as to call a *crisis* in postsecondary education in North America. Thirdly, I explain what I mean by theory, what purposes theory serves, and how my theory of liberal education will develop. Finally in Chapter One, I explicate my methodology.

1.2 LIBERAL EDUCATION: INITIAL DEFINITIONS

The word liberal derives from the Latin *librare*, *to free*. A liberal education, then, might be an education "*for a free mind*, a mind curious to roam where it will, intent on study for its own sake" (Gould, 2003, pp. 12-13). Others have also attempted to define and describe liberal education:

> A liberal education fosters the ability to distinguish between what is true and what is false . . . . I call this a liberating education, liberating students from their provincial origins, no matter what their station in life. (Scott, 2014, p. 25)

> *Liberal education in the university refers to activities that are designed to cultivate intellectual creativity, autonomy, and resilience; critical thinking; a combination of intellectual breadth and specialized knowledge; the comprehension and tolerance of diverse ideas and experiences; informed participation in community life; and effective communication skills*. (Axelrod, 2002, p. 34-5)

> A philosophy of education that empowers individuals, liberates the mind from ignorance, and cultivates social responsibility. Characterized by challenging encounters with important issues, and more a way of studying than specific content, liberal education can occur at all types of colleges and universities. (Schneider, 2013, p. 4)

"Liberal education" also needs to be distinguished explicitly from other terms with which it is commonly and unreflectively conflated, such as "liberal arts," "general education," and "the humanities." Glyer and Weeks (1998), Table 1 below, demonstrate an attempt to differentiate liberal education from other closely associated concepts.

Table 1 CONCEPTUAL DIFFERENTIATIONS[1]

Liberal Arts	Although the notion of academic disciplines is a recent development, seven fields of study have historically been identified as liberal arts: logic, grammar, rhetoric, mathematics, geometry, music, and astronomy. Any number of other subjects have been dubbed modern spin-offs of those seven fields, but there is no consensus about other fields claiming such status.

[1] Glyer, Diana & Weeks, David. L. (1998) Liberal Education: Initiating the Conversation, in Glyer, Diana & Weeks, David. L. (eds.), *The Liberal Arts in Higher Education: Challenging Assumptions, Exploring Possibilities.* Lanham, New York, & Oxford: University Press of America, Inc. (pp. ix-xvi).

Liberal Education	An education grounded in the liberal arts which extends to an investigation into the central human questions: Who am I? Why am I here? What is my responsibility to God, to other individuals, to the community? What is true? What is good? What is beautiful? It is also helpful to explain what liberal education is not. The following three views may be part of liberal education but should not be mistaken for liberal education itself: (1) the development of transferrable intellectual capacities (e.g., critical thinking, higher order reasoning, and intellectual virtue) and the sharpening of basic skills (e.g., reading, writing, speaking, and listening); (2) a survey of the "cultural heritage of Western civilization" to establish cultural literacy, inculcate Western values, and cultivate aesthetic taste; and (3) general education.
Trivium	Those disciplines generally referred to as the literary arts, the verbal arts, the humane letters, the arts of eloquence - grammar, logic, and rhetoric. These protean arts were always understood more broadly then contemporary formulations; the trivium generally included but was never restricted to linguistics, critical thinking, and persuasive communication, the arts of composing, delivering, and analyzing written and oral communication, or even reading, writing, and thinking. It was no accident that one studies the arts of eloquence by reading classical literature, often histories, not only in one's native language, but in a foreign language (usually Latin and Greek) because the classics were the consummate guide to moral philosophy (ethics and politics). Therefore, a contemporary formulation of the trivium probably includes the study of language, literature, foreign language, communication, logic, history, ethics, and politics .
Quadrivium	Those disciplines often referred to as the mathematical arts, the arts of wisdom and understanding - arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. These arts revolve around the study of things, of quantities, and of abstractions, symbolic representations of things such as numbers. One scholar describes the quadrivium as consisting "of the mathematical or 'learnable' arts, so called because they

	concern intelligible objects, which are traditionally ordered according to increasing corporeality, from dimensionless arithmetic through plane and solid geometry, to astronomy (the application of mathematics to moving bodies) and music (the study of bodies executing harmonious motions, that is, physics)." Geography was often a part of the study of geometry. A contemporary formulation of the quadrivium probably includes mathematics, the natural sciences (i.e., physics, astronomy, geology, biology, and chemistry) and, perhaps, geography.
Liberalism	Those modern social and political movements ranging from democratic socialists to libertarians which are identified with the ideals of liberty, equality, progress, and individual rights. Although both classical and contemporary liberals advance particular and influential understandings of liberal education, liberalism and liberal education are not essentially related. Political liberals are not the end product of liberal education.
General Education	An utterly amorphous notion that is used to describe either (a) an educational experience that prepares all students for life in general, a common denominator approach; or (b) a basic level of study in most major fields of inquiry, that is to say, a required "taste" of many different fields, or (c) a comprehensive term used to describe the combination of academic and co-curricular experiences that constitute a student's complete college experience.

LIBERAL ARTS: The origins of the liberal arts are in Ancient Greece and Rome. Plato's *Academus*, established in 387 BC, is the contested origin of the historical and philosophical impetus. While Plato emphasized purely theoretical truth, his contemporary, Isocrates, advocated for a civic kind of liberal education based in rhetoric and the preparation of an enlightened leadership. The “liberal arts” took concrete shape in the Hellenic era as a kind of study suitable to “a free man.” In the Middle Ages, the liberal arts were reconfigured by the rise of Christianity and synthesized in the emerging *universitatis*. They took on the connotation of “liberatory” - that is, freeing. From the outset, the scope of the liberal arts was malleable, embodying different

contents and different methods depending on context, and the liberal arts have a massive range of different hierarchical organizations and different interpretations of each individual art (Kimball, 1986).

During the reconfiguration of knowledge by the rise of the medieval European universities in the 13th century, the core of the liberal education became known as the "seven liberal arts" and became a program aimed at developing the intellectual and moral substance of society's future leaders. The liberal arts at the *universitatis* represented preparatory studies necessary for entry into the higher level studies of law, medicine, and theology (Graffon et al, 2010).

Today, the "liberal arts" commonly refers to unspecialized studies during the undergraduate years at colleges and universities, and usually to certain cultural branches of learning - languages, history, religion, and the arts and humanities as over and against science and technology education (Allen, 2007). The liberal arts represent a broad and general education combined with an in-depth critical appreciation of an academic discipline, comprising a curriculum that aims at developing general knowledge and general cognitive capacities combined with sufficient depth to form a critical awareness. The liberal arts are the modern developed version of the *trivium* (i.e., grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and the *quadrivium* (i.e., music, geometry, arithmetic, and astronomy) of the medieval *universitatis,* The medieval arts represent an attempt to systematize the philosophical precepts of liberal education into a course of liberal studies (Axelrod, 2002). Rothblatt (1993) thematized from historical fragments the attributes of a liberal education as

a. liberation from the self or parts of the self, mentally or emotionally, or from society or the prejudices and limitations of society;
b. breadth of outlook, a capacity to see connections and hence an ability to make fundamental decisions and judgments;
c. independence of mind, born of a breadth of outlook and freedom from prejudice and pre-conception; and,
d. an understanding of human nature, the motives and springs of action in human conduct, and by extension, institutions and basic human structures (p. 28).

HUMANITIES: During the Italian Renaissance (14th-17th centuries) the term *studia humanitatis* (literally "studies of humanity") meant a program of humane, secular, and classical studies defined as distinct from theology by content and method, and by the 19th century the humanities began to be defined specifically as distinct from the natural sciences. In our times, the humanities often mean a kind of "values education," as distinct from both the natural and the social sciences. The humanities have also sometimes been called "the spiritual sciences" and "the human sciences," defined as dealing with everything outside the domain of the natural sciences.

LIBERAL STUDIES AND GENERAL EDUCATION: The term "liberal studies" commonly refers to courses based in the liberal arts and humanities that complement a program of business, science, technology, or professional studies (Allen, 2007). Today, "liberal studies" refers to a program often called "general education" which is broadly based in the arts and sciences, and often comprised of studies in literature, languages, philosophy, history, mathematics, and science.

LIBERAL EDUCATION: The liberal arts, humanities, liberal studies, and general education are all aspects of liberal education to the extent that they aim at developing a certain frame or bent of mind characterized by universality, but these programs do not mark out its entire scope. A liberally educated person is often regarded as someone with a critical capacity to reflect on values, opinions, and judgements and connect them to the whole of knowledge. A liberal education involves initiation into the historically transmitted tradition of the liberal arts. It is not merely the transmission of content, but initiation into a state of mind developed over centuries of change - initiation into historical and philosophical modes of thinking.

The British philosopher of education R.S. Peters (1965) (see Chapter Three, p. 48-54) emphasized the inter-subjective nature of education generally as involving a special kind of love and a feeling of togetherness and mutual respect. Applying this notion to the concept of a liberal education implies initiation into a group of free people who enjoy liberty and the capacity to conjure and revise an image of the good for themselves. The notion of a liberal education is in this sense the initiation into a worthwhile life. As my theory of liberal education shall also develop, the idea has an intrinsically civic, as well as cognitive, dimension - an emphasis on

citizenship alongside a commitment to intellectual and moral ideals. The aim is a liberally educated and responsible citizen committed to universal freedom and tolerance.

Reaching a clear and perspicuous account of liberal education is a complex task. While virtually all education owes at least a passing acknowledgement to notions of liberal education, few institutions define it with clarity and precision. A liberal education is an education that seeks to develop ways of thinking and knowing - a certain frame of mind and habit of thought - rather than any particular content or specific knowledge. It does not point to any single kind of study but rather to the intrinsic purposes of all study. It is concerned with the development of qualities of mind and intellectual virtues rooted in reflection on timeless questions that are universal in scope, questions that educate both the mind and the heart, that illuminates the ambiguity of human life both at the moments of its highest dignity as well as in the depths of its most desperate despair, and that serve needs and interests intrinsic to humanity as a species.

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THEORY OF LIBERAL EDUCATION

Allan Bloom's controversial best-selling 1987 critique of the modern university, *The Closing of the American Mind*, is an extensive lament about how and why higher education is failing today's young people and leaving them intellectually and culturally impoverished (Bloom, 1987). Whether one finds *The Closing of the American Mind* to be long, erudite, and polemical (Reno, 2007) or deep and profound (Kimball, 1987), Bloom's analysis continues to be a key reference in any discussion of liberal education. Bloom's concern in defending Great Books and the classics is to preserve some of the spirit behind the medieval *studia humanitas* in the contemporary American academic humanities.

In more moderate terms, John McMurty (1991) identified concerns about education similar to many of those about which Bloom had lamented. McMurty's critique is of an international movement towards justifying educational excellence in terms of the capacity to "compete effectively in the international marketplace" (p. 209). The concerns are similar to Hyslop-Margison's (2000) analysis, in which the discourse and values of capitalist ideology and market-centric thinking are exerting a tremendous influence on all education, including the college and university missions and mandates of North America and around the world.

The concerns Bloom raised about education in the United States of America 25 years ago are still current and prevalent. University of Chicago philosopher and legal scholar Martha Nussbaum's (2010) recent book *Not for Profit* alerts us to the "silent crisis" (p. 1-11) of the American arts and humanities, "We are in the midst of a crisis of massive proportions and grave global significance" (p. 1). The erosion of liberal education represents the grinding down of the values upon which a free and democratic society thrives. The capacity for critical inquiry and questioning looks irrelevant, trivial, and dispensable to an outlook that focuses purely on maximizing profits and producing knowledge with marketable results. Liberal education, with its commitment to democratic and civic participation, is declining in the face of a profit, efficiency, and utility driven system. When education begins to be assessed purely in terms of market responsiveness and economic growth, both democracy and human decency are put at risk (Allemang, 2010).

Concern over liberal education is widespread in Canada and the United States of America. The humanities, long regarded as the core of liberal education, are declining in the face of government policy intended to reorient higher education towards labor force demands. Reorienting universities in this way makes them little more than appendages of government, industry, and economic policy, and erodes their purpose to serve democracy and democratic society (Anisef et al., 1999). In *Values in Conflict*, Paul Axelrod (2002) explains how political and economic pressures are influencing liberal education in the North American context and are redefining the university according to the imperatives of the marketplace. North American colleges and universities are increasingly pressured to provide skills and knowledge tied directly to employment and labour market success. Amidst all the noise and clatter, liberal education is ignored and subsequently in decline, with the future of North American colleges and universities at stake. Essentially, redefining the university according to the utilitarian criteria of efficiency drawn from the world of business management, along with the restructuring plans of industry, commerce, and government, has displaced the values traditionally associated with liberal education.

Universities, as the critics referenced above argue, have over the past two decades been more and more openly turned into an arm of the new global economy as part of an unprecedented mobilization of social life to meet the demands of those who control the economy. Education at

university and other levels is seen in an increasingly reductive way as equipping people for work. Most funded research is in areas which are designated as national priorities for business, industry, commerce, and government. The academy has been pushed into a closely networked relationship with business and government and talk of the autonomy of the university is now largely nostalgia (Fairclough, 2003, p. 216).

The commitment to liberal education in Canada and the United States is clearly in decline. Although Axelrod (2002) suggests that liberal education today is not necessarily in crisis, current policy trends rarely, if ever, discuss its importance. Recent government policies privilege science, technology, and business at the expense of the academic humanities. The space for liberal education is shrinking next to the expansion of professional, technical, and applied programs. Universities are being directed to make their operations and programs instrumental to areas of provincial and federal economic importance.

The concern is widespread, and many have expressed anxiety over the future of liberal education (Hyslop-Margison, 2000; Kubsch, 2002; Norris, 2009; Shaker, 2001). Some, including Martha Nussbaum, and earlier, Allan Bloom, consider the decline of liberal education to be a profound educational crisis with wide ranging consequences, economically, socially, culturally, civically and politically. Universities increasingly regard liberal education as a waste of valuable time and resources (Allemang, 2010). Research funding and the marketplace favor useful science and technical training over all other knowledge and understanding. The turn away from liberal education, particularly in its university and college context, represents a turn away from the intellectual and civic values that support a just and democratic regime.

Weakening the liberal arts is going to have serious long-term consequences for Canadian culture and the possibilities for young people to realize their civic role and potential in a democratic society (Whyte, 2015). Reductions in funding for the academic humanities, such as the withdrawal of $6 billion from health, education, and welfare in Canada from 1994 to 1996 (Axelrod, 2002, p. 93), and the engineering of funding metrics targeted to programs that meet labour market and industrial demand erode the intellectual, moral, and cultural ideals of both liberal education and the university. Compounding the forces causing a decline in the academic humanities is commercialization that values research with profitable, marketable results, fueled

by collaboration between university, government, and industry. One could argue that, abuses aside, commercially oriented academic work, by *definition*, subverts a basic precept of liberal education, in that research contracts between academics and external sponsors inevitably encumber, in some way, autonomous intellectual inquiry (Axelrod, 2002, p. 108).

Changes in Canadian education arising from the policy demands of global organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the policy imperatives the emanate from government, industry, and business, intended to develop workforce and technical capacities, erode the values and purposes of liberal education (Hyslop-Margison, 2000). Economic shifts and anxiety at labor market gains are causing more and more students to reject the idea of liberal education (Chapnick, 2015). Rising tuition rates and exploding student debt counter-act the civic and democratic purposes of both liberal education and the college and university system. Rising tuition and massive debt means that civically, Canada will fail to develop the most talented and deserving members of lower socio-economic brackets and those with academic and intellectual ability who come from lower and working class backgrounds. The retreat from liberal education represents a decline in our civic capacity to fuel a just and democratic society (Whyte, 2005).

One of the core values of liberal education is to provide the intellectual culture capable of producing informed and engaged citizens (Anisef et al., 1999). Liberal education, like science education, values the processes of critical inquiry and deliberation, discovery, exploration, and the curiosity that drives a vibrant intellectual and civic culture and that generates the intellectual flexibility required by companies and businesses to adapt to market trends. Indeed, I argue that the skills and values of a liberal education, for a variety of reasons, are more relevant than ever.

Ansif, Axelrod, and Lin (1999), in *Universities, Liberal Education, and the Labour Market,* affirm the market viability of liberal education. The reorientation of higher education to assumed market needs is based on the fallacious premise that universities are well equipped to anticipate the long-term, employment-generating sectors of the economy. That government and business economic projections have been notoriously faulty raises additional questions about the rationality of this premise (Anisef et al., 1999, p. 12).

It is difficult, if not impossible, to predict how the university system will evolve in the coming decades, but with a diminished focus on the values of intellectual cultivation and the world of ideas, universities will almost certainly be defined mainly with reference to corporate principles harnessed to marketable results. What is often overlooked in the many demands and policies is that liberal education serves the university as a whole; it can contribute to professional and vocational education and virtually all jobs training and employment because it is already assumed in most job and skills training (Axelrod, 2002).

1.4 FOCUS, QUESTIONS, AND CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Research Focus: Liberal education represents a deep and recurring problem for policy makers and higher educational institutions in Canada and around the world (Godwin, 2015). In this thesis, I will generate a theory of liberal education academically, through historical, philosophical, and political analysis. The intention of the research is to generate the ideas and theories required to fuel policy thinking, making, and development.

Key Questions: In this dissertation, I will address some key questions - What is liberal education? What are its origins? What are its purposes? What ends does it serve?

This research will ultimately propose two points:

- that liberal education is eminently justifiable in the modern world, and
- that education policy can be developed to support the inclusion of liberal education in the missions and mandates of North American colleges and universities.

Chapter One develops the method of the academic, analytical and conceptual approach according to historical, philosophical, and political analysis, aimed at producing the ideas and theories required to fuel the policy making processes.

Chapter Two develops a historical analysis and narrative. Any historical analysis of liberal education remains partial, fragmentary, and incomplete. Liberal education has had a vast range of historical influences on the development of education in Canada, the United States of America, and around the world.

Chapter Three addresses philosophical issues that arise out of the problem of liberal education. I simply argue that liberal education is underwritten by a commitment to universality, or to valuea with a universal significance. A conception of "universal" is central in liberal education as it is in science education. Working out an argument in support of values and ideas with a universal significance can help to establish liberal education.

Chapter Four situates liberal education politically. Since the Roman era and the thought of Marcus Tullius Cicero (see Chapter Two), one of the motivating ideals of liberal education has been the education of a citizenry capable of participating in democratic society. Liberal education has a special relationship with democracy and it is woven into the fate of democracy and free and democratic societies around the world.

Chapter Five argues, out of the synthesis of the three conceptual, academic approaches (i.e., historical, philosophical, and political), that liberal education is intrinsically idealist, committed to values with a universal significance,. and animated by a conception of universality. Even science education needs to be framed in terms of the idealist pursuit of, and inquiry into, values with a universal and timeless character. A conception of universality is indispensable in understanding the purposes and aims of liberal education.

1.5 THEORY OF LIBERAL EDUCATION

The purpose of this dissertation is to develop a rich theory of liberal education to justify the inclusion of liberal education in the missions and mandates of colleges and universities in North America and around the world. My *Paperback Oxford Canadian English Dictionary 2nd ed*.(2006) defines "theory" as:

> **1**. a supposition or system of ideas explaining something, esp. one based on general principles independent of the particular things to be explained (*opp*. HYPOTHESIS 2) (*atomic theory*; *theory of evolution*) **2**. a speculative (esp. fanciful) view (*one of my pet theories*) **3**. (the sphere of) abstract knowledge or speculative thought (*this is all very well in theory; has been studying theory*) **4**. the principles on which a subject of study is based (*music theory*) **5**. *Math*. a collection of propositions to illustrate the principles of a subject (*probability theory*). (p. 1072-3).

A theory is a form of understanding and a way of looking at the world; theories explain things and form the basis of our practices. Theories are made up of ideas and arguments and provide a framework for explanation to make sense of thoughts and understanding through structuring facts and their inter-relationships. Sets of ideas that make up theories and provide the basis of explanations for different events and actions. Theories are the explanations and the accounts of the reasons for why we do things and the basis of our practices.

Developing a theory of liberal education means developing a system of ideas to explain what it is and generating a set of principles on which the practice of liberal education can be based. The theory of liberal education I develop in this dissertation is the product of generating theory according to three descriptive, conceptual, academic approaches: historical, philosophical, and political. The historical, philosophical, and political analysis is academic, and committed to idealism. I will develop a theory of liberal education that will show that liberal education is specifically a special kind of education grounded in values that are timeless and universal in scope. Without a commitment to values with a universal character then liberal education has no basis.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

In order to develop theory around the notion of liberal education, a methodology that seeks rigor and conceptual clarity is required. Analytical philosophy, through conceptual analysis and discourse analysis, is relevant to this task.

Philosophical Inquiry

Philosophical inquiry mirrors processes in which most people are already engaged: making meaning out of experience and trying to understand the world. Doing philosophical analysis means rationally bringing out aspects of the nature of the world through questioning and examining the facts and evidence and proceeding methodically. Marriam B. Sharon and Edwin L. Simpson (2000) identify four categories of philosophical questions: questions about the nature of knowledge (epistemology); questions about what is real (metaphysics); questions about values (axiology); and questions about rules for procedures and reasoning (logic) (p. 85). In terms of

liberal education, one might ask: What *is* liberal education? Why is it important? What ought the goals of liberal education to be? How does liberal education proceed?

In their influential essay, "Philosophical Inquiry: Conceptual Analysis," Jerrold R. Coombs and Le Roi B. Daniels (1997) note that within curriculum studies - and, I would argue, most areas within the field of education - many important questions can be adequately addressed only through analytical and conceptual inquiry.

Analytical philosophy aims at understanding and improving the sets of concepts or conceptual structures in terms of which we interpret experience, express purposes, frame problems, and conduct inquiries. It is an important part of education research because the conceptual structures we possess determine the kinds of educational policies we can entertain and the kinds of empirical and normative research questions we regard as significant.

Coombs and Daniels (1997) identify three kinds of conceptual inquiry:

> *Concept Interpretation* aims "to provide adequate concrete interpretations of concepts." (p. 27)
>
> *Concept Development* means "developing and defending a conception or conceptual structure." (p. 28)
>
> *Conceptual Structure Assessment* aims to "determine the adequacy of conceptual structures." (p. 28)

In this dissertation, I will undertake concept interpretation and concept development, as Coombs and Daniels define these terms, around the notion of liberal education. I will attempt to develop a "concrete interpretation" of liberal education, and to develop and defend "a conceptual structure" for liberal education that can serve as a basis for education policy development.

Conceptual Analysis as Method

Analytical philosophical inquiry cannot be identified with any specifiable methodology. Rather it comprises a diverse set of analytical questions, techniques, and procedures. What distinguishes it from other kinds of inquiry is its purpose or point (Coombs & Daniels, 1997, p. 27).

The purpose of applying analytical philosophy to an object in educational policy is not for the sake of prediction, control, and input-output ratios, but to add richness to the body of theory, ideas, and concepts that inform policy thinking. Philosophical analysis is an attempt to get at the reality of a particular policy-related object (e.g., liberal education, teaching and learning, knowledge and understanding, etc), and to deal with it in great depth, complexity, and detail. Given current issues concerning the nature of post-secondary education, it is more important than ever to provide clarity concerning our thinking and reasoning. Applying philosophical analysis to the objects of educational policy will add to the theoretical infrastructure of the discipline.

Analytical and philosophical inquiry emphasizes rigor and conceptual clarity in the terms and words through which ideas and theories are expressed. Conceptual analysis as a branch of philosophical inquiry seeks to "clarify a concept or the meaning of a statement or the definition of a word" (Marriam & Simpson, 2000, p. 88) - or, in the words of Coombs and Daniels (1997), Concept Interpretation (CI) aims "to provide adequate concrete interpretations of concepts" (p. 27). The goal of conceptual analysis is to clarify a concept as it is used in everyday language. Whenever we try to answer a question or frame a problem we are interpreting a concept.

All the problems for which solutions are pursued are formulated in ordinary language. The definition of a concept ought to clearly capture what is meant in terms of ordinary language use. The mode through which a clear understanding of a term is created is the central component of conceptual analysis: "Conceptual analysis attempts to provide an explicit and perspicuous account of the meaning of a concept by clearly detailing its relationships to other concepts and its role in our social practices – including our judgments about the world" (Coombs & Daniels, 1997, p. 29). The process of conceptual analysis involves analysing linguistic and social structures and how these structures represent reality; it is a process of breaking concepts into propositions and logical structures (Audi, 1999).

Conceptual analysis can be used to analyse the linguistic structures present in relevant literature. The data consists in the linguistic and conceptual structures that underlie relevant data, that include books, journal articles, reports, essays, periodicals, research studies, theses and dissertations, research papers, bibliographies, dictionaries, online databases, indexes, and encyclopaedias. Summarizing, integrating, and synthesizing data from different sources provides

the basis for the construction of a conceptual framework and for further research and inquiry into the area of interest. Guiding philosophical questions and rules provide the basis for interpretations (Marriam & Simpson, 2000).

There are no clear, definitive rules for how to proceed with the analytical techniques of conceptual analysis. Coombs and Daniels (1997) have provided eight "loose guidelines" as a framework:

a. Not all concepts have the same degree of complexity. Extensive analysis is not always required. Where possible, keep interpretation simplistic.
b. Discover the range of ways in which the concept is used in sentences, and formulate these uses into sentence contexts. When the terms mean different things in different contexts, this may cause conflicting conclusions and some contexts may be totally irrelevant to the inquiry.
c. Consider unconventional uses of a term such as in slogans, recommendations, the making of commitments, metaphors, or allegories. The term can be treated outside the domain of describing an object, state of affairs, or relation.
d. Compare and contrast ways in which the term is used appropriately with ways in which the term is used inappropriately. The point is to understand what makes the use of the term appropriate or inappropriate. It is also helpful to relate the use of the term with other closely affiliated terms. The purpose is to generate rules to follow in the use of the concept.
e. Avoid considering the use of the term in narrowly specialist or technical uses. The goal is to clearly understand the concept the way competent language users mean it in an everyday sense untainted by specialist and technical uses.
f. Avoid supposing that our conclusions identify clear underlying linguistic and social structures.

Conceptual Development (CD) is a process of developing and modifying existing conceptual structures. Developing a concept is a way of making a vague idea more precise. Clarifying ideas using conceptual development aids in the process of categorizing related phenomena. Coombs and Daniels (1997) provide five loose guidelines for the process of conceptual development:

a. Clearly identify the problem that is to be solved, and the use for which the framework is intended. It is helpful to state clearly the problems and issues being addressed and the goal being aimed at.
b. Preserve the core meaning of what persons who use the term normally mean. It is critical to discover the meaning that people who use the term are evoking. This kind of analysis is use-based clarification, which can (if inquiring into technical or specialist language use) create conflicting meanings.
c. Break down technical terms (e.g., liberal education) and analyze the concepts separately. This provides the ground for articulating the core meaning of the term by identifying the purpose of the use and of combining the meanings.
d. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of existing conceptual frameworks (e.g., Hirst's (1974) work on "liberal education," see Chapter Three, p. 54-60).
e. Provide reasons for how the new conception is better than other frameworks. The new framework must be justified as more fruitful than other models. (pp. 33-5)

Discourse Analysis as Method

Analytical inquiry and conceptual analysis can also employ discourse analysis. The term "discourse" was largely popularized by Foucault, who used the word to include how language "embod[ies] meaning and social relationships, [and] constitute[s] both subjectivity and power relations" (Ball, 1996, p. 2). Texts have a causal influence on society and on beliefs, attitudes, and social relations. Representations of concepts and frameworks in texts influence the way the world is perceived, structured, and changed. A discourse thus includes both linguistic structures and the process of interpretation. Using discourse analysis means that texts are examined not just as words or sentences but as elements of a social, cultural, and historical process. A discourse is more than a text or a conversation; it refers to "the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 20).

The discourse of the liberal arts has been transmitted through history in a fragmentary way, but consists in different conceptual and linguistic structures in different times and different epochs. Discourse analysis allows researchers to see how in different epochs the discourse of the liberal arts has been different and how the types and orders of discourse overlap and diverge. Discourse

analysis will show that key concepts and categories (i.e., universality) bind the notion of the liberal arts together through history and how the idea of the liberal arts we have today is the culmination of a historical tradition.

Critical discourse analysis is typically associated with issues of domination and submission embedded in such fields as colonial history and globalization. It can provide a means for discovering the frameworks that underlie ideas and texts associated with these fields, how they are constructed, and how they overlap and diverge (Fairclough, 2003). The political history of liberal education and political influences on post-secondary education make critical discourse analysis an important tool in any attempt to generate theory around liberal education.

Critical discourse analysis also functions as a kind of language critique. As a method, it begins with a social problem (e.g., the decline of liberal education) rather than a research question, and moves to an analysis of practices, relations, structures, and inter-discursive elements that frame the problem. The purpose is to discover the causes of the problem in terms of the way certain activities are structured. The next stage of critical discourse analysis is to imagine possibilities for change and to reflect critically on the analysis in order to imagine new possibilities. Critical discourse analysis is best used in concert with other techniques and resources of analytical analysis (e.g., conceptual analysis) (Fairclough, 2003).

1.7 LIBERAL EDUCATION AND POLICY

Education Policy

Education policy is a sub-discipline of policy studies that is particularly concerned with issues associated with education - and particularly with the analysis of such phenomena as school budgets, salaries for teachers, human resources, management, contracts, legal issues, tenure, testing, and so on (Nagel, 1983). In a field dominated by cost-effectiveness analysis and the use of interviews, surveys, case studies, and different kinds of experimental and pseudo-experimental research designs, the utility of philosophy is not often recognized. Philosophical analysis is well outside the mainstream thinking. Within the world of mainstream policy studies, however, philosophical analysis can serve as an important *formative* theoretical tool (Haas & Springer,

1998, p. 93) - meaning that it can be used, as Coombs and Daniels also suggested (1997, quoted above), to improve and refine already existing ideas.

Rich theory adds depth to the policy making process and facilitates informed decision making in the later stages of policy making. There are at least four distinct strengths that analytical philosophy can add to educational policy: it can reduce ambiguity and provide clarity and precision in the use of terms and communication of theories, improve the understanding of decision makers, bring out new perspectives and new understandings, and improve the quality of discussion and debate in the research area..

Liberal Education as an Object of Educational Policy Analysis

Liberal education has a long and complex history and has been influential in the genesis of educational institutions in North America and in educational planning and decision making around the world. Some educators - John Henry Newman, for example - considered liberal education to be among the highest goals of the university and one of the purposes of its existence as an institution. Yet it remains an idea mired in ambiguity in spite of the efforts of many who sought to provide it with a special place of importance and force in educational deliberation.

Educational policy requires a deep theoretical grasp of the issues with which it is concerned - the processes of teaching and learning, for example, or, in the present case, the notion of liberal education. The task of analytical inquiry into liberal education consists in explicating the ideas upon which liberal education is based. Rich theory will help to fuel the policy making process; indeed, rich theory is a requirement for good policy. A theory of liberal education grounded in analytical philosophy and discourse analysis will contribute to the theoretical infrastructure that guides educational development in North America.

Justifying the Philosophical Analysis of Liberal Education[2]

1. Who is the information for?

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[2] For an extended discussion of how these questions fit into a situation-based justification for policy research, see Hass, Peter J. & Springer, Fred (1998) *Applied Policy Research*. New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc.

A project on liberal education is intended to provide a robust theoretical understanding. A rich understanding is helpful for policy making at virtually all levels and stages of the deliberation and decision making process. As an idea, liberal education has a long history and has been deeply influential in the development of North American education, in particular as it pertains to the historical founding and intellectual and moral purposes of the university as an institution. The knowledge produced by a philosophical analysis of liberal education is intended for use by anyone involved in education policy planning.

2. What kind of information is needed?

A wide array of sources and many considerations add to the depth and complexity of the analysis. A considerable breadth and depth of information improves the theoretical infrastructure of the policy object. Books and journals contain the data and an intellectual synthesis combined with clear, rigorous argument is the goal.

3. What is the purpose of the research?

Education today is facing profound challenges. There is a real need to generate ideas and theories that can lead us into the uncertain future. The purpose of this research is to inquire into the ideas and values that influenced the development of our educational institutions and to advocate for including liberal education in the long term evolution of North American colleges and universities.

4. What resources are required to conduct the research?

Perhaps the great strength of philosophical analysis is that it is resource-minimal. It only requires the analyst have access to a wide and diverse enough body of literature to apply interpretation and draw out theories and ideas. The data consists in books, reports, essays, research projects, and so on. The resource minimal nature of philosophy is an interesting issue. As the mother discipline it thrives on debate, discussion, controversy, and argument. In a philosophical paradigm ideas themselves are considered the data and good thinking the method or procedure.

5. What is liberal education?

A theory of liberal education seeks to develop a frame of mind rather than any particular content. It does not point to any single kind of study but rather the universal purposes of all study. Liberal

education implies the development of qualities of mind and intellectual virtues rooted in reflection on timeless questions that are universal in scope, questions that educate both the mind and the heart. It is a special kind of education that serves needs and interests intrinsic to humanity as a species. The whole purpose of my work is to defend the idealist and universalist idea of liberal education as one based in irresolvable and intractable problems of human nature. Defining liberal education and providing it with a rich theoretical infrastructure will mean, in part, clearly differentiating it from other closely related terms.

Literature Selection

Some of the most important meditations on liberal education include John Henry Newman's (1851) *The Idea of a University,* Robert Maynard Hutchins's (1936) *The Higher Learning in America,* the 1945 Harvard Report *General Education in a Free Society,* Alan Bloom's (1987) *The Closing of the American Mind,* and Bruce Kimball's (1906) *Orators and Philosophers*. All of these sources are cited and included in the study. Several further sources around the problem of liberal education which are not as central were also reviewed and are cited. Ultimately, the selection of literature reflects the aim of dealing with sources which have as a central issue specifically philosophical justifications for liberal education and that give reasons for why liberal education is important. Sources that did not meet this criteria were omitted or do not have a central place in the argument.

1.8 CONCLUSION

Chapter One situates the problem of liberal education in its contemporary political and economic context, clarifies the issue by distinguishing liberal education from other closely related terms, and develops the rationale and method for approaching the problem of liberal education. The purpose is to justify why inquiry into liberal education is a vital problem in the development of university and college missions and mandates in North America and around the world. The research will generate a theory of liberal grounded in idealism, in the intractable problems and ambiguities of human nature and in values and inquiry with a universal significance. The purpose is ultimately to generate the theory required to advocate for the place of liberal education in the college and university missions and mandates in North America and around the world.

CHAPTER TWO: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

> *Education*, in its absolute determination, is the *liberation* and *work* towards a higher liberation; it is the absolute transition to the infinitely subjective substantiality of ethical life, which is no longer immediate and natural, but spiritual and at the same time raised to the shape of universality. (Hegel, G.W.F., *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, III., 187, p. 225)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Different frameworks of liberal education are commensurable in many respects but distinguishable by fundamental ontological and epistemological variances. Different over-arching themes can be discerned in different historical moments. These moments and themes, these different ontological and epistemological variances, help to demonstrate how and why the ambiguities, contradictions, and conflicts that currently characterize liberal education have been ongoing since its inception. Examining different historical frames of liberal education can help to provide a basis for examining the complex problems liberal education faces today and, in particular, the challenges facing liberal education with reference to its place in the modern university. It is worth noting that the legacy of liberal education up until the work of R.S. Peters and Paul H. Hirst (which will be discussed in Chapter Three, p. 48-60) was committed to metaphysical realism. Even today, metaphysical realism informs the methods and assumptions of scientific inquiry. The historical analysis provides the intellectual basis and theoretical infrastructure for the universalist and idealist justification for liberal education generated throughout the project.

The history of liberal education spans over 2500 years of development and accretion. Virtually every epoch of Western civilization from ancient Greece and Rome to present day North America includes some reference or footnote to liberal education. The theoretical background inquired into is the history of creative tensions that has produced disagreements between philosophers, educators, politicians, and statesmen for millennia. The whole edifice of what we call science, the university, professional education, all the arguments of post-modernism and multiculturalism, are part of the universalist idea of liberal education.

Bruce A. Kimball's (1986) astonishing book *Philosophers and Orators* traces the development of the idea of liberal education from its roots in Greek antiquity, through the evolution and decline of ancient Rome, its reconfiguration under the rise of Christianity, its influence in the humanism of the Italian Renaissance and its place in the Enlightenment, and finally its sojourn across the Atlantic to America during the colonial era. Kimball (1986) divides the legacy of liberal education into two ideals: the one Socratic (or the philosophers), the other Ciceronian (or the orators). The philosophical ideal emphasizes the never-ending quest for truth while the oratorical ideal highlights the production of responsible citizens committed to rhetorical and oratorical skill and the virtues required by society's future leaders. One ideal is theoretical and contemplative while the other is civic and political. The lines that divide these ideals, however, are complex and the distinction between the two is often blurry and confused. An interesting aspect of Kimball's (1986) analysis is two implicit themes, one relativist and the other idealist. On the relativist account, liberal education is treated as changing from age to age and from context to context, while on the idealist account the idea of liberal education represents values and theory that are fundamental, timeless, and lasting.

Kimball's (1986) differentiation of liberal education into the philosophical and oratorical ideals is an intellectual construct intended only to provide a theoretical framework to enable inquiry into the dialectic of liberal education in various historical contexts. Every kind of liberal education can be explained with references to its tendency to gravitate to either the philosophical or rhetorical ideals. Underlying the many fragmentary notions of liberal education is a commitment to preparation for civic, intellectual, and moral life, driven by the realist premise that the human personality consists in many conflicting tendencies that need to be brought into harmonious alignment and holistic balance in according with an external reality (Rothblatt, 1993).

2.2 THE GREEK FRAMEWORK

Liberal education originated in the ancient influences of Platonic and Pythagorean thought in the idea that education should enable a person to ascend from appearances to truth (Rothblatt, 1993). Distinct ontological features of this classical view are its commitments to truth, to the notion that knowledge is an end in itself, and to the significance of the question of how we ought to live our lives. Indeed, the classical Greek liberal education had as its starting point the notion of

wholeness and the whole person (Rothblatt, 1993) and that liberal education meant asking questions about the universal significance of human life, human nature, and the individual person in his or her relationship to the world and to all others. It was based on the ideas that it is the nature of the mind to pursue knowledge, that the pursuit of knowledge is the pursuit of the good and of the good life, and that it is through the quest for self-knowledge that the liberally educated person becomes a universal citizen of humanity and a citizen of the world:

> Implicit in the whole history of liberal education is the goal of increased self-knowledge: that students come to see themselves, their strengths and weaknesses, accurately and to appraise their relationship to the rest of the world accurately. (Winter et al., 1981, p. 49)

Socrates and the questions he posed to the ancient Athenians has a special significance for the universalist and idealist conception of liberal education I develop throughout this dissertation. Socrates went about confronting the men of public affairs, the poets, the merchants, and the artisans, exhorting them first to look after their souls and their own nature and only afterwards to pursue fame and wealth. Socrates is the model of the liberal educator through his critical and dialectical activity of shared communication and discovery.

Socrates serves as the first exemplar of the classical framework's philosophical and political commitments. Plato's allegory of the cave is the description of the upward progress of the mind through education, from shadows to substance, from second hand impressions and opinions to full understanding. The progress of the mind from the moral and intellectual condition of the average man to the higher state of philosophic reflection was believed to be achieved through training in arithmetic, logic, rhetoric, dialectic, and other studies (Plato, 2003).

The ancient ideals of a liberal education have been retrieved and re-conceptualised in a fragmentary way in different eras and epochs and in different national and cultural contexts. The ancient ideals of the harmony of the soul with the cosmos and the pursuit of knowledge as the good of the mind have, arguably, been eclipsed in modern society by an emphasis on technical, professional, and vocational education and the governance of universities by management criteria drawn from the world of business rather than by the legacy of Western philosophy. This conflict, however, is not new. Its roots are discernible in the conflict between Plato and Isocrates,

where the contrast between a liberal and intellectual, and a practical, useful, or vocational education had its first expression.

2.3 THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD (500 - 1500 CE)

The accretion of the tradition of theory and ideas that originate in the classical Greeks and Romans came to be differentiated by the fifth and sixth centuries CE into the *trivium* (i.e., the verbal arts of logic, grammar, and rhetoric) and the *quadrivium* (i.e., the numerical arts of mathematics, geometry, music, and astronomy) (Kimball, 1986). The liberal arts as the trivium and quadrivium of the medieval *universitatis* are the intellectual accretions of a tradition manifested in a substantive curriculum of studies in an organizational structure that maintained a theoretical commitment to an intellectual and moral ascent.

The allegory of the cave in Plato's *Republic VII*[3], where the assent of the mind from illusion to pure philosophy is described, is the motivating image behind the organization of the medieval trivium and quadrivium. The classical realist justification behind the differentiation of the medieval liberal arts is the training of the intellect according to the nature of the mind, character development, and development of the "whole person" (Rothblatt, 1993). The intellectual training begins with basic literacy and numeracy because these are necessary for all branches of learning. It then moves to the more difficult inquiry into phenomena with a universal human significance. The medieval *universitatis* was committed to metaphysical realism, to the notion that the mind develops in unity with external reality, and to the general principle that all knowledge forms a unified whole and is bound together by harmony (Rothblatt, 1993). All the development of liberal education is associated with "freeing," with liberating the individual from the intellectual and moral snares of social and civic life so the person can develop according to their own innate potential.

The Latin phrase *artes liberales* means, literally, "the arts of freedom" (Flannery & Newstad, 1998, p. 9). Kimball (1986) develops the notion of the *artes liberales* as the accretion of trends

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[3] Lee, Desmond, (ed.). (2007) *Plato: The Republic 2nd ed*. London, England: Penguin Books, (p. 240-248, *Republic VII*. 514a-521b).

rooted in the writings of Plato (427-346 BCE) and Aristotle (384-322 BCE), the developments of Hellenism, and the writings of figures such as Cicero (107-44 BCE) and Quintilian (35-100 CE). It was the Romans who systematized the ancient ideas into the seven liberal arts found in the medieval *universitatis*. Underlying the various medieval versions of the liberal arts is the influence of the original Platonic education that emphasized harmony (i.e., the study of inter-relationships) and dialectic (i.e., pure theory or abstraction) (Winter et al., 1981, p. 2). The *artes liberales* ideal is implicitly committed to discovering a universal basis for the experience of life.

It is interesting to note that the ideas driving the differentiation of the liberal arts and the ideals of personal development and growth are often assumed in the justification for professional programs in modern times. Even the differentiation of modern day academic fields and faculties, such as sociology, psychology, and anthropology, are mostly developments of the tradition of the liberal arts and represent subspecies of traditions we inherit from the Greeks as extensions of the thought of Plato and Aristotle (Hanson & Heath, 1998).

2.4 RENAISSANCE HUMANISM AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT

By the thirteenth century several institutions called *universities* were in operation[4]: "In 1300, there existed in Western Europe between fifteen and twenty functioning universities; and over the following two centuries scores more were planned, founded, or actually opened for lectures" (Kimball, 1986, p. 75). These institutions were committed to a pattern of education based on the liberal arts with an underlying commitment to metaphysical realism and with requirements, grading, and academic ranks (Kimball, 1986). The entire edifice of what was called education was entirely transformed by the rise of these institutions. Even the liberal arts themselves became deeply intellectually problematic because they came to be taught according to different

[4] "including Salamanca, Lisbon, Valladolid, and Coimbra in the Iberian Peninsula; Bologna, Padua, Naples, Vicenza, Arezzo, and Siena in Italy; Paris, Orleans, Angers, Toulouse, and Montpellier in France; and Oxford and Cambridge in England (None yet existed in Germany and central Europe)." (Kimball, 1986, p. 63)

hierarchies of value and importance and because radically different interpretations of each of the individual arts (such as grammar and rhetoric) came to exist.

The 14th and 15th centuries saw the rise of renaissance humanism, mostly in Italy[5]. Leaving aside debates about the meaning of the terms, the humanism of the renaissance was partially a revival of the philosophical liberal educational ideal grounded in a retrieval of the classical literature of antiquity (Kimbal, 1986). The humanism of the renaissance represented an educational ideal grounded in the retrieval of classical letters. Debatably, it was the beginning of the historical turn known as the Enlightenment (1620 - 1780 CE) and the subsequent turn to science, liberalism, and modernity. Humanism was committed to both the civic ideal of the production of good citizens and to the intellectual and moral ideal of the development of the human character and personality. Interestingly enough, humanism did not arise from within the university and the influence it had on the 15th century medieval *universitatis* is debated and contested (Kimball, 1986).

The 16th and 17th century Enlightenment was driven by the idea that society should be guided by philosophy and science. Out of the Enlightenment arose a new liberal education ideal, what Kimball (1986) calls the "liberal-free" ideal. The Enlightenment dissolved the traditional theological justification of the university and produced the New Philosophy, the philosophy of modern philosophy, the philosophy of Rene Descartes (1596-1650 CE), of rationalism, empiricism, and scientific, experimental method. The times were characterized by figures such as Copernicus (CE 1473-1543), Kepler (CE 1571-1630), Galileo (CE 1564-1642), and Sir Isaac Newton (CE 1642-1727). They were predicated on a rejection of the classical tradition insofar as the New Philosophy, with its commitment to experimental science, rejected the scholasticism of the medieval universities (Kimball, 1986). The modern world was profoundly changed by the rise of science and scientific method.

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[5] Hirst (1973), in his essay on "Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge," considers the revival of Greek and Roman literature of the Italian Renaissance to be a misconception of liberal education.

What Kimball (1986) calls the liberal-free ideal was characterized specifically by reconfiguring the idea of liberal education according to individual freedom and liberty. The liberal-free ideal of liberal education is characterised by its emphasis on seven criteria: freedom and liberty; rationality; critical skepticism; tolerance; egalitarianism; individualism and the obligations of citizenship; and the concern for individual personal growth (Kimball, 1986, p. 119-123). Kimball (1986) intends the liberal-free ideal to explain the modifications to the idea of liberal education that occurred through the 17th and 18th centuries. In *Philosophers and Orators* he writes "As liberalism challenged the 'conservative' influences in society, so did the liberal-free ideal confront the *artes liberales* ideal in education" (p. 61). There is a great deal of ambiguity here in how the idea of liberal education is transmuted from the medieval *artes liberales* to the Enlightenment liberal-free ideal.

Robert W. Connor (2013) recently noted in *Inside Higher Ed* that the roots of liberal education in the humanism of the Italian Renaissance, with its deep commitment to the retrieval of classical Greek and Roman wisdom - often through translating, critiquing, commenting on, discussing, disseminating, and teaching certain key texts - is the spirit underlying the Great Books approach to liberal education advocated by modern figures such as Alan Bloom (1987) in *The Closing of the American Mind*. The Great Books programs of the American academic humanities are a modern attempt to synthesize the ideals of the medieval *studia humanitatis* with modern educational thinking. According to Connor (2013), the justification for Great Books in America and the synthesis of classical authors is the same as in the Italian Renaissance *humanitatis* at Bologna, Florence, and Padua, where the study and synthesis of poetry and mathematics based on metaphysical realism undergirded the educational scheme. Degree programs at institutions such as Oxford, Cambridge, and Harvard are motivated by this vision in a limited sense, even today.

2.5 UNIVERSALITY AND IDEALISM

The theological view of a liberal education is provided by John Henry Newman's (1873) "Discourse V: Knowledge its Own End" in *The Idea of a University*. Newman advances the view of an education founded on the belief that all knowledge is inter-related, inter-dependent, and bound together by harmony - an idea in many ways similar to the Platonic "Idea of the Good"

(Plato, 2003). Newman (1873) views a liberal education as the cultivation of the intellect as such, the training of the mind, and the elevation of the intellect into moral, philosophical, and historical states of conscious awareness.

Newman argues that knowledge is valuable in itself and is its own end, “There is a knowledge which is desirable, though nothing come of it, as being of itself a treasure, and a sufficient remuneration of years of labor” (Discourse V, pt. 6) - but also that it has a purpose which he believed to be to free the mind from confusions and error and to elevate it with intellectual growth. Liberal education and the liberal arts are in this sense exercises of the mind and of the innate human faculties that are within us. The exercise of these faculties for their own sake is intended to lead to a kind of transcendence, where the absolute limit of the soul with the cosmos is encountered (Newman, 1873).

A liberal education subsumes both cognitive and affective domains. Newman believed that intellectual development itself would result in the cultivation of particular character traits or dispositions such as calmness and moderation; that liberal education, through intellectual engagement with timeless questions about the nature of being human, would educate both the mind and the heart.

Newman argued that the university is the special home of liberal education, which is aimed at what he called "liberal" and "universal" knowledge. By "liberal" he meant "philosophical," and he thought that studying in the special home of intellect and integrity he called the "university" would lead to moral and character development. In his framework for religious knowledge he tried to synthesize formal processes of reasoning with aspects of experience that fall outside pure rationality. Newman's framework represents an early attempt to synthesize intellectual ideals with the aim of cultivating the cognitive and moral requirements of citizenship in full acknowledgement of the universality of human experience that transcends the dichotomy between thought and feeling and that resists attempts at easy systemization and formalization.

Newman's universalist view is founded on the belief that all knowledge is inter-related, inter-dependant, and bound together by harmony, and he stands in as a figure who advocated for a version of the universalist and idealist justification. The view in *The Idea of a University* (1873) is a kind of the philosophical species of liberal education and something like a Platonic form

where reality represents the reflection of an intellectual and moral ideal. The purpose of Newman's scheme is to produce a solid intellectual foundation that can last throughout life:

> Hence it is that his education is called 'Liberal.' A habit of mind is formed which lasts throughout life, of which the attributes are freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom; or in what a former Discourse I have ventured to call a philosophical habit. (Newman, 1873/1962, p. 77)

Newman's (1873) framework in *The Idea of a University* is unique, special and reflective of the attempt to establish liberal education, with its special language of universality and transcendence, as the purpose of the university. Newman's claims are important (the problem of establishing an objective, science-based justification for the claim that liberal education produces intellectual and character traits is analyzed in Chapter Three, p. 77-81), as he regarded liberal education as involved in the production of virtues like equitableness, calmness, and moderation.

As an example of the historical claims made by defenders of liberal education, and in particular a defender of a universalist position, the thesis Newman advanced is that intellectual development occurs through a focus on timeless questions - the same questions that pervade both philosophy and science - that transcend the dichotomy between cognitive and affective, through a kind of education intended to fulfill both the mind and the heart. Liberal education in the universalist sense is a product of the philosophical ideal and associated strongly with the tendency to equate "liberal" education with purely intellectual development:

> It is common to speak of 'liberal knowledge,' of the 'liberal arts and studies,' of a 'liberal education,' as the especial characteristic or property of a university and of a gentlemen; what is really meant by the word? Now first, in its grammatical sense it is opposed to servile; and by 'servile work' is understood, as our catechisms inform us, bodily labour, mechanical employment, and the like, in which the mind has little or no part. (Newman, 1873/1962, p. 80-1)

The idea of universality underlying the justification in *The Idea of a University* (1873) is an important point of reflection as it differentiates liberal education away from manual, vocational, and technical education and develops the idea toward the universalist and idealist pursuit of

knowledge for its own sake and purely theoretical reflection detached from practical or utilitarian aims.

A further defender of the idealist conception, Wilhelm von Humboldt's "Theorie der Bildung des Menschen" (or "Theory of Bildung", 1793/4) represents a notion of education as "[the] unlimited development and flourishing of the potentials and capacities of the single human person" (Stojanov, 2012). Bildung encompasses all that might be involved in the development of individual potential and in the freeing of the individual from the cultural and intellectual snares of society.

The word "education" is too narrow to embody what Humboldt means by Bildung, because he refers to the whole of life and all the exercise of human powers that are innate in us in their totality. The purpose of Bildung is essentially inner improvement and elevation and the expansion of the innate faculties of human knowledge (i.e., memory, reason, and imagination). The concept of universal and innate intellectual powers is central to the cultivation of a free and autonomous mind. The striving after goals set autonomously is the expression of a vital power and part of the process of developing an individually differentiated character. All activity and gathering of experience is an attempt at self-understanding and at gaining self-knowledge (Humboldt, 1793/4).

Humboldt's (1793/4) concept of Bildung is deeply influenced by the idealist philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804 CE). The study of classics and idealist philosophy is intended to liberate the individual and to cultivate freedom, liberty, agency, and autonomy, and to combine experience with knowledge in a process that forms identity and an ideal of humanity towards which an individual can direct his or her activity (Luth, 2000). Through the study of idealist philosophy, and by striving after autonomously set goals, a person strives to "transform mere scholarship into scholarly Bildung, merely restless behaviour into judicious activity" (Humboldt, 1793/4, pp. 60).

The conception of liberal education advanced by Humboldt in the 18th century European university is the product of the idealist notion of Bildung, which is rendered here in English as "aesthetic or spiritual self-development" (Luth, 2000). The idealist conception maintained the notion that there is a harmony between the individual with the world and the community

(Rothblatt, 1993, p. 41). The idealist theory of knowledge underlying Humboldt's notion of Bildung involves an anthropocentric view of life and experience that puts the individual at the center of the world (Luth, 2000). The contribution made to liberal education includes the idealist retrieval of the ideas and culture of classical antiquity and also through the framing of the pursuit of science in idealist terms. The central value of the *Theory of Bildung* (1793/4) is the development of all the powers of humanity in terms of the individual life and also in terms of the whole range and scope of human culture and community:

> It is the ultimate task of our existence to achieve as much substance as possible for the concept of humanity in our person, both during the span of our life and beyond it, through the traces we leave by means of our vital activity. This can be fulfilled only by the linking of the self to the world to achieve the most general, most animated, and most unrestrained interplay. This alone is the yardstick by which each branch of knowledge can be judged. (Humboldt, 1793/4, p. 58-9)

Humboldt's promotion of science in terms of idealist philosophy provides justification for the universalist position because he regards liberal education to be aimed essentially at inner improvement and expanding the innate faculties of human knowledge - memory, reason, and imagination - that are treated as universal in scope. The concept of innate *a priori* mental and moral powers that are universal in scope is an essential part of the claim to universality and the cultivation of a free and independent character and mind. The study of classics in terms of idealist philosophy is intended to cultivate individual freedom, liberty, agency, and autonomy, and to combine experience and knowledge in a process that forms identity and an ideal of humanity towards which the individual directs his activity (Luth, 2000).

Universality implies the whole of human life and the exercise of innate intellectual powers in their totality. Universality aims at the cultivation of an individually differentiated character through aiming at goals autonomously, and all of this activity represents a basic attempt at acquiring self-understanding and self-knowledge. The pursuit of science in the context of idealist philosophy is intended to improve the world within us and to cultivate and improve the inner-being of humanity generally.

The idealist influence centers on certain distinctions between inner and outer, of unity and wholeness, and the cultivation of diverse intellectual and moral powers which are themselves all sides of a single, universal power, combined with liberation, freedom, and liberty. Through the externalization of internal powers in discussion and debate and the objectification of subjective ideas and theories through communication - by exercising innate or "plastic" creative powers - human potential is cultivated, expressed, and realized. Science has a central place in this scheme and is to be pursued in the context of idealist philosophy in a recognition that an individual participates in a wider humanity and a global community characterized by freedom, liberty, and diversity. The essential point of science is not the acquisition of knowledge or facts but the exercise of innate, creative, plastic powers. Bildung is science combined with inner elevation and improvement, the improvement of the self through experience of the world, and the transformation of restless activity into real judicious production (Luth, 2000). However, the idealist notion advocated for by Wilhelm von Humboldt seems to not have had much influence in North America which instead became philosophically committed to utilitarianism, pragmatism, and progressivism (Wegener, 1978).

2.6 THE AMERICAN CONTEXT

Some version of the liberal-free ideal makes its sojourn across the Atlantic and into the American colleges of the 18th century. During the colonial era (1693-1776 CE), the school curriculum included Greek and Latin and the retrieval and study of classical authors such as Cicero, Virgil, and Isocrates:

> In reports of the Harvard laws from 1642, 1655, 1686, and 1702, it is consistently specified that a boy desiring admission must demonstrate the ability to speak and write Latin prose and poetry, comprehension of Greek and its grammar, and familiarity with standard classical authors, especially Cicero and Vergil in Latin and Isocrates and the New Testament in Greek - 'Then may hee bee admitted into the Colledge, nor shall any claime admission before such qualifications.' (Kimball, 1986, p. 103)

The Oxford and Cambridge models influenced the founding of institutions such as Harvard in the United States of America. Oxford and Cambridge were committed to a Great Books curriculum, in which training in ancient languages and mathematics was considered to train the mind, and

liberal education was considered to be liberal when it sought to develop broad analytical capacities required for civic, social, and political leadership. The liberal education espoused at late 17th and early 18th century Harvard represents a guiding intellectual principle followed by many colleges and universities in North America until the middle of the twentieth century, when liberal education became linked more strongly with pragmatism, progressivism, and utilitarianism. The liberal education of the American colonial institutions was drastically different, however, from the *artes liberales* of the medieval European *universtiatis* (Kimball, 1986).

Out of the Enlightenment arose an increasing emphasis on science, and this influenced the American context. The early American version of liberal education in the 20th century represented a bouquet of science, pragmatism, and utilitarianism, united with a classical heritage and with an ideal of Christian gentility (Kimball, 1986, p. 120). The Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian cultures were mingled with American purposes and ends in the early colonial American educational institutions. The kind of liberal education involved in the founding of Harvard in America, for example, represents the reproduction of institutions such as Cambridge and Oxford on the other side of the Atlantic.

The *Morrill Federal Land Grant Act* of 1862 established colleges in America firmly committed to utilitarian criteria for the practical necessity of providing the skills and ideas needed to maintain a middle class (Sheridan, 1998, p. 27). The American demand for a utilitarian, pragmatic, and scientifically-based education exerted influence on the development of its colleges and university system. By the 20th century attacks are commonly made on liberal education in its classical, perennialist, universalist, and idealist kind by American educators such as John Dewey (1859-1952), who advocated for a pragmatic form of democratic education with no reference to idealism or the language of universality.

The decline of the idealist justification of liberal education can be explained with reference to the utilitarianism, progressivism, and pragmatism behind *The Morill Land Grant Acts* of 1862 and 1890 which made practical, technical, and vocational education and training an indispensable part of the idea of liberal education in North America. By 1939, a liberal education came to be defined in North America in mainly negative ways, specifically with reference to it *not* being a

professional education or a technical education (Sheridan, 1998). However, a huge mass of ambiguity surrounds the transformation of liberal education in the colonial institutions of 20th century America.

In the early part of 20th century liberal arts colleges existed and were in operation but their missions and mandates conveyed a massive web of contradictions, confusion, and ambiguity (Kimball, 1986). Early American colleges and universities were influenced by a wide array of competing ideas and values; they were heirs of the Enlightenment and its utilitarian outlook, and American colleges and universities became exceedingly committed to progress and progressivism (Rothblatt, 1993, p. 47). The utility of liberal education has been a problem for much of the historical transmission of the idea. From the dichotomy between liberal and useful education many ambiguities and perplexities arise with distinctions and differences that can ultimately be misleading.

Even with the move away from notions of universality and idealism to pragmatism and utilitarianism the American universities of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were nevertheless partially influenced by the idealism of the European research university, embodied in a commitment to a program of specialized scholarship, speculation, and individual freedom. The commitment to idealism and intellectual freedom was at least partially influential in America: "*Lehrfreiheit* (freedom to teach what one wishes) and *Lernfreiheit* (freedom to study what one wishes) - impressed the Americans" (Kimball, 1986, p. 162). The North American colleges of this time were part high school, part university, partly devoted to some vague idea of general education and partly to specialization, and often served primarily as teacher training institutes. The American middle-class into the 20th century was deeply committed to a utilitarian culture of professionalism. Pragmatism was the driving philosophical system shaping the American higher educational experiment.

Throughout this period:

> Descriptions of liberal education affirmed diversity but called for unity; offered breadth but eschewed superficiality; extolled freedom but called for discipline; proclaimed democratic equality while demanding standards; honored individuality beside social responsibility; hailed intellectual along with spiritual, emotional, and physical

> development; promised 'a foundation on which to base . . . occupational activities' but not vocational education; and recognized that no idea of liberal education is final but expected their students to find a firm philosophy of life. (Kimball, 1986, p. 196)

In the second half of the 20th century the pragmatism and progressivism of post-World War II America was loosely tied to a notion of liberal education as liberating and liberational (or as liberal-free, in Kimball's (1986) analysis), and the importance of freedom and individual liberty. The 20th century witnessed, rooted in the legacy of the Enlightenment, a deepening commitment to science, the meaning of which (i.e., the term "science") has been significantly debated, and by an ongoing search for a "science education." Paradoxically, the talk of science education for most of the 20th century and its commitment to critical inquiry into natural phenomena and mathematical laws through experimental method gravitates to the Platonic rather than the civic liberal educational ideal. However, the conflict here is complex, because the rise of science - with its commitment to specialization - runs directly counter to, and has arguably contributed to the decline of, the academic humanities, classical letters, and Great Books. The pragmatism of the post-World War II American university was guided by the demand for science based education: "The faith on which the new universities was grounded was not really a faith in education: it was a faith in the ability of controlled, scientific inquiry to change the conditions of human life and work" (Wegener, 1978, p. 41).

By 1936, Robert M. Hutchins, President of the University of Chicago from 1929 to 1945 had written *The Higher Learning in America*, commenting on the American version of liberal education of his time. Critiquing American pragmatism and progressivism, he writee, "Our erroneous notion of progress has thrown the classics and the liberal arts out of the curriculum, overemphasized the empirical sciences, and made education the servant of any contemporary movements in society, no matter how superficial" (p. 65). Hutchins (1936) further comments that for most of the life of the institutions we call universities the curriculum and processes of the place had, for most of history (i.e., up to the Enlightenment), been committed to theology. Theology had, since the medieval *universitatis*, been regarded as the science of sciences, and was seen as a necessary precursor for the study of all the other sciences. During the Enlightenment, with its turn to scientific empiricism and experimental method, theology was cast down from its

place of importance, and in our time theology exists mainly as a sub-discipline in some philosophy departments.

Hutchins (1936) saw that, with the expulsion of theology from the university - and with it the traditional justification for liberal education as in John Henry Newman - a vacuum was created, and no ruling idea or faculty remained to organize all the disparate departments of the university into a single, unified, harmonious whole. There is no agreement among faculty about any universal discipline or universal knowledge that underlies and unites all the various branches of science and departments in the North American college and university. This has led to a confused mish-mash of fields often guided by little more than the trendiest and most fashionable ideas of the moment. Hutchins (1936) then argues for the study of metaphysics to assume the place once held by theology: "Metaphysics, the study of first principles, pervades the whole" (p. 108)[6].

In 1945, Harvard University released a report, *General Education in a Free Society*, which is commonly called the *Redbook*. This report, which was ultimately rejected by many,[7] was criticized for its conceptual conflation of liberal and general education. The kind of general education espoused by the *Redbook* represents a blurring of liberal education with general education. The *Redbook* connected general education with mental traits and powers of mind - thinking effectively, communicating thought, making relevant judgments, and discriminating among values (Winter, 1981, p. 10) - but provided little justification for how these powers and traits of mind are induced.

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[6] Hutchins (1936) makes an important argument, but I deviate at least so far as to advocate for liberal education, rather than metaphysics, to be the guiding ideal that binds the university as an institution into a continuous whole. Metaphysics is part of liberal education, but not its entire scope.

[7] Hirst, P. H. (1973) "Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge," in Peters, R.S. (ed) *The Philosophy of Education*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, (p. 87-111).

Charles Wegener's (1978) *Liberal Education and the Modern University* is a history of liberal education in the university since the beginning of the 20th century. The book demonstrates how deep and consistent the problem of retrieving and continually redefining liberal education has been in the life of North American colleges and universities. Historical analysis of liberal education ends up consisting mainly in objectifying ambiguity and disagreements for reflection, discussion, and for critical inquiry. Constructing a historical architecture of the idea remains contingent and partial, but it exerts a gravitational influence on the practices and processes of teaching and learning wherever the idea of liberal education is invoked. The colleges and universities of North America today are hardly a "system" at all but a vast galaxy of institutions that spans the whole continent (Wegener, 1978).

The entire educational landscape of North America underwent massive transformations throughout the 20th century. The press for scientific and technical research and specialization is characteristic of the spirit of the development of the North American colleges and universities in recent times. However, the conceptual tie to liberal education happens at the pre-reflective level of university work (e.g., research, teaching, and service). The practical operations of the North American college and university are often shot through with vague and obscure references to liberal education. For most students and faculty the connections between liberal education and the university are simply assumed. Liberal education is pre-supposed in the way researchers, including scientists, go about their work (Wegener, 1978).

In recent times there have been as many characterizations of liberal education as there are people who invoke the phrase. David G. Winter, David C. McClelland, and Abigail J. Stewart (1981), in *A New Case for the Liberal Arts,* generalize concerning modern day developments:

> The new liberal education programs had two common features: (a) They emphasized broad abstractions and basic principles (usually across several disciplines) rather than specialized advanced work in a particular discipline. (2) they were consciously intended *not* to prepare students for vocations, or even for graduate school. (Winter et al., 1981, p. 4)

The vast and complex web-like historical context in which liberal education develops to contemporary times is important. However, any historical interpretation of liberal education

remains only partial and perpetually incomplete. The problems arise from disputes concerning defining the whole problem of human nature and how, if there is a universal human nature, it is to be educated and fulfilled.

2.7 CONTEMPORARY ARGUMENTS

After the 1960's and 1970's in America liberal education came under increased scrutiny. Pragmatists rejected liberal education as irrelevant and trivial. The aims of pragmatic and democratic American educators were civic, concerned with producing responsible citizens with the skills and culture required for labor market success and for the maintenance of a middle class. The kind of pragmatic American education advocated for in the period of the 1960's and 1970's, harnessed to instrumental political and economic goals, has led to, among other things, rampant materialism, consumerism, and the development of technological and technical capacities associated with oppression, exploitation, violence, and terror (Wegener, 1978). The educational upheavals of the 1960's and 1970's did much to obscure liberal education and attempts to define it and formulate a clear and distinct conception. The more that the idea of liberal education is inquired into, it seems, the more confused, confounding, and contradictory the issues become. The whole epoch at this time created a general crisis about both the university and, in particular, the value of a liberal education.

In North America today the issues surrounding liberal education are confused. In the turn to pragmatism and progressivism in the 1960s and 1970s North American context, for example, liberal education is still commonly invoked by its relationship to the *artes liberales* or the liberal-free ideals, but the appeal is assumed and tacit. The liberalism of present day America and liberal education are not sacrosanct (Rothblatt, 1993), and liberal individualism has little to do with the transmission of either of Kimball's (1986) philosophical or oratorical ideals. Liberal individualism is in a sense the negation of liberal education owing to the fact that liberal education, in terms of idealism and universality, has always sought some notion of universal harmony between the self and the world and between the individual and the community.

An example of a recent manifestation of liberal education is Mortimer Adler's notion of "the Paideia framework." Adler (2014) regarded education as primarily a practical activity aimed at particular kinds of ends and goals. It is generally aimed at the improvement or betterment of

persons and of society generally and is treated as an inherently moral enterprise. The means and ends of education are a special kind of good involved with improvement. It is a practical enterprise concerned with particular kinds of goals and the ways they are achieved. Adler (2014) saw education in its most general sense as ”a process which aims at the improvement or betterment of [persons], in themselves and in relation to society” (p.1). Adler’s (1984) *The Paideia Program* sought to synthesize work and citizenship with the realization of fundamental human potential. The Paideia project was intended to be enacted through the development of different kinds of knowledge, skills, and understandings, with a basis in fundamental human traits that are widely generalizable or universalizable (but he mostly emphasised, in the philosophical vein, training in theoretical mathematics).

Adler’s (1984) *The Paideia Program* aims at:

> A course of study that is general, not specialized; liberal, not vocational; humanistic, not technical. Only in this way can it fulfill the meaning of the words ‘paideia’ and ‘humanitas,’ which signifies the general learning that should be in the possession of every human being. (Adler, 1984, p. 6)

While society is built on a division of labor that serves a wide array of functions there is the natural fact that individuals are different and have different talents and needs. Some argue that education is the improvement of persons based on their own unique skills and talents. On the other hand, Adler's (2014) more universalist orientation argues education is intended to improve people based on a common humanity in terms of things everyone must do. Adler’s (2014) key point is that people seem to have special talents and functions and capacities and functions common to all. Liberal education is specifically aimed at certain fundamental aspects of human experience such as the meaning of life and work in the most general sense.

Adler (2014) distinguishes between attributes which all people share and excellences specific to particulair individuals. Some people seem to have special talents and abilities. However, what Adler calls “liberal education” is not aimed at specific talents. It is liberal to the extent it is aimed at those excellences and powers which are part of humanity in a general and universal sense. Specialized education is often closely related to technical or vocational training. The tendency here is to conflate specialized education with labor and occupation and to conflate general

education with liberal education. The problem arises because general education is often seen as directed towards "the liberal training of man as man" (*sic*, Adler, 2014, p. 2). That education is aimed at the cultivation of generalizable and universalizable human capacities marks out the scope of Adler's notion of liberal education.

Adler (2014) distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic educational aims. He divides them according to whether or not the aims are cultivating general human capacities or powers or specific, occupation related capacities. Extrinsic aims are those aimed at the perfection of specific skills that might possibly involve intrinsic human excellences. Extrinsic aims may also be determined by political forces, and to the extent that these forces determine the scope of what is acceptable, they are ideologies. Many activities have both these features: the exercise of hand and brain is both human generally and a factor in vocation or occupation.

Adler's (2014) universalist notion of liberal education is not confined to a mere arts education, nor is it narrowly confined to intellectual education or the cultivation of the mind. Liberal education resists attempts at systematization due to the inherent logical nature of the enterprise itself. Adler regarded "liberal education" as involving three broad aspects of a person's being: the physical (body), the moral (character), and the intellectual (intellect). Adler pointed out that, ultimately, liberal education is intended to produce subjects that apprehend the principles behind the skills and knowledge encountered. It requires certain basic masteries (e.g., literacy and numeracy), but beyond this involves apprehension of universal principles of knowledge. A complete education is both technical and liberal in the sense that it aims at universal principles across sciences, disciplines, and faculties.

While Adler represents a recent development of the idea of liberal education towards a philosophical trend, Meira Levinson (1999) in *The Demands of Liberal Education* pushes the idea towards the civic side and founds the modern notion of liberal education within the framework of liberalism itself (see Appendix B) as an education that protects individual liberty and that is grounded in the civic value of autonomy. Liberalism in modern society is often founded on market oriented reform and centered on pluralism and diversity. Levinson's (1999) criticism is that liberal education in modern society has been increasingly defined along economic rather than social or democratic grounds. She reframes the principles of liberalism in

terms of the influence it has had on educational theory, practice, and policy. For her, the aims of education are not intrinsic to the concept (contrary to the claims made by the educational philosopher R.S. Peters, see Chapter Three), but are defined by the external political influences that shape it (the civic importance of liberal education for our times, specifically with reference to democratic education, is further discussed in Chapter Four).

Levinson (1999) defines autonomy as the capacity to form a conception of the good and to re-think goals with the genuine possibility of revising them. It is autonomy that justifies the substantive freedoms of political liberalism. It is a substantive political value that allows citizens to enact a search for the good. "Autonomy, I conclude, is a necessary component of contemporary liberal theory" (Levinson, 1999, p. 21). For Levinson, a liberal education is primarily an education of beliefs and of initiation into a set of intellectual and moral habits grounded in a wider dimension of cognition (e.g., Paul H. Hirst's forms of knowledge, discussed in Chapter Three, and/or the trivium and quadrivium, etc.), than mere technical or professional education. It is the training of the intellect and of the character towards civic ideals rather than towards practical know-how and skills.

Autonomy is a kind of self-rule or self-legislation (Levinson, 1999), and is a necessary condition of freedom. Autonomy implies the ability to evaluate and revise desires through the continual re-examination of reasons for acting. A kind of autonomy that recognizes plurality allows for the revision of values from a variety of standpoints. Levinson (1999) argues that liberal education, having no end inherent in the concept itself and detached from its classical premises, requires a political commitment, in North America, to the ideal of personal autonomy:

> The ideal of personal autonomy is a substantive notion of higher order preference formation within a context of cultural coherence, plural constitutive personal values and beliefs, openness to others evaluations of oneself, and a sufficiently developed moral, spiritual, or aesthetic, intellectual, and emotional personality. (p. 35)

Adler and Levinson represent recent influences on the justification for liberal education, but the tension between them is merely an example of the historical configurations of Kimball's (1986) two ideals, of the philosophers and the orators, in a modern and contemporary form. Adler's justification is commensurate with the universalist and idealist justification, whereas Levinson's

framework rejects the notion of universality as superfluous and connects liberal education to the extrinsic civic demands of the liberal state. The tensions here, once again, serve to demonstrate that liberal education is perhaps best exemplified by a focus on seemingly irresolvable and contradictory problems.

2.8 FROM HISTORICAL TO PHILOSOPHICAL AND POLITICAL

The argument developed in the historical and historiographical analysis claims that liberal education is a special and atypical kind of education that is specifically based in a concept of universality which is defined in terms of the universal significance of rationality and objectivity for all education. The whole animating spirit of the humanities (i.e., the *humanitatis*, or the spiritual sciences) is the universality implied in the intrinsic structures of human experience and consciousness of which the medieval liberal arts are an early incarnation. Questions and inquiries that are universal in scope is the source of the idea of liberal education, at least in the West (Flannery & Newsted, 1998, p. 5).

The history of liberal education is prone to ambiguity and conceptual confusion, a kind of theoretical dissonance, because it involves inquiry into the phenomena of human consciousness at the universal and pre-reflective level. Myth is written into the fabric of ideas that make up any notion of liberal education and give it substance (Rothblatt, 1983). The aim of such an education, then, is to produce students and teachers capable of inquiring into the universal significance of thoughts and actions and that are able to discern the just from the unjust, virtue from vice, wisdom from folly, according to universalizable standards and rational criteria.

While liberal education is logically and historically grounded in, and a product of, at least some representative notion of the liberal arts, liberal education still represents something that transcends both the plurality of interpretations of each of the individual arts and of the framing of the seven arts known as the trivium and quadrivium within the context of the holistic conceptual unity of all branches of knowledge. The substantive scope of liberal education is problematic for just this reason. Under the shape of universality, the organization of liberal education is towards certain powers of intellect and mind, but how a liberal education actually produces intellectual and moral powers is still unclear (this question is raised again in Chapter Three). The whole organization of the academic humanities is implied in this problem. The liberal arts, however

they are construed and arranged, are specifically those arts that emerge out of the universal nature of human consciousness as such, and that are aimed at uplifting the human spirit, enlivening the soul, and educating the mind and the heart. A democracy requires citizens educated in a such a way if it is to function healthily (more comments are made on the relationship between liberal and democratic education in Chapter Four).

The argument developed from the history of liberal education is that it renews, in a universalist and idealist sense, the values that sustain all cultures regardless of context. Historically, liberal education is not concerned with any particular culture but the general and universal significance of all culture. It is that special education that arises out of the intrinsic criteria of historical inquiry itself - out of the intrinsic necessary conditions of human nature, reality, consciousness, and awareness. The universal bond of each individual person with all others, the transcendence of the human condition, the universal community of human nature and the bonds of citizenship, civic responsibility, and friendship that these bonds imply; our responsibility to ourselves, to each other, to the community, and to the life of the planet and to the species, is all implied in the universalist conception of liberal education.

Most recent attacks on liberal education emanate from movements in philosophy in the American academic humanities, from post-modernism and relativism (see Chapter Three) treated primarily as a philosophical problem. Post-modernism arose in the wake of the 1960s and 1970s and drove the North American college and university away from any notion of liberal education. The ultimate impact of post-modernism and relativism on the aims and purposes of liberal education is still unclear. In the decades since the 1960s, post-modernism has been central in contemporary debates concerning truth and reality in science and philosophy. Perhaps as a result of this conceptual chaos, liberal education by the 1980s had come to be defined "however one pleased" (Wegener, 1978).

From its inception, liberal education was beset with variance concerning aims, conflicting and contradictory goals, and different manners of framing substantive content. Underlying the different frameworks of liberal education is something like what Thomas Kuhn (1970) means by paradigms in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. However it is construed, liberal education

remains the attempt to produce a special kind of education suited to the shared, general, universal nature of humanity (if there even is such a thing) (Rothblatt, 1993).

The historical development of liberal education is marked by a commitment to metaphysical realism, or to the idea that there is a reality outside perception that is universal in scope (attempts to divorce liberal education from metaphysical realism by R.S. Peters and Paul H. Hirst are discussed in Chapter Three). Implicit in the fragmentary historical transmission and association with metaphysical realism is the commitment to universality. Realism, including the realism of the physical and mathematical sciences, assumes a universal basis for experience outside the contingencies of the moment and of any particular situation or context. Universality is written into the fabric of liberal education and represents one of its foundational ideas.

Presumably, the first conflicts between the philosophical and oratorical ideals, between Plato and Isocrates, and the contrast between an intellectual or civic education, is implicitly a debate about the universal nature of human life and how that nature ought to be shaped and educated. The problems of today mirror ancient philosophical conflicts about the nature of universality, about the Platonic intellectual and moral ascent from opinions and illusions to true beliefs, and the metaphysical arguments, mostly emanating from post-modernism, that critique and reject the kind of universality assumed by both liberal education and scientific inquiry. The whole argument, historically, hinges on accepting the realist claim to a reality outside perception that is universal in scope and that can be expressed in rational, objective, scientific terms (Chapter Three will confront the issue of relativism, in particular as it is related to the claims of modern science to an objective basis for reality and knowledge). The whole ambiguity surrounding this problem is further complicated, as Rothblatt (1993) notes, by the economic reform imperatives of modern day American liberalism (discussed further in Chapter Four) and by the tense status of liberal education in mainstream academic politics.

The idea of liberal education is what spans the chasm between the free and democratic societies of today - with our modern scientific and pragmatic orientations - and the thought of classical Greece and Rome, Renaissance Humanism, and the Enlightenment. Several distortions and dogmas have taken shape upon the tradition of thought and ideas of liberal education. Today, it is perhaps best defined in terms of the constellation of conflicts around which it revolves: between

the sciences and humanities, between liberal and professional education, utilitarian and pragmatic concerns over usefulness and labor market responsiveness, and the many theoretical challenges posed by post-modernism and philosophical relativism. The challenges of post-modernism and relativism are perhaps the most serious for the universalist and idealist understanding, and post-modernist and relativist critiques lay at the source of most of the disagreements between the sciences and humanities, with professional education, and with utility, usefulness, and employment and labor market relevance.

The conflict between a "liberal" and a "useful," "practical," or "science-based" education has characterized the history of liberal education in North America for centuries. The relationship of liberal education to the rise of professionalism is now an area of general dispute but the principles of professional education are often explained with reference to at least some of the values implicit in the historical transmission of the idea of liberal education.

We call our times the new millennium. One of the failings of North American colleges and universities is that they are unable to produce ideals and values of lasting importance to guide young people into the wider horizons of the world, into the cosmopolitan politics of global culture, multi-culturalism, and citizenship, with all of its confusions and ambiguities. The same fundamental problems of all knowledge and values, and all the quest for knowledge, under universality and idealism, is necessarily the quest for self-knowledge, no matter what ontological or axiological conflicts may arise.

The purpose of the university is liberal education, to map out the whole country of our knowledge and its boundaries, explore its regions, climb its mountains, cross its seas, and return home to safe shores once again. Science and philosophy, in the dialectic of universality and idealism, are inseparably connected in the substance of both fields; they both ask fundamental questions about the experience of being human and of having a mind, and neither are satisfied with easy and emotionally gratifying answers. If liberal education is a special, unique, and atypical kind of education that arises out of some shared human nature it is already always bound up in every job, occupation, and profession.

2.9 CONCLUSION

The historical conceptions of liberal education illustrate something of the historical evolution of the idea. Any narrative of liberal education, however, remains partial, incomplete, and fragmentary, and requires selectivity in the issues being explained and related. The origins of liberal education are in ancient Greece and Rome and in particular in the example of Socrates and the writings of Plato and Aristotle. Further major developments include the humanism of the 15th century Italian Renaissance and the 17th century Enlightenment. The Enlightenment was driven by a conception of universality and the pursuit of universal values, two of which are rationality and objectivity (which will be further discussed in Chapter Three). Rationality has a universal character because it is implied in all communication, knowledge, and understanding. The world that objectivity seeks to explain is the same for all and outside the accidents of place, time, and context. In terms of the universality of liberal education, rationality and objectivity need to be framed in terms of the idealist reflection on the whole of knowledge. Universality is a meta-principle and an ideal rather than any specific content or set of educational practices. Idealism, and the pursuit of values with a universal significance (i.e., rationality and objectivity) is written into the whole historical edifice of liberal education.

CHAPTER THREE: PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

> The university's ultimate purpose is to reunite us at a higher level of our humanity - as reasoning and moral beings. (Emberley, 1996., p. 254)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three presents the attempts of the British philosophers of education R.S. Peters and Paul H. Hirst to give liberal education a new justification and philosophical basis in rationality. Peters attempts to ground liberal education in conceptual and analytical philosophy while Hirst seeks to justify it in terms of academic-rationalism. Both these thinkers, however, are widely regarded to have failed to give liberal education a new justification, mostly because of movements in philosophy associated with relativism and post-modernism and the rejection of universal Enlightenment values such as rationality and objectivity. I discuss this relativist challenge to universality and reference Alan Sokal as a challenge to the post-modernist turn. Sokal serves as an advocate for science and a scientific worldview. In a sense, he is defending the universalist justification because in defending science he is implicitly defending the universal principles of objectivity and rationality that characterize the sciences. Finally, I discuss the science-based justification for the historical claims of liberal education.

3.2 THE PETERS-HIRST LIBERAL EDUCATION PARADIGM

Any new theory of liberal education has to deal with the thought and influence of the British philosophers of education R.S. Peters and Paul H. Hirst. To ask "What is liberal education?" is a special kind of question according to Hirst because it assumes a commitment to principles of rationality and to a system of publicly, socially shared and agreed upon meanings; meanings consented to in language. To ask for a justification for liberal education, therefore, means to ask for a justification for the development of rational knowledge at all.

Peters was mainly concerned with the nature of education, the moral and social principles underlying education in a democracy, and the moral education of the individual and society (MacIntyre et al., 1981). Hirst (1973) sought to give liberal education a broader conceptual definition as "an education based fairly and squarely in the nature of knowledge itself, a concept

central to the discussion of education at any level" (p. 87). In "Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge," Hirst provides what has come to be called an academic-rationalist framework for education. Peters and Hirst argued that the concept of liberal education is itself already logically implied by the idea of "education" - as an inherently civic, intellectual, and moral form of education aimed at the knowledge and abilities necessary for living in a modern, industrialized society with all its complex cognitive and social demands.

The foundation of the Hirst and Peters educational paradigm are principles retrieved from Socrates:

> (i) that there is a universal human good; (ii) that the good for man is immanent in, not transcendent of, human life; (iii) that it is immanent in the individual life; and (iv) that there is no separation between education and life, of which education is a part: in the process of obtaining the educational good the learner is already living the good life. (Elliott, 1986, p. 17)

PETERS AND ANALYTICAL CRITERIA

The establishing and mapping out of the whole domain of the philosophy of education can largely be attributed to R.S. Peters, although he was also influential in philosophy generally (MacIntyre, 1987). He is widely regarded as an analytical philosopher but he followed no particular model and he dealt mainly with the conceptual structures and values upon which the whole idea of education is based. One of the main tasks in philosophy is making explicit the conceptual schemes and presuppositions that underlie any idea (Peters, 1968). Any idea of liberal education must be clear about what the term "education" means.

"Education" is too general a term to refer to any specific activity. In its generality, it rather points to rational and definitive criteria to which a process must conform. The term covers a massive range of activities and tasks that have an ethical and moral component built into their nature. Education, it is argued, is taken to mean a family of processes explained with reference to the effect they have on a person, effects that are primarily cognitive and aimed at the development of mental states. Peters (1968) argues in *Ethics and Education* that education is differentiated from other families of similar processes such as indoctrination, coercion, or training by intrinsic rational and definitive criteria. Since in his conceptual approach the criteria that distinguish

education from processes such as training or rearing are closely related to "freeing," some people have argued that what R.S. Peters means by "education" and "liberal education" is essentially identical (Peters, 1968).

Education implies that something worthwhile is being or has been intentionally transmitted in a morally acceptable manner. It would be a logical contradiction to say that a person has been educated but has in no way changed for the better or that in educating a student a person was attempting something that was not worthwhile. This is a purely conceptual and analytical point. Such a connection between "education" and what is valuable does not imply any particular commitment to content (Peters, 1968). It is generally agreed that education should aim at something valuable. Even if the aim is not intrinsic to the concept, that the ends are of value is pre-supposed by the term "education." It is implied that the person being educated will come into possession of something valuable (Peters, 1973).

Peters and Hirst held that the aims of education are inherent in the concepts of "education" and "knowledge" themselves; that education has a set of built-in rational criteria inseparable from notions of value; and that education does not signify any particular process but rather rational criteria to which a process must conform. Several criteria can contribute to making a process "educational," but foremost among them is that activities be "worthwhile" and generally agreed upon to be of value. "Liberal education," then, is initiation into systems of thought and awareness predicated on certain value distinctions, including "worthwhileness" and "desirability" (Peters, 1966).

Education implies a "desirability" criterion because it is incoherent to use the term to describe a process that makes people worse, "although 'education' picks out no specific processes it does imply criteria which processes involved must satisfy in addition to the demand that something valuable must be passed on" (Peters, 1965, p. 18). Analyzing the desirability of some aims and processes over others brings into focus the immanence of value judgments and normative, moral considerations. Considerations of value and morality as a hallmark of mind apply both to what is taught and the manner of its transmission.

In "Education as Initiation" Peters (1965) argues that the values embedded in the concept of education include developing desirable states of mind in the transmission of what is worthwhile;

acquiring a body of knowledge intended to frame in a cognitive perspective and achieving an understanding of what is being learned and of what is required in the learning. Worthwhile educational activities must be justified by sets of rationally generated criteria. Peters makes the distinction between things valuable instrumentally and things valuable intrinsically. The justification for intrinsic values is transcendental, "the activities being the pursuits of knowledge and understanding necessarily presupposed in the question 'why do this rather than that?' (Hirst, 1986, p. 21). The problem of intrinsic value intersects with almost any conception of liberal education.

Peters (1966) lays out his conceptual and analytical position on liberal education in his book *Ethics and Education* (p. 18-20). Peters's (1966) approach is similar to Socratic inquiry into concepts such as justice and virtue. However, Peters notes that the general terms that philosophy aims at, such as "education," do not have the clear and distinct kinds of definitions found in domains such as mathematics and geometry (i.e., such as the definitions of triangle or circle). Rather, the meaning of the term exists in families of related processes. It is by formulating criteria that a term is given a definitive, lexical meaning. General terms such as "education" pick out no particular activity, it is argued, but rather point to criteria to which activities and processes must conform (p. 3).

For Peters, the intrinsic criteria that define any idea of education already point toward liberal education because the criteria to which education must conform in order to be something more than merely training, reforming, or indoctrinating are liberal. For Peters (1966), the concept of education is one committed to certain criteria:

> (i) that "education" implies the transmission of what is worth-while to those who become committed to it;
>
> (ii) that "education" must involve knowledge and understanding and some kind of cognitive perspective which are not inert;
>
> (iii) that "education" at least rules out some procedures of transmission, on the grounds that they lack willingness and voluntariness on the part of the learner. (p. 20)

In *Ethics and Education* (1968) Peters differentiates his notion of "liberal education" from the concept of "education." Peters writes that what he means by "education" as differentiated from processes such as indoctrination, brainwashing, or coercion, is essentially the same as what is often meant by "liberal education." Such education, he says, is closely associated with the notion of "freeing" (i.e., freeing the mind from error).

Peters lays out three senses of the way the cognate "liberal" is used in its relation to "education." First, he lays out the negative sense of the term "liberal," which means essentially removing restrictions and impediments. In its negative sense, being "free" means not being restricted by barriers. Traditionally, "liberal education" is a differentiated from, as opposed to being harnessed to, instrumental goals, "it has been a plea for education rather than vocational training, or training of hand and brain for utilitarian purposes" (Peters, 1968, p. 43). "Liberal," in the negative sense, means essentially uncoupling educational processes from extrinsic or utilitarian aims and defining it in terms of intrinsic criteria. In the second sense, Peters argues that "liberal" seems to imply a certain depth of understanding aimed at standards and values intrinsic to a subject or activity. In the second sense, "liberal" takes on the meaning of not confining thought to a single field or domain of knowledge. With reference to the ideal of "the educated person," being "liberally educated" means having a variety, or a plurality, of different ways of looking at the world. In the third sense of the term "liberal," Peters suggests that liberal education means emphasizing principles of individual liberty in the context of educationally related processes and contents. In this sense, "liberal education" is a component of almost any education-related process or means. In processes such as vocational training it can mean teaching in a way that emphasizes standards intrinsic to the field or activity; it can mean that grasping a deeper understanding is encouraged; and it can mean encouraging a critical attitude towards what is taught. All three "liberal" approaches add educational value to relevant processes (Peters, 1968).

One interpretation of the term "liberal" here is that education should not be purely technical, vocational, or manual. It takes into account a plurality on the epistemological level of modes of awareness. It also means that the criteria that separate true from false in the different domains come from the rational structure of the concepts knowledge, truth, and mind. "Liberal" emphasizes a plurality of ways of thinking and knowing into which education is intended to initiate people (Peters, 1973). While the aims and goals themselves are not implicit in the

concept of education, that those aims are of value or worthwhile is. The value of the aims is determined by rational criteria implicit in the concept. However, there is a great deal of confusion regarding the range and scope of "liberal," "vocational," and "technical" education (Peters, 1977).

Liberal education is remarkably difficult because of its commitment to the unimpeded development of mind. In this sense the term "liberal" essentially means "to free" in the sense of freedom of the mind in all domains of intellectual inquiry. The view adheres to the premise that "liberal" means a kind of development towards knowledge uninhibited by instrumental (i.e., utilitarian, vocational, or technical) aims. Knowledge in this case is, once again, "for its own sake," as apart from instrumental forms of justification (Peters, 1977).

Liberal education framed in terms of "knowledge for its own sake," as having its method and ends contained within the idea itself, is underwritten by the premise that the essential nature of the mind is rational and its highest development is pure theory (Peters, 1977). The value of studying is treated as immanent in the nature of knowledge itself and is contrasted against manual, technical, and vocational training where the psyche is mixed with the base material components of nature. Peters' position, in terms of its modern historical developments, is in a sense a more developed and differentiated form of this view. However, liberal education as "knowledge for its own sake" is too vague a notion to support a concrete program of liberal studies. Peters's work is an attempt to ameliorate the conceptual confusion and ambiguity that plagues discussions of liberal education and is committed to an ideal of freedom and liberty. It is clear that being a free person, for Peters and Hirst, means more than narrow specialist training (Peters, 1977).

According to Peters, liberal education is also woven into the nature of democratic life. Democratic life is committed to: i. respect for persons and others, ii. truth as self-evidently valuable, and iii. a plurality of views of what constitutes the good life (Peters, 1981). However, to be educated seems to mean more than a commitment to democratic ideals. It implies acquaintanceship with a plurality of principles and worldviews characterized mainly by a cognitive perspective and a habit, frame, or bent of mind.

The value of what is transmitted in the name of education is often in dispute in democratic societies owing to differences concerning the aims and ends of education. Peters tried to demonstrate that education of any kind is intrinsically rational and that it is "liberal" to the extent it tries to recognize analytical criteria in its process of teaching and learning. Any conceptual analysis in this area necessarily intersects with ethical and moral issues. The content and method of education as well as why some kinds of knowledge are more valuable than others is a moral question that needs some kind of philosophical justification (Peters, 1968).

HIRST AND THE FORMS OF KNOWLEDGE

The original notion of liberal education comes from the Greeks, a notion involving doctrines of metaphysical realism about the significance of knowledge for the mind and the relationship between knowledge and reality. The first doctrine holds that it is the nature of the mind to pursue knowledge: "The pursuit of knowledge is thus the pursuit of the good of the mind and, therefore, an essential element in the good life" (Hirst, 1973, p. 87). The second doctrine upon which the realist version of liberal education is founded is that the mind develops in accordance with an external reality. The mind can come to know what is true and ultimately real through critical and dialectical reasoning activity. Knowledge, understanding, and reality are (arbitrarily, it seems) hierarchically structured into various levels:

> From the knowledge of mere particulars to that of pure being, all knowledge has its place in a comprehensive and harmonious scheme, the pattern of which is formed as knowledge is developed in apprehending reality in its many different manifestations. (Hirst, 1973, p. 88)

In "Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge" Hirst (1973) argues that, in his time, liberal education had become little more than a slogan that takes on whatever meaning suits the immediate context. The meaning is almost always totally defined negatively as *not* a vocational, scientific, or specialist education. In working out his notion of liberal education, Hirst comments on the "Harvard Committee Report: General Education in a Free Society" (1946, also known as the *Redbook*) in which a liberal education is more or less equated with a "general education" and is defined and justified in terms of "traits of mind" and "areas of knowledge." Areas of knowledge are first identified as the natural sciences, social studies, and the humanities which

are differentiated and defined in terms of "methods of knowledge" (p. 59). The "traits of mind" advanced in the 1946 *Redbook* comprise the abilities "to think effectively, to communicate thought, to make relevant judgments, and to discriminate among values" (Harvard Report, 1946, p. 65).

- *Effective Thinking*: Defined as logical thinking directed at practical ends, it is "the ability to extract universal truths from particular cases and to infer particulars from general laws; it is the ability to analyze a problem and to recombine the elements by the use of imagination" (p. 91). Under the label of "effective thinking" go all the cognitive operations involved in common sense and of the poet and the inventor.
- *Communication*: Defined as the ability to speak, listen, read, and write well, it includes the social and moral dimensions of speaking, discussion, debate, and conversation.
- *Making Relevant Judgments*: Defined in terms of the relationship between theory and practice, judgment has to do with the relationship between ideas and experience and between thoughts and actions.
- *Discriminating Among Values*: Defined as assigning importance to different values and kinds of values, discrimination of value has to do with conscious awareness of values of character, such as self-control and moderation, and intellectual values, such as integrity and commitment to truth. Discriminating among values also involves aesthetic qualities such as the appreciation of beauty, harmony, and for the ethical and moral conduct of life (Hirst, 1973).

Hirst argues, however, that the kinds of mental activities underlying the Report's notion of "areas of knowledge" and "traits of mind" leave ambiguous an underlying commitment to metaphysical realism and that the broad, general terms in which liberal education is couched are misleading (i.e., that the areas of knowledge are marked out along either socially agreed upon, or arbitrary, lines). How the forms of knowledge are distinguished and how they are related are too broadly defined and too loosely connected to an assumed metaphysical realism to be defensible.

The *Redbook* says little about how the qualities of mind it develops correspond to its differentiation of knowledge into the three areas (natural science, social studies, and humanities). The relationship between the qualities of mind and the areas of knowledge is left ambiguous. In

order for liberal education to be defined in terms of mental qualities, how these qualities are related to the three domains needs to be clarified. The *Redbook* simply assumes that liberal education cultivates general mental abilities and does not provide a sufficient framework for specifying the relations. Also, in its use of broad and general terms, it misleadingly conflates what are distinct intellectual and mental processes, abilities, and powers, and assumes that skills have commonalities where none may be apparent. The *Redbook* also implies that liberal education is somehow emotional and moral but it gives no explanation as to how or why (Hirst, 1973).

Hirst's (1973) project is, then, to provide a new justification for liberal education in terms of what he calls the "forms of knowledge," which are "the complex ways of understanding experience . . . , which are publicly specifiable and which are gained through learning" (p. 96). "The forms of knowledge are the basic articulations whereby the whole of experience has become intelligible to man; they are the fundamental achievements of the mind" (Hirst, 1973, p. 98). Each is characterized by central organizing concepts, a distinctive logical structure, propositions testable against experience, and distinctive techniques for exploring experience. Hirst identifies seven forms - mathematics, physical science, human science, history, religion, literature and the fine arts, and philosophy - each organized around a network of core over-arching principles such as "number" in mathematics or "God" in religion. Each has a distinctive, inherent logical structure of relationships and distinct truth criteria.

The different forms and networks are frameworks within which experiences become intelligible to consciousness. For Hirst, the forms of knowledge are the particular ways in which mind itself develops. Through the forms of knowledge he seeks to reassert and reinterpret the concept of a liberal education with the ambiguous claims of metaphysical realism and the loose connection to areas of knowledge and traits of mind explained and solved. The concept of liberal education is to be explained in terms of the plurality of ways through which reality is interpreted in socially shared terms, terms that are made legitimate through public consent, consensus, and tradition. Liberal education in the forms of knowledge sense is initiation into public traditions of thought that have been achieved by the mind through agreed upon, debated, contested, and consented to historical developments of public traditions:

Hirst's (1973) framework assumes that knowledge is rational and developed along the lines of a publicly identifiable conceptual scheme. Knowledge is only intelligible in terms of a *rational* and public conceptual apparatus. Articulation is a process of translating individual intellectual achievements into a publicly shared conceptual scheme – a cognitive framework with public criteria. Through this process individuals become aware of private states of mind in terms of a shared, external world in part through objectification of ideas in language. Language gives public expression to a private internal world.

Hirst's epistemological framework supposes that to ask for a justification for liberal education is to ask for a justification for the pursuit of rational knowledge and the development of a rational mind at all. To ask for a reason presupposes a commitment to rationality. Justification is only possible in and through a shared scheme of rational public symbols that make up language and that are publicly consented to in discussion and agreement.

Hirst's conception of liberal education, like the Peters' framework, is rooted in the nature of knowledge itself but is no longer tied to a hierarchical epistemological organization and abandons its philosophical commitments to classical realism. Instead, the forms of knowledge are delimited by conceptual, methodological, and logical features that are the product of public traditions and that acknowledge a plurality of worldviews based on the fundamental division between theoretical and practical knowledge. The forms of knowledge framework is mainly rational and cognitive in nature and not concerned with utilitarian modes of justification and no longer committed to a vague, obscure, ambiguous basis in metaphysical realism. The realist justification for liberal education has been to develop the mind in accordance with an external reality, but the way in which this process takes place and how liberal education is linked with the cultivation of powers of mind has historically been left obscure. Hirst's position is no longer committed to metaphysical realism but on the necessary conditions intrinsic to the nature of rationality and rational knowledge itself. The forms of knowledge are modes of awareness the species has developed through traditions objectified in public form that are communicated through publicly accepted systems embodied in language.

Whatever private inner world of consciousness might exist such states are only objective in terms of public symbols such as language and communication. The objective external world and

subjective private states of mind are related through a shared public scheme that exists in the use of signs and symbols in discussion and communication. It is a shared, rational, objective system where the validity of expressions and the separation of true and false are judged according to public criteria in discussion and consensus-seeking. The aim of Hirst's formulation of liberal education as initiation into public forms of thought and awareness is a rejection of metaphysical realism and a re-assertion of the concept of liberal education according to the publicly agreed on forms of knowledge. The aim is to acquire enough breadth of knowledge along with sufficient depth to acquire "critical appreciation" (Hirst, 1973, p. 106). The forms make up the basis for the whole apparatus of what we call "mind" and how experience is made intelligible through rational schemata. The different "forms" of knowledge are various historically accredited and differentiated kinds of rationality.

Hirst's formulation serves to underscore that to ask for a justification for liberal education is a special kind of question. To ask for a justification in any sense seems to be committed to asking for an intelligible or rational answer, so that rationality is treated as a necessary universal value. To ask for a justification for liberal education, then, is to ask for a justification for the development of rational knowledge at all: "Justification is only possible if what is being justified is both intelligible under publicly rooted concepts and is assessable according to accepted criteria" (Hirst, 1973, p. 47).

> If the achievement of knowledge is necessarily the development of mind in its most basic sense, then it can be readily seen that to ask for a justification for the pursuit of knowledge is not at all the same thing as to ask for the justification for, say, teaching all children a foreign language or making them orderly and punctual in their behavior. It is in fact a peculiar question asking for justification for any development of the rational mind at all. To ask for the justification for any form of activity is significant only if one is in fact committed already to seeking rational knowledge. To ask for a justification for the pursuit of rational knowledge itself therefore presupposes some form of commitment to what one is seeking to justify. Justification is possible only if what is being justified is both intelligible under publicly rooted concepts and is assessable according to accepted criteria. It assumes a commitment to these two principles. But these very principles are in fact fundamental to the pursuit of knowledge in all its forms, be it, for instance, empirical

> knowledge or understanding in the arts. The forms of knowledge are in a sense simply the working out of these general principles in particular ways. To give justification of any kind of knowledge therefore involves using the principles in one specific form to assess their use in another. Any particular activity can be examined for its rational character, for its adherence to these principles, and thus justified on the assumption of them. Indeed, insofar as activities are rational this will be possible. It is commitment to them that characterizes any rational activity as such. But the principles themselves have no such assessable status, for justification outside the use of the principles is not logically possible. This does not mean that rational pursuits in the end lack justification, for they could equally well be said to have their justification written into them. Nor is any form of viciously circular justification involved by assuming in the procedure what is being looked for. The situation is that we have here reached the ultimate point where the question of justification ceases to be significantly applicable. The apparent circularity is the result of the interrelation between the concept of rational justification and the pursuit of knowledge. (Hirst, 1973, p. 100)

Liberal education in this sense is conceived without any reference to technical or "useful" aims. It is defined totally in terms of rational, publicly agreed upon knowledge as the greatest good. This conception of liberal education has been influential in the philosophy of education for decades (Hirst, 1973). The Hirst conception of liberal education clearly intersects with questions of value. What is the basis for the values that animate liberal education? Hirst (1973) says they are found in the "forms of knowledge" that have been achieved. Liberal education is initiation into a plurality of historically accredited forms of knowledge according to the universal value of rationality. However, Hirst's claims are themselves inadequate. The conception does not provide a sufficient framework to justify liberal education and he never foresaw the necessary nature of philosophy to combat modern sophistries. While Hirst's framework does include both science and philosophy the whole of liberal education is not reducible to either philosophy or science.

Liberal education is, according to Hirst, aimed at a particular bent or frame of mind, of coming to see judgments of taste or empirical assertions for what they are. It aims at "critical appreciation" (p. 166) (See Appendix A), which means essentially a breadth of knowledge and understanding

along with sufficient depth to become critical. Coming to know a form of knowledge, Hirst (1973) tells us, is "more like coming to know a country than climbing a ladder" (p. 108-9).

Two key questions arise out of Hirst's (1973) justification of liberal education: What subjects are to be included in a program of liberal education? How much depth is required to acquire critical appreciation? Notions of breadth and depth plague any notion of liberal education. However, any questions of breadth and depth in liberal education are now largely irrelevant as both Peters and Hirst are widely regarded to have failed in giving liberal education a new justification. Furthermore, neither Peters nor Hirst could have predicted the influence of relativism in philosophy, which is one of the main developments, mostly in philosophy, eroding and displacing any attempt to advocate for liberal education in the North American college and university missions of today.

3.3 RELATIVITY AND UNIVERSALITY

The influence of relativist epistemology and ontology since the era of the 1960's and 1970's in America (during and after the period of Peters and Hirst) in post-modernism, post-structuralism, and social constructionism is now deeply felt in the American academic humanities. Relativism represents a new scholasticism and a new sophistry that regards itself as a higher form of wisdom. It is against any idea of a universal basis to humanity and against any language that is totalizing in nature and so annihilates attempts to advocate for liberal education. Radical attacks on Enlightenment values, such as rationality and objectivity, have gained wide acceptance in the academic humanities. Relativist frameworks deny any idea of universal *a priori* human values.

In "Relativism, Rationalism, and the Sociology of Knowledge," Barry Barnes and David Bloor (1982) define relativism as "(i) the observation that beliefs on a certain topic vary, and (ii) the conviction that which of these beliefs is found in a given context depends on, or is relative to, the circumstances of users" (p. 22). Barnes and Bloor (1982) support a relativistic view about how contradictory beliefs can exist about the same thing. Under the relativism of Barnes and Bloor, knowledge is defined as "any collectively accepted system of beliefs" (Barnes & Bloor in Koertge, 1998, p. 14).

Under relativism, contradictory beliefs are the product of the varying, changing, and evolving rules of logic and interpretation and the criteria that separate good reasons from bad ones are regarded as context dependant. In other words, there are no universal *a priori* values or standards. In anthropology, relativism is the view that the world of the Other must be interpreted according to subjectivism that finds the key to understanding local knowledge from local causes (Barnes, & Bloor, 1998). All knowledge is treated locally and contextually. This runs against the Enlightenment premise that belief has a basis in an objective and universally shared reality that can be explained rationally in terms of abstract formalism and impartial criteria. In the wholesale rejection of essentialism, in the rejection of claims to a universal basis for experience, relativism is itself an essentialism and is making implicit universalist claims about the nature of the world (Sokal & Bricmont, 1998).

Relativist claims about the nature of the world often conflate, in different ways, according to Alan D. Sokal (1998):

> 1. *Ontology*. What objects *exist* in the world? What statements about these objects are *true*?
>
> 2. *Epistemology*. How can human beings obtain *knowledge* of truths about the world? How can they assess the *reliability* of knowledge?
>
> 3. *Sociology of Knowledge*. To what extent are the truths *known* (or *knowable*) by humans in any given society influenced (or determined) by social, economic, political, cultural, and ideological factors? Same question for the false statements erroneously believed to be true.
>
> 4. *Individual ethics*. What types of research *ought* a scientist (or technologist) to undertake (or refuse to undertake)?
>
> 5. *Social ethics*. What types of research *ought* we to encourage, subsidize, or publicly fund (or alternatively, to discourage, tax, or forbid)? (p. 14-5)

Relativist frames for the truth place various modes of interpretation in *different worlds* and deny the idea of a universality behind the mere names of phenomena. All truth is subjective - the

product of linguistic, social, and cultural conventions - and attempts to get at the truth have produced equally valid and sometimes incommensurable interpretations.

Bruno Latour is often associated with "strong relativism" (Huth, 1998, p. 181). His strong form seeks to redefine science strictly as a social phenomenon. At least part of Latour's program is due to what Sokal and Bricmont[8] (1998) in *Fashionable Nonsense* consider to be a bad interpretation of Einstein's (1916) populist essay *Relativity: The Special and General Theory*. Relativity in physics is highly abstract and very different from the way the term is used in an everyday sense. In physics it has a lexical, formal, specialized definition. The everyday sense of the term "relative" has a bizarre relationship with how it is used in professional science, physics, and mathematics. Mis-interpretation of concepts used in the discourse of professional science has a debilitating effect on the aims and ideals of liberal education. It is common at many colleges and universities that are committed to liberal education for students to be asked to analyze scientific treatise about global warming or nuclear energy but in social and political, rather than intellectual, philosophical, or scientific terms. Even purely theoretical mathematics is framed as relative to cultural positionality (Sokal & Bricmont, 1998).

Relativism has a special significance for interpreting the Other. Truth, and giving reasons for beliefs, hinge on the meanings of terms that are determined by what Ian Hacking (1999) calls "thought styles." A paradigm or a "conceptual scheme" is in a sense a thought style. A conceptual scheme is based on "a set of sentences held to be true" (Hacking, 1982, p. 58). The problem brings into focus the issue of disparate and incommensurable thought styles and contradictory beliefs about the same phenomena. The Western thought style behind the historical development of liberal education (see Chapter Two) with its special atypical tradition and language of universality and transcendence has generated objective scientific knowledge based on evidence out of the dialectical development of reason and science. Paradigm shifts bring tectonic changes in the rules that guide thinking, "Thales opening a continent, that of

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[8] Sokal, Alan. D. & Bricmont, Jean (1998) *Fashionable Nonsense*. New York: Picador USA, (p. 124-133).

mathematics, Galileo opening up the continent of dynamics and Marx that of history" (Hacking, 1982, p. 51).

Cultural constructivist doctrine[9] with its relativist epistemology regards situated cultural factors as giving rise to the diversity of beliefs and the naming of things. Often, constructivist doctrine only serves as a front to advance radical political ideas. Cultural factors and affections clearly do play a role in the things we believe and the reasons we give for them. The cultural constructivist view distances itself from the idea that there is a universal reality separate from the contingencies of perception (Fishman, 1996). Universality is aimed at articulating rules that exist separately in nature outside the mere accidents of time and place, and universality is the special feature and requirement of liberal education. However, such rules are mysterious and the subject of huge debate:

> There may well be a psychological mechanism (or mechanisms) that provide us with cognitive rules and generalizations from experience of which we are not consciously aware, and which we find impossible to articulate or formalize. (Fishman, 1996, p. 94)

Scientific realism (Kitcher, 1998), an inheritor of the metaphysical realism underlying the historical justification for liberal education, is the attempt to discover and explain such an elusive mechanism in the reflexive basis of nature if there is one. There are different varieties of realists, but generally they accept "the knower can attain (some) knowledge of an independent reality - that is, reality that is objective in the sense it does not originate in the knower, or knowing subject" (Held, 1998, p. 199).

Realism, ontologically and epistemologically, pursues a reality *in-itself* that the mind can acquire knowledge of. According to the relativity of cultural constructivism, reality is mainly the product of language, the linguistic mediation of communication and the partial nature of interpretation. Every problem in philosophy and science is reduced to the language games of communication.

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[9] Gross, Paul R. & Levitt, Norman (1994/8) *Higher Superstition*. Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, (p. 42-70)

All *things* are *constructs*, and in extreme forms, all theories are equally valid. Under the anti-realist posture (which is often political rather than philosophical):

> The knower cannot under any circumstances attain knowledge of a reality that is objectively independent of the knower, or how the world really is. Instead, knowers make, invent, constitute, create, construct, or narrate, in language, their own subjective realities, or, in the usual terminology, antirealities and nonrealities. (Held, 1998, p. 199)

Relativistic attacks on the method and content (i.e., rational progress and objective knowledge) of natural science are also attacks on liberal education, they attack objectivity, rationality, and science implicitly, and so represent an attack on universality and the idealist justification for liberal education. Attacks that emanate from constructivist and post-modernist doctrine maintain that everything is relative to subjective interpretation. The relativist claim rejects the entire Enlightenment development of rationality and objectivity which is sometimes criticized as a "Western" and "patriarchal" abstraction (Nanda, 1998).

Defending any concept of universality or universalizabiltiy is exceedingly difficult and without it, justifications for liberal education have no basis. The issue is deeply problematic because rationality is the capacity that can liberate the oppressed and help people break free from the margins and experience a wider humanity. Rationality has an intrinsically political and liberating power that promotes self-determination, autonomy, equality, and emancipation. Meera Nanda (1998) is correct, that rationality transcends the accidents of race, class, and gender, and that the knowledge it seeks - something outside the arbitrariness of cultural traditions and accidents of birth - has a way of being critical of, and improving upon, tradition.

In Ernst Gellner's (1982) "Relativism and Universals," the problem of relativity is framed anthropologically. Anthropology as an academic field can be framed as the general study of humanity. Relativity is framed by cultural anthropology in terms of the diversity of humanity and the enormous variety of all possible worlds, "Is there but one kind of man, or are there many? Is there but one world, or are there many?" (Gellner, 1982, p. 181). The problem of relativism and universality ought to be treated first as a philosophical issue, it is foremost a philosophical problem and it needs to be dealt with in terms of philosophy and science. Epistemologically, it has to do with the relativity of cognition and subjectivity. Ontologically, it has to do with the

reality of the world. Sociologically, it represents the problem of the differences of social forms, systems, and organizations.

Relativism is also commonly understood as an epistemological doctrine, "Relativism is basically a doctrine in the theory of knowledge: it asserts that there is no unique truth, no objective reality" (Gellner, 1982, p. 183). The relativity of worlds and the relativity of subjectivities is, however, not the same question:

> The issues of relativism, and that of the existence of human universals, are not one and the same issue. The problem of relativism is whether there is one and only one world, in the end; whether all the divergent visions of reality can be shown (leaving out cases when they are simply mistaken) to be diverse aspects of one and the same objective world, whose diversity can itself be explained in terms of the properties or laws of that world. (Gellner, 1982, p. 186)

Relativity as an epistemological, ontological, and sociological doctrine does not defeat the claim that there may be a universal component to being human, even while the huge variety of possible interpretations of the world seems to deny this. The diversity of subjective perception and the variety of interpretations of the world seems to resist attempts to prove and explain human universality. The world is subjectively interpreted and how it is understood is often the product of cultural traditions or a particular thought-style (Hacking, 1982).

Relativism as an anthropological problem claims all cognition is purely subjective and that it has no *a priori*, rational, universal basis. In cultural relativity, the subjective units (i.e., the individual person) identify things in terms of traditions that may include cosmological, mystical, and religious world views, that are all treated as equally valid. Each individual represents a cosmological and subjective unit with human diversity and the variety of seemingly incommensurable worldviews and thought-styles explained with reference to local, contextual factors. Clearly, the issue of relativism makes any claim for a universal basis for human experience dubious. Different thought styles are often the product of local cultural traditions and languages and incommensurable thought styles do exist in the enormous variation of cultural, social, and cognitive traits.

Epistemologically, the claim of the Western thought style embodied in the historical narrative of liberal education (see Chapter Two), of the intellectual and historical development of the rationality and objectivity used in the natural sciences, is that in order for something to count as knowledge it must meet certain criteria (according to Gellner (1982), explanation must be symmetrical, orderly, and rational). Sociologically, under universality, cultures are seen to inhabit the same world, and this world has an *a priori* necessary structure. Objectivity, based in the intellectual development of rationality in the West, assumes an absolute basis in the world that generates rational criteria for good and bad reasons and standards of truth.

As an epistemological claim, objectivity assumes an absolute basis in a single, universally shared, unified world that all humans encounter. In order for something to be knowledge according to the claims of universality it must be so under rational criteria of interpretation and intelligibility. Rationality generates the dualism and the bimodal differentiation between true and false propositions that can be empirically tested against experience. However, the Western thought style that generated the problem of relativity and universality is just one among many others, "for the particular thought style which alone generated this unique, converging, cumulative world, as the object of human cognition, was not universally dispersed among men. On the contrary, it was but one tradition amongst many, and a very untypical one" (Gellner, 1982, p. 191).

Gellner (1982) summarizes the argument of "Relativism and Universals":

> The problems of relativism and that of the existence of human universals is *not* identical.
>
> The doctrine of 'human universals' is often tacitly conjoined with that of the uniqueness of man: the claim is not only that the essentially human *is* present in all of us, but also that it is *not* present in anything else.
>
> Universality at the phenomenological level is highly questionable or trivial. At the explanatory level, the notion is complex and obscure.
>
> The solution of the problem of relativism does not hinge on the establishment of human universals. If it has a solution, it is elsewhere.

> Relativism is about the existence of One World: and the conceptual unification of the world is, precisely, the work of one particular style of thought, which is not universal amongst men, but is culturally specific.
>
> But this in turn does not actually subvert the Universality Thesis: for although the conceptual unification of the world does have specific socio-historic roots, it is evidently accessible to all men, and is in fact now being diffused generally.
>
> Science needs one world. It does not need one *kind* of man within it. But one kind of man did make the single world. His historical situation may have been unique, his basic constitution was *not*. The single world seems to be gradually adopted by all of them, and appears manifestly accessible to all men. (Gellner, 1982, p. 199-200)

Universality claims that there is an a priori unity to humanity. Universals are those features that are shared by humanity generally or the general characteristics of being human. Universals are the constants of general humanity that operate for all societies and characterize human beings as a species. As an epistemological claim it assumes humans have certain a priori cognitive structures (e.g., memory and imagination). As an ontological claim it assumes that the world humans encounter is the same for all, regardless of tradition, situatedness, and context. Sociologically, it regards all social organizations and systems of governance to be based in principles and the various expressions of a single, harmonious unity. The rationality that the West has developed seeks a universally valid basis for beliefs, and such universality is the only legitimate ground of liberal education.

3.4 THE POST-MODERN CHALLENGE

Postmodernism is often characterized with reference to Jacques Derrida and Jean-Francois Lyotard as the rejection of any claim to a universal basis for experience; a problematization of the nature of meaning as changing from one situation and discussion to another, one context to another, one person to another. All knowledge is treated as localized, situated, and relative to the subjective reality of the observer and objectivity is rejected as the illusion of bias and prejudice. The subjectivism and relativism of post-modernism criticizes any claim to a reality outside perception or to any theory of universal or transcendent phenomena. Deconstructive literary theory is intended to be liberatory and to reveal hierarchies and expose the marginalization of the

weak and powerless. Liberal education has in particular come under attack from post-modernists, post-structuralists, social constructionists, and desconstuctionists, for its monolithic character, that was argued to have excluded the experiences of women and minorities (Hanson & Heath, 1998). The whole theoretical enterprise of post-modernism has a special antagonism with claims to objectivity and universality.

In the foreword to the eighth printing of *The Postmodern Condition* (1991) Frederic Jameson tells us the term "post-modernism" refers to "the condition of knowledge in the most highly developed societies" (Jameson in Lyotard, 1991, p. xxiii). He frames the state of philosophy and science today as "the crisis of metanarratives" (Jameson in Lyotard, 1991, p. xxiii). The crisis of metanarratives is the crisis of metaphysical philosophy and of our social and civil institutions whose justifications have historically been based in its arguments and reasons. Transformations in technology, it is argued, have led to transformations in the nature of knowledge and reality. Lyotard's vein in *The Postmodern Condition* (1991) is aligned with the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari and is intended as a polemic against Jurgen Habermas (Jameson, 1991). While Habermas concerned himself with the philosophical status of authority and consensus, Lyotard aims mainly at the "game of dialogue," or how language influences the scope of, and determines, the possibility and structure of social bonds. It is important to remember, underlying the debate, that the whole constellation revolves around the problem of justice. Defining justice is consonant with the problem of defining liberal education; it is a hugely complex task and resists easy explanation.

Post-modernism presents itself as a kind of narrative analysis where even science and its principles and arguments are treated as fables and myths with the intention of calling the epistemological and ontological basis of any notion of universality, rationality, or objectivity into radical question. It is tied up with the relationship between science, capitalism, and our accepted and acceptable ways of getting at and communicating the truth. Science and "narrative," for Lyotard (1991), are distinct and often contradictory forms of knowing. Where the objectivist and universalist discourse of science is monolithic, narrative is heterogeneous, contradictory, and contested. Lyotard (1991) is incredulous towards grand metanarratives (e.g., Hegel and Marx) and the ideals of the Enlightenment that once served as the basis of civil and social institutions such as the university. It is a change in metaphysical philosophy arising from a transformed idea

of science where the justification for beliefs are treated as merely various myths and fables. It is a turn to heterogeneity in the language games that form and justify beliefs (Lyotard, 1991).

Post-modern, then, refers primarily to the status of knowledge in the post-industrial, computerized, mechanized age. It is concerned with heterogeneity in the language games of everyday life and in science (e.g., computer languages, information storage, linguistics, and communications). Post-modernism and narrative analysis is an attempt to explain metaphysical transformations in knowledge in general. Lyotard's frame differs in its fundamental ontology from scientific realism in a number of ways and is antagonistic against, and in opposition to, any idea of universality (Lyotard, 1991).

Under post-modernism the discursive, linguistic component of decision making is emphasized. Post-modernism, as a transformation in the processes of knowledge through computer technology, has influenced almost every aspect of life, including our interpersonal relationships and the foundation of the legitimacy of our civil institutions. Economic growth and social control are both involved in the extension of computer technology into everyday life. The transformations of the modern nation-state has had a profound influence on the nature of science and scientific inquiry (Lyotard, 1991).

Narrative analysis has an overarching concern for, and a special antagonism with, the processes and status of science. Narrative analysis is aimed at understanding utterances such as evaluations or opinions. It is intended as an emancipatory and liberatory framework that problematizes any claim based on authority in any domain. Narration, as a form of knowledge, is involved in every aspect of our existence and influences science in the language games of legitimation, consensus, and consent and the use of language to make arguments and explanations. Language is a goal already implied in our everyday awareness of the world and our place in it. It is concerned with the pragmatics of communication, competing stories, the articulation of theories and ideas with a special concern for heterogeneity that is a primarily philosophical problem:

> What is most striking in Lyotard's differentiation between story-telling and 'scientific' abstraction is its unexpected modulation towards a Nietzschean thematics of history. In effect, indeed, for Lyotard the fundamental distinction between these two forms of

> knowledge lies in their relationship to temporality, and in particular to their relationship to the retention of the past (Jameson in Lyotard, 1991, p. xiii).

In the Appendix to the eighth printing of Lyotard's (1991) *The Post-modern Condition*, Regis Durand answers the question "What is postmodernism?" In Durand's estimation, post-modernism is essentially a movement that is against the idea that history is a unity guided by an inherent end. It is a radical break with the grand narrative of the Enlightenment. Post-modernism, in this sense, is mainly a movement in aesthetics and art that seeks to transform traditional standards of beauty and judgments of taste. It is against canonical, established, lexical standards of aesthetic judgment. The purpose is to reject conformity and to embrace heterogeneity:

> The postmodern would be that which, in the modern puts forward the unpresentable in presentation itself; that which denied itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable; that which searches for new presentation, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unpresentable. A postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by preestablished rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgment, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. Those rules and categories are what the work of art itself is looking for. The artist and the writer, then, are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what *will have been done*. Hence the fact that work and text have the characters of an event; hence also, they always come too late for their author, or, what amounts to the same thing, their being put into work, their realization (*mise en oeuvre*) always begin too soon. *Postmodern* would have to be understood according to the paradox of the future (*post*) anterior (*modo*) (Durand in Lytoard, 1991, p. 81).

Postmodernism offers itself as an intellectual framework for interpreting the world arising out of the dynamic development of information technology and transformed modes of accessing and distributing knowledge, at least in the West. Post-modernism, as an aesthetic movement, seeks to dissolve traditional notions of beauty and justice. However, even purely in terms of a movement in aesthetics, post-modernism often conflates ontology and epistemology and is

antagonistic towards universality, rationality and objectivity. In its conflation of ontology and epistemology - even while it states as its purpose the generation of "new" and "fresh" theories - postmodernism often blurs the distinct between the world and our knowledge of it (Lyotard, 1991).

Post-modernism assumes that "reality," or "the real," can never truly be represented. All representation remains only partial and contextual. Post-modernism is a radical break with the mainstream, especially in terms of aesthetics, "Let us wage a war on totality; let us be witnesses to the unpresentable; lets us activate the differences and save the honor of the name" (Durand in Lyotard, 1991, p. 82).

As Regis Durand's "war on totality," post-modernism seeks to end all metanarratives and to eradicate totalizing concepts such as universality and objectivity. The turn here has had a profound influence in shaping the culture and ethos of the North American university and has been extraordinarily influential in the academic humanities. Post-modernism is antagonistic to the narratives that legitimate the structures and processes of the university, between the unity of knowledge and the heterogeneity of fields and faculties. The principal of the harmony and unity of knowledge - which is universality - is problematized and framed as "a language game that links the sciences together as moments in the becoming of spirit, in other words, which links them in rational narration, or rather metanarration" (Lyotard, 1991, p. 33).

By dissolving the universalist idea of the unity and harmony of knowledge, postmodernism dissolves the intellectual basis of the university (and also our moral and intellectual core as a people), and fragments even the notion of a coherent identity, or concept of truth and justice, and also liberal education. It dissolves the "grand narrative of legitimation." The role of the university has changed drastically and our collective future, or the whole world, is now largely volatile and unpredictable. The rise of machines has indeed changed the way knowledge is produced, stored, and transmitted, and teaching and learning at the university is now framed in terms of performativity and measured by the efficiency criteria of input-output ratios "Who transmits learning? What is transmitted? To whom? Through what medium? In what form? With what effect? A university policy is formed by a coherent set of answers to these questions" (Lyotard, 1991, p. 48). Technological transformations have changed the nature of knowledge,

and how it is produced, processed, and distributed. The problem of transformed relationships is perhaps most evident in the processes of teaching and learning at the university. The relationship between knowledge producers and the consumers of knowledge has clearly changed drastically, contributing to the decline of liberal education.

3.5 RELATIVISM AND SCIENCE

Alan Sokal (2008) caused an uproar when he published a parody of post-modern literary criticism for a trendy leftists American journal. He submitted "Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity" to a cultural studies journal called *Social Text* (1996, p. 217-252). It was accepted under the auspices of a special issue for the Science Wars, which was intended as an attack on Paul R. Gross & Norman Levitt's (1998) book *Higher Superstition*. Sokal then revealed his hoax in *Lingua Franca*. The story made it to the front page of the *New York Times*, and in the *International Herald Tribune*, the *London Observer*, and the French *Le Monde*.

Sokal's first impression of the Gross and Levitt (1994) book *Higher Superstition* was that the authors were on the political right and were grossly exaggerating the intellectual confusion and ambiguity of some social constructionist and post-modernist thinking. However, after some further research and reading, Sokal concludes that Gross and Levitt (1994) are correct, and the concerns they raise are important and legitimate. Sokal has now written two books critiquing the confusing and unjustifiable doctrines of social constructionism and post-modernism.

The event of Sokal's hoax demonstrates for us the profound influence that social constructionist and post-modernist intellectual frameworks have played in our politics and in shaping the North American university, particularly the academic humanities. Sokal's intention in writing the *Social Text* piece is mainly political and it serves to show the role epistemological conflicts play in informing our practice and shaping disagreements over how we view reality. Social constructionism and post-modernism have been extraordinarily influential in American academic humanities departments and in science studies and the cultural study of science.

In Sokal's (2008) book *Beyond the Hoax*, a text written in response to the ripples the hoax controversy caused, Sokal points out for us the huge political and intellectual implications that

relativist epistemology poses to any conception of universality, rationality, or objectivity, and so to any kind of liberal education. The purpose of the hoax, in Sokal's (2008) terms, is to "combat a currently fashionable postmodernist/poststructuralist/social-constructivist discourse - and more generally a penchant for subjectivism - which is, I believe, inimical to the values and the future of the Left" (p. 95). The hoax demonstrates that the conflict between universality and relativism is an intrinsically political problem. Post-modernism, post-structuralism, and social constructivism regard all human relations to be masked systems of arbitrary power.

Sokal positions himself, along with Gross & Levitt (1994), with the Left, understood as "the political current that denounces the injustices and inequalities of capitalist society and that seeks more egalitarian and democratic social and economic arrangements" (p. 107). Sokal and Levitt are socialists while Paul Gross is a centrist (social constructionists and post-modernists make up the radical left, while religious fundamentalists make up the radical right, in the North American college and university today).

The hoax demonstrates the need for a progressive social critique grounded in a worldview that can get past partisanship and provide a realistic analysis that American citizens can understand. The project of defending universality, a necessary feature of developing an acceptable and plausible kind of liberal education, is also a component of formulating a coherent account of ourselves as ethical and moral beings and of the identity of ourselves as a nation. A focus on universality might be our best tool in the struggle for a more just and fair society. For Sokal (1998) and Gross and Levittt (1994), universality, objectivity, and rationality are regarded as the best tools for liberation and for improving the world around us. Rationality offers a powerful tool for liberating the oppressed.

Political critiques that emanate from what Gross & Levitt (1998) and Sokal (2008) refer to as the "academic left" have portrayed science and rationality as simply one worldview among others that is optional to adopt. Some have attacked universality and objectivity as Western ethno-science that only serves to obscure the power relations that define us and oppress the marginalized Other. The seriousness of these conflicting epistemological frameworks cannot be overstated and the problem is further exacerbated by a host of damning concerns facing the university including significant social and civil unrest and protest.

Like many social constructionists and post-modernists (e.g., Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Bruno Latour, Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guatarri, and Paul Virilio), Jean Baudrillard employs ambiguous terminology drawn from the world of professional science in an often confused and confusing way:

> In the Euclidean space of history, the shortest path between two points is a straight line, the line of Progress and Democracy. But this is only true of the linear space of the Enlightenment. In our non-Euclidean *fin de siecle* space, a baleful curvature unfailingly deflects all trajectories. This is doubtless linked to the sphericity of time (visible on the horizon at the end of the day) or the subtle distortion of the gravitational field. (Baudrillard in Sokal, 1998, p. 148)

It is difficult to unravel exactly what it is Jean Baudrillard is getting at here. He is combining the use of well-known scientific terms (e.g, Euclidean space) with a total disregard for their meaning in professional science and in an ambiguous, misleading way. The confusing use of language is a source of error rather than clarity or understanding. The point, according to Alan Sokal, is that the way in which Jean Baudrillard uses the terms has nothing to do with how the terms are used in mathematics, physics, or in any branch of professional science.

The feminist wing of social construction (e.g., Sandra Harding, Carolyn Merchant, and Evelyn Fox Keller) represent a radical challenge to the Enlightenment legacy of rationality and scientific method and the Western canon of literature and philosophy (Sokal, 2008). The challenge extends to the development of scientific method in the West. Western capitalism is portrayed as patriarchal domination where flawed notions of objectivity and universality obscure what are deeply held racist and sexist prejudices. Even while aimed at egalitarian and social-democratic ideals, relativistic epistemological and ontological thinking of the social constructionist kind only obscures the distinction between the world and our knowledge of it. Feminist social constructionism, in its construal of Western capitalism as a patriarchal conspiracy, often conflates ontology, epistemology, and sociology with individual ethics. Sokal (2008) accuses the feminist wing of social constructionism and post-modernism of academic faddishness, careerism disguised as professionalism, based in an incoherent mish-mash of trendy ideas.

Epistemological relativism, as both social constructionism and post-modernism, represents a serious intellectual challenge to any notion of universality or objectivity. Critics have attacked science and scientific method, as well as the substantive content of the natural sciences, as grounded in bourgeois, sexist, Eurocentric prejudices (Sokal, 2008). The relativistic post-modernist and social-constructionist frameworks are often coupled with a denial of objectivity and a rejection of the idea of a world separate from language and perception that can be known rationally. Universality and objectivity, in this view, are an illusion that only serves to obscure the power relations that define us and that contribute to their reproduction. Social constructionism and post-modernism both rely on relativistic theories of knowledge and truth that are predicated on a rejection of human universality.

There are different kinds of relativism underlying post-modernism and social-constructionism:

- Cognitive relativism: Truth, knowledge, and matters-of-fact
- Ethical and moral relativism: Goodness, justice, and value judgments
- Aesthetic relativism: Beauty, harmony, and artistic judgments (Sokal & Bricmont, 1998)

While the political stance of social constructionism and post modernism is to liberate the oppressed it has yet to do so in any demonstrable way. Post modernism and social constructionism are a backlash against the grand narrative of the Enlightenment and the leadership of society by science and philosophy. In response to the controversy the Sokal hoax caused, Sokal advocates for liberatory post-modernism and offers several rules to guide the development of post-modern theory:

- Stress on non-linearity and discontinuity,
- Deconstruction that seeks to transcend the subject-object dichotomy,
- The overthrow of static identity categories and hierarchies,
- A stress on symbolism and representation, and
- Refutation of authoritarianism and elitism (Sokal, 1998).

Liberatory post-modernism can aid in demystifying and democratizing professional science and help to deconstruct the barrier between "scientist" and "public" by incorporating feminist, queer, multicultural, and ecological perspectives and critique. Philosophy and science can indeed be more welcoming of women, the marginalized and the oppressed. A liberatory post-modernism

will aid us in advancing universality and also aid in revising the entire Western canon, which will be a pre-requisite of generating a consensus about the substantive content of any program of liberal education (Sokal, 1998).

Values with a universal significance, such as rationality and objectivity, have a liberatory power. The intellectual powers underlying scientific method promote self-determination, autonomy, equality, and emancipation. Science has a tense relationship with tradition and has a way of overturning and changing it. The knowledge and skills cultivated in science and scientific education are regarded as beyond cultural traditions and the knowledge it pursues knows no bounds of birth, or the contingencies and accidents of class and family background (Nanda, 1998). Science sees itself as driven by reality rather than culture or politics (Gross & Levitt, 1994). A scientific worldview is characterized by Sokal (2008) as clear and cool headedness combined with respect for evidence and open debate. He also regards, as do I, such a worldview to be vital for the survival of humanity.

Relativism is hegemonic in many American academic humanities departments today and relativistic concepts of "mind" and "reality" influence the way people think in the wider society and culture. Modern relativist sophistries often conflate epistemology, ontology, and sociology, treat science, rationality and objectivity as an inherently exploitative, culturally constructed illusion and conflate facts with values and the world with our understanding of it. This is a problem for the philosophy of science as much as it is a problem of intellectual integrity (Gross & Levitt, 1998).

Sokal's (2008) counter to relativism is what he calls a "scientific worldview" which he defines as "a respect for evidence and logic, and for the incessant confrontation of theories with the real world; in short, for reasoned argument over wishful thinking, superstition, and demagoguery" (p. 106). A scientific worldview is a rational worldview based in clear headedness, a respect for evidence, and open debate. Discovering the truth, for scientists and philosophers, remains one of the most perplexing questions of all. The problems of science and philosophy are intrinsically political, and are universal in scope at least to the extent that they transcend mere left-right politics (e.g., What is knowledge? What is justice? What things in the world are real?).

Universality seeks to categorize what are disparate epistemological and ontological frameworks under a universal system of ethical and moral rules that represent a trans-cultural value, a value that offers the best means for navigating what is an increasingly complex, danger, and terror filled world. The process of open and fair argument is essential for our spirit as a people and for the survival of our species on this planet. Defending liberal education will mean defending rationality from attacks on science, scientific method, and especially on the Western canon of philosophy and literature.

3.6 FROM SPECULATION TO SCIENCE

In David G. Winters, David C. McClelland, and Abigail J. Stewarts (1981) book *A New Case for the Liberal Arts*, the authors set out the traditional issue of liberal education claiming to produce cognitive, mental, and moral effects such as critical thinking (see Appendix A), independence of thought, empathy, and self-control, and to test whether colleges and universities actually produce these effects using evidence-based, scientific, objective, psychometric analysis[10]. The authors test the impact of liberal education by measuring the effects colleges and universities have on students in the long run - longitudinally - both in single institutions and generalized across many institutions that are committed to some kind of liberal education. There is a wide array of effects, and many colleges do indeed seem to produce substantial intellectual and moral gains. How can we tell that liberal education is causing character development, and that the development is not caused by extraneous variables and factors such as social class, geographical context, family status, etc...? The work of Winter et al. (1981) is the only attempt I have seen to give traditional and classical claims of liberal education an evidence-based footing.

The different statements concerning the kind of products and results of a liberal education vary and overlap widely:

1. Thinking critically or possessing broad analytical skill: Hutchins, Harvard Committee, Dressel and Mayhew, and Barton.

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[10] The table that lays out the structure and format of the method used in the psychometric analysis used by Winters et al., (1981) is found on p. 50.

a. Differentiation and discrimination within a broad range of particular phenomena (especially within the history of Western culture): Plato, Harvard Committee, Dressel and Mayhew, Barton, and Bok.

b. Formation of abstract concepts: Whitehead

c. Integration of abstract concepts with particular phenomena or concrete instances; making relevant judgments: Plato, Whitehead, Harvard Committee, and Dressel and Mayhew.

d. Evaluation of evidence and revision of abstract concepts and hypotheses as: Dressel and Mayhew, and Bok.

e. Articulation and communication of abstract concepts: Harvard Committee, Dressel and Mayhew, and Bok.

f. Differentiation and discrimination of abstractions, identification of abstract concepts: Plato, Harvard Committee, Faust, Dressel and Mayhew, and Bok.

g. Comprehension of the logics governing the relationships among abstract concepts: Plato, Whitehead, and Bok.

2. Learning how to think: Bok.

3. Thinking independently: Faust, Barton, and Becker.

4. Empathizing, recognizing one's own assumptions, and seeing all sides of an issue: Dressel and Mayhew, Barton, and Bok.

5. Showing of self-assurance in leadership ability: Plato, Rhodes, Wilkinson, and Becker.

6. Demonstrating mature social and emotional judgment; personal integration: Plato, Harvard Committee, Dressel and Mayhew, Perry, and Bok.

7. Holding equalitarian, liberal, pro-science, and anti-authoritarian values and beliefs: Dressel and Mayhew, and Barton.

8. Participating in and enjoying cultural experience: Dressel and Mayhew, and Bok (Winter et al., 1981, p. 12-3).

Because there is so much ambiguity concerning how liberal education induces powers and capacities of mind the claim seems, historically, to have rested on a quasi-religious faith rather than on scientific evidence and the liberal arts with their special language of universality and transcendence constitute phenomena with a quasi-religious significance (Winter et al., 1981).

It is very common for liberal education to be vaguely associated with cognitive and intellectual processes such as "critical thinking." Critical thinking represents a general term associated with the liberally educated person that implies some kind of thought process, concept formation, or concept attainment. Critical thinking implies being able to select, arrange, organize, and interpret facts with flexible, logical, analytical thinking. Ultimately, the psychometric argument does provide evidence-based proof that a liberal education does produce cognitive, motivational, and emotional effects through producing "self-knowledge" and "the ability to think" (Winters et al., 1981, p. 80-5): "We could say it strives towards Plato's goal of the philosopher-king: adept at conceptual articulation and imbued with mature and instrumental motives for leadership" (p. 81).

However, even with the evidence and science-based approach of Winter et al. (1981), the means by which liberal education produces psychological and social effects is still unclear. What precisely causes the effects? Family background or social class? For example, intersecting factors that influence the learning at North American colleges and universities might include: i. academic involvement, ii. extracurricular activities, iii. dormitory life, iv. culture, v. sports involvement, vi. volunteering, and vii. science (Winter et al., 1981).

In Chapter Seven[11] of A *New Case for the Liberal Arts* (1981), the authors generalize their findings from a single elite institution across several other similar institutions (i.e., colleges and universities committed to some version of liberal education in their missions and mandates) and find the effects of attending such an institution are shown to be similar and generalizable (i.e., that liberal education leads to an enhanced capacity for thought, mature adaption, critical thinking and conceptual skills, independence of thought, self-knowledge, and motivation for leadership, regardless of context). Many of the anxieties concerning liberal education across

[11] Winter, David. G., McClelland, David. C., & Stewart, Abigail, J. (1981) *A New Case for the Liberal Arts*. San Francisco, Washington, London: Jossey-Bass Publishers (p. 151-180).

North America may be resolvable by turning to evidence-based psychometric research, but evidence-based research is not necessary for accepting the universalist thesis or universalist justification of liberal education[12].

Winter et al. (1981) conclude that the growth in cognitive skills (e.g., critical thinking or intellectual flexibility) can be demonstrated psychometrically to be effects of liberal education regardless of context (i.e., liberal education produces these effects independent of geographical location, and independently of factors such as social class and historical context). The application of systematic, disciplined, organized cognitive effort in complex situations produces, among other things, independence of thought (i.e., liberal education "liberates" students intellectually), leadership abilities, and personal maturation (i.e., through the exposure to new and often difficult ideas and experiences in formalized, organized activities). Responding to confusion through disciplined and concentrated effort enhances overall substantive gains in critical thinking capacities, that transcends the context of any single institution and is widely generalizable across the phenomenon of liberal education as a whole. Winter et al. (1981) conclude by pointing out that their analysis is just a first step toward providing an evidence-based justification for the kinds of effects people such as John Henry Newman (see Chapter Two) attributed to liberal education. However, it provides progress towards refining a justification for liberal education with carefully defined relations between content and method and the production of educational effects.

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[12] In the conclusions of their work, the authors write: "If liberal arts education confers benefits to society through better leadership and management skills and more vigorous voluntary organizational activity of liberal arts graduates, but if it does not confer financial benefits to these graduates that are commensurate with its costs, society, as a major, if not the principal financial beneficiary of liberal education, should assume a large share of increased college costs. Our results, therefore, can be read as making a case specifically for increased public support of liberal arts education, either by direct grants to private, high-quality liberal arts institutions or by changing public institutions so that they have these qualities" (Winter et al., 1981, p. 183-4).

3.7 CONCLUSION

Chapter Three begins with a discussion of the attempts of the philosophers of education, Peters and Hirst, to provide a new philosophical basis for liberal education. These two thinkers made similar, but different, attempts to justify liberal education. However, they are widely regarded to have failed in their attempt, mainly because of movements in philosophy towards post-modernism and relativism. The issues raised by relativism and post-modernism, and particularly how they are related to the claim for universality, is discussed. Sokal represents a challenge to the post-modernist turn as an advocate for the objectivity of the natural sciences and a scientific worldview. A scientific worldview is commensurable with the idealist claim to universality (i.e., objectivity and rationality as universal values). Finally, the evidence-based justification for the historical claims of liberal education made by figures such as John Henry Newman is given. However, more needs to do be done to establish liberal education as based on objective, neutral, scientific evidence.

CHAPTER FOUR: POLITICAL ANALYSIS

> We must dissent from the indifference. We must dissent from the apathy. We must dissent from the fear, the hatred, and the mistrust. We must dissent from a government that has left its young people without jobs, education, or hope. We must dissent from the poverty of vision and the absence of moral leadership. We must dissent because America can do better, because America has no choice but to do better. (Justice Marshall in Freedman, 1996, p. 143)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Four examines the intrinsically political nature of liberal education and situates the idea in the context of policy problems in North American colleges and universities. It is impossible to ignore the political and economic climate in which arguments about liberal education take place today. Liberal education is intrinsically political at a number of intersections: with academic research and work, with the university as an institution, and with the generational struggle for democracy. The political problems that influence any notion of liberal education today are discussed. Today, in the sense of Cicero's civic ideal, the problem of liberal education is approached civically and as a kind of democratic education. The issues here include political attempts to harness the university to the labor requirements of national industry and movements in philosophy situated in the American academic humanities. Finally, Chapter Four advocates for a synthesis of professional and liberal learning as at least a partial solution to the intractable problems of educational planning in colleges and universities in North America.

4.2 THE POLITICS AND ECONOMICS OF LIBERAL EDUCATION

The university itself is a radically political phenomenon. It represents a mingling and mixing of many diverse elements - including the elements that make up the academic and scientific community. Our times mark the beginning of a new age for the colleges and universities of North America. The politics of liberal education are written into the whole edifice of the university and it is one of the fronts of our contemporary culture wars. It remains, as it has been for over 2500 years, an area of general disagreement and dispute.

Fareed Zakaria (2015), noted as amongst the most influential foreign policy advisers of his generation by *Esquire* (Zakaria, 2015), points out in his recent defense of liberal education, *In Defense of a Liberal Education*:

> The governors of Texas, Florida, North Carolina, and Wisconsin have announced that they do not intend to keep subsidizing the liberal arts at state-funded universities. "Is it a vital interest of the state to have more anthropologists?" Florida's Rich Scott asked. "I don't think so." Wisconsin is planning to cut money from subjects that don't train students for a specific job right out of college. "How many PhD's in philosophy do I need to subsidize? (p. 18-9)

Florida Governor Rick Scott proposed in 2013 to make funding for degrees according to their relevance to regional and national industrial imperatives that are perceived to be of economic importance to the vitality of the United of States of America and the state of Florida (TBO, 2013). Students in humanities disciplines would therefore be paying higher tuition than their colleagues in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). The harnessing of education to the immediate demands of labor force development is misguided inasmuch as the strong literacy and numeracy component of liberal education is already assumed by most advanced scientific and technological research. The intellectual, civic, and moral ideals of liberal education are intended to provide the basis for wider life success through phenomena such as a broad and deep understanding of concepts, such as duty and justice.

Recently, Victor E. Farral Jr. pointed out in *The Fiscal Times* (2013) that one of the forces leading the decline of the liberal arts is a context of high unemployment and rising student debt. The pressures arising from market forces are tending to direct students into a focus on technical fields that are immediately connected to labor market success. As with the proposals of Governor Rick Scott to make funding dependent on the knowledge requirements of local and national industry the general direction is away from any notion of liberal education. No mention is made of how decline in liberal educational ideals is associated with declining civic and democratic participation. The decline of the liberal arts is tied directly to the decline of civic engagement in America and the boom-bust economic cycle of modern, industrialized, computerized nation-states. Without liberal education the creative thinking and higher order intellectual capacities that

governments and companies depend upon to animate their bureaucratic infrastructure will decline and will mean less creative adaption to the pull of market forces for national industry.

Also in *The Fiscal Times*, Sharyl N. Nash (2012) reports that a study by the *Georgetown University Center on Education and Workforce and Civic Enterprises* affirms the market viability of bachelor's and graduate degrees in liberal fields. In times of economic instability and soaring student debt (Blaire Briody in 2012 presents the shocking figure that student debt is astronomically high in the United States of America at $956 billion, and tuition fees have increased 72% since 2000), and at a time when the average wage for a high school graduate is below the poverty line, the kind of flexibility and intellectual versatility that liberal education strives for is perhaps more important than ever.

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) since its founding in 1915 has maintained a commitment to liberal education. The idea is defined by the AAC&U as a kind of education involved in cultivating transferable skills, values, ethics, civic engagement, and as more of a way of studying than any particular subject. The AAC&U emphasizes the civic ideal, the aim of responsible citizenship and producing the intellectual, moral, and social requirements for democracy.

In the January-February (2013) edition of *Change Magazine*, Martha Kanter and Carol G. Schneider point out that the Obama administration in the United States of America is aiming to revive the civic commitment of American colleges and universities. Civics education transcends the boundaries of educational purpose and extends from the early years of schooling to college and university and beyond. Two reports point to the veracity of this commitment and the importance of civic education, *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracies Future* (2012) and *Advancing Civic Learning and Engagement in Democracy: A Roadmap and Call to Action* (2012). The first report emphasizes taking civic engagement to a higher level and making it of central importance to policy and planning at public colleges and universities. Even job preparation requires initiation into civic virtues. Civic education is a component of all training, including vocational and professional training. The second report is the response of the U.S. educational administration. The roadmap lays out substantive objectives and criteria to guide the future of educational policy and planning:

> Each generation must work to preserve the fundamental values and principles of its heritage. . . to narrow the gap between the ideals of this nation and the reality of the daily lives of its people; and to more fully realize the potential of our constitutional, democratic republic. We can emerge from this civic recession, but to do so will require a full-scale national investment from every level of government and every sector of society. (Quigley, 2012, p. xiii)

Owing to being intrinsically political and for being naturally embedded in virtually all of the most forceful components of public life in North America today, liberal education has been attacked for many reasons, especially since the turn to post-modernism, social constructionism, and relativism in the academic humanities (see Chapter Three). It has also been attacked politically along partisan lines as irrelevant, exclusionary, elitist and disconnected from the practical realities of life and work (Hanson, & Heath, 1998). Liberal education today is both highly politicized and highly criticized by almost everybody. It has become an outcast living on the margins of intellectual culture or the gadfly in the marketplace that Socrates once claimed to be.

As Paul Axelrod (2002) points out in *Values in Conflict*, the phrase "liberal education" now means whatever is in service to the dominant political and economic agendas of the day. Globalization and the marketplace are pressuring colleges and universities towards illiberal policies focused on economic competitiveness and efficiency. Professional, business, and technology programs are privileged at many North American colleges and universities. Professional and business programs are committed to bureaucratic criteria and instrumental aims that have no place for the universalist and idealist commitments of a liberal education. Professional, business, and technology programs simply do not mention fostering the Socratic spirit of critical inquiry into the general nature of the world and human experience. These programs often implicitly and unreflectively accept certain values and principles over others, and how these assumptions shape the cognitive and moral dimension of professionalism is still largely unresolved. Often, the bureaucratic and technical rationality of professional programs is directly antagonistic to the notion of a universal humanity, where instrumental reasoning seeks to determine the life possibilities of the student without taking into consideration the universal, historical, intellectual, and cultural significance of the university as an institution.

Clearly, our times involve massive doubt and skepticism over the value of liberal education, and this comes at a time when higher education can no longer assume easy justification, when North American colleges and universities are being called upon for accountability, and where financial crises threaten the existence of many institutions. The demand for instrumental training in skills that are directly related to labour market needs, the industrial labor requirements of the modern nation-state, and market forces all exert a profound gravity on the development of college and university infrastructure. The tradition of thought and ideas upon which the whole North American educational experiment were based are inseparable from the kind of intellectual, moral, civic, and social values that the universalist and idealist conception of liberal education advocates for. Writing liberal education into the missions and mandates of colleges and universities in North America is an attempt to direct the whole orchestra of the long range development of higher learning both locally and around the world.

4.3 LIBERAL EDUCATION AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Peter C. Emberley's (1996) *Zero Tolerance* is among the best critiques of university politics in Canada. The author pins the main problem of liberal education in the tense political relationship between what he calls the cultural left (p. 200-228) and the corporate right (p. 153-174). *Zero Tolerance* (1996) demonstrates that no program of liberal education is likely to be accepted or to gain wide support and mainstream acceptance. Politically motivated attempts to transform the mission and mandate of the university represent a tangential attack on liberal education and its universalist basis.

Emberley (1996) instructs us that the corporate right sees the university as a set of financial resources similar to any other to be efficiently and effectively managed and distributed. The university is to be made market-responsive and ruled by the "invisible hand;" cost-effectiveness is to be the only criterion capable of validly measuring program utility. The invisible hand of the market is treated by some as the only valid form of accountability and universities are seen as expensive and poorly managed in terms of the utilitarian ethics of bureaucracy. Some have proposed cost-effective means such as distance education, raising tuition fees and charging foreign students double fees, and strategically targeting research to areas of provincial and national economic concern. However, it should not be ignored that the problem of university

finance today is an intrinsically historical problem. The problems of today "result directly from the indiscriminate expansion of the 1960's, and the blame should fall on those who governed in the period from the 60's to the 80's" (Emberley, 1996, p. 160).

The bad advice during the era of the 60's to the 80's was that spending in education would fuel economic growth and wealth creation and that with more money flowing in more could be spent in the future to maintain colleges and universities. The university, as a result, has become a massive, bloated industry, suffering from the overblown education budgets of an earlier era (Emberley, 1996). In the reform movements of the 90's universities were increasingly framed for the public as a means for preparing knowledge workers for the labor market where all knowledge and skills are justified directly by reference to employment. The economic reforms of Canada's colleges and universities during the 90's saw the passing off of rising costs to students in the manner of increased tuition fees. The financial engineering of the senior administration has led to many deeply concerning student protests. In one example, Lord Axworthy, one of the main architects behind the transformation and change in Ontario's universities in the 1990's, was pelted with macaroni by a group of student protesters (Emberley, 1996, p. 165).

> What the corporate right does not recognize is the huge gap between our inner selves and the technological civilization it is building around us. It cannot see that behind the social disorder and widespread anomie is something more than just another technical problem that can be solved. Essential human experiences are being blunted and diverted into surrogate, but potentially lethal, satisfactions by unconditional faith in technological progress. (Emberley, 1996, p. 198)

We are all aware that massive shifts in education, college, and university government and administration are underway. Under the thin veil of normalcy a dark struggle for power and prestige is going on. The significant changes going on in North American colleges and universities today include new governing models and economic metrics such as "Model C":

> Model C works on the assumption that the university is a private corporation, free to develop according to its own mission. Like a corporation, it would maximize profits and be accountable to its shareholders. Funding would be provided on a contract-by-contract basis. Governments would identify the level of service they wished to purchase from the

> university in the form of teaching, research, and community service (Emberley, 1996, p. 169).

Model C has been criticized for creating a situation where competition rewards those who are already at the top of the decision making and authority structure and those in positions of privilege at the expense of the McStudents it exploits (Emberley, 1996). Engineering the university according to market logic, again, relies on the idea of the invisible hand rather than on a set of rules to guide educational development. In the whole nebulous ideology of market driven reform there is virtually no mention of liberal education, scholarly and intellectual culture, or the civic role of colleges and universities. The invisible hand points to a base materialistic egoism, where all choices and decisions about the world, and of the world, are driven by selfish, financial, fiduciary calculations. Selfishness cheapens the university mission and produces competing factions and rampant base personal ambition. A liberal educational culture is grounded in wholly different values. The role of the university is to provide a home to the best impulses of human imagination, creativity, culture, and ingenuity, and it is not to be framed as driven by supply and demand or input and output ratios (Emberley, 1996).

Exacerbating the issues of contemporary North American college and university reform and renewal are generational clashes between those who entered academic culture during the bloated budgets of the 60's and 80's and today's young generation. The present scheme involves shifting the burden of debt accumulated by what are now the senior administration and management to the generation of McStudents entering the higher learning today (Emberley, 1996). It is not moral, professional, ethical, or acceptable in any way to force the young generation to continue paying for the privilege and security of the senior leadership. The issue here represents a threat to national unity and identity, with the emerging class stratification leading to huge civic and social unrest and protest. If the issue of intergenerational clash is not met directly and confronted head on it may have the effect of crippling today's young people, not only economically and financially, but intellectually, culturally, socially, and morally. The loss of liberal education, I argue, will be a profound threat to our future and to the life chances of today's young people.

Market logic has a special antagonism with liberal education at the level of *a priori* values and pre-understood assumptions. Market logic, with its focus on immediate gratification, efficiency,

and economic responsiveness, represents a disguised attack on, and negation of, any idea of liberal education. All kinds of political agendas represent a negation of liberal education, which is essentially non-partisan, particularly in its universalist and idealist kind. Conflicting with the reforms of the corporate right and Governors such as Rick Scott are movements in the academic humanities, in philosophy, and the turn to relativism and post-modernism.

Stephen H. Balch (2005) points out in "Liberal Education and Civic Education for Our Time" that increasing emphasis on research specialization represents an abandonment of liberal education. The intersection of liberal education and research specialization, like the intersection with professional education, is a complex analytical and conceptual mess. Professional programs and research specialization are predicated on the fragmentation and the devolution of the university into disparate, fragmented, antagonistic faculties. As a result of the turn to a narrow focus on research specialization and the massive increase in business, technology, and professionally based programs, liberal education has declined, degrading the baccalaureate to the level of a marker of potential upward social class mobility.

4.4 ATTACKS ON UNIVERSALITY

Peter C. Emberley's (1996) cultural left is conflicting with the corporate right and its McStudent products. The left generally seeks to aim the university towards social welfare and egalitarian reform. Post-modernism (see Chapter Three), typically associated with the political left, represents a serious challenge to mainstream politics and it is tied together with wider social and political tensions between the parties and the organization of the estates and the people of North America. Post-modernism is written into the causes of our modern battles over academic and social status, it has been influential in America for decades, and while it has declined, it has left in its wake irresolvable problems and fundamental disagreements. Behind post-modernism is a political agenda driven by a relativistic philosophy that sees all sociability as a product of conflict and tensions and a struggle for power that pits all against all. Behind all the antagonism is the quest for continuous revolution. The struggle of all against all of liberal individualism is written into our national political life (Emberley, 1996).

Liberal education is theoretically and intellectually committed to universality, objectivity, rationality. Therefore, attacks on science are defacto attacks on liberal education, insofar as the

objectivity and rationality of the sciences is attacked. Paul R. Gross and Norman Levitt's (1994) *Higher Superstition* demonstrates that many of the attacks on science come from critics who have little actual knowledge of science and its means and ends. The authors of *Higher Superstition* (1994) critique the attacks that emanate from what they call the "academic left" (p. 2) - mostly humanists and social scientists - and their dislike of science. The academic left is hostile against the social structures that produce science as well as scientists themselves. Many of the attacks are directed towards the substantive knowledge of various fields of scientific inquiry and many reject the legacy of the Enlightenment, including Marxists, feminists, multiculturalists, and environmentalists:

> The traditional Marxist view that what we think of as science is really 'bourgeois' science, a superstructural manifestation of the capitalist order, recurs with predictable regularity, in its own right or refurbished as the doctrine of 'cultural constructivism.' The radical feminist view that science, like every other intellectual structure of modern society, is poisoned and corrupted by an ineradicable gender bias, is another vitally important element. An analogous accusation comes from multiculturalists, who view 'Western' science as inherently inaccurate and incomplete by virtue of its failure to incorporate the full range of cultural perspectives. A certain strain of radical environmentalism condemns science as embodying the instrumentalism and alienation from direct experience of nature which are the twin sources of an eventual (or imminent) ecological doomsday. (p. 5)

Ultimately, these attacks represent a threat to liberal education as well as the intellectual health and vibrancy of North American colleges and universities. There really is no central core from which the attacks emanate - the manner in which critiques of universality are approached are disparate and heterogeneous, for the most part. The attacks on objectivity, rationality, and universality are routinely a part of nearly all classroom instruction in North American colleges and universities (Gross & Levitt, 1994).

In Chapter Three (p. 43-55) of *Higher Superstition* (1998), Gross and Levitt distinguish between weak and strong forms of the doctrine known as cultural constructivism. In the weak form, it is acknowledged that all science is, in a sense, influenced by the social and cultural milieu in which it is pursued. In the strong form of cultural constructivism (what is also sometimes called

"social constructionism" (p. 45)), science and its commitment to objectivity and rational progress are regarded as a mere *discourse* and as a *practice* that is contextually relative and mostly arbitrary. In the strong form, any claim to universality is regarded as meaningless outside of the particular community in which it is bestowed with meaning. From here we descend to the position of absolute relativism where all worldviews are regarded as equally valid. The strong form criticized by Gross and Levitt (1998) is also among the mainstays of feminist doctrine. Often, social constructionism is a front for indoctrination into various ideological and political positions. The post-modernist, social constructionist, relativist vulgate dissolves any justification for liberal education.

Martin Anderson (1996) points out in *Imposters in the Temple* that the last generation of educators, particularly on the left, criticized the liberal education tradition as difficult, inappropriate, irrelevant, brutal, immoral, racist, and sexist. Politics, intellectual decay, the decline of academic freedom (and freedom of any kind), and political correctness all serve to damage and obscure the nature and purposes of liberal education and all play a role in the degradation of the university as an institution. At this time, formulating and defending a justification for liberal education is exceedingly difficult and requires a radical break with mainstream academic politics. Liberal education is one of the last bastions of resistance against attempts to harness the university to partisan aims.

Victor D. Hanson and John Heath (1998) argue in *Who Killed Homer?* that the higher educational institutions of today in the abandonment of the liberal education tradition have perhaps lost the reflexive basis of the intellectual, moral, and civic goods of a free and democratic society. The last generation of educators abandoned liberal education and fled to relativism, social constructionism, and post-modernism. Civic virtue and citizenship are implied in this problem. The attempt to unite us across our differences is civic and democratic in the highest sense. A focus on difference can only divide us through arbitrary, contextual distinctions. Those who attack liberal education as Eurocentric and phallocentric (Gross & Levitt, 1998) do not understand its values, its means, or its processes, or the knowledge and understanding at which it aims.

4.5 LIBERAL EDUCATION AS CIVIC EDUCATION

Liberal education was recently defined by Carol G. Schneider (2013) in "Practicing Liberal Education: Formative Themes in the Re-Invention of Liberal Learning" as

> A philosophy of education that empowers individuals, liberates the mind from ignorance, and cultivates social responsibility. Characterized by challenging encounters with important issues, and more a way of studying than specific content, liberal education can occur at all types of colleges and universities. (p. 4)

Liberal education in its civic sense, in the sense of Cicero's *artes liberales* in modern times, has often been used as a slogan and conflated with the liberal arts and general education. Again, the liberal arts are a specific set of disciplines in the humanities, the social sciences, and the sciences, that have their roots in the medieval *trivium* and *quadrivium* (see Chapter Two). General education is a broad foundation of knowledge spread across all disciplines that is shared among all college and university students. While liberal education in its civic sense certainly is related to both the liberal arts and general education, it is conceptually and analytically distinct from both (Schnieder, 2013).

Liberal education in its civic sense is closely aligned with Amy Gutman's (1999) notion of democratic education and is concerned mainly with the utilitarian social concern of producing responsible citizens. Any debate concerning education at all is intrinsically political and therefore intrinsically civic. Hirst's (1973) framework (see Chapter Three) calls into question two key points that are also relevant for the civic kind of liberal education: i. What subjects are included in the civic and democratic version of liberal education? and, ii. How much depth of knowledge and understanding is necessary for liberal education suited to democracy? To bring the problem into focus: Is patriotism necessary for responsible citizenship? What is the role of multiculturalism in educating responsible citizens? What constitutes a liberal education in a constitutional democracy? (Gutman, 1999).

While in the historical sense of the *humanitatis*, liberal education today might include subjects such as history, languages, philosophy, and religious studies, in its civic sense it might be characterized more by the philosophy of law, sociology, political science, and a thorough introduction to the nature, purposes, and structures of democratic institutions. Pronouncements

that these subjects and the ideals of justice and democracy that underlie them are obsolete and outmoded are damning for the civic kind liberal education (Schneider, 2013).

Civic and democratic education are made up of cognitive, social, and moral commitments. What kind of college or university curriculum does democratic citizenship entail? Colleges and universities certainly do play a role in training workers but being a worker means more than merely earning wages. It means participating in a system of concepts and meanings that imbue freedom, justice, and democracy with meaning, power, and vitality. Every generation must renew this commitment and come to accept certain civic, intellectual, and moral ideals if democracy is to survive and proliferate. The civic mode of liberal education is the intellectual and moral substance that animates democracy. Civic education is required to animate democracy and perpetuate North American democratic institutions (Schneider, 2011).

Young people today are bombarded with the message that education in any form is only relevant for the purposes of potential labor market gains. Anxiety over jobs and economic gains are definitive of the young generation. No emphasis is placed on the ideals of freedom, justice, or democracy that liberal society depends on. The best and freest society in the world is being intellectually and morally eroded at a time when exactly the opposite should be happening. In the wider picture the most vital component of a free and democratic society is the shared system of concepts and meanings that live in our colleges and universities and fuel the intellectual life of the nation. The community of inquirers of academic culture is the moral and intellectual core of liberal education that underlies almost all of its forms in terms of both the philosophical and oratorical ideals (see Chapter Two) (Schneider, 2012).

Living in a democratic society is like a habit or skill that requires initiation into concepts and meanings that form the horizon for the possibility of weighing evidence and making real political choices. Our shared world is one built around fundamental questions that are totally human - all too human. The process of initiation into citizenship defines the terms around which the whole struggle rages, of the good and the good life, and the natural human desire for wholeness and oneness. Each one of us confronts these question in a uniquely personal way, but these perennial questions have a universal significance and application. The civic kind of liberal education, with its basis in scientific, literary, and creative thought, provides initiation into a tradition of

erudition on these questions and the opportunity to deliberate them in the context of the liberal university in a shared community of free and equal people and in a situation of full and open communication (Schneider, 2013).

Liberal education in its civic sense, perhaps owing to the often confused, vague, and ambiguous terms in which the phrase is used, is experiencing tenuous and difficult times. There are growing concerns over quality, accountability, and the expectation of a university education at all (Schneider, 2009). Liberal education is often characterized pejoratively by those who think that the demands of market logic have no place for a civically and democratically minded education that emphasizes the intellectual and moral demands of citizenship over the training of workers. The harshest critics today argue that the civic or democratic kind of liberal education is not only irrelevant but actually counterproductive to an educated and efficient "workforce of tomorrow." The ideals of intellectual, moral, and political growth that characterize liberal education are seen as irrelevant to the production of a compliant, productive, and efficient workforce. Universities and colleges today are embracing a utilitarian and economically minded framework modelled after management practices borrowed from the world of business. Many policy leaders seek to eviscerate liberal education for the sake of workforce development (Schneider, 2013).

Attacks on liberal education are felt deeply in our American academic humanities departments. The disciplines of the humanities and social sciences are now seen as largely irrelevant by the majority of citizens. Universities and colleges are being instrumentalized to the demands of market logic and to meet the labor and manpower demands of industry. The loss of consciousness of history, philosophy, and values associated with the decline of liberal education has contributed to the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of the North American campus and of American society generally. Without the consciousness necessary to carry on and renew the ideals of a free and democratic society the knowledge and skills that made the liberal university a genuine possibility will surly decline (Schneider, 2013).

It should be obvious that a democratic society requires generational renewal to survive. The intellectual, political, and moral ideals of the civic kind of liberal education are rooted in a shared framework of concepts and meanings that live in our colleges and universities. The "workforce of tomorrow" will require more than a narrow education defined along market lines and

economic imperatives. Workers also require initiation into the knowledge and ideas required for full participation in life and society. Democracy rests on a commitment to the development of rationality through argument and debate as a society where people use reason in a high degree and argument to weigh evidence and solve problems. A nation is built on more than economic competitiveness and market gains (Schneider, 2011).

Science has a tense relationship with the civic framework for liberal education and the extent to which science is implied in citizenship is ambiguous. Scientific specialization and democratic education are at odds. They are often grounded in opposed and contradictory ways of seeing the world. Liberal education does include science but would be characterized by something such as the philosophy of science rather than narrow specialization in a particular branch of science, such as theoretical physics. The purpose of science education in a civic education framework is to acquire the methodological acumen to benefit from tradition while developing ways to question and improve upon existing views (Koertge, 1998). In its civic sense it is unclear how science would be structured and included and how it would be taught and assessed.

Canada and the U.S. today face a host of insurmountable challenges. Cultures are getting more diverse, the economy is painfully difficult, society includes special interest groups competing for influence, social unrest and protest continues to arise here and there, and our democratic politics garner less confidence and respect, particularly from the younger generation. The world still suffers from poverty, war, terrorism, fear and anxiety at our collective and uncertain future. A civic kind of liberal education can give young people the real possibility to seriously deliberate life choices and political ideas, and it can act as a catalyst for aiding young people in the struggle out of the existential despair and the moral and intellectual ennui and malaise of North American society today (Schneider, 2013).

4.6 LIBERAL EDUCATION AS DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

In the North American context, liberal education is most commonly associated with democratic education, which is itself a modification of the civic ideal of the *artes liberales* tradition. For those who sought to include democratic education in the college and university mission a democratically organized university is centered around certain definitive criteria: i. the first investigation of a democratic university ought to be itself, its own practices and processes of

doing research and generating theory - its own commitment to research, teaching, and service, ii. a deep commitment to serving humanity, and iii. of accessibility for all (Wegener, 1978). A democratic institution is inherently aimed at the processes that expand and enrich the individual human life in its civic, democratic, and political dimensions:

> Democratically meant two things: first, the opportunity to participate in the enterprise of creating and enlarging an intellectual culture was to be open to all who could contribute to it by the standards of the enterprise itself, not by irrelevant criteria of birth, race, creed, or 'alien' tradition; second, the fruits that the enterprise would yield, in every sense for every activity, would be available to the society as a whole, rather than to some members of it only. In other words, universities and the intellectual community were to be the servants of the community at large (Wegener, 1978, p. 107).

As Meira Levinson (1999) points out for us in *The Demands of Liberal Education* the aims of education are often determined by extrinsic political forces rather than the logic intrinsic to the concept of "education" itself and in a liberal state the aims of education are liberal. To know that the aim of "education" is "to educate" is not enough to claim that the goals of education are intrinsic to the concept itself; "contrary to the assertions made by the philosopher of education R.S. Peters, the aims of education are not internal to or given by the concept of 'education' itself" (Levinson, 1999, p. 3).

The ends of education are determined by political structures extrinsic to the concept. In a liberal state, liberal principles (e.g., individual liberty, private property, free trade, respect for persons, and peace) set the tone of education. Liberal principles guide both the ends and processes of the civic kind of liberal education in a democratic society. Liberal education is both intrinsically moral and intrinsically political; "the politics of education provision in a liberal state should be guided by liberal principles" (Levinson, 1999, p. 4).

The civic justification for liberal education is that it feeds a vibrant and democratic society. Living in a democratic society is a skill or capacity acquired through initiation. Democratically minded education seems necessary to *consciously* (Gutman, 1999) reproduce the conditions of a democratic society, although the political regime of democracy is not implicated in the intrinsic, formal logic of the concept "education" either. Democracy is the legacy of a Western philosophic

tradition that has been transmitted generationally and forms the basis of both a cognitive perspective and a way of life. However, democracy does not produce itself. It needs to be produced and re-produced through liberal and civic education (Schneider, 2013).

Liberal education has historically intended to cultivate knowledge, skills, imagination, and creativity. These qualities are developed through initiation into a shared stock of cultural knowledge and into the intellectual and moral criteria of citizenship, exemplified by the civic and political dimensions of liberal education. The ability to act ethically, to justify reasons for action, and to recognize values are all key to the continuation of a vibrant democracy. With the decline of liberal education and its intellectual, moral, and political ideals, the very intellectual and moral substance of humanity so vital to a vibrant democracy will also decline. Democracy may not be able to survive the decline of liberal educational ideals (Schneider, 2013).

The civic, intellectual, and moral benefits of liberal education seem eminently self-evident. To think clearly, to examine thoroughly, and to judge carefully are all intrinsically valuable cognitive qualities to cultivate. Underlying the civic basis of liberal education is the premise of a social contract between free and equal people grounded in universalizable values and precepts (i.e., the general qualities of rationality required by all citizens to seriously deliberate about political choices). The liberal values associated with democratic education are the ground that mark out the possibilities of what subjects can be included and the depth and rigor with which these subjects should be pursued.

The ideal of individual liberty is a moral endeavour that exerts significant influence on education in Canada and the U.S. Citizens in a liberal state are necessarily committed to individual liberty as a foundational value. In terms of liberalism, liberty brings the individual into dialectical conflict with the state. Education is the vital space where the dialectical relationship of the individual with the social plays out. The dialectic between the individual and the state is most pronounced in the educational structure where the political ideal of autonomy is practiced and cultivated. For Levinson (1999), the structures and aims of the civic version of liberal education depend upon the value of autonomy and individual liberty:

> I simply argue that liberal principles depend for their justification on an appeal to the value of individual autonomy, and that this justification must also therefore guide the development of a liberal theory of education (Levinson, 1999, p. 6).

If the extrinsic political demand on liberal education is autonomy for the sake of responsible citizenship, and for the sake of democracy, then this, like all educational aims and processes, is intrinsically moral and aimed at universality. Democratic life has moral demands and universities are specially well suited to facilitating the cognitive and moral requirements of a democratic state. As institutions that produce and facilitate democratic virtues, universities tend to be sanctuaries against attempts to impose controls on the creation and proliferation of ideas that might be unpopular (Gutman, 1999).

Democracy hinges on rationality and on using discussion and debate to weigh evidence and make judgments, and these are cognitive and social requirements that take intellectual training and socialization. The special home where this skill is cultivated and practiced is the university. The cognitive and social process of debate and discussion produce the powers of autonomy, responsibility, and accountability. They are the virtues made up of the knowledge and skills practiced by the responsible citizen. Liberal education in its civic kind involves a pluralistic conception of the university where young people are introduced to the widest array of possible conceptions of the good, and the good life, and where the process of teaching and learning for the sake of autonomy is practiced. Democratic citizenship has cognitive, social, and moral demands. The civic kind of liberal education is aimed at post-secondary institutions such as colleges and universities, not primary and secondary schools, and the development in colleges and universities implies a broad range of content and a deep level of mastery (Gutman, 1999).

Each of the subjects covered by the civic kind of liberal education is subdivisible. The philosophy of law, for instance, as an example of something that might be included in a civics curriculum, asks the basic universalist question "What is law?" The study of law can be differentiated into the study of things such as natural law, legal positivism, legal realism, legal interpretivism, utilitarianism, deontology, and would be motivated by philosophical approaches to legal problem solving. As a purely pragmatic point it is worth noting that citizenship education is subdivisible like any subject, and it requires philosophy as a necessary condition to justify its

scope and make arguments concerning its validity as a field and for why some ends are more desirable than others.

4.7 CIVIC EDUCATION AND IDEALISM

James O. Freedman's (1996) in *Idealism and Liberal Education*, (a book that reflects his experience as president of the University of Iowa from 1982 to 1987, and as president of Dartmouth College since 1987, and that consists mainly of his many speeches delivered at commencements and convocation exercises), writes that liberal education with its special commitment to the most enduring achievements of Western and Eastern civilization prepares students for our unforeseeable future through acquainting them with the cultural achievements of the past. Liberal education represents the attempt to shape the long term future of human destiny and our life on this earth and to question and impose order upon the experience of being human:

> A liberal education invites students to explore the ideal of being human - the drama of discovering the darker side of the self; the responsibility of imposing meaning on one's life and one's society; the challenge of transcending the ambiguity-entangled counsel of arrogance and modesty, egotism and altruism, emotion and reason, opportunism and loyalty, individualism and conformity. (Freedman, 1996, p. 2)

In our times, where the political, social, and moral spaces that divide us on issues of equality, science, faith, tradition, and progress are far greater than what little common ground we can find, Freedman's (1996) idealistic conception of liberal education is more important than ever. The task of preparing young people for the future is an intrinsically political and civic, and also intrinsically idealistic, enterprise. Such an education transforms the whole realm of the merely human and should transform students in every segment of their being by infusing them with ideas that have a magnificent, resplendent, transcendent power.

Liberal education with its universalist basis remains unconventional and left out of mainstream academic administration and policy planning. It is unfashionable in its emphasis on values that get past the mere moment and in its uneasiness with emotionally gratifying answers. The ambiguities lead to intractable problems with a universal significance, and, at its basis, the

human condition has intrinsic principles that underlie the lives of individuals and communities (Freedom, 1981).

Political analysis has a special significance for science and has the value-added criterion, or the utility, of explaining science to the citizens of free and democratic societies around the globe. Advancing science is a self-evident good and a positive end because it serves the *a priori* conditions of human nature. The tension between the intellectual activity of literary intellectuals and scientists is longstanding[13]. Liberal education is a bridge between the massive range of human endeavors and the basic principles of knowledge, basic principles that are required to organize reality into intelligible structures, and that generate the criteria for the cognitive, intellectual, and moral activity that binds us as a species, and with the entwinement of the university with the civic soul of the nation:

> Just as a poet seeks to express and understand the world by imposing an order on words, just as a painter seeks to convey a vision of reality by imposing an order on light and color and form, just as an historian seeks to record and explain the past by imposing an order on developments and events, so a scientist seeks to explain the riddles of the natural world invoking intellect and imagination to impose an order on the disparate facts and phenomena that he or she observes. (Freedman, 1996, p. 79)

The problem of the kind of critical consciousness pointed to by James O. Freedman originates in Socrates and in the Delphic precept to "know thyself." In the introduction to the book *Civic Education and Culture*, Bradley C. S. Watson (2005) claims that in liberal education the passions are tamed and the self is made social. Its essence, civically, is a process of socialization into what it means to be human and the desire to go beyond oneself in the widest possible sense. The civic kind of liberal education represents the desire to "ask the questions that cut across time and place" (London, 2010, p. 325).

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[13] C.P. Snow (1959) Rede Lecture *The Two Cultures*. Science represents one of the greatest and most magnificent achievements of human culture. It is an achievement of the mind of the highest activity, rigor, complexity, and beauty.

Ultimately, the problem of civic virtue is a philosophical problem. Becoming liberally educated means becoming civically engaged but it also means a habit or comportment of thought, a cognitive trait of remaining on the outside of history, of questioning the very nature of history, historicity, and time itself, of the ultimate mysteries of human life and consciousness, the unanswerable and intractable questions and perplexities of human nature and the human condition that underlie both poetry and mathematics, both philosophy and science. There are no universal rules to govern life and society in modernity, progressivism and technological advance have dissolved tradition, in dissolving tradition we have dissolved the justification of liberal education and left our colleges and universities to flounder in confusion, error, disarray, and decay.

Inquiring into the nature of universal humanity is not purely scientific and is not purely philosophical. Perhaps the distinguishing characteristic of liberal education is that it represents an unsolvable problem and in being unsolvable is the universal basis of all problems. The most serious challenges to universality have come from post-modernism, social-constructionism, and relativism (see Chapter Three) which are the product of mainly political imperatives. Relativism dissolves the civic justification that all students require initiation into general skills such as literacy and numeracy because it annihilates even the claim of generalizable capacities at all or of traits and characteristics that are generalizable past the uniqueness of the individual subject. The trend towards post-modernism and relativism pose a serious challenge to the aims of liberal educators. The perspective of universality regards human existence as a rational whole whose various forces intersect and reciprocate, becoming attuned, in the processes of teaching and learning, to the nature of external reality (Emberley, 1994).

Liberal education remains a unique and atypical attempt to direct the long range life and development of both education and civilization. Politically, the practice of liberal education is aimed at certain universal patterns of thought and action required for full and active participation in civic life, and sets of values and ideas that are held to be of universal and transcendent significance. Liberal education grounded in the universalist thesis represents the ongoing and never-ending attempt to found a political community based in phenomena that are more profound than mere administrative rank and salaries. Liberal education is intrinsically political precisely at the intersection where it coincides with the social and civic significance of the North

American college and university mission. What is often missed in political and civic debates over liberal education is that the argument and controversy is over the nature of human life as such.

North American colleges and universities today are facing challenges that are not going to go away; neither are our civic and economic shortfalls. The idealist claim for universality is a pedagogical ideal to guide teaching and research. It is the only thing I know of that can mediate all competing concerns while producing a rational, democratic, liberal culture. Arguments over the missions and mandates of North American colleges and universities are toxic and poisonous, they have corrupted the halls of ivy, and are engineering the intellectual, cultural, and moral course of the nation. New ways forward need to be found for advocates of liberal education, and perhaps our best option is, as I will suggest in the next section, supported by Lee Shulman (2004), to make liberal education into a profession that adheres to the criteria and general structure of professionalism.

4.8 LIBERAL AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Any idea of liberal education is at odds with the demand for professional training with immediate labor market relevance. The universalist conception of liberal education in particular, committed to reflecting on the whole breadth of human culture, is not for the sake of a profession, although it is part of all professions. What we are discussing here is the intellectual and moral soul of the North American college and university and of humanity generally, and how that humanity ought to be educated, trained, and so forth. Purely professional training and an emphasis on immediate financial gain is too narrow a mandate for educational development. The tension between any idea of liberal education and business-professional education, some have argued, has produced a "bimodal culture[14]" (Lewis & Liegler, 1998, p. 48). Professors and teachers in the academic humanities often have a negative attitude toward professional schools:

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[14] To clarify what is meant by "bimodal culture," see C.P. Snow's famous 1959 Rede Lecture, *The Two Cultures*.

> *Liberal arts* is said to comprise knowledge for the sake of knowledge. It is an education that prepares students to live. Its quality of life deals with ideas, not monetary gain. On the other hand, *professional studies* is said to involve knowledge for the sake of occupation. It is a vocational education that prepares students to make a living. Its quality of life deals with monetary gain, not ideas. (Lewis & Liegler, 1998, p. 49)

The utilitarian and pragmatic criteria of developing North American colleges and universities according to a mandate that arises out of market needs and immediate fiduciary demands is producing a gulf and a separation between the two cultures of liberal and professional learning. While there are no easy answers or simple solutions, our task is to demonstrate where and how liberal and professional education are commensurable, where they are not, and what intersections bind the two frameworks theoretically, conceptually, and analytically together. For example, scientific specialization in a single branch of knowledge is already involved in liberal education. It is freeing in that it gives the individual command over a speciality, but it is imprisoning, by imposing limits on the capacity for reflection on the whole of knowledge (Lewis & Liegler, 1998).

Professional and liberal education are both intended to cultivate certain intellectual, cognitive, and civic virtues. With its justification in seeking a shared basis for experience and as general inquiry into the universalist phenomena of being human, liberal education shares many of the outcomes of professional training, such as critical appreciation, critical thinking, and critical awareness (see Appendix A). The features attributed to liberal education and to professional education, assuming professionalism involves some higher order thinking and cognitive abilities or civic, social, and moral virtues, are not mutually exclusive:

> An educated professional requires four aspects of knowledge specific to their chosen field: (1) conceptual understanding of theoretical foundations; (2) technical skills; (3) the ability to integrate theory with practice; and (4) career marketability. (Lewis & Liegler, 1998, p. 54)

Lee S. Shulman (2004) in "Professing the Liberal Arts" argues that one of the great challenges facing liberal education in our modern climate is that it is not professional enough. People who espouse some notion of liberal education are often suspicious of professional and vocational

education. Liberal learning is defined precisely as education for its own sake and not for the sake of a profession. The whole purpose of Shulman's discussion in "Professing the Liberal Arts" is to show that the tension between liberal and professional education is flawed and that liberal education needs to become more professional, and vice versa. Drawing on Steven Brint, Shulman (2004) lays out the six characteristics of professional learning

> 1. Service: Serving others using bodies of knowledge according to a moral ideal
>
> 2. Understanding: That theory changes according to transformations in the knowledge domain
>
> 3. Practice: The enacting of a knowledge base of the field.
>
> 4. Judgment: The middle term between theory and practice, between knowledge and application.
>
> 5. Learning: Acquiring knowledge through experience, both for the individual practitioner and for the entire community of practice.
>
> 6. Community: Professions are public and communal groups of experts who possess the knowledge to critically evaluate their own field. (p. 549-551)

The term "profession" implies criteria and logical requirements that include, but are not limited to, skilled application of a broad and deep understanding of a particular area of knowledge guided by a moral ideal of service and in a community of fellow inquirers. In reference to the second point in particular, understanding includes both a broad acquaintanceship with the area of knowledge of any field and a grasp of both the theoretical and practical reality of the profession. Liberal education and professional education are at odds and they need to be bridged for the greater beauty and harmony of all. In the confusing and often contradictory relations of theory and practice, and mind and reality, Shulman (2004) shows us liberal education faces three challenges:

> i. the loss of learning (amnesia): Students often forget the theory and knowledge acquired at a college or university, a problem more pronounced in liberal education.

ii. the illusion of learning (illusory understanding): Ostensibly deep knowledge may be based on glib verbal understanding and superficial acquaintance, with no substantive comprehension or a misconception of theories.

iii. the uselessness of learning (inert ideas): Ideas may be received by the mind without being used or tested and without being combined with other knowledge or theory.

Shulman (2004) argues that to defeat the chimeras and hobgoblins of liberal learning requires that we make it more like a profession. He offers a few principles to make liberal education more like a profession, namely activity, reflection, collaboration, passion, and community (p. 558). Generalizing across these principles, the substance of professionalizing liberal education consists in the demanding exercise of participating in an energetic community of inquirers, through working in discussion, argument, and debate, in social interaction and the company of others. Through a pedagogy of active discussion, debate, and dialogue, a caste of mind is produced that is critical of itself and the professional community to which it belongs. Shulman ultimately advocates for the use and examination of case study (p. 561-565), however, the issue here merely reflects the longstanding liberal educational commitment to the integrity of teaching and learning that has characterized the transmission of liberal education since Socrates. One of the challenges facing liberal education today is the gulf between liberal and professional learning, and the gulf between the two domains needs to be bridged.

4.9 CONCLUSION

Chapter Four situates liberal education in the contemporary political and economic climate. Several political forces are serving to obscure liberal education and its special idealist and universalist justification. The issues include both the attempts to politically engineer the college and university according to criteria drawn from the world of professional business and management, and movements in philosophy in the American academic humanities. Today, liberal education is gravitating towards the civic ideal, towards preparation for responsible citizenship and full participation in democracy and the intellectual life of the nation. Finally, as a curative to the political problems facing liberal education, Chapter Four offers a synthesis of liberal and professional learning. The cultures of liberal education and professional education are

at odds and need to be bridged in the academic humanities. Doing so represents an attempt to include some facet of liberal education in the college and university mission.

CHAPTER FIVE: A THEORY OF LIBERAL EDUCATION

> Facts can be relayed, feeling-states can be conveyed, and skills can be demonstrated by computers and video, but nothing can replicate the contact of human beings. (Emberley, 1996, p. 188)

The preceding chapters have stated the goal of including liberal education in the missions and mandates of North American colleges and universities. The problem of liberal education is approached in three ways: historically, philosophically, and politically. The intention of advancing liberal education along these fronts is to generate the ideas and theories that can fuel policy thinking. Theory influences policy at the level of college and university work by affecting the considerations and debates of decision makers. The argument is part of an ongoing conversation over the future of college and university education in North America and around the world. Universality is a pedagogical ideal and a way of framing the processes of teaching and learning; it is a way of making a special commitment to reflecting on the whole of knowledge. The ends of universality, it is argued, are already implied in all teaching and in all research.

The historical analysis in Chapter Two shows that any narrative of liberal education remains partial and incomplete. With its basis in Greek and Roman classics, and in terms of its medieval historical developments, there is simply too much scope for simple generalizations. Debates about liberal education begin with Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (Hanson & Heath, 1998) and continue to today, calling into question fundamental problems in all the main branches of philosophy - that is, in epistemology, ontology, ethics, and axiology. The influence of liberal education in the North American system is extraordinarily complex and the problem is further complicated by recent political, economic, and social developments; more needs to be done to understand liberal education in the North American context. The historical narrative ends with recent developments in philosophy, in post-modernism and relativism, and the notion that the problem of liberal education today is inseparable from tensions caused by competing paradigms.

Peters and Hirst (see Chapter Three) represent a major attempt to establish liberal education philosophically as a part of the necessary logical conditions of the concepts of education and knowledge themselves. Peters sought to define liberal education as part of the intrinsic, formal, logically necessary criteria of the concept "education." Hirst sought to separate liberal education

from its basis in classical realism and to establish it according to an academic rationalist framework. Ultimately, Peters and Hirst failed in their attempt to establish a new justification for liberal education and neither could have foreseen the transformations in philosophy brought on by the developments of post-modernism.

Post-modernism rejects the Enlightenment values of philosophy and science, its whole purpose being antagonistic towards claims with a totalizing character (e.g., in mathematics, that formal analytical notations demonstrate universal attributes of reality). Debates here are often scholastic in nature and in their language and arguments. The rejection of the objectivity and rationality of the sciences represents the rejection of the claim to a universal basis of reality. More needs to be done to establish the universalist and idealist claims of liberal education according to rational science and objective evidence.

Chapter Four describes the economic and political climate that debates over liberal education revolve around today. Recent political and economic tensions are causing people to turn away from liberal education and embrace a mandate of technical and professional training to serve the demands of national industry. Politically, universities today have taken on a corporate model of governance borrowed from the world of business and management. The values of the corporate model of governance and its utilitarian ethics of efficiency and economy negate liberal education; it represents a rejection of the special language of universality.

Movements in philosophy in the American academic humanities represent another major challenge to liberal education in their rejection of any explanation of life and work that purports to be universal in scope. Perhaps owing to competing partisan concerns the turn liberal education is taking today is civic and towards the oratorical and rhetorical ideal (see Chapter Two) aimed at civic education and preparation for democratic citizenship. Civic and democratic education represent a turn to the oratorical ideal but liberal education must remain committed to serving a universal humanity. It is an intrinsically idealist enterprise. To ameliorate the theoretical and political tensions over liberal education Chapter Four advocates for professionalizing liberal learning or developing liberal arts institutions according to the values and criteria of professionalism.

As an idea to drive policy development in North American colleges and universities, liberal education in its idealist and universalist sense - framed in terms of the development of objectivity and rationality as values that are universal in scope - represents the best that has been achieved. Any explanation is complicated by perplexities that arise out of the historical, philosophical, and political analysis, but the idealist kind of liberal education is one committed to directing the long range course of development for colleges and universities in North America and the whole future of human destiny. The bases of liberal education are the questions and values that cut across our differences, that unite us as a community of inquirers, as citizens that love freedom, justice, and virtue, and the qualities and capacities that unite human beings as a species. Universality and idealism are two sides to the same idea; each side informs the other, and both are necessary requirements for liberal education.

Universality is best characterized by objectivity and rationality but these features are framed in idealist terms as the ongoing quest for wholeness and oneness. Universality serves as a pedagogical and ethical ideal that transcends the boundaries of philosophy and science and of liberal and professional learning. The universality and idealism of liberal education will be indispensable for the future of North American colleges and universities.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH SPECIALIZATION

There is no simple answer to easing the integration of liberal education and the pragmatic demands of professional training and scientific research specialization. The problem might be framed: What is the value of education if it does not contribute to a job and a career? What value is a career without the full and rich experience of an individual human life? (Wegener, 1978). How can liberal education be integrated into the mission and scope of North American colleges and universities? How can it be integrated with science and professional education? The task of reconfiguring the university mission along these lines is foremost a philosophical problem. *Primarily, the aim must be unifying the fragmentary experience of colleges and universities according to the meta-principle of universality.* While universality rings strangely in our ears it remains the all-important task of uniting the species through firing the transcendent bond that bridges each person with all others.

Ameliorating liberal and professional education is possible because the two cultures overlap at a variety of points of intersection both in terms of the knowledge they pursue and the values they espouse. Synthesizing the cultures of science, liberal, and professional education must begin at the conceptual and idealist level of pure theory because it exists nowhere in practice today. Collaboration in areas of overlapping knowledge and values and between different specialists and scholars is the substance of liberal education. The kind of intellect required must enter into inquiry into the nature of the universe and be committed to teaching the universe.

Students at North American colleges and universities have a special liberal educational heritage that is unique to our cultural circumstances and context. One of the problems that liberal education must confront is the genesis of a unique North American ideal peculiar to our special circumstances and in our present context and climate. It is the essential task of liberal education to interpret and remake the world, to encounter the fundamental problems of human life and community in a radically intellectual and moral way. The university is the special site reserved specifically for this process. Universities are the organizing educational engines of tomorrow and the base upon which the future of the nation is built.

Management science, for example, is built on utilitarianism and progressivism that assumes the criteria of utility, efficiency, and productivity fulfills both the economy and also acts as the ultimate fulfillment of human nature (Embelery, 1996). If good management is the ability to judge correctly in diverse circumstances then liberal education is already assumed and implied in it. Individual uniqueness, even for the individuality, autonomy, and creativity of the business manager, are part of a universal nature. Attentiveness to the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of human beings alerts us to the intellectual and moral depths of our own person. The university mission ought to reflect the universalist understanding and awaken us to the calling of serving the hearts and minds of the community and a wider humanity.

Research specialization poses a perplexing problem for liberal education. High levels of specialization cause researchers to drift away from the lasting, fundamental, perennial, timeless questions that drive the enterprise of the liberal educator. Specialization itself runs counter to both liberal education and democracy. It restricts the inquirer into a narrow branch of knowledge without making any reference to the whole (Wegener, 1978). Even science needs to be

committed to the intellectual and moral ideals of liberal education. A North American version of liberal education will need to synthesize the diverse and seemingly contradictory phenomena of science, democracy, and professional education.

Liberal education according to the notion of universality represents an embracing of the continuity of the species with the inevitable mortality of the individual life. The work of the liberal educator is to speak out across the generations and to study the most pressing and essential problems of human nature. The substance of such an education are the books at the *libris* (Freedman, 1996) (debates about what books ought to be included, and what constitutes a Great Book, is longstanding, (Bloom, 1987)). The library, where the intellectual riches of the university resides, is the temple of liberal education. Books wake us up to the complexity and inherent ambiguity of human life and provoke us to ask the searching questions intrinsic to what it means to be human. Being in conversation with other minds through books is a transcendent moment in our intellectual, moral, and emotional lives. Books provide us with the resources to cope with the moments of our most desperate despair as well as with the moments of our highest nobility and dignity. The library at the college or university - the *libris* - with its mass of materials is the temple of a regime committed to liberal education. The library represents the intellectual soul of the university as an institution (Freedman, 1996).

The processes of teaching and learning framed in the universalist conception of liberal education is intrinsically moral, aimed at uniting each member of the community with all others. No one is ever alone because our lives are only defined by our relationships with other people. Colleges and universities end up being a magnet for all of the most dire problems; they respond to, and are in a dialectical relationship with, the wider culture; a conversation takes place among and within them, ideas give universities harmony and form, the theory the institution produces fuels us and our intellectual and civic culture. The life of our campuses shape the civic future of the nation.

Liberal education is, then, the slow and sober work towards examining and explaining the most pressing problems of human life and community, those fundamental questions that are universal in scope, and totally human - all too human: Who am I? Why I am here? What is just? What is virtuous? Even in professional education and business management these intractable questions

remain. The crisis of liberal education is the same crisis faced by every sector of the economy, it is the crisis of human nature itself and all those who seek to influence and shape it.

UNIVERSALITY AND IDEALISM

The intractable problem for liberal education is between relativism and idealism. Relativism is a denial of even the possibility of shared, general, universal, a priori values. The whole basis of relativism is anti-idealism and anti-universality. There is no denying that society is experiencing a breakdown in moral order and civic virtue and the university plays a role in this phenomenon. As an ideal to guide educational policy development at colleges and universities across Canada and the United States of America a turn is needed to a special kind of liberal education committed to idealism and universality. The implications of the universality ideal are complex: How can educational institutions be guided by such an ideal? How can the university teach the whole universe? As Wegener (1978) pointed to in his historical revision of liberal education, "The true University is the centre of thought on every problem connected with human life and work, and the first obligation resting upon the individual members which compose it is that of research and investigation" (p. 37). The college or university guided by the notion of universality is a special and atypical kind of community committed to an intellectual and moral ideal of service to humanity.

The ontology underlying the claim to universality is that there is *the* world - we all formulate our problems and goals, and experience pleasures and pains, in the same world. Liberal education is, then, the kind of education involved in becoming reflectively aware of the shared world of language, communication, and thought we all inhabit, in the context of the universal significance of all phenomena. It is to come to see the universal or transcendent significance of the individual human life, or to perceive the universal person through the particular individual, that liberal education aims at. Implied in the problem of universality is an ethical paradox of the first magnitude: How does the individual mind and individual world take shape and evolve according to the general nature of human life and a general humanity?

A radical transformation is implied in the question of transcendence. The common conditions of all human activity (e.g., the underlying conceptual, intellectual, and theoretical basis of diverse activities and phenomena) is the conceptual ground of our search for universality. The criteria

that distinguishes liberal education are structured and systematic, rational, objective, reflective, and committed to the wider goal of the improvement of the human condition. Through the connection of the individual human life with the totality of all human lives a state of harmony and caste of mind is produced and the transcendent nature of human life is disclosed. For example, if we perceive our moment right here and now not as any particular moment but as the perpetual and universal moment of all moments, we approach something like the disclosure of universality.

The university represents the organization of universal knowledge and the conduit of intellectual culture and liberal education is its animating force. The essential task of the university is the teaching of the universe. As an institution the university has a special relationship to the world. However, it seems ridiculous to demand that the university reflect the entire scope of human experience and work. What would be required is a new kind of institution that reconfigures and supersedes the present North American context, one that exists in a huge, complex mass of activity and that is immense in its intellectual energy and collaboration. Perhaps the best approach to such an institution is to reduce all subjects to the teaching of philosophy - to a universal discipline or faculty that accommodates all data, subsumes all inquiry, and functions as the fulcrum of intellectual life.

The claim to universality is a way of putting into words the ineffable human longing for wholeness, the same natural longing we all have for a fair society and a just political order. The new justification for liberal education - universality - is to serve as the basis for inclusion of the idea of liberal education in the construction of college and university missions and mandates in North America. The interests embodied here were once called the *trivium* and *quadrivium* and they represented values intended to be universal in scope that arose out of the general nature of life and work itself. The whole project revolves around the articulation of human nature and its special concern with justice and dignity.

The place where essential values are created and renewed, the temple of liberal, intellectual, moral, and professional culture - the university - is besieged by change, by the winds of different competing visions and orthodoxies, and the factionalism and fragmentation brought on by the demand for myopic research specialization. The idealist conception of liberal education is rarely,

if ever, mentioned. What is the philosophical purpose of education if it is not to unite us across our differences, to unite human beings with their world and with each other, with the community, the city, the whole cosmopolitan society of citizenship in, and fraternity with, humanity? (Emberley, 1996).

The idea of liberal education reaches out to us across the centuries, across nations and languages, through the whole dramatic and tragic tale of life on this planet. It speaks to us about ourselves, our nature, and the values that bind us as a people, as a community of inquirers, and as a nation of citizens who love freedom, liberty and justice. The substantive question is essentially what curriculum, what course of studies, what suite of data and assessment procedures, what testing mechanisms can do justice to liberal education? Any attempt to formulate a substantive context to the formal reality of liberal education is going to be simply another version or configuration of the arts, of the liberal arts, of the same fundamental organization of knowledge embodied in the basic study of language, music, mathematics, and poetry.

The liberal arts themselves represent the attempt to unite mathematics and poetry with the human longing for wholeness and holism. A North American version of liberal education must be committed to uniting poetry and mathematics in rebellion against both modernity and post-modernity. However, it is more than merely retrieving classical authors such as Plato or Cicero (as in renaissance humanism); it is more than merely studying Goethe's *Faust* (1808). Pedagogically, it represents an ideal of a shared humanity embedded in the *a priori* nature of human community itself. Any justification for liberal education arises out of the ambiguous nature of human life and serves the nature of human life as a harmonious and unified whole.

Some who have defended liberal education, such as Peter C. Emberley (1994,1996), sought to do so by reviving the noblest heritage of the Hegelian philosophy, something that influenced the founders of Canada's educational establishment. He means, like Kimball (1986), that liberal education represents a perpetual historical process, an ongoing dialectical conversation of participation in pure theory and pure being. The universalist justification claims objectivity and rationality as its basis as the accretion of a special and atypical tradition of thought and erudition.

Universality is a special commitment to harmonizing groups across diverse identities and differences. The phenomena we are aiming at is elusive because it is based in the underlying

structure of all our dissonance and contradictions. The reason why no course of liberal education can be agreed on is that written into the idea itself is perpetual debate and endless argument, the endless arguments in philosophy and science, around which the future of our educational institutions and our whole civilization revolve. As Emberley (1996) writes in *Bankrupt Education,* "The debate over liberal education goes on *sub species aeternitatis*" (p. 62).

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

The moment of self-knowledge - the kind of self-knowledge pointed to by Socrates when he exhorts us to "know thyself" - is the distinguishing feature of a liberal education[15]. Thinking at the level of universal human nature is the formal logical requirement that distinguishes liberal education from other forms of education but this is an idealist and universalist argument that is not widely accepted and is outside mainstream educational thinking. The bond that Socrates seeks is universal in scope and beyond the political and economic realities of the day. As a special concern for the necessary underlying features of tradition it represents an ongoing quest for the meaning of all tradition and of a life beyond the self. The ground of liberal education is a special concern for the soul of humanity and for the harmonious relationship of the individual self with the cosmos. Liberal education is the special education of the self and a journey of the mind and soul into wider horizons where the personal, social, and spiritual coincide in the relationship between teacher and student (Emberley, 1996).

How is liberal education logically and ethically distinct from other kinds of education? The idealistic reflection on innate powers is a form of cognitive, ethical, and moral activity. As a process of awareness it entails the incremental progress towards knowledge of a transcendent and universal human world. While the process of discovery is unique to each individual person the capacity for self-discovery is itself a feature of human nature with universal significance. Through the universal reflection on intellectual powers intrinsic to human consciousness - of capacities, features, and requirements that transcend the contingencies and accidents of place and

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[15] Wegener, Charles (1978) *Liberal Education and the Modern University*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, (p. 94-5).

time - liberal education is distinct precisely because of its basis in the irresolvable problems and ambiguities of the human condition.

The powers liberal education advances are based in the logically necessary *a priori* structures of thinking, knowing, teaching, and learning in the most general and widely used senses of the those terms. The act of becoming liberally educated is distinguished by a unique and atypical moment of transcendence in the special relationship of the moment with the universal reality of all moments and of the individual life with the entire range and scope of human experience. Exercising and expanding the critical faculties of mind, its languages and processes, the way it learns and adapts by coming to know its environment and testing its ideas against empirical reality, using rationality and rational method as the only guide, making choices about good and evil, right and wrong, asking all the most fundamental ethical questions of human existence: What is real? What things exist in this world? What am I? What is just? What is truth?

OUR UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Liberal education is going to have a curious episode in North American colleges and universities. Today it is little more than an amorphous liberality of thought and feeling taking place in the conflict between the sciences and the academic humanities (Wegener, 1978). The university is no mere cultural adornment or preserver of the status quo and middle class. It is an instrument for the enhancement and preservation of both the individual life and the life of a community of citizens committed to intellectual and moral ideals and the values upon which the goods of a free and democratic society depend. Democracy has a special significance for our North American context.

Plato's image of the cave from *Republic VII* (514a-521b) is the best description of what liberal education is supposed to do for us. Young people today are still drawn in by the gravity of the journey represented there, they still fall in love with the stars and the sky and with ideas such as freedom, virtue, and justice (Emberley, 1996). The purpose of my research has been to further the cause of liberal education by providing it with a new justification, arising from the historical, philosophical, and political analysis according to the significance of the concept of universality for life and work. With its special commitment to a universal basis for being human, liberal education represents the best preparation there is for all the chances and exigencies of human

destiny and our life in this world. The argument made here is as unconventional as it is outside mainstream academic politics, administration, and planning. It is not in fashion to advocate for a focus on the enduring and intractable problems of the human condition. Intractable problems of a first-order character operate as the principles that underlie the organization of the individual life as well as the organization of the political life of the nation. No scheme of studies can be prescriptively laid down and any set of substantive content remains only partial, tentative, and provisional, representing only a moment in what is a long and complex, perpetual process.

Any discussion or plan for a program based on liberal education runs into the issues of curriculum, issues of breadth and depth, and institutional procedures. The basic unit of liberal education, however, is the student, and it is to the student that its transformative powers are aimed. The student is the purpose, object, vehicle, and content of liberal education (Wegener, 1978, p. 103). The university, like the liberal arts, is the historical product of the cosmic link between the individual human life and the nature of the species. The commitment to universality is a complex one: it is the problem of the relationship of the individual human life with the totality of all human lives. Liberal education in the universalist (and idealist) sense, then, represents a massive undertaking of human beings thinking about themselves - their powers, achievements, failures, and destiny. A liberal education is a goal oriented kind of education but the aim is service to humanity and to human dignity generally (Wegener, 1978).

There is now a vast chasm separating the core of the Canadian people and the architects of the educational apparatus. The intent of my argument is to provide liberal education with a new justification, the universality thesis, intended to serve as a meta-principle for educational development and reform. What an education would look like that is based in rationality and objectivity, that is integrated with professional education and research specialization, and that is committed to seeking a shared basis for human experience, is still unclear. Challenges are posed by both the need for scientific research specialization and professional education. The system of North American colleges and universities must develop strategies for dealing with issues of curriculum and assessment that can integrate and synthesize scientific and professional education with liberal and democratic education. The way forward is interdisciplinarity and a commitment to intellectual, moral, and ethical values that bridge the many chasms that separate us. We have to ask ourselves, whose interests are being served by ignoring the problem of liberal education?

A THEORY OF LIBERAL EDUCATION

From the synthesis of conceptual approaches (i.e., the historical, philosophical, and political analysis) arises the understanding that liberal education is an ongoing controversy, discussion, and debate over certain fundamental, intractable problems with a universal significance. However, clearly, perpetual argument and debate cannot serve as the basis for a program of liberal education. The second definition of liberal education developed out of the conceptual synthesis, then, is that liberal education arises out of the general nature of human life and, through the search for values with a universal significance, serves the nature of human life as a whole. What are the universal values upon which liberal education depends?

The task, then, to establish liberal education is establishing the idea of universality (see Chapter Three, p. 51-8). Universals are the constants of a general humanity that operate in all contexts and for all societies. The idealist commitment is to values that transcend time, place, and context and to principles that characterize the entire scope of human activity and experience. Liberal education, by definition, arises out of reflection on the whole of knowledge and experience and serves the nature of human life as a harmonious unity.

Universality is a meta-principle. The rationality and the objectivity that arises out of the 17th century Enlightenment are, I argue, the best example of values with universal implications. Universality is an ideal; something we strive for and more of a frame of mind and a way of studying than any particular content or subject matter. Universality implies a commitment to reflecting on the whole of knowledge and the nature of human life as a whole in the context of values that are outside the accidents of place, time, and context. The two universalist components of liberal education - rationality and objectivity - must be thought of in the context of idealism, in terms of fundamental, universal, widely generalizable values. From the idealist position the conception arises that liberal education is a way of studying or a habit of thought. It is a pedagogical principle rather than any particular subject matter or content.

Many books have now been written defending rationality and objectivity from various intellectual critiques (see Gross, Levitt & Lewis (eds) (1996) *The Flight from Science and Reason*; Sokal & Bricmont, (1998) *Fashionable Nonsense*, Gross & Levitt (1994) *Higher Superstition*, and Koertge (ed) *A House Built on Sand*). The rationality and objectivity of liberal

education is framed in terms of idealism in the context of values that are universal in scope. Universal values are pursued in the recognition of a wider humanity and in a commitment to reflecting on the whole of knowledge. The understanding of universals is best explained with reference to rationality and objectivity. Rationality and objectivity are based in linear, logical progress, grounded in facts and evidence, and aimed at a reality outside perception that is the same for all, regardless of place, time, or context.

First, rationality represents a core, universal value of liberal education. As the philosopher of education Paul H. Hirst (see Chapter Three, p. 54-60) argued, to ask for a justification for liberal education is a special kind of question because it asks for a justification for the development of a rational mind at all. Rationality is a universal value because knowledge is only rendered intelligible according to rational criteria that are publicly agreed on and that are rooted in public traditions. Rationality is a trans-cultural value implied in all communication and in all knowledge and understanding.

Second, objectivity represents a phenomenon with universal significance. Objectivity seeks to inquire into and explain a world that is the same for all regardless of place, time, and context. The world that objectivity seeks is universal in scope; it aims at discovering the world we all encounter, although we all approach it in different and unique ways. Objectivity is a kind of understanding aimed at revealing a reality outside perception that holds in all times and all places. Objectivity represents a mode of thinking not bound by context, place, and time..

Rationality and objectivity are universal values of liberal education but not its entire scope. Liberal education has always been characterized as a bent, habit, or frame of mind rather than any specific content; a habit of mind able to relate a particular phenomenon to the universal significance of all phenomena. Being able to relate particular issues to the whole of knowledge involves a rational objective worldview. However, for liberal education, the values of rationality and objectivity must maintain a commitment to reflecting on the whole of knowledge and serving the nature of human life as a whole.

SUMMARY

The purpose of my research has been to inquire into the nature and ends of liberal education for the sake of advocating for the place of liberal education in the missions and mandates of colleges and universities in North America.

Historically, liberal education represents an idea that originates in the ancient Greeks and Romans, in the person of Socrates and the writings of Plato and Aristotle. It is too vast a history to provide any simple historical narrative to the point where a complete historical account is virtually impossible. Any history of liberal education remains partial, fragmentary, and incomplete and requires selectivity in terms of the phenomena being explained and related. Liberal education is, however, mainly the special and atypical tradition of education that originates in Socrates. The historical analysis demonstrates what a profoundly difficult problem the continual retrieval and re-interpretation of the idea of liberal education has been in educational development in North America and around the world.

Philosophically, R.S. Peters and Paul H. Hirst represent one of the most recent attempts to provide a new theoretical justification for liberal education. R.S. Peters sought to redefine liberal education in terms of the rational criteria to which an educational process must conform in order to be considered "liberal." Paul H. Hirst sought to define liberal education in terms of academic-rationalism and to divorce liberal education from its vague, obscure basis in metaphysical realism. Inquiry into liberal education is a special type of project, according to Hirst, because it asks for a justification for the cultivation of a rational mind at all. However, both these thinkers are widely regarded to have failed to provide liberal education with a new justification and neither could have predicted the modern day attacks on universalist values, such as rationality and objectivity.

Several intellectual frameworks such as post-modernism, social-constructionism, and post-structuralism have attacked the development of universality in the West and the universalist values of the Enlightenment. Liberal education, in particular, came under attack for its monolithic character, for excluding other traditions and for being irrelevant to the production of the workforce in the 21st century. Philosophically, the special basis of liberal education are certain fundamental problems and conflicts of a first-order character that are universal in scope (e.g., What is knowledge? What things exist in the world? What is just? What is good?).

Therefore, the rejection of universal values, such as rationality and objectivity, represent a rejection of the basis of liberal education. Ultimately, more needs to be done to establish the claims of liberal education according to objective, disinterested evidence.

Politically, liberal education is woven into the fabric of many of the challenges of North American society today. Many policy leaders seek to eviscerate liberal education for the sake of workforce development. Liberal education today is often regarded as civic in nature, as having a special relationship with democracy, and is seen as aimed at the production of responsible citizens capable of participating in democratic society. Again, the special basis of liberal education is a focus on certain fundamental questions with a universal character such that attacks on universal values such as objectivity and rationality represent attacks on liberal education. Many of the attacks on objectivity and rationality are political and represent the rejection of any idea of universality.

Contrary to the arguments of R.S. Peters that liberal education can be defined totally in terms of the concept "education" itself, liberal education is aimed at extrinsic political ends and the production of citizens capable of participating in democratic society. The key political task of liberal education is to ameliorate what are seemingly opposed phenomena, such as the opposition between the sciences and the humanities, between science education and democratic education, and between humanistic and professional learning. The amelioration of these opposed positions is an intrinsically idealistic enterprise as is the preparation of young people for the future and for participation in civic life. Perhaps the best approach to supporting liberal education today is to synthesize it with professional learning and to make liberal education more professional and more like a profession.

Finally, liberal education represents a continuous, ongoing controversy, discussion, and debate. It is a link between the educational institutions of today and the ancient past. All the problems of modern society, the conflict between the sciences and the humanities, scientific and democratic education, all the arguments of post-modernism and multiculturalism, are all part of the debate over liberal education. The idea of liberal education is best defined in terms of the clusters of arguments, disagreements, and intractable problems within which the debate takes place. The debate over liberal education and its place, purposes, and aims goes on *sub species aeternitatis*.

The purpose of my research has been to generate the theory required to fuel policy thinking and the policy process. Liberal education, with its special basis in an ongoing argument, discussion, and debate that is universal in scope represents the highest purposes of the university as an institution. Its aim is nothing other than to unite us at a higher level of our humanity, as thinking, reasoning, and moral beings (Emberley, 1996). What is the philosophical purpose of education if it is not to unite us across our differences and to unite people with their community? The way forward for liberal education is interdisciplinary through an education that is based in universal values, such as rationality and objectivity, that is integrated with professional education and research specialization, and that is committed to seeking a shared basis for experience and uniting us as a people and a community of inquirers.

APPENDIX A

LINGERING CONFUSIONS AROUND CRITICAL THINKING

Chapter Three made reference to Hirst's (1973) justification for liberal education in social-rationalism. For Hirst, liberal education is aimed at "critical appreciation" (p. 106) of the forms of knowledge. However, what does Hirst mean by the term "critical"? While the term critical is often treated as if the meaning goes without saying there are serious conceptual issues regarding the meaning of this phrase. Conflicts over the aims and means of education has made defining critical thinking an increasingly important task. Critical thinking is often seen as a panacea and treated as a politically indifferent phenomena that is assumed as a general aim of many colleges and universities. Critical thinking, however, has several definitions and it is still a contested domain mired in ambiguity and complexity. Ralph Johnson (1996) in "The Problem of Defining Critical Thinking" notes five attempts to define "critical thinking":

- *Ennis*: "reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do" (Ennis in Johnson, 1996, p. 266).
- *Paul*: "critical thinking is disciplined, self-directed thinking which exemplifies the perfections of thinking appropriate to a particular mode or domain of thinking" (Paul in Johnson, 1996, p. 267).
- *McPeck*: "the skill and propensity to engage in an activity with reflective skepticism" (McPeck in Johnson, 1996, p. 267).
- *Siegel*: "an individual who is appropriately moved by reasons" (Siegel in Johnson, 1996, p. 267).
- *Lipman*: "skillful, responsible thinking that facilitates good judgment because it (1) relies upon criteria, (2) is self-correcting and, (3) is sensitive to context" (Lipman in Johnson, 1996, p. 267).

Johnson shows that all these attempts are inadequate in different ways. To formulate a new widely acceptable definition, Johnson frames the problem of critical thinking in terms of: i. the network problem (of other closely related phrases), and ii. the scope problem (of the degree to which it extends into different cognitive, social, and practical domains).

i. *the network problem*: "critical thinking" is conceptually related to cognitive processes such as "problem solving, decision making, metacognition, rationality, rational thinking, reasoning, knowledge, intelligence" (Johnson, 1996, p. 218). As such, the phrase "critical thinking" is often left ambiguously related to a wide array of cognitive processes. Clarifying the differences between these closely related concepts is a foremost task of conceptually analyzing the term "critical thinking."

ii. *the scope problem*: What is the scope of critical thinking? Does it extend to the realm of action no less than thought? "Reflection on what one is to do" sounds like a description of problem solving, decision making, or of moral thinking, "Does critical thinking contain moral thinking and morality as a proper subset?" (Johnson, 1996, p. 218).

Both Ennis (i) and Siegel (iv) conflate critical thinking and rationality and serve to show that they are closely related terms. "Critical thinking" and "rational thinking" are clearly distinct processes.(as are creative thinking, problem solving, decision making, metacognition, reasoning, and knowing). In Paul's (ii) definition "critical thinking" hinges on becoming aware of different forms of egocentric and ethnocentric thinking. Under Paul's (ii) conception, critical thinking involves moral awareness, and rationality is treated as an intrinsically moral phenomena. Like liberal education, rationality is regarded by Paul (ii) as an inherently normative and moral enterprise. However, Paul (ii) leaves vague how exactly critical thinking is related to morality. Johnson (1996) further criticizes this by arguing it emphasizes individuality at the expense of the inter-subjective component of critical thought, judgment, and awareness.

In McPeck's (iii) account, from the perspective of the philosophy of education, "critical thinking" is a matter of disciplinary knowledge and a broad view of understanding. Johnson (1996) criticizes McPeck's view for being too general and for subsuming many capacities and features which have a tenuous connection to how critical thinking is commonly thought of (i.e., McPeck's definition would include connoisseurship). For McPeck, critical thinking is a subset of rationality.

Seigel's (iv) definition is more developed because it is built on a critical commentary on Ennis, Paul, and McPeck. The core of Seigel's more developed view extends critical thinking into the domain of practical life. Seigel's conception is more like an attitude, as one who is moved by

good reasons. Johnson (1996, p. 221) claims that for Seigel, critical thinking is co-extensive with rationality. It is based on articulating judgments in a way that is underwritten by an appreciation that acknowledges the reasons for beliefs and actions. It is predicated on a depth and complexity of understanding aimed at certain forms of judgment. Johnson (1996) points to Seigel's (iv) conflation of critical thinking with rationality. The ambiguity between critical thinking and rationality is not easily resolved. They have a "tight" conceptual connection (as R.S. Peters might say), and are certainly closely related, but remain distinct depending on context. The extent to which rationality is implied by critical thinking remains unclear.

Lipman's (v) account emphasizes recognizing criteria intrinsic to different forms of knowledge as the meaning of "critical." However, a person may perceive that activities have intrinsic standards and still fail to fall under the form of critical thinking as it is commonly understood. Johnson (1996) further criticized this view for, again, emphasizing the individual over the inter-subjective negotiation of meanings and concepts. Being critical seems to mean being judged to be so based on the consensus of a community of people or of professionals that criticize their own community. Lipman's account of critical thinking, however, is mainly scientific and logical thought, and as such, Lipman's account "is much too restrictive" (Johnson, 1996, p. 223).

No one is critical of everything, all the time, everyday. "Being critical" remains an ambiguous state of affairs and framing it narrowly in terms of cognitive capacities underscores the neglect of a wider domain of the inter-subjective negotiation of community standards. While critical thinking surly is related to logical and scientific kinds of thinking, insofar as "critical" means recognizing intrinsic standards in kinds of knowledge and various principles that organize bodies of facts, those standards are not separate from the social and community-based processes that influence how they are judged. Critical thinking certainly does seem to mean recognising normative dimensions intrinsic to values and judgments concerning standards that separate good thinking from bad thinking.

> Begin with etymology: The word *krinein* - from which we get out word 'critic' and 'critical' - means to estimate the value of something. A critic is a person who judges, appreciates, estimates the value of something. Similarly, I propose a critical thinker is a

> critic of thought in much the way that a film critic is a critic of film. (Johnson, 1996, p. 225).

The scope of critical thinking influences how we frame discussions of the scope of liberal education. Liberal education is associated with cognitive development but also with moral development and a commitment to intellectual ideals such as self-critical reflection and political ideals such as autonomy. The basis of liberal education is rationality and the cognitive, social, and moral processes involved in weighing evidence and making judgments. Formulating a coherent, lexical, authoritative account of critical thinking and differentiating it from rationality will aid us in formulating a scheme of liberal education and defending it from its detractors.

> The term 'critical' has historically a number of connotations. Suggested synonyms are indicative of the first and more popular understanding of the word - faultfinding, captious, caviling, carping, and censorious. The Oxford English Dictionary traces the changing nuances from the first use - notably by Shakespeare's Othello: 'I am nothing if not critical,' meaning 'giving to judging in an especially adverse or unfavorable way'; to Sir Thomas Browne's use in the 17th century, meaning 'involving or exercising careful judgment or observation on the basis of which right decisions might be made'; to the use by Thomas Jefferson as 'a turning point of decisive importance in relation to an issue.' I assume that the Group of Five would identify Browne's use as the appropriate one. (Johnson, 1996, p. 225)

The lines that distinguish rationality from critical thinking are blurry and undefined. Both rely on formal, analytical, cognitive processes for weighing evidence and arguments and making judgments, including moral judgments. While rationality is often framed as "reason generally," it may be that rationality is the cognitive process involved in generating criteria for judging, while critical thinking is the process of application of the criteria to different domains of knowledge.

Critical thinking is a special kind of cognitive process and does not seem to be a regular feature of everyday practice, like bare rationality. Even a thought at all is in some sense a product of rationality. Critical thinking might be framed as a more developed kind of rationality subsuming a set of technical cognitive processes. Is critical thinking a highly developed form of reason and practical rationality? Critical thinking surly is involved with reason, as having a logical, coherent

framework for weighing evidence and making judgments, and giving reasons is a necessary feature. Rationality and critical thinking are clearly tightly related.

In formulating a coherent scheme of rationality we must make clear to what extent it is intrinsically social and moral. Rationality is clearly an antecedent of moral judgment and of giving reasons for actions. As Johnson (1996) points out for us a critic is one who produces a commentary or a theory and has a respect for objectivity, reason, and gives evidence to back up theories. Giving theories to justify a critique is intrinsically social and hinges on the criteria of separating good from bad based on community standards. To what extent is formulating a conception of rationality a purely social and linguistic problem?

The word rationality means more than merely formal, analytical, logical reasoning. It is not merely logical consistency, even while logical inconsistency is sometimes what is meant by irrational (Johnson, 1996). In its intrinsically moral sense our conception of rationality seems to lead itself towards the idea of *self-knowledge*. Self-knowledge is the dialectical basis for the interplay between actions and beliefs that influences the extent to which an action or decision is rational and moral. Generating a defense of liberal education will have rationality, particularly in terms of self-knowledge, as a key distinguishing feature. The issue here means differentiating the intellectual from the rational and the rational from the irrational in theories, beliefs, norms, standards, and judgments of value.

APPENDIX B

LIBERAL EDUCATION AND POLITICAL LIBERALISM

The framework for a liberal educational theory includes: i. a deep commitment to pluralism, ii. government influence through a legitimation process, and iii. that a legitimated government has a duty to uphold individual liberty (Levinson, 1999):

(a) *Commitment to pluralism*: Huge range of possible values, identities, conceptions of the good life. Consensus of values is unlikely.

(b) *Government legitimation*: Principles of justice through which the state operates. The legitimation process takes place in an acknowledgement of agreed upon principles and equal respect.

Meira Levinson's (1999) criteria for a liberal legitimation process are:

- public process
- all citizens participate
- equality (equally)
- freedom (freely)
- consensus

(c) *Government duty*: To uphold individual liberty through substantive liberal institutions.

I. *Pluralism*: Pluralism is the ground of the liberal legitimation process. Different values gain support in a process of discussion and agreement. A process of legitimation serves as the ground of the state. Laws are only justifiable through the mode of deliberative equality and freedom.

II. *Government legitimation*: Grounded in John Locke's notion of "non-coercive, equal participation leading to unanimous agreement" (Levinson, 1999, p. 11). Any lawful government needs to be rooted in this liberal approach and the criteria for a fair legitimation process. John Locke's framework satisfies all five of the legitimation criteria.

III. *Government duty*: Contingent on satisfying criteria I and II, includes legitimated liberties and duties. It is a positive, substantive requirement of a legitimate state.

The idea that the state has a duty to uphold fundamental rights is what distinguishes liberalism from anarchism and utilitarianism. Liberalism is complicated by the idea of pluralism and by the negotiation of meanings and terms. Some think this may render widespread agreement impossible and that liberals and libertarians need to acknowledge implicit partisanship in their claims. The processes of weighing evidence and making judgments implicit in the cognitive functions of liberal education are similar in nature to the processes of democratic election. It involves being able to look at things from a variety of perspectives and incorporate new ways of seeing problems and finding solutions amidst a wide array of critical problems.

Table 2 CONDITIONS OF A LIBERAL STATE

COMMITMENT TO PLURALISM	Range of possible values, identities, conceptions of the good; Process of reasonable deliberation leading to consensus	Ground of legitimation process; plurality of beliefs/values;
PROCESS OF GOVERNMENT LEGITIMATION	Criteria for legitimation process: i. public process, ii. all citizens participate, iii. equality (equally), iv. freedom (freely), and v. consensus	"non-coercive, equal participation leading to unanimous agreement" (Levinson, M., 1999, p. 11)
DUTIES OF LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT	Uphold liberty through substantive institutions	Contingent on criteria I and II. Consensus among values leading to liberties and duties; Positive requirement of the state

Levinson (1999) unites the commitment to pluralism, the legitimation process, and substantive liberties and duties under the form of autonomy. Autonomy is defined as the capacity to form a conception of the good and to evaluate ends with the genuine possibility of revising them. Autonomy is regarded as a value that justifies substantive freedoms. Autonomy has at least two dimensions: i. social and political, and ii. cognitive and moral. In its social and political

dimensions it involves processes of practical judgements based on opinion and evidence. In the cognitive and moral sense it involves the mental process of envisioning a just society and calculating an acceptable path to achieving the good for the individual and for the state.

APPENDIX C

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The Academic Approach

A philosophy of education reflects the basic understanding, values, and knowledge of a person's worldview. Such a position is a kind of meta-orientation (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009, p. 2). A philosophy of education provides statements concerning educational development, design, and planning, and the perceived roles of teachers and students. A person can be strongly attached to a single approach or represent an overlapping of approaches catered to different situations.

Broadly speaking, I situate myself in an academic approach (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009, p. 7-8) which is also sometimes referred to as the traditional, encyclopedic, intellectual, or knowledge-based orientation. The academic orientation is aimed at analyzing and synthesizing major positions, trends, and concepts. Academic analysis is concerned with many broad issues that are approached in a scholarly, intellectual, and theoretical rather than a scientific, technical, social, or practical way. Academic approaches are often concerned with the nature and structure of knowledge and the basis of processes like teaching and learning. Often, ideas and theories are approached historically, philosophically, and politically, aimed at a broad theoretical overview and synthesis. Academic approaches are primarily concerned with ideas, theories, concepts, and words.

Idealism and Epistemology

An orientation towards knowledge is central to the philosophy of education; it influences all the organization of our lives and the goals towards which we strive. Usually, an individual reflects several philosophies and approaches to knowledge. Beliefs about the nature, structure, and scope of knowledge influences the life of the individual and the life of the wider society. The way we frame knowledge determines our decisions, choices, and understandings of the world; acting on a philosophical orientation influences what values we attach ourselves to and how we enact those values. Epistemological considerations are a beginning point in educational decision making and in selecting criteria to determine means, aims, and ends. An epistemological orientation reflects

our background and our experiences, our attitudes, beliefs, and worldview and provides a guide for our actions.

Epistemology provides a framework for thinking about our values and goals and determines our aims and methods for achieving them. Epistemologically, I position myself as an idealist, in the vein that stretches back to Socrates and Plato and whose other major figures include Kant and Hegel (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009, p. 34-5). Plato believed that ideas could be brought into unity and harmony through universal concepts or Platonic "forms." Hegel tried to establish a comprehensive philosophical worldview grounded in idealism and thought ideas could be synthesized through the bringing together of thesis and anti-thesis to arrive at higher levels of understanding. Kant believed such a process as pointed to by Plato could achieve some moral clarification and insight but that no such universal or absolute truths could be known.

Idealists generally hold that the highest aim of education is the search for truth. and for enduring, timeless, universal values. To an idealist, learning involves remembrance or *anamnesis* (see Plato's *Meno*), which is the recollection and analysis of ideas. Education, as well as knowledge, is mainly concerned with ideas and concepts (e.g., liberal education). The idealist seeks to synthesize knowledge together as a harmonious unity by relating ideas and concepts together. The seven liberal arts of the trivium and quadrivium represent the best curricular organization for the idealist. Philosophy and theology are at the top of the hierarchy for their highly abstract character, mathematics is required to cultivate rational thinking, history and literature provide training in moral and cultural thinking, and language provides the means for articulating and communicating ideas, theories, and concepts.

Idealists typically emphasize classics like Plato and Aristotle over science because the purpose of the classics (like the Great Books of Alan Bloom's (1987) *The Closing of the American Mind*), is the training of the intellect according to its own inherent nature, a nature that has a universal significance. Training in ancient philosophy and languages trains the mind whereas science merely interrogates certain cause and effect relationships between natural objects.

As a philosophy of education idealism aims at moral principles that are universal in scope such as the constant features of a general humanity. Knowledge consists in recollection,

remembrance, or anamnesis of latent, innate ideas that arise from the potential for experience of the world. Knowledge is only the reflection on innate ideas or values intrinsic to the formal structures of experience, knowledge, understanding, teaching, and learning. The only real values are those that are unchanging, constant, and general in character. The teacher, according to idealism, must aid students in becoming aware of innate potential and intrinsic human powers, and to the moral criteria that are intrinsic to all life and work. Framing knowledge as recollection or the power of memory in general represents thinking in its most abstract sense. The basis of idealist educators is the liberal arts, that are crowned with philosophy; a master discipline that is universal in scope.

Idealism and Perennialism

Alongside the idealist commitment to values that transcend the accidents of place, time, and context, perennialists (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009, p. 38-9) regard human nature as a constant. People have the capacity to reason and to raise to an understanding of the universal truths of nature. The goal of education is to develop reason, rationality, and the rational person. According to perennials, similar to idealism, the liberal arts represent our best intellectual heritage. Becoming acquainted with the ideas of the past aids the student in coping with the demands of the present and the exigencies of the unforeseeable future. Both idealism and perennialism focus on the past and regard the liberal arts as a special intellectual heritage, and both orientations value classics and classical subjects. Perennialists typically advocate for Great Books, a core curriculum, and for returning to the liberal arts.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Christopher Lyons

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

DEGREE	SPECIALIZATION	UNIVERSITY	DATE
PhD	Policy Studies	University of Western Ontario	2015
MIDST	Interdisciplinary Studies	University of New Brunswick	2010
BA	Philosophy	St. Thomas University	2008

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND ACTIVITIES

CSSE - Canadian Society for the Study of Education (2011-present)

CERA - Canadian Educational Researchers Association (2011-present)

CAFE - Canadian Association of Foundations of Education (2011-present

CPES - Canadian Philosophy of Education Society (2011-present)

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Member of the Fundraising Committee for the 4th Annual Graduate Research in Education Symposium, UWO

Co-Chair of the Volunteers Committee for the 3rd Annual Graduate Research in Education Symposium, UWO

Member of the Registration Committee for the 2nd Annual Research in Education Symposium, UWO

COURSES TAUGHT

5002 Social Foundations of Education

PUBLICATIONS

Refereed Publications

(R) Forthcoming: Lyons, Christopher. W. (2015) Philosophy in Education Policy Research: Its Relevance and Scope. Philosophy of Education: George Brown College (http://www.georgebrown.ca/pls/events/philosophy-education-conference.aspx)

(R) Forthcoming: Lyons, Christopher. W. (2015) Habermas's "Lifeworld" and Bureaucratic Rationality: *The Advantage New Brunswick Report*. New Brunswick: Atlantic Journal of Graduate Studies in Education (http://ejournal.educ.unb.ca/index.php/ejournal)

Non-Refereed Publications

Lyons, Christopher. W. (2011) Reforming Higher Learning in New Brunswick: A Critical Theory Critique. Saarbrucken, Germany: Lambert Academic Publishers.

Formal Research Credit Granted

Hyslop-Margison, E. & Thayer, J. (2009). Teaching Democracy: Citizenship Education as Critical Pedagogy. Boston: Sense Publishers.

Peer Reviewed & Invited Conference Papers/Presentations Delivered or Forthcoming

Lyons, Christopher. W. (2015) Philosophy in Education Policy Research: Its Relevance and Scope, presented at the George Brown College Philosophy of Education (PoE) Conference on May 28th, 2015.

Lyons, Christopher. W. (2012) Re-conceptualizing the Liberal Arts for Higher Learning: Discourses and Frameworks presented at the 3rd Annual Graduate Research in Education Symposium on April 11th.

Lyons, Christopher. W. (2012) Blending the Analytic Tools of Conceptual Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis for Textual Interpretation: Philosophical Textual Analysis at the 3rd Annual Research in Education Symposium on April 11th.

Lyons, Christopher. W. (2012) Re-conceptualizing the Liberal Arts for Higher Learning: Discourses and Frameworks presented at the 40th Annual CSSE Conference from May 26th to May 30th.

Lyons, Christopher. W. (2011) The *Advantage New Brunswick Report* and *New Brunswick Action Plan*: Corporate Hegemony and the Death of the Liberal Arts presented at the 2nd Annual Research in Education Symposium on April 20.

Lyons, Christopher. W. (2010) Reviewing the Social, Political, and Economic context of the 2007 *Advantage New Brunswick Report* in New Brunswick, Canada presented at Looking Back and Moving Forward: The Next 100 Years of the Liberal Arts - Confronting the Challenge from Sept 30 – Oct 2.

Lyons, Christopher. W. (2010) Reviewing the Social, Political, and Economic Context of the 2007 *Advantage New Brunswick Report* in New Brunswick, Canada presented at the Brown Bag Colloquia Seminar on Sept 16.

Hyslop-Margison, Emery & Lyons, Christopher. W. (2009) Liberalizing Vocational Education: Democratic Approaches to Work Study presented at STLHE Between the Tides Conference from June 17 – 20.