

The future of the humanities in today's neoliberal environment

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ABSTRACT

This paper approaches the decline in the study and teaching of the humanities within the university context from a global financial perspective. As humanities departments are either closed down or have their curriculum attenuated, obviously we can say that the revenue that was previously present to support such programs has not been forthcoming. Accordingly, this paper argues that resources that could have supported the humanities have been available to the university, but they have been applied elsewhere to increase the administration and ancillary support staff, in

supporting the social sciences and in augmenting business and management programs. This paper links such decline to the growing financialization of the economy, the ideology of managerialism and the emergence of the "academic capitalist" regime, as defined by Slaughter and Rhoades (2004, 2005). These developments can be traced to an underlying 'neoliberal ideology' - a form of liberalism in which the market freedoms achieve an extreme dominance. One observes that higher education has continuously embraced the central neoliberal principle that denies the concept of public good, in regarding education as a private good rather than a public good. The emphasis on such notion encourages the belief that individual choices and market exchanges most efficiently determine the allocation of resources, and necessarily entails that subjects more directly related to monetary interests will prioritized over the humanities.

Keywords

Neoliberalism, University Curriculum, Humanities, Financialization, Common Good

Introduction

Neoliberalism in the minds of many is an ideology that strives to justify a state of affairs in which social and political affairs are increasingly driven by market and commercial imperatives. The imperatives of neoliberalism are regarded as entailing a reality in which various combinations of economic and financial interests exercise preeminent dominance. Within this reality there is no centrally locatable point of control, but rather elite, coterminous with multifarious economic and commercial interests. However, this does not mean that neoliberalism is a mere epiphenomenal appendage or mere intellectual window dressing. It serves an intellectual basis for policies that are transforming and restructuring our social existence.

Demonstrably, the so-called managerialism and financialization, both which continue to restructure social and working relationships and even our very thinking, are closely integrated within the neoliberal *weltanschauung*. In the following text we will demonstrate how these elements are effecting a transformation of the university and the decline of the humanities.

Although the term neoliberalism has been often used somewhat imprecisely, it can be most generally defined as the belief that the optimal way for organizing exchanges of goods and services is through freely adopted market mechanisms (Friedman, 1980). As D.E. Thorsen and A. Lie (2006) assert, "The practical implementation of neoliberal policies will, therefore, lead to a relocation of power from political to economic processes,

from the state to markets and individuals, and finally from the legislature and executive authorities to the judiciary.” The policies most prominently associated with this practical implementation include: privatization, the cutting of public expenditure on social programs, deregulation and the elimination of the concept of the public good or community and the substitution of individual responsibility.

The neoliberal ideology has pushed for greater deregulation of the economy, but may also find itself in conflict with democratic imperatives. Promoters of neoliberalism find no difficulty in asserting the priority of the market when such conflicts occur. Milton Friedman (1974), for example, boldly asserted “free markets free men” in his famous London lecture in 1974. Moreover, Friedman acted as economic advisor to the Chilean government that came to power through a coup that overthrew the elected president Salvador Allende (Friedman 1980).

Regardless of the pronouncements on the liberating qualities of the free market, there is an obvious authoritarian aspect to recent social and economic developments, as realized in the weakening of unions, and the undermining of democratic principles. Pinochet’s Chile remains a striking example of the partnership of totalitarianism, neoliberalism and anti-union policy. In 1953 the Workers United Center of Chile was created bringing together 65% of all the unions in Chile. Under Salvador Allende, CUT (*Central Unitario Trabajadores de Chile*) was formerly established as the agent for collective bargaining at the national federation level rather than at the local union or factory level (Zapata 1976). Allende was overthrown and the subsequent Pinochet regime outlawed the organization entirely whereas previously Allende had recognized the union as an important political actor (Leer and Collins, 1995). Pinochet’s crackdown on the labor organization together with his neoliberal policies exacerbated unemployment, which reached an historic high of 17% during his governance (Marcel, 1993).

A more subtle form of disempowerment of labor unionism occurred

under New Labour in the United Kingdom. Labor unions can be understood as an important component of institutionalized democracy insofar as they act, as they exist, as the formal representative of a significant segment of the working class. Historically, labor unions in Britain have been a strong and powerful constituency within the Labour Party. However, as the Labour Party enacted neoliberal policies, the unions have successively lost control and influence over the party’s decision making (Daniels & McIlroy, 2008). As Gary Daniels and John McIlroy (2008, 4) explain, “Neoliberalism attempts, it encourages, it tries to introduce a degree of change, it strives to alter balances. It endeavors to drive transformation in different political junctures with different histories through different forms of ideological, economic and political struggle.” New labor’s policies were subtly designed to recalibrate the balance between labour and management. ‘Partnership’ was the device adopted to develop a neoliberal trade union movement, which meant that unions were no longer the indispensable intermediaries between employers and worker. Two-hundred-and-twenty formal partnership agreements were enacted to shackle union militancy by unions’ consenting to renounce class conflict and participate in a drive to increase profits and productivity. A decline in both union membership and the number of unions has been evident as the number of unions declined from 453 in 1979 to 245 in 1997 and the number of union members declined from 12.6 million in 1979 to less than eight million in 1996 (Daniels & McIlroy 2008; 98).

The weakening of the unions has been accompanied by the promotion of a political culture dominated by experts and elites. In this respect proponents of neoliberalism prefer decision making by executive order or the judicial decision rather than parliamentary or legislative rule susceptible to the influence of the demos (Rosow & George 2014: 43). At the same time with neoliberalism one encounters a further demand that particular institutions such as the central bank be immune from democratic oversight. While a totalitarian regime can be entirely acceptable to neoliberal imperatives, as in the case of Pinochet’s Chile, it is argued that neoliberalism actually prefers a managed

democracy, one which has been described as polyarchy (Rosow & George, 2014, 43). Within this context the choices available to the electors are managed by elite so that ultimately the choice lies between policies offered by the competing elites. As C.B. Macpherson (1977) has explained, the political realities within modern Western democracies mean that the will of the people is not a datum to which the electoral system responds. The so called will of the people, according to Macpherson, is manufactured in ways analogous to commercial advertising. The people neither raise nor decide issues but the issues that shape their fate are normally raised and decided for them. In a sense neoliberalism tolerates political institutions insofar as these institutions are prepared to give strong support to property rights, while providing a strong security presence to maintain order and compliance to legal regime of minimal economic regulation.

Cailin Cotoi (2010) claims that Michel Foucault's research on neoliberal governmentality does not take liberalism as a political theory, ideology or theoretical standpoint on modernity. Liberalism and neoliberalism are seen as "practices, reflexive modes of action, and special ways of rationalizing the governance". On this view neoliberalism apparently refers to a set of practices, forms of action, ways of rationalizing control, phenomena that, Wittgenstein (2009) would claim, bear a family resemblance rather than clearly defined common characteristic.

However, the approach of this text is one which seeks to understand neoliberalism by exploring its role in reorganizing and reorienting social and institutional relationships. The financialization of the economy strikingly illustrates these so-called neoliberal developments. Prominent financial players have been conspicuously engaged in agenda associated with neoliberalism such as deregulation. Enron, for example, which in the 1990s transformed itself from a basic energy provider to become a principal trader of energy related derivatives, was at the same time a vocal and powerful supporter, and ultimately infamous beneficiary of deregulation.

Financialization, in turn, is closely associated with a managerial approach to social organization, often referred to by the term managerialism, which has been frequently applied to the so called reforms that in recent decades have permeated prominent Western institutions from the civil service, health care to the education system and the universities themselves. Contemporary wisdom alleges that managers offer a set of managerial techniques which we associate with the term "managerialism". Denhardt, in discussing managerialism as it relates to public administration, equates it with the importation of business management practices, "...designed specifically to increase profit and efficiency, into public agencies" (Denhardt 1993: 8-9). Examples of these practices include: Strategic planning activities, performance remunerations systems, quality control systems, quality assurance systems, organizational reengineering and auditing procedures. Of course these developments have also taken place within the realms of education and healthcare, as well as the civil service. Overall, Managerialism, which encompasses a spectrum of procedures and techniques, claims to restructure bureaucratic organizations for greater efficiency and economy. These claims are linked to the allegation that the public sector is inefficient and wasteful, and thus not giving value for money because of the absence of an automatic disciplining mechanism. Value for money has become a central justification for greater managerial control and has engendered the so-called value for money audit, which will be discussed in more detail later in the paper.

Ideologically, managers express a strong belief that their procedures and techniques are the appropriate means to solve organization problems (Krantz & Gilmore, 1990). This position, argue some, has led managers to believe that organizational goals can only be achieved by excessively controlling the behavior of subordinates through rules and procedures embedded in the structures of their organizations (Zaleznik 1990, 6). Some, notably William Scott have noted the ideological conflict between managerialism and autonomy (Scott & Barnard, 1992). For Scott, managerialism reflects a belief system that contrasts sharply

with the values underlying traditional democratic notions of individual freedom and autonomy. He acknowledges that the American political system has always incorporated a tension between two somewhat contradictory value sets. One stresses individual liberty and the other emphasizes legitimate demands placed on the individual by the community, but he suggests, managerialism represents the ascendancy of community values at the sacrifice of individualism (Scott & Barnard 1992, 159).

However, this work will demonstrate in the following pages that it is mistaken to believe the managerial approach promotes community values over individual interests; the reality is one in which the managerial approach implements an authoritarian regime rejecting the idea that organizations can be understood as communities and we argue the resulting outcomes of such an approach can be viewed as inconsistent with the public interest. The following text demonstrates that managerialism implements a narrowly defined instrumental approach justified by the value of greater efficiency, as defined solely in monetary terms. The following treatment of the decline of the humanities in higher education is intended to demonstrate the infelicitous social consequences of this approach.

Contextualizing a Market Driven Approach to Higher Education

Ginsberg, 2011, 178 cites factual evidence that the humanities are in decline. Citing a NAS (National Association of Scholars) study, he reports that around the time of the First World War virtually all American colleges required students to take courses in English composition, foreign languages, history, literature, philosophy, social sciences, natural sciences and mathematics. By the 1990s barely a third of the fifty schools in the NAS sample required English composition, only 14 percent required a literature course, 45 percent a philosophy course, 34 percent a natural science and 12 percent required a traditional mathematics course. Even core liberal arts at traditional schools like Harvard and Chicago cut the

number of hours and reduced the scope of the requirement.

The decline in course requirements within the humanities is paralleled by a decline in the hiring of the humanities' faculty. Donaghue (2010) presented a study published by Stanford University Press in 2006, tracking trends in faculty hiring in the British Commonwealth throughout the 20th century, confirms a decline in the number of faculty employed in the teaching of the humanities. The study showed in overwhelming terms that between 1915 and 1995, the total number of faculty jobs in the humanities declined by 41 percent, while the total number of faculty jobs in the social sciences increased by 222 percent. The natural sciences declined by 12 percent.

However, although the growth of the administration and its managerial approach to organization may partly explain the unavailability of resources for the humanities, on the other hand, as will be demonstrated in the following paragraphs, resources have still been available for the growth of other academic disciplines such as business and management studies as well as the social sciences. One could make the case that the corporatization of the university administration, and the growth of Business and Management Studies have a common source in a deeper ideological and more general ideological shift in which the economic values of the market economy have come to dominate thinking and motivation.

In this intellectual environment value previously attributed to the humanities is no longer as evident as such values are displaced by the values associated with the economic market. Typical of this thinking is an article that the *New York Times* ran after the financial crash of 2008. A *New York Times'* journalist states "With additional painful cuts across the board a near certainty even as millions of federal stimulus dollars may be funneled to education, the humanities are under greater pressure than ever to justify their existence to administrators, policy makers, students and parents" (Cohen 2009). The same article quotes Andrew Delbanco, the director of American studies at Columbia University "Although people in humanities have always

lamented the state of the field, they have never felt quite as much of a panic that their field is becoming irrelevant" (Cohen 2009).

The perceived crisis in the humanities occasioned by the criticism that the humanities are irrelevant has gained force as humanities' departments are downsized or closed and obversely business schools experience exponential growth. Clearly, we are observing a process whereby there exists an inverse relationship in which the value attributed to the humanities declines, while the value attributed to business and management studies swells. As this happens society increasingly diverts resources from the humanities and applies them to business and management studies. Within UK higher education alone, the number of business schools expanded from more two in the mid-1960s to more than 100 in the mid-1990s and in the years between 1996-97 and 2004-05 the number of students of Business and Administrative studies rose by 35% (from 222,321 to 299,310) (Bolden 2007). By contrast, in 2011, Cornell University in the United States conferred 49 percent fewer degrees in history, 37-percent fewer degrees in English, 40-percent fewer degrees in foreign languages and linguistics and nearly 61-percent fewer degrees in philosophy and religious studies than it did in 2006.

Nevertheless, this paper argues that resources that could have supported the humanities have been available to the university, but they have been applied elsewhere to increasing the administration and ancillary support staff, and secondly, in supporting the social sciences and pushing numbers of business and management programs. This paper links this decline to neoliberal developments associated with the growing financialization of the economy, the ideology of managerialism and the emergence of the "academic capitalist" regime, as defined by Slaughter and Rhoades (2004).

We may ask ourselves in what sense are the humanities irrelevant? MacIntyre speaks of the phenomenon that occurs when the problems and issues belonging to one tradition "... are being debated within some other tradition, and defined areas of agreement and disagreement with such

another tradition may develop"(MacIntyre, 1988: 358). In his terms the so-called liberal tradition that emphasizes the centrality of the market steadily overtakes an older tradition in which the value of virtue, within the meaning of character development, is being judged by a liberal tradition based on market values.

Moreover, that the contradictions can be located within liberal theory itself. C.B. Macpherson (1977) noted that since the nineteenth century liberalism has maintained two internally inconsistent ontological assumptions, that is, two concepts of the human essence which are in the circumstances incompatible. One of these is the liberal, individualist concept of man as essentially a consumer of utilities, an infinite desirer and infinite appropriator, while the other is the concept of man as an enjoyer and exerter of his uniquely human attributes or capacities. For Macpherson the failures of modern liberalism may well be metaphysical or perhaps anthropological in that there exists conflict between understandings as to the nature of the human being. In C. B Macpherson's terms the individual is increasingly defined as a possessive individualist rather than an individual possessor of capacities and talents which should be developed. Presently, neoliberalism may well represent the more extreme articulation of a form of liberalism, one in which the identity of the individual as a possessive individualist achieves its most dominate realization. In any event C. B. Macpherson and MacIntyre are in accord, insofar as both recognize that liberalism promotes a notion of personal identity forged through market relations, which is undermining the social conditions that promote a more robust and developed notion of character. Macpherson's analysis in part indicates that elements of this older tradition were preserved in modern liberalism in terms of a belief in a form of freedom that encourages the development of human attributes and capacities, yet undermined by the ontology of possessive individualism.

MacIntyre (1988) speaks of the liberal tradition, in which the public space rather than a place of debate has turned to one where individuals bargain with one

another to achieve their personal preferences. Thus, older forms of discourse associated with the humanities, in which the community and the individual good remain the subjects of discussion and debate, are regarded as irrelevant.

This tradition, according to MacIntyre, developed by restructuring of thought and action in a way that accords with the "liberal individualistic politics." (Mc Intyre 1988: 359). There is significant evidence of this trend. Roger L. Geiger (2009, 66), for instance, cites survey figures indicating that around 40 percent of students "consider[ed] it 'very important' to become 'very well off financially' until 1973, while that percentage increased to 50 percent in 1975 and 71 percent in 1985.

One can find a more official statement of this ideology in the UK Browne Report on Higher Education, originally commissioned by a Labour government and published in 2010. The report explicitly emphasizes a market driven approach as the future direction of higher education in Britain. The review is said to mark another stage in the shift to a UK system where the balance of funding lies with individuals rather than with tax payers, and the report repeatedly argues that higher education confers more benefits on individuals than on the public at large (Morgan 2010). In short, education is defined as a private rather than a public good, an issue which will be highlighted in the forthcoming pages.

In calling for the scrapping of the student tuition caps, the report signals that the individual beneficiaries, students should bear more of the cost of higher education, and by implication, the direction of higher education will be driven by the market choices of the students. The report also recommends that the government should be given scope to withdraw public funding from all, but "priority" subjects, with teaching funding for the arts and humanities likely to be axed, according to Morgan (2010). Accordingly, public investment is to be targeted at clinical medicine, nursing, science, technology and modern languages.

Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades (2004) demonstrate that, over the recent decades, higher education in the United States has been actively embracing the neo-liberal principles that one finds expressed in the Browne report. The work of Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades (2004) has allowed us to grasp better the specific influence of this neoliberal ideology on the functional transformation and redesign of the US University. Slaughter and Rhoades refer to "academic capitalism" which is understood as the driver of this restructuring. In sum, there are two aspects to this development: The first involves the fact that universities have developed policies designed to increase income streams from "external revenues", and secondly, there is the emergence of new complex networks of actors within colleges and universities aligned with groups external to the university (Slaughter & Rhodes 2005). These are said to include: economic development offices, technology licensing offices, fund raising personnel, trademark licensing offices, profit centers for marketing etc. Accordingly, "academic capitalism" refers to a knowledge/learning regime involving the introduction of new organizations, the reorganization of existing ones, and a redefinition of the goals of the university. In this manner academic capitalism has sought to reshape the university to serve the new/knowledge/information economy. As the universities increasingly embrace these ends, the focus is no longer on social welfare, but on wealth production and on "enabling individuals as economic actors" (Slaughter & Rhodes, 2005, 20). The ascendancy of "academic capitalism, can be interpreted as the concrete realization of the Browne Report, "insofar as it involves a rejection of a regime which sees "knowledge as a public good to which the citizenry has claims" (Slaughter & Rhodes, 2005, 28).

The linkage between the regime of academic capitalism and the new knowledge economy is to be found in tertiary education's response to the knowledge economy's demand for marketable knowledge products and services to be supplied by the colleges and universities. To achieve this remake of the university that sufficiently responds to these demands knowledge is to be conceived as a commodity rather than a public good. Once

such motion is accepted, the university becomes part of a system or process in which knowledge is extracted in an unprotected form and subsequently patented, copyrighted, trademarked and bundled into non-disclosure agreements to be successfully marketed and sold.

If anything this new knowledge economy is symptomatic of a wider financialization of the economy co-extensive with a process of globalization. Here we refer to the growing tendency of companies to create global networks, as they decentralize, outsource, and form international partnerships in the pursuit of various profitable advantages. With financialization, Dembinski (2009) observes, very large companies subsequently became merely systems in divesting themselves of previously central functions such as manufacturing and focused upon organizing logistical and other links with their partners, suppliers and subcontractors. Sales and global marketing subsequently became the central preoccupations. Dembinski observes further that they owned the brands of products, sold them through distribution networks, controlled design and relevant intellectual property rights and the necessary services once products were sold. Clearly as he observes, once the economy moves away from manufacturing to financial products and the relationships between primary and secondary agents as well as partners, the role of knowledge that is highly technologized and digitalized becomes central to the axis of control.

The financialization of Western markets, as Dembinski (2009) has emphasized, is coextensive with the need to create and control the so called 'intellectual property'. Branding, trade secrecy, copyright and patent have all played a part in promoting an environment in which financial control has replaced the core activities of manufacturing and production. Networks of subsidiaries and partnerships dominated and regulated by an intellectual property regime and a legal apparatus with global pretensions have facilitated the continued positioning of Western corporations as the economic hegemons. Here one refers to The Trips agreement on Trade related Intellectual

Property Rights that recognized intellectual property rights as private rights, which now binds all World Trade Organization (WTO) members, one of the final Acts of GATT (General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs). Increasingly higher education has sought to integrate itself ever more closely with this so-called knowledge economy focusing on digital innovation and industrial inventions. It is reported in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, for instance that Universities and their inventors in the United States earned more than \$1.8-billion from commercializing their academic research in the 2011 fiscal year, collecting royalties from new breeds of wheat, from a new drug for the treatment of HIV, and from longstanding arrangements over enduring products like Gatorade (Blumenstyk 2012).

In this context, the role of academic capitalism, as described by Slaughter and Rhoades is evident. The academic knowledge regime acts as a principal source of knowledge technology, which is applied and further marketed by the economic actors, while the university has an important function in the consumption of these commercialized products. As it goes on embracing the technology as courseware provided on Blackboard and Web-CT linked to educational platforms offering standardized education delivery, education and industry become increasingly imprecated. Correspondingly, as students become highly adept users and enjoyers of the digitalized technology, they constitute generations of future consumers and users of such products. Simultaneously, the university provides future well educated workers who create and protect technological products, processes and services with application to business law, science, and medicine available to both industry and university as software and courseware. This, in turn, serves the emergent interstitial "profit centers" within the university that seek to commercialize education by marketing and further developing education materials, software and courseware for commercial purposes and often for distance education.

Consequently, as tertiary institutions adopt an 'academic capitalist' regime, they tend to value knowledge privatization and

conceive knowledge in terms of profit taking. Knowledge thereby can be said to be a private good, which both the individual student and the university strive to obtain and exploit. Education and knowledge enable individuals and institutions to be economic actors. Insofar as knowledge is no longer thought of as a public good that promotes social welfare, seems little room for NannerleKeohane's observation that "A liberal education teaches people how to learn rather than master a technical skill that may later become obsolete. In the case of a liberal education the mental discipline itself is the basic point rather than the content of what is learned." (Keohane 2010, 184). In accordance with this market conceptualization of relationships, students are both consumers and ultimately products within a system. They become consumers of educational products and thus spur the growth of units with the university devoted to marketing and advertising and the business of attracting these student consumers. At the same time the student is viewed as a potential product of the tertiary education institution as the bearer of certain skills, competencies, not to mention technical knowledge that will enable him to find a place within the new knowledge economy.

The point is that the humanities are being assessed not according to their own values that understand the necessity for intellectual development and the disinterested pursuit of knowledge, but according to a growing tradition of thought that maintains that human activity can only have value insofar as it promotes the individual's ability to acquire the means and wealth to satisfy his/her desires and preferences. As MacIntyre (1988) points out, the function of the market is that of satisfying the personal desires and preferences of the individual. There is no overriding assessment as to whether these desires and preferences promote the good of the individual or that of the community. Neither is there hierarchical ordering of interests, as in the philosophy of John Stuart Mill (1864) in which the exercise of the will for the purposes of self-development is to be preferred over the passive satisfaction of desires.

In macro terms MacIntyre (1988, 345) doubts whether this ideology can ever

deliver on the egalitarian, open and free society which it promises. Moreover, there are harmful consequences for both the individual and society. Ultimately the market and the mentality of the market understand the individual as a consumer and education is to be conceived as a device to enhance market delivery and the individual's ability to be a better consumer. In this ideology, the market is thought of as being neutral and egalitarian in which the distribution of resources represents the free choices of individuals. But in point of fact, as MacIntyre underlines, liberalism like other traditions expresses itself through a particular type of hierarchy. In a society where personal preferences have priority, whether in the market, politics or private life, power lies with those who are able to determine what the alternatives are on offer. Although the consumer, the voter and the individual in general are accorded the right of expressing their preferences for one or more of the alternatives available, the range of possible alternatives is controlled by an elite, and how they are so presented is also controlled.

The Role of the University

At the same time these remarks lead to a consideration of the broader issue, the function of the university. MacIntyre argues that institutions corrupt when they become preoccupied with the pursuit of external goods and neglect the so-called internal goods. Ginsberg (2011:61) documents the increased preoccupation with endowment and fundraising. Universities now obsess about the size of their endowment and maintaining that size, not whether that money is spent effectively and actually improves the programs offered by the institution. Ginsberg reports that in the 2007 fiscal year Harvard earned a huge 23 percent or 6.7 billion dollars on its endowment which was already 29.2 billion dollars. Harvard in the same year spent roughly 1.1 billion dollars of its endowment earning and retained the remaining 5.6 billion to increase its total endowment to about 34.9 billion dollars. In contrast, private foundations are required under US tax law to justify their favorable tax status by spending at least 5 percent of their net worth each year on charitable or philanthropic concerns. The

requirement is supposed to ensure that tax exempt organizations actually fulfil their social responsibilities, not hoard their earnings. The education industry has successfully lobbied against being subject to the same rule (Ginsberg 2011, 63).

The more the university becomes preoccupied with profit making, the more it turns out indistinguishable from a commercial organization, especially insofar as the essential subjects become those related to business, management and training. In the long run, this trend may actually render universities redundant in that the same skills could be acquired by apprenticeship programs with immediate job site training. Universities may continue to exist only because finance and industry would rather not take responsibility for the training of their future employees, but prefer simply to outsource that training to the universities without assuming the cost. This is to say that as this trend continues the university as an institution would no longer offer any form of social good that could not be acquired in an apprenticeship program under the supervision of a commercial organization.

Having made this point, we should summarize the earlier argument following the insights of Slaughter and Rhoades in which the paper linked the decline of the humanities with the ascendancy of a view that regards knowledge as a private rather than a public good. This ideological shift has transformed the university from an institution that regards itself as intricately related to the public good and public affairs of the entire social body to one which regards itself as part of an industrial commercial complex that produces educational products available for private acquisition through the transactions of the market. These educational products include the educational experience on offer to the student consumers, the educated graduates to satisfy industrial specifications, as well as the technical knowledge, digital and scientific innovations, as demanded and paid for by industry. The relationship is not asymmetrical insofar as the university is not only the supplier but also the consumer of the technological and digital products.

Some note that this loss of a perceived relatedness to the public good has left faculty with a sense of utility grounded in economic cost benefit analysis. Individual faculty and disciplines thus become engaged in a competitive struggle to attract students and grants. As Henry Giroux (2010: 116) aptly observes, "Faculty interaction is structured less around collective solidarities built upon practices which offer a particular relationship to public life than through corporate imposed rituals of competition and production".

Moreover, in this environment the humanities have been the readily identifiable losers in that they have been found to be less attractive to grant funding organizations than those disciplines more directly related to the concerns of industry, and thereby less able to articulate their role in the new regime grounded in academic capitalism. In this environment the humanities have been increasingly marginalized by institutions and students that intensifyingly value knowledge only in its relatedness to economic utility.

Slaughter and Rhoades argue that within the university these two world views do co-exist, that of the public good knowledge regime and the academic capitalist. Frequently, the faculty may see themselves from either of the perspectives. As these commentators observe, it is clearly the case that the latter increasingly takes dominance within tertiary institutions. The future of the humanities may well depend on maintaining at the very least a minimal commitment to the older regime in which knowledge is identified with the public good. When knowledge is regarded in the latter light, issues relating to relations between the individual and the public good, or the proper constituents of the public good, gain in importance and relevance. In the most obvious sense the humanities are concerned with the meaning of humanity itself with close associations with humanism and in this sense there is an abiding concern with human nature and consequently, the nature of the individual and social good. In part this means recapturing or at the least trying to promote the notion of the public forum as a place of public debate rather than a locality for negotiating interests. It is within this intellectual environment that institutions and students may come to

reconceived the associated value of the humanities. Along these lines students would conceive themselves as participant in a tradition that engages in issues directly related to society's well-being. In doing so they may well be able to overcome the narrow ideological perspective in which articulation of the public good is invariably conceived in terms of the mechanics of the market.

Besides, it is certainly arguable that part of what constitutes the public good consists of the intellectual and cultural inheritance of society. In making a case for a liberal education Keohane (2001, 186) emphasizes that the intellectual and political elite should have familiarity with the major cultural accomplishments of the Western world and increasingly other cultures. These contributions of language and culture are integrally part of the value of Western civilization and the humanities are the avenue by which students may acquaint themselves and engage with such tradition. Although postmodern critiques from the perspectives of feminism, gender politics and post-colonial retrospectives have questioned many of the ideological assumptions, at the same time it is essential that this tradition be recognized and known to sustain intelligent and informed engagement.

Here we might echo Ernest Cassirer's (1985) stance that freedom is realized through the production of a cultural environment that is a uniquely human realm. This is certainly a view that reflects a Hegelian perspective, but one which recognizes that freedom entails more than pre-determined electoral options and free market transactions. Culture achievements remain an important expression and exercise of personal freedom and self-realization, and Cassirer's work underlines the necessity to maintain and further develop this cultural inheritance.

Moreover, one need not embrace the Hegelian tradition to appreciate this point of view. Ultimately, John Stuart Mill's ideal of the individual as an exenter and developer of his/her intellectual capacities can be understood as fundamental to civilization's cultural achievements. Personal liberty should also be appreciated in these terms and therefore, as Mill urged, it is necessary that

social conditions provide the environment that maximizes these personal possibilities. From this perspective the humanities have a role in enabling university students to access, and the possibility, in varying extents, to participate in this realm of human cultural and intellectual self-expression. In this sense the humanities constitute a public good in their functional role as part of the necessary environment that promotes and engages in society's cultural achievements.

But as Keohane (2001: 192) admits, a liberal education only truly works for students who have the qualities of "mental acuity, curiosity and intellectual stamina". Undoubtedly, not all potential university students will possess these qualities or respond to these traditional areas of study. For those who do not, other forms of education may well be more appropriate, but as Slaughter and Rhoades emphasize, knowledge is a public good to which all members of society have a claim and thus those who do have the aptitude, but not the economic means, should receive an appropriate form of financial support.

Conclusion

Having made these points, one sees that the issue remains what is to be done to recover an understanding of knowledge and learning as a public good. Aside from documenting evidence and offering an etiology that explains the decline of the humanities, it is important for proponents of the liberal arts to strive to protect what is left of these programs. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) argue that there is an urgent need for universities to debate where they need to draw the line between the public good academic knowledge regime and the academic capitalist regime.

Clark Kerr in 1963 recognized that it was no longer possible to conceive the university, in the language of Cardinal John Henry Newman, as an ideal community of thinkers, engaging in intellectual pursuits as an end in it self, and not for any external purpose. The American university had become more multifunctional, or as explained, a multi- university, dealing with the impacts

of the advent of universal access to education; decisions by the federal government to base scientific research in the universities; and the enhanced availability of resources (Kerr 2001, 201). Clark Kerr in 2001 sees similar developments to those underlined by Slaughter and Rhoades (2004, 2005), which he understands to be possibly undermining the ideal of a liberal education. Among these are the demographic shifts in which universities develop non-traditional markets: the 25 to 65 year olds, and the retired. These developments may well affect the maintenance of standards. Kerr also sees the university under threat from an onslaught of aggressive industry and entrepreneurial faculty driven in part by the globalization of the world economy. Writing in 2001 Kerr saw these possible scenarios in both negative and positive terms. However, it is clearly the case that Slaughter and Rhoades already perceive the realization of the dominance of the 'academic capitalist regime', which they feel has impacted negatively on the ideal of knowledge as a public good. Following Slaughter and Rhoades' suggestion, it is necessary to reinvigorate the debate and it would appear imperative that the humanities' faculty insist that the university should be a forum for the public discussion of such matters rather than a venue in which the various factions within the multi-university negotiate interests and budgetary demands.

This means that the humanities' faculty must make the case for maintaining the humanities as an indispensable element of the public good. One accepts that having made the case, it is probable that not all relevant stakeholders both within and external to the university will be convinced. Nevertheless, it is important that the argument be made, rather than allowing the conventional, uncritical embrace of market values to go unchallenged. This should mean that those faculty who find themselves in positions of administrative authority either as heads or chairmen of departments, should strive to resist rather than facilitate bureaucratic oversight, and managerial control, and at the same time resist the pressures to digitalize course content and the delivery of course materials. Although these activities may not be sufficient to reverse the tide of 'academic capitalism', one could say that there is an

existential necessity that individual faculty express their commitment to a public knowledge regime rather than quietly acquiesce to a system that they understand to be contrary to their better judgment.

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