KNOWLEDGE IN THE POSTMODERN UNIVERSITY

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Concepts of knowledge and the advancement of learning are inherently worthy of debate within higher education. Although the discussion may remain dormant over long periods of confident practice, deep social changes can occasion uncertainty about the purposes of universities. This kind of problem afflicts social institutions generally, but it is especially acute for one whose mission embraces critical inquiry that should not exclude itself. The recently perceived transition to "the postmodern condition" has become an occasion for resuming such explicit self-examination.

The concept of postmodernity is problematic in many ways, but it can be a useful analytical device. This usefulness resides largely in contrasts it provides with educational cliches, such as the foundations, advancement, and unity of knowledge, when these notions are challenged by the idea that there is no total account of human understanding but a plethora of "knowledges" unconnected by an encompassing vision. Since clarity about the purpose of education is most called for where the concept of knowledge is contested, a fundamental intellectual issue for higher education now is the interpretation of its institutional goals. This essay seeks to facilitate that task by clarifying the intellectual rationale of the postmodern challenge. Many current trends in the university are subjects of postmodern commentary, but the present discussion focuses primarily upon the success of that rationale rather than attempting to determine whether postmodern philosophy influences or reflects a range of deeply interesting social and institutional changes.

MARKS OF POSTMODERNITY

One of the frustrations of the postmodern challenge to education is that the central terms lack accepted definitions, making it difficult to provide a precise account of our subject. In itself, this is not a serious problem. We are able to discuss the centrality of knowledge to the purpose of the university in all of its historical forms without offering a definition of the word. Even if "knowledge" is an elementary term, there is nothing mysterious or ambiguous about it in spite of its having no explanation in terms of an idea that is easier to grasp. Part of the importance of the concept of knowledge is its lack of some deeper foundation. In order to talk revealingly about it, therefore, it has to be related to other concepts, such as understanding, truth, belief, opinion, experience, evidence, theory, action, good, and right.[1]

The concept of knowledge can also be explicated by attending closely to details of the supposed fragmentation of knowledge into knowledges and independent genres of discourse that is identified by postmodern thinkers.[2] Academic knowledge in particular

has mainly been located through scholarly disciplines, the inquiries whose rules define coherent practices of learning and discovery. Thus, Michel Foucault notes that the university is a "discursive regime" within which "every discipline recognizes true and false propositions."[3] Moreover, "Discursive practices are characterized by the delimitation of a field of objects, the determination of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge, and the fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts and theories."[4] This makes propositional knowledge of particular interest to academic agents, even though "knowing that p" constitutes only a small part of what people know.[5]

The philosophical meaning of "postmodern" can be conveyed through the persons most often identified by others as postmodernism's principal academic representatives, such as Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Jean-Francois Lyotard.[6] Their rejection of rationalism, realism, foundationalism, and structuralism in particular constitutes the primary meaning of "postmodernism" for present purposes and makes the concept a coherent one within educational theory. Of course, in discussing these views it is well to recall Nietzsche's comment -- one of the mottos of postmodernism -- that lack of appreciation for differences is a sign of weak eyes.[7] The representatives of postmodernism do differ importantly in various respects, but they also express a series of familiar theses. Since it is these theses that concern me here, I do not substantially engage the three philosophers in this essay. Rather, I use their collective critique of realism, rationalism, foundationalism, and structuralism to delimit the notion of postmodernism along lines suggested by Richard Rorty.[8] The useful result is a depiction of the postmodern university as one in which metaphysical, epistemological, and political theories are not canonical.[9]

Because the resulting issues are clear and serious, one salutary result of isolating them for sober consideration should be to reduce the inclination to view postmodern hypotheses as intellectual tumors produced by fallout from a "French cultural Chernobyl" or as mysteries of a "higher superstition."[10] If the concept of postmodernism is now used seriously only within the discourse of academics, it is neither pernicious nor obscure.[11] Its significance for higher education permits a sometimes unruly discussion to be governed by civility. Where mutual contempt reigns, the excesses of verbal strife show that there is something badly, but corrigibly, amiss in the university.[12]

Avoiding these excesses does not preclude criticism, the dignified model of which is Habermas's Philosophical Discourse of Modernity. I will develop a version of his point that postmodernism neglects the "counterdiscourse which modernity has carried on with itself from its very beginnings."[13] What postmodernism clearly asserts -- the core critiques in particular -- has a long history, so that the canon-less postmodern university is primarily distinguished by having successfully freed itself from philosophical disputes that are still regarded as critical questions within the modern one. At the same time, postmodernists sometimes experience this freedom as a constraint, preferring to speak of a position beyond rationalism and above the opposition between realism and anti-realism, as if one might hope to secure a confident grasp of the postmodern project by comparing it with Hegelian efforts to achieve a higher resolution of old antitheses. However, in the

end such comparisons are rightly eschewed.[14] If I am correct, attempts to break new ground misplace the postmodern ambition, which is not to develop positions superior to traditional philosophical theories but to get beyond these disputes, or isolate them within philosophy, because they are neither necessary nor generally useful to higher education.

Although theses in epistemology, metaphysics and political theory are subjects of extended and subtle analysis within the discipline of philosophy, assessing the differences I am concerned to mark requires only conceptual sensitivity. It does not demand adjudicating between competing theories of objectivity, for example, since it is such theories that postmodernists want to get beyond or leave as playthings for metaphysicians.[15] What the assessment requires, rather, is recognition that the basic tenets of postmodernism suggest a decisive distinction between modem and postmodern knowledge only where the basics are deserted and the tenets overblown in various ways. Although exaggerations occur on both sides, by identifying those of postmodern theory I will distinguish two layers of that account. One is an effective critique of rationalism, foundationalism, realism, and structuralism that deflates much of modern epistemology and metaphysics. The other is a series of inflations: of critical thinking into oppositional thinking, of analyses of epistemology and metaphysics into a dogma of social constructions, of discipline into odious power. Identifying this controversial second layer makes it possible to show that the most viable elements of the postmodern critique of knowledge are perfectly at home in the modern university. In this sense we have always been postmodern, but without subscribing to the most notorious features of postmodernism, such as social constructivism.[16]

My fuller argument is this: The interrelated critiques of rationalism, realism, and foundationalism show that the modern university includes a contest between different theories of rational scholarly agreement. The most distinctively postmodern role in this debate is not to take sides but to question whether theories of agreement are useful and even whether agreement itself is a feasible or appropriate objective of higher education. This critique of consensus can be inflated into an attack upon the notion of universal knowledge that is an ideal of modem inquiry. However, universality does not depend upon the soundness of theories of agreement and is not inconsistent with postmodernism. In short, the critique of consensus succeeds only very modestly, so that modem aspirations to universally available knowledge require only moderate amendment.

THE CRITIQUE OF RATIONALISM, REALISM, AND FOUNDATIONALISM

Derrida notes that the modem university institutionalizes the principle of reason.[17] It has been assumed that all persons of sound and educated mind can come through intellectually disciplined inquiry to know any truth accessible to human understanding. The authority of this founding principle has rarely been questioned. It seems suitably modest, for although it entails that anyone can know anything, it does not suggest that anyone can know everything. It also seems obvious, since potential skeptics about reason would have to provide reasons for doubt in order to be taken seriously, thereby accepting the principle in their argumentative practices.[18] However, it is possible to question the principle of reason thoughtfully without rejecting it. Reason can then be cast as only one

species of intelligent thought and that one historically changing. In this way postmodern educators accept a responsibility to interrogate their disciplines fundamentally without abandoning reason by supposing that "thought" is irrational. Rather, thought is critical or analytical, opening up the question of how the principle of reason reflects the regime du savoir and permitting the hypothesis that this regime now consists of noncommunicating "rationalities."[19] Having become a principal institution of modem techno-science, the university should attempt in particular to question the pretensions of scientific rationality. Suggestions that the only "reasons" properly so-called are those that provide empirical evidence for a thesis or confirm a truth are properly confronted by the kinds of rationale given in support of judgments in literary criticism or psychoanalysis.

What counts as a reason may become limited in another way. The defining purpose of education as the transmission and advancement of knowledge has been encouraged by a view of knowledge as an inherent good, but if Lyotard is right this conception

is becoming obsolete and will become ever more so. The relationship of the suppliers and users of knowledge to the knowledge they supply and use is now tending, and will increasingly tend, to assume the form already taken by the relationship of commodity producers and consumers to the commodities they produce and consume -- that is, the form of value. Knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valorized in a new production: in both cases, the goal is exchange. Knowledge ceases to be an end in itself (PC, 45).

As the institution of education becomes dominated by commerce, its previous purpose is transformed. For scientific knowledge "the goal is no longer truth, but performativity -- that is, the best possible input/output equation"; and the "general effect" of "the performativity principle" is "to subordinate the institutions of higher learning to the existing powers" (PC, 46, 48-50). For "performativity" to become the principal criterion of knowledge is at the same time for reasoning to extend no further than instrumental calculation. Knowledge is then fused to the identification of means to desired ends. In such an environment the principle of reason does not, as it once did, apply to these ends themselves. That is, it is no longer fruitful to ask whether ends themselves have reasons. Nor is the principle applied to truths that lack imaginable utility, so that it does not seem rational to study matters that have no evident practical purpose.

Although postmodernism takes an interest in these developments, it does not drive them, and Lyotard's observations are continuous with modern philosophy. Marx had already discussed the commodification of knowledge in similar terms, and John Dewey had challenged the distinction between instrumental and inherent goods or ends-in-themselves.[20] Moreover, Lyotard continues to speak of truth as the essential criterion of scientific knowledge. The empirical and mathematical disciplines generate a wealth of discoveries whose interest is not reducible to their great cumulative usefulness. These discoveries are marked by data that can be replicated and generalized in testable theories, distinguishing natural science from the interpretative disciplines that are dedicated to describing particular cultures and learning from their artifacts, customs, histories, literatures, and philosophies. It is possible to speak of knowledge here as well, but it is

narrative knowledge. Dealing with human purposes, where generalization is a less central concern, the principal formal criterion of such knowledge is coherence. It is also to be expected that descriptions of belief and behavior will be brought together into a rich and detailed story rather than a merely self-consistent one, but the distinct criteria for scientific and narrative knowledge suggest cognitive differentiation, if not fragmentation. Moreover, narrative knowledge can appear not only distinct but also inferior in kind. Its criterion of rich coherence must also be satisfied by scientific knowledge, but science claims the further virtues of truth and efficacy. This appears to define a more demanding task, identifying an arguably superior form of knowledge.

Yet for postmodernism the superiority of science displayed in this differentiation of knowledge is only apparent, its distinctiveness from narrative and conversation specious and temporary. As Foucault suggests, in the postmodern university there is no drawing "a line between that in a discourse which falls under the category of scientificity or truth, and that which falls under some other category."[21] This is one of the key notions of postmodern philosophy, whose reflections on discourse support a view of science as lacking deep philosophical legitimation. The claims of science to objectivity then appear to depend wholly upon its technical successes, so that science properly comes to be seen as a useful workhorse rather than an exemplary source of knowledge (PC, 46).[22] The scientific ambition to describe the natural universe can only be expressed in coherent but potentially conflicting stories of a reality that cannot be identified apart from these narratives and the human rules that govern them. Pretensions to objective and disinterested knowledge do not then appear fundamentally different from the claims of previous intellectual communities governed by shamans, sorcerers, and priests.[23] Falling short of its aspirations, science might be deemed inferior to the arts that make no unwarranted claims about objective truth.

These views are sometimes stated provocatively, but there is surprisingly little in them that defenders of the modern university must dispute. The critique of scientific rationality questions views of inquiry that depend upon conforming judgments to a reality external to them, but it never straightforwardly asserts the opposite position. In this respect postmodern views resemble the instrumentalism about scientific knowledge developed by some logical empiricists in order to avoid cognitively meaningless commitments to realism or anti-realism. The views differ in their theories of meaning, but honestly and comprehensibly. The logical empiricists worked from the assumption that words get their meaning from their reference to things (though not to "reality"), while postmodernists typically suppose that signs can refer only to each other. "There is nothing outside the text," as Derrida famously says.[24] Read in one way this is a perfectly sensible rendition of Wittgenstein's view that words get their meaning from the relation of their uses to the uses of other words.[25] These uses include connections with things in the world, so that "the text" is not solely a work of imagination. Language and its uses are shaped by an environment that punishes failure to distinguish saying something from its being so.

Read in another way, Derrida's postmodern slogan is highly problematic. As Jean Baudrillard has it, "The real ... is no longer real at all. It is a hyperreal ... sheltered from the imaginary, and from any distinction between the real and the imaginary."[26] Careful

critics have taken this to imply that "There is no real world."[27] postmodernists can probably resist such anti-realism even now, since their deconstructions of apparent dichotomies such as "real/imaginary" explain the first sign as a special case of the second. If the real is a special case of the imaginary, then conceptual space is left for construing reality as an expression of imagination. The real is thus not unambiguously denied. However, the suggestion seems a pointless conjecture. If it is not falsely denying the discipline of words by the environment or harboring some form of idealist metaphysic, then it is restating the Wittgensteinian point about the justification of practices in a needlessly extravagant way or revisiting a tradition of controversy in analytic philosophy that goes back at least to Hume.[28] Accomplished readers are therefore left uncertain what post-realist point is being made at the level of theory that attempts to rise above the conflict between reference- and use-theories of meaning, sustaining suspicions that no interesting sense has been given to talk of the "hyperreal."

The problem illustrates a more general one: postmodern philosophers fail to make it clear what they are saying when they attempt to venture into new territory. Of course, one can reasonably object that it is misguided to apply a modernist reading to a postmodernist claim and to demand clarification about the remainder that is not captured by this reading. On this objection, expecting postmodern theory to be fully intelligible within the modem worldview is insisting upon the viewpoint that postmodernists are exploring beyond. What sounds like nonsense then does so because of approaching it from a conception of reality that distinguishes reality from signs, stressing our knowledge-of-the-world rather than our being-in-the-world. While the former concept expresses the central place of propositional knowledge in the university, it is arguably appreciation of the latter relation that is required for Baudrillard and other postmodern analysts of metaphysics to make sense. The onus of clarification is therefore not properly placed upon them, since that simply relegates anything that cannot be captured within modernist theories to obscurity. This objection turns the tables on the critics, obliging them to try harder to understand what postmodernists are saying, but it is possible to do this by descending to the level of theory that postmodernists share with such post-positivists as Wittgenstein. "Postmodern knowledge," according to Lyotard, recognizes "the heterogeneity of language-games" (PC, xxv). By developing the place of language-games and discursive practices generally in scholarship, it is possible to identify the features of postmodernism that are clearest and most reasonable, elaborating the critique of metaphysics and epistemology most forcefully.

Language-games are defined in terms of rules that determine their objects and specify proper moves, as the rules of chess define the properties of the pieces and how to move them. It is an important feature of such rule-governed activities that they are social constructions, enduring only as long as the players are prepared to follow the rules -- only, as Lyotard puts it in a significant elaboration of Wittgenstein's concept, so long as the rules are the objects of an acceptable contract between the players. At the same time as undermining any simplistic form of realism, this conception supports a view of scholarship as a set of practices defined by rules of procedure and criteria of success. The notable property of any practice is that, constituted by its rules, it resists demands for justification external to these rules. Coherent practices are not subject to refutation,

continuing as long as people willingly take part in them. If scholarly inquiry consists in such ungrounded practices, then knowledge expressed within them lasts no longer than agreement among the participants. Bodies of knowledge then rest upon social acknowledgment that may be withdrawn.[29] I will assume that this practice-view is essentially correct but maintain that its implications are easily overdrawn.[30]

It is useful to note that severe tensions can arise within a practice-account of knowledge. The absence of superior authorities outside the activities of learning requires that internal criteria be sufficient for identifying solid contributions to scholarship. In these circumstances a kind of guild mentality threatens to prevail in the university, where a system of masters, journeymen, and apprentices may hamper innovation, originality, and heterodox approaches to learning. The use of peer-review sometimes does this, causing important discoveries to be neglected because a fallible elite control access to the favored avenues of expression, the journals that must be read, and the publishers whose books are reviewed. Disagreements are inevitable because even experts can evaluate the same information in different ways. These departures from an ideal of objective knowledge easily encourage the search for new and wider avenues of publication as preferable to a structure of questionable privilege. Further, they can encourage the virtues of democratic opinion over contestable notions of intellectual superiority. Not all of these egalitarian currents can be ascribed to the influence of postmodernism, but they do all have to be reconciled with the fact that if "knowledge" means anything it is not simply a matter of opinion. Something better than opinion is a critical interest and responsibility for the practice of learning. Recourse to professional judgment fills this role, justifying belief by resting it upon the best available training and surviving the most learned criticism. Until a more dependable alternative forces out the imperfect practice, we have to be content with the partial and fallible findings of those who are recognized as experts by experts.[31]

This by no means precludes exploring the unity and universality of knowledge. As I noted earlier, the principle of reason supposes that knowledge is in principle available to everyone, but the assumption of universality can be carefully moderated, saying only that agreement is possible in principle given competent participation in a line of inquiry. Any appropriately educated person, then, should be able to discover truths that can also be known by anyone else. By contrast, before the modern era many knowledge claims were privileged, fit only for initiates: religious mysteries accessible to the faithful alone, alchemical knowledge unique to adepts, and other secret lore comprehensible by specially privileged observers. After the Enlightenment a form of this view may appear to become reasonable again. If scholarly experts work within academic language-games or practices, then anyone who can not participate in particular inquiries cannot gain their knowledge, which thus lacks universality. This restriction is most plausible for certain special domains, such as feminine knowledge, which may rest upon experience that many persons cannot share. Recognizing such knowledge leads to suspicion that universities have preferred ways of knowing that manifest the biases of persons who are not female, not black, not handicapped, and not "different." Universities have thus falsely pretended to universality and thereby failed to serve learning impartially. Such concerns reinforce the notion that there are "knowledges" belonging to the numerous imperfectly communicating groups who are preoccupied with issues arising within their own

language-games. However, as I note below, feminine and other special knowledge should be recognized by postmodernism only with great caution.

Concerns about the undue pretensions of higher education are deeply warranted only if what universities may not have done they cannot do. In order to explore this suggestion, let us review the defense of universality that characterizes the empiricist and rationalist traditions, namely that knowledge rests respectively upon the data of observation or indubitable propositions. Thus, Locke conceived of the mind as a blank slate upon which knowledge is constructed from the sensory information available to any individual and Descartes argued that "I think, therefore I am" in the course of meditations that anyone can repeat. Social practices of inquiry are supposedly not fundamental in these views.[32] They may be pragmatic necessities if knowledge is to grow, but they claim to rest upon truths that can be identified without assistance from other persons. Now, whatever one may think of such foundationalist epistemologies, they do not readily characterize academic knowledge, which is deeply dependent upon testimony rather than arising from solitary experience and reflection. To rely upon testimony is to display a pedigree, placing oneself within a particular line of investigators. However, this genealogy of inquiry does not by itself negate the view that knowledge is available to everyone. One first depends upon testimony, but it can be tested by the many independent sources of confirmation present in any complex inquiry.[33] Although there is a plurality of scholarly communities, the importance of testimony does not make them closed or fundamentally heterogeneous. Even if "phrases from heterogeneous regimens" characteristic of academic fields of knowledge "cannot be translated from one into the other,"[34] the social dimension of knowledge does not preclude participation in any academic practice or participation without inconsistency in more than one. Without some further argument a universalistic conception of knowledge survives rejection of foundationalism.

One might seek that further argument by returning to the point that in any culture the concept of knowledge is reserved for something better than opinion. By philosophical standards that distinction is reserved for beliefs that are both true and justified. Considered from the standpoint of foundationalism, such beliefs express observations of data that are obvious and acknowledged by everyone. But it is only when the data are given theoretical interpretation that they become interesting, for the knowledge they constitute is then made understandable. In explaining phenomena, theories draw them together and offer an account of how and why things happen, making parts of the world comprehensible. This higher learning can be called knowledge as well as understanding, although there is good reason to maintain a distinction. Reports of data are easily tested for truth, but the truth of theories is a more questionable idea. As interpretations of data, theories are subject to competition from other interpretations that are consistent with these data, so that the data alone are inadequate to demonstrate a theory's truth. The underdetermination of theories by data therefore leaves the justification of theories in question. The primary test of understanding is thus rich coherence. This point does not yet divide modern and postmodern views of inquiry, but grounds for substantive disagreement may be found in details of the relation between data and theories.

It is now widely accepted that the basic objects of knowledge, the data, do not come "raw," uninterpreted, or simply "given" in experience. They are thus "theoryladen" and cannot be foundations of knowledge. As I have already suggested and will return to below, however, foundationalism is not essential to the modern conception of knowledge, so the fact that theories influence the identification of data is nothing new. An issue arises only over the much stronger thesis that theories delimit their objects by actually constituting their data, making these data inaccessible to some when theories express experiences that others cannot share. Whereas for any discipline there are data and there are theories that interpret them in various ways, the second level of postmodernism regards this as a distinction without a difference. Following the heuristic of language-games it may seem more appropriate to say that theories create their own data, disciplines create their objects.[35] The explanatory theories that interpret data can thus function differently in modern and postmodern views of knowledge. It is consistent with the modern view to agree that data are theory-laden, but this permits distinguishing data from sheer social constructions. Some postmodernists, though, are tempted to think that, since theories are human contrivances and there are no fully independent data against which to test them, there is no distinguishing the objects of knowledge, data as well as theories, from the creations of social practices. This is a shaky inference, since from the fact that rule-governed activities are social constructions it does not follow that everything about such an activity is a construction.

Discursive practices certainly do delimit a field of objects, but we must be careful to determine in what this delimitation consists. The notion of language-games insinuates an undiscriminating answer. The rules of chess delimit a field of objects when they define the pawns and pieces. They do so in two senses. First, the rules create boundaries outside of which lie the elements of other games, such as checkers. Second, the rules create the pawns and pieces themselves, which do not exist outside the game. They can be defined entirely conceptually in terms of permissible moves without reference to material objects placed on a material board. There thus results a sense in which the rules create their data, namely by determining all the possible moves and positions of pawns and pieces, although the moves and positions making up actual instances of the game are data that can only be determined though inspection. Academic fields also delimit a range of objects in the first sense. They affix boundaries (although not so exclusively as chess in virtue of overlapping interdisciplinary interest in atoms, chemical bonds, genes, organisms, communities, languages, and so on). Further, it is at least arguable that some scholarly discourses create their data in one of the ways that conventional games do, namely setting out all the possibilities a priori. It is much less convincing to suggest that these discourses delimit their objects in the additional sense of actually creating atoms, chemical bonds, kinship relations, elections, and the like. If the analogy with language-games is to be maintained even here, it will depend upon some still further rationale. But this rationale is not to be found in additional arguments and analyses of the interrelations of theories and data. If it is to be found anywhere, it will be seen to emerge from misperceptions of power, concerns about forced consensus, and a critique of structuralism.

THE CRITIQUE OF CONSENSUS AND STRUCTURALISM

Even if one accepts a foundationalist epistemology, there is at least one respect in which knowledge appears to be basically diverse. Foundationalist theories are plausible for science but fail to be enlightening about narrative knowledge. By postulating undeniable data they say nothing about the intentional stance that is necessary for describing human actions, but that leaves these actions subject to a variety of interpretations, no one of which is ever fully authoritative. This potential variety is typical of coherence as a major criterion of knowledge, since using coherence as a test leaves open the possibility of alternative systems of coherent propositions. The need for scholarship to occur within a community is thus joined by a second feature of which postmodernists sometimes make too much, namely the impossibility of arriving at a final consensus where there are always disparate possible interpretations of events. This feature of coherence as a criterion of knowledge is certainly important, but it does not fully support the notion that scientific and narrative knowledge are deeply different. That would probably be the case if the modern conception of scientific knowledge included foundationalism and realism, but the assumption is mistaken. Empiricist and rationalist theories of knowledge are not best seen as defining a conception of knowledge but as explanations of the capacity of investigators to agree in their judgments.

These foundationalist epistemologies are prominent in the gospels of the Enlightenment, but we should remind ourselves that they do not have the dominance ascribed to them. They have been explicitly contested in their essentials by thinkers from Edmund Burke to Hans-Georg Gadamer, who stress the role of tradition and prejudice in knowledge over the representation of things as they really are. Although Locke's notion of the mind as a blank slate has defined an important research program in philosophy, the Burkeian view that prejudice is essential for knowledge represents a competing program that explains scholarly agreement by reference to traditions of inquiry, their presuppositions, and an existing history of results. Of course, Burke was a critic of many aspects of the Enlightenment, but he was an informed participant in this cultural discussion. If modernity is to be a useful notion it cannot be associated too tightly with a single epistemological style. When this mistake is avoided, competing theories of knowledge provide different explanations of the capacity of scholars to agree in their conclusions after careful study, but they do not undermine the assumption that consensus should be striven for and can be reached.

A problem for academic knowledge could still be posed by a systematic inability of investigators to reach agreements. In the modern university the knowledgeable colleagues to whom one is answerable are widely distributed. Even in minute specializations, the identification of good scholars and scientists calls upon expertise in broader disciplines of inquiry in which people must prove themselves.[36] The problem arises when one's equals are much more narrowly constituted. New fields of study pursued within peculiar vocabularies and driven by particular interests make inspection difficult, so that it is feasible to wonder whether there is any criterion for expertise other than self-identification. In this context, the discursive practices central to accounts of the postmodern, condition suggest a dramatic increase in the fragmentation of inquiry beyond that defined by the different general criteria for knowledge employed in science and the

arts. In this case, however, the appropriate image is not fragmentation but disintegration. If access to knowledge were privileged according to the social identity of the knower, then it would also be hindered by the differences that postmodern theory expects to occur within any group. The definition of any social identity should be constantly upset by the tendency to challenge rules and transgress boundaries. Brave attempts to identify a feminine or gay science, for example, like attempts to develop a proletarian science before them, founder on the unyielding fact that personal identity is rent by difference.

It is interesting in this connection that postmodern theorists often equate modernism with humanism and the idea that the subject is a real thing, the substance or self-certainty of Descartes's cogito. On this view, the university should rid itself of the conception of knowledge that presupposes that there is a real subject of knowledge.[37] It is questionable, though, whether the university was ever possessed by this conception. It is challenged by Hume's view of the self as a "fiction or imaginary principle of union" and by Hegel's view that self-consciousness depends upon being acknowledged or recognized by others.[38] Either of the alternative modern streams of thinking about subjecthood permits recognizing that a person's sex or race can be epistemologically significant. A woman may identify herself as a woman, as a mother, as a member of an oppressed group, and in other ways that give her a contingent perspective upon events and a capacity to interpret them that most men lack. She may also exemplify Foucault's interest in promoting "new forms of subjectivity" in preference to the "kind of individuality which has been imposed upon us for several centuries."[39] However, these capacities do not define a feminine epistemology if the point of such a theory is analogous to that of other theories of knowledge, that is, to explain the capacity of scholars to agree in their judgments. In the absence of critical agreement on what counts as feminine knowledge, such an epistemology can only provide a useful complement to established theories by describing the role of factors, such as emotional perception and know-how, that are peripheral in standard accounts of knowledge as justified true belief.[40] This by no means compromises the universality of propositional knowledge in the sense that identifies it with the capacity to participate in any practice of inquiry. To attack this cornerstone of the modern university, the focus on agreement itself has to be repudiated.

Thus, Lyotard maintains that "[C]onsensus obtained through discussion ... does violence to the heterogeneity of language games" (PC, xxv).[41] In saying this, he holds that to admire agreement betrays unjustifiable epistemic aspirations and unjust hostility to difference. The epistemic point is supported by the fact that the rules governing language-games are not statements that can be verified by reference to the way things are. They have the logical form of prescriptions and are thus inherently subject to resistance and challenge, so that the players can always be petitioned to adopt different rules. Postmodern knowledge can therefore rest upon "paralogy," which is an imaginative "search for dissent" (PC, 60, 65-66). Seeking dissension, players create instabilities that undermine the framework within which the search for knowledge has previously been conducted and promote new rules characterizing new fields of research. The moral point is reminiscent of Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor, for whom only "miserable creatures" have "to find something that all believe in."[42] It also expresses the fact that any framework of rules, including the framework of normal inquiry, can be enforced by

existing authority. This suppression of imagination, criticism, and dissent is for Lyotard an exercise in power, indeed in terror. Since terrorism is unjust, any legitimate social order will be based upon negotiable agreements rather than permanent institutions. Any consensus on the rules defining a game and the playable moves is and should be strictly local and temporary, accepted by the present players and subject to eventual cancellation. As a result, the future of knowledge and society is fundamentally open.

This important line of thought is evident when Derrida complains of the vertical structure of knowledge that tends to immobilize all the authorized frontiers of inquiry.[43] Foucauldian comparisons between academic disciplines and the discipline exerted by such social institutions as prisons and military establishments are also appropriate here.[44] The power to control and punish is as much part of the pursuit of knowledge as of any other part of social life. The association of power and knowledge is therefore one without which postmodernist educational objectives cannot be understood, but it is important not to overstate it. According to Foucault, "We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes,' it 'represses,' ... it 'masks,' it 'conceals.' In fact, power produces; ... it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth."[45] Reflection on discursive practices and language-games shows that their rules are not simply repressive but enabling. They create possibilities for action that do not exist without them, along with authorities and limitations. The limitations in question are not inherently objectionable, however, since they serve, as Locke said of laws, "to preserve and enlarge freedom."[46] Two qualifications are necessary but do not alter the fundamental point. First, where authority exists it can be abused, in which case the appropriate response is to attack the abuse rather than the rules that create its possibility. The practice of academic peer review permits rigging the evaluation of research in various ways, but the problem is corruption within the practice rather than the practice itself.[47] Second, rules can become oppressive, occasioning frustration and exclusion, in which case the game, practice, or institution in question stands in need of reform or rejection. But because rules and games are enabling it would be contrary to human well-being to engage in universal criticism aimed at the destruction of all institutions. This poses a fundamental constraint on any paralogical search for dissent, although occasions for particular criticisms of particular sets of rules are ever-present.[48]

Foucault's form of critique elaborates these elementary reflections by encouraging "moments of liberation from social order" and seeking to "defamiliarize" the concepts and behavior that make social practices and institutions appear as natural or necessary. This sanctions challenges at least on the periphery of generally accepted social conventions, but the account nicely fits the practice of criticism that has long been central to the vocation of higher education rather than describing anything distinctively postmodern. Instead, Foucault's remarks do two important but less fundamental things. First, they express appreciation of the turmoil of change in which rule-governed debate is submerged by an "anything goes" style of argument. Postmodern philosophers are often prepared to mix logic and rhetorical persuasion willy-nilly in order to provoke contests and to inject useful confusion into a debate gone stale. When revelling in obscurity has such a clear practical purpose, it will not offend modernists. However, while the passion for clarity may be typical of modernists, who, in Bruno Latour's description, are

"obsessed by the distinction between rationality and obscurantism," the legitimate uses of obscurity are limited for anyone who subscribes to critical thinking.[49]

Second, Foucault's remarks express rejection of one family of modem social theory. Marx described a society in which one class systematically imposes its power upon another, one sign of which is capitalism reducing knowledge to a commodity produced solely for exchange, undermining opportunities for curiosity to drive inquiry and promoting a passion for efficiency that is inhospitable to learning as it was once understood. His work has been followed by similar analyses of patriarchal and racial power as constituting oppressive social structures that can only be removed by the overthrow of the social system. Foucault replaces structural combat with local struggles, denying that there is any "binary and all-encompassing opposition between ruler and ruled at the root of power relations."[50] Since the concept of structural opposition is not typical of all modernist views, its rejection does not entail a rejection of modernity. Postmodernism diverges decisively from the assumptions of modernism only when the oppositional stance of structuralist theory outlives the theory and is seen as integral to the questioning and critical attitude appropriate for universities. Criticism, thus augmented, must not only challenge but also oppose dominant institutions. The theory then obliges the postmodern university to repudiate the difference between its cognitive values on the one hand and political partisanship on the other and thus to "join cultural analysis with tactics of cultural resistance."[51] But this is a second-layer view that collapses as soon as criticism is differentiated from opposition.

The distinction would be specious if knowledge were obviously tied to pernicious political power, but this is an entirely moot point in the absence of an accepted analysis of what power is or what makes something political. Certainly Foucault does not identify all power as political in the original sense of "political," explaining that "By power I do not mean ... a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state."[52] Scholars can point out, as he does of sexuality, that the objects of their inquiry are not disinterestedly identified but constituted as an area of investigation because it suits certain interests or "relations of power."[53] Powerful interests do succeed in fashioning disciplines that identify objects not previously part of academic inquiry or popular attention. Sensitivity to conceptual difference is important when making this point, however, since there are ways of delimiting objects of inquiry that are not obviously productions of consciousness that express political and intellectual partisanship. It remains arguable that the modern differentiation of politics from such other major institutions as kinship, religion, and education need not continue to characterize postmodern culture, but only then might knowledge and political power be "simply two sides of the same question," making "the question of knowledge ... a question of government" (PC, 9).

The cogent version of the fusion of knowledge and power in higher education describes the constituting relationships of cognitive authority, which identify who may participate in inquiry, what objects are worthy of study, where one may speak and where one must listen, how to identify experts, and the like.[54] Given the basic characteristics of the postmodern critique of knowledge, power in such relationships should be broadly

distributed. In the absence of obvious foundations for knowledge, judgments improve upon opinion the more they are subjected to testing from many perspectives. Where metaphysical doctrines such as realism are under suspicion, the function they served for depicting the objectivity of knowledge is assumed at least in part by the interdisciplinary assessment of claims.[55] And, since excluding criticism by favoring some elements of society over others leads to a diminished claim to knowledge, the theoretical perspectives of oppressed and marginalized groups in particular should be represented in any scholarly community. Their insightful perspectives enhance objectivity by providing inquiry with a democratic and egalitarian impetus, but it is notable that this impetus need not foster dissensus. On the contrary, one of the central rules of the language-game of democracy can be to strive for agreement.[56]

BETWEEN AND ABOVE ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES

I have argued that even in the absence of metaphysical foundations for knowledge, human beings inhabit a natural and social environment that resists arbitrary interpretation. Any critique of rationality should show that research results in discovery, that is, in original propositions that withstand criticism of all sorts. These sturdy hypotheses often arise within traditions of normal inquiry that take the rules of a discipline as given and apply them in order to gain new results. At the same time, traditions of inquiry can be frustrating, leading to the desire to transgress limits and gain a measure of liberation from the existing academic order. The traditions are thus themselves open to criticism that can result in the emergence of new fields and new relations between fields. Intellectual advance often occurs in this way, as dissatisfaction with prevailing rules causes them to be questioned and sometimes to yield.[57] Yet if democratic norms are to distinguish knowledge from opinion they will not permit transgressing rules of inquiry with impunity. Otherwise criticism decays into uninformed questioning, breaking any connection with learning.

It nonetheless remains arguable that education will become decoupled from the pursuit of knowledge as a single, coherent practice. A postmodern sociologist says that the purpose of his subject "is not to accumulate knowledge ... but to be part of the ongoing conversation ... over the present and future shape of the social world."[58] The idea of a general cultural discourse transcending academic specializations addresses the question whether conversation in the human sciences and the arts entails cognitive fragmentation between them and the natural sciences or permits a holistic conception of scholarship that connects a family of intellectual activities. If the primary test of understanding the world is rich coherence, then critical inquiry consists in articulating compelling stories, leaving scientific and humanistic research fundamentally alike. This confirms a superdisciplinary ambition to bring even scientific discourse within the catholic family of language-games whose principal requirement is conformity to their own rules rather than (metaphysically speaking) external reference. However, this highly general point about discursive practices will not sustain useful conversation for very long. If the aspiration to get beyond disciplines is to be interesting, it needs more intellectual substance.

Postmodern inquiry is resolutely both interdisciplinary and superdisciplinary. The former interest arises partly as an expression of the fact that connecting fields can enhance the "performativity" sought by the social system, partly because the perceived feudal organization of jealously guarded disciplines is broken down by the promotion of instabilities. Referring to "performativity" ironically recognizes that the system requires skills that have the potential to undermine it, but the characterization of a modern-cum-medieval organization of knowledge is less obvious. Academic disciplines have not successfully resisted change or been impermeable to one another. Even for foundationalists the world does not naturally divide into bodies of potential knowledge. Given that the lines must be drawn by human beings, areas of inquiry are driven by the interests of investigators, which make disciplines inherently mutable things. The fact is apparent from any sufficiently long view of a subject matter, where the notion of its having a natural place within a stately tree of knowledge is readily replaced by the idea of knowledge as an iris patch, whose connections are made by rhizomes that cross and grow out of each other without there being any essentially organizing structure.[59] This is a postmodern image, but something very like it can be found in Diderot's "Prospectus" for the Encyclopedia.[60]

Often unannounced and unadvertised, the standard university curriculum modifies itself to reflect new discoveries and interests. In the experimental sciences, botany and zoology merged into biology decades ago as common principles were identified, and much of biology is now merging with the medical sciences. Molecular biology has erased basic distinctions between the physical and the life sciences, if not between academic departments. In the humanities and human sciences similar developments have taken place. In subject after subject, research and teaching have incorporated considerations of human difference, so that normal inquiry includes the place of ethnic minorities in the history of national cultures, the contribution of subordinate classes to the life of modem countries, the role of women in classical civilization, and innumerable similar topics discussed within self-transforming traditional disciplines. Of course, the causes of these developments are complex, including the identification of bridging principles that enable disciplines to intersect and the changing demographics of higher education that make attending to particular social groups unavoidable. This complexity does not explain the puzzling criticism that academic disciplines jealously guard their boundaries, however. What, then, inclines postmodernism to neglect some evident facts?

The answer must reside partly in the recognition that changes in the organization of higher learning do not always reflect welcome and reasonable criticism and debate. When disciplines begin to intersect, this happens not only through discovery but also through legal battles, public demonstrations, and emotional appeals. Whereas for modernists the permeability of disciplines to one another increases primarily as a result of understanding theoretical principles that connect them, postmodern thinkers recognize that the process is often disorderly. They are sensitive to the turmoil of change, paradigm shifts, confrontations between colleagues, and struggles between establishments and pretenders. But these are not deeply opposed perspectives. Thus far, the views are complementary, differing in focus rather than disagreeing. This changes only when sensitivity to disorder becomes support for the idea that scholarship aims not to understand the world but to

change it. Then theoretical improvements alone are not progressive, since they do not undermine the social and intellectual dominance that families of academic disciplines, especially science, have come to enjoy. This critique of traditional disciplines, though, conflates two different matters. It is one thing to recognize that disciplines are not only practices of inquiry but also concentrations of special power whose effects deserve exposure and examination. It is another thing entirely to suppose that there is an obligation to discard knowledge or contribute to its fragmentation in the interest of dismantling such power. Unless one exaggerates in this way, there is no mistaking the changes to disciplines that are an inherent part of the culture of the university.

If there is a valid obligation it will be discerned in the high moral purpose expressed by Derrida, Foucault, and Lyotard. "There is no knowledge in matters of ethics" according to Lyotard,[61] but he passionately insists that "justice as a value is neither outmoded nor suspect" (PC, 66). This moral seriousness may be limited in the presence of the postmodern "incredulity toward metanarratives" that constrains grand intellectual schemes, but it is also integral to this philosophical stance, serving to define an ethics of belief to which all parties might reasonably subscribe.[62] Responsibility for inquiry does not rest upon an epistemological or metaphysical theory, but it must acknowledge criteria for the good professional judgment whose results improve upon opinion. It includes social and political criticism, though this is consistent with distinguishing between analysis and advocacy. The ethics of belief may also require disseminating ideas, including a superdisciplinary conversation that provides a bridge between the academy and the broader public. However, this discourse of cultural generality is an articulation of scientific and narrative knowledge rather than its arbiter. In this respect, it can be compared to the history, philosophy, or sociology of a discipline, none of which determine what is true in the disciplines they study. To suggest more grandly that universities should seek the proliferation of uncommunicating knowledges or the subordination of academic disciplines to critical oversight may only confuse the nomadic and cosmopolitan way of life that inspires postmodernism with a need to challenge customs and traditions of inquiry. As long as such excesses are avoided, postmodernism effectively identifies responsibilities that universities need to consider in clarifying their enduring educational purpose and defending it undogmatically.

Such freedom from the constraints of metaphysical, epistemological, and political canons should enhance our capacity to think effectively about the pursuit of knowledge and understanding. These would be precarious pursuits if their success depended upon the adequacy of particular philosophical theories that are longstanding sources of controversy. Since progress within and between disciplines occurs without resolution of these controversies, there is no need to be distracted by them. Instead, debating the terms of the education of well-prepared professional investigators and the obligations that define the ethics of belief will keep the interpretation of universities' purposes usefully present to our attention.

University of Guelph, and colleagues in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Adelaide during a visiting research fellowship there.

1. Compare Donald Davidson, "The Folly of Trying to Define Truth," The Journal of Philosophy, 93 (1996): 264-65.

2. "Knowledges" is a neologism of Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge: Interviews and Other Writings, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980). Genres of discourse are discussed by Jean-Francois Lyotard, The Differend: Phrases in Dispute, trans. G. Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

3. See Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge, 113, and The Archaeology of Knowledge (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 223.

4. Michel Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 197.

5. See Barry Allen, "Forbidding Knowledge," The Monist 79 (1996): 297.

6. Compare Ludwig Wittgenstein's point that one's concept of a game does not extend beyond the examples that one can give of it, Philosophical Investigations (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), section75. This and Wittgenstein's other later work, along with Kant's third Critique and his historical-political texts, are characterized by Lyotard as "epilogues to modernity and prologues to an honorable postmodernity," The Differend, xiii.

7. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Whoever seeks to mediate between two decided thinkers ... lacks an eye for the unique; seeing similarities ... is the sign of weak eyes," my translation of The Gay Science, section 228, from Nietzsche Werke, ed. Georgio Colli and Massino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1973).

8. Rorty's critiques of foundationalism and realism are clearly articulated in a number of works, including Richard Rorty, Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); Richard Rorty, Consequences of Pragmatism (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), esp. chap. 11; and Richard Rorty, Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.) His attitude toward structuralist political theories and the second-level views of "the Foucauldian Left" is expressed in Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 37.

9. Of course, the associated issues extend more broadly. See the contributions to Anthony Smith and Frank Webster, eds., The Postmodern University? Contested Visions of Higher Education in Society (Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, 1997).

10. The image of Chernobyl is consistently worked through by Robert Nola, "Post-modernism, a French Cultural Chernobyl: Foucault on Power/Knowledge," Inquiry 37

(1994): 3-43. The play on "higher education" comes from Paul R. Gross and Norman Levitt, Higher Superstition: The Academic Left and Its Quarrels with Science (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

11. See Michael Rosenthal, commenting as a bookseller on the decline of popular interest in postmodernism in "What Was Postmodernism?" Socialist Review 22, no. 3 (July-Sept. 1992): 100.

12. The hopelessness of exchanging insults is well-illustrated by Jacques Derrida, "The Principle of Reason: The University in the Eyes of Its Pupils," Diacritics 13, no. 3 (Fall 1983): 15n.

13. Jurgen Habermas, Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 282, 295, and 302.

14. See Jacques Derrida, Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), chap. 9, esp. 263-65 and 273-76. Compare Fred Dallmayer, "Poststructuralism and Deconstruction," in G. F. W. Hegel: Modernity and Politics (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1993), 233-38.

15. Thus, for example, when Charles Taylor charges that Rorty pays too little attention to the relation between truth and representations of reality, Rorty appropriately replies that we should drop the representationalist problematic all together. See Charles Taylor, "Rorty in the Epistemological Tradition," in Reading Rorty, ed. A. Malachowski (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 272; and Richard Rorty, "Taylor on Truth," in Philosophy in the Age of Pluralism: The Philosophy of Charles Taylor in Question, ed. James Tully (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 29-30.

16. Compare Terry Eagleson, Illusions of Postmodernism {Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), viii.

17. See Derrida, "The Principle of Reason," 8. He does not note that the principle was also respected by Thomas Aquinas and the medieval university.

18. It is worth noting that even enthusiastic champions of the principle of reason acknowledge that it has been constrained in parts of the university. See for example, Immanuel Kant, The Conflict of the Faculties, trans. M.J. Gregor (New York: Abatis Books, 1979), 23-45. In any event, characterizations of "the modem university" deserve their own skeptics. Wilhelm von Humboldt, whom Lyotard names as important to its development, was at best an ambiguous defender of Enlightenment rationalism. Compare Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 32-33. This book will be cited as PC in the text for all subsequent references. For Humboldt's complex views see "Ideen fiber Staatsverfassung, dutch die neue franzosische Constitution veranlasst," in Wilhelm yon Humboldt, Werke, vol. 1, ed. Andreas Flitner and Klaus Giel (Stuttgart: J.G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1960).

19. Compare Michel Foucault, "The Subject of Power," included as an "Afterword," in H.L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 209-12.

20. See John Dewey, Theory of Valuation, in International Encyclopedia of Unified Science, vol. 2, no. 4 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 40. I am grateful to Barry Allen for reminding me of Dewey's view.

21. Foucault, Power/Knowledge, 60.

22. For this formulation see Mary Hesse, "How to be Postmodern Without Being a Feminist," The Monist, 77 (1994): 448 and 456.

23. Thomas S. Kuhn's account of a community's paradigms in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962) has been read by postmodernists in this way. It is notable that this famous work was published as part of the International Encyclopedia of Unified Science, a series devoted to the development of ideas in the tradition of logical empiricism.

24. Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 158.

25. Richard Rorty offers this characterization in Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 131.

26. Jean Baudrillard, Simulations, trans. by Paul Foss, Paul Patton, and Philip Beitchman (New York: Semiotext (e), 1983), 3-4.

27. See Robert Hughes's review of Baudrillard, America is Nothing if Not Critical: Selected Essays on Art and Artists (London: Harvill Press, 1990), 378.

28. See Simon Blackburn, Essays in Quasi-Realism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 15.

29. Compare Ludwig Wittgenstein, On Certainty (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969), section378: "Knowledge is in the end based on acknowledgement."

30. In doing this, I necessarily leave aside the complexities of practices (evident in Lyotard's later work, The Differend, and Foucault's notion of disciplines) that make the language-game model decidedly imperfect. It is still useful.

31. Existing methods of peer-review appear to be in serious need of reform. See David Shatz, "Is Peer Review Overrated?" The Monist 79 (1996): 536-63. None of the proposed reforms obviate the need to depend upon professional judgment as a primary test of knowledge, however.

32. Compare Dorothy E. Smith, Writing the Social: Critique, Theory, and Investigations (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 241, fn. 20.

33. Jonathan E. Adler, "Testimony, Trust, Knowing," Journal of Philosophy 91 (1994): 264-75.

34. Lyotard, The Differend, xii.

35. For Foucault, the "delinquent" is fabricated as the object of penitentiary science in Discipline and Punish (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 255. Similarly, "mental illness was constituted by all that was said in the statements that named it," and discourses more generally are "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak," The Archeology of Knowledge, 32 and 49. Foucault does not give these cases as examples of a general thesis about the objects of knowledge but as illustrations of the way in which select forms of modern knowledge constitute their objects. Others do generalize. According to Susan Hekman, Carol Gilligan's "theory creates its own data," Moral Voices, Moral Selves: Carol Gilligan and Feminist Moral Theory (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 19.

36. A useful account of these relations in the case of biology is offered by Philip Kitcher, The Advancement of Science (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 56-59.

37. See, for example, Jean-Francois Lyotard, The Inhuman (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 4-7, where he stresses the "naive indeterminacy" of the "inhuman."

38. David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), 262 and G.F.W. Hegel, The Phenomenology of Spirit, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 111. See also Dorothy Smith's characterization of George H. Mead's account of the individuated subject in Dorothy Smith, Writing the Social, 109.

39. Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," in H.W. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 216.

40. For useful reflections on emotional perception and know-how, see Martha Nussbaum, Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), and Code, What Can She Know?

41. The universal form of this statement and its reference to "our sensitivity" might suggest that general agreements remain or should still be encouraged, but I assume that skilful philosophers do not make obvious mistakes.

42. Fyodor Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, trans. David Magarshack (London: Penguin Books, 1982), 298.

43. Jacques Derrida, Du droit a la philosophie (Paris: Editions Galilee, 1990), 572.

44. Note, though, that Foucault appears to distinguish the responsibility to understand and the responsibility to change the world in suggesting that "What the intellectual can do is to provide instruments of analysis. ... But as for saying, 'Here is what you must do!' certainly not." See Foucault, Power/Knowledge, 62.

45. Foucault, Discipline and Punish, 194. Compare Lyotard's distinction between power and force (which belongs only to the language-game of technology) and terror (which in the social bond is threatened with destruction), The Postmodern Condition, 46. Foucault also distinguishes power and force in Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture, ed. L.D. Kritzman (New York: Routledge, 1988), 83.

46. John Locke, Two Treatises of Government, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 2, 57.

47. See John Kekes, "Academic Corruption," The Monist, 79 (1996): 564-76.

48. Possibly this is Foucault's meaning when he says, "perhaps one must not be for consensuality, but one must be against nonconsensuality, "Politics and Ethics: An Interview," in Paul Rabinow, The Foucault Reader (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 379.

49. Bruno Latour, We Have Never Been Modern, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 36.

50. Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 94.

51. A series of books published by the University of Minnesota Press advertises this as its general objective in Lingua Franca (September-October 1992): 21.

52. Foucault, The History of Sexuality, 92.

53. Ibid., 98.

54. These points are nicely set out by Elizabeth S. Anderson, "The Democratic University: The Role of Justice in the Production of Knowledge," Social Philosophy and Policy 12 (1995): 186-219.

55. See Derrida, Du droit a la philosophie, 569.

56. See in particular, Donald R.C. Reed, Following Kohlberg: Liberalism and the Practice of Democratic Community (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 1997), 196-97.

57. See Lyotard on justice, which "does not merely consist in the observance of rules .... it consists in working at the limits of what the rules permit, in order to invent new moves, perhaps new games"; Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jean-Loup Thebaud, Just Gaming (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 100.

58. Steven Seidman, Contested Knowledge: Social Theory in the Postmodern Era (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), ix.

59. See the introduction to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, 5-25.

60. Speaking of the "arbitrariness" of the "tree of knowledge," Diderot says, "if on this ocean of objects surrounding us, there should appear a few that seem to break through the surface and to dominate the rest like the crest of a reef, they merely owe this advantage to particular systems, to vague conventions, and to certain events that have nothing to do with the physical arrangement of beings"; cited in Robert Darnton, The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 195. I am grateful to Wayne Thorpe for this reference.

61. See Lyotard and Thebaud, Just Gaming, 73.

62. On the central place of philosophical incredulity, see Nicholas C. Burbules, "Postmodern Doubt and Philosophy of Education," Philosophy of Education 1995, fn. 5. <http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/EPS/PESYearbook/95_docs/burbules.htm l> (1 June 1998).

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In particular, the university aligns itself with the commodification of knowledge and adopts an uncritical stance in relation to the imposition of market forces within Higher Education. This supports the legitimisation of learning that is external to the university and validates such phenomena as Lifelong Learning, Experiential Learning and other forms of work-based learning. Although not entirely critical of these forms of learning, this thesis presents a cautionary view of these developments. Specifically, the discipline of education in considering the position of the university within the p...