CHAOS IN THE ACADEMY - A HISTORY OF AND CHALLENGES TO LIBERAL EDUCATION

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By

Larry Creech
B.A., Georgetown University, 2009
M.A., Georgetown University, 2012

Georgetown University
Washington, D.C.
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Larry W. Creech, M.A.
DLS Chair: Ori Soltes, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

For more than twenty-five hundred years of recorded history the acquisition of knowledge has increased in quantity and complexity. The method of communicating that knowledge has evolved in difficulty along with the vagaries of politics, social evolution and revolution, and other quirks of the human condition. The two constants throughout have been the chaos accompanying humankind’s quest for knowledge, and the method of communicating the knowledge. Nowhere is chaos more discernible than in the university, where every possible dynamic is in play, as well as the increasing though not unprecedented intervention and intrusion by government, corporations, and other outside entities. Chaos resulting in change is not a bad state of affairs in the university. As society evolves for better or worse, the university evolves as well. Chaos in the university is also an interdisciplinary theory of apparent randomness of complex systems of education where there are underlying patterns, feedback loops, repetition, redundancies, similarities, along with a reliance on scholars at the initial point of knowledge creation who are sensitive to the initial conditions and their possible consequences. The other constant has been the method of communication, which has also experienced chaos, evolving to meet the needs of students and scholars. The twenty-first century is no different, except in the manner of chaos. But the method is still founded in the liberal education of students as it has been for multiple millennia. This thesis will examine the chaos of the creation of knowledge and the communication of that knowledge, and Liberal Education in the university and its continued relevance and value in a chaotic society.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with the deepest love and respect I acknowledge the enormous contributions of my family, and especially my wife, for simply being there as encouragement and motivation as I undertook this labor. Without them, especially the future my children and grandchildren represent, I am not certain the drive to complete this, arguably the most difficult task of my life, would have been possible.

To the faculty at Georgetown whom I have come to know well over the years, I offer my highest regard. They represent the highest levels of intellectualism, scholarship, and most importantly, the excellence of educators. I can only aspire to follow their example as educators and scholars. And to my Advisor Dr. Ori Soltes, and Readers Dr. Theresa Sanders and Dr. Charles McNelis, a special thanks for the guidance they provided as I navigated the chaos of this project. I also thank Anne Ridder for her support over the many years, reading my work and making sure I, quite literally, had every comma in place and every ‘i’ dotted and ‘t’ crossed.

It is also with the deepest humility, respect, and admiration I recognize the scholarship of the intellectuals referenced within. Without these intellectuals, none of this would have any meaning. While I have studied each of the scholars and intellectuals in detail, through this work I have come to understand and appreciate the brilliance of each as they unraveled mysteries of their time and brought to my time an understanding of the chaos inherent and necessary for the progress of the human intellect. I have also come to recognize the challenges they faced and the bravery of each as they created and brought forward the knowledge available to me today. I am in their debt to their intellect, and can only strive to emulate their examples and follow in their footsteps of advancing knowledge for humankind.
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Preface

“It is time that we had uncommon schools, that we did not leave off our education when we begin to be men and women. It is time that villages were universities, and their elder inhabitants the fellows of universities, with leisure — if they are, indeed, so well off — to pursue liberal studies the rest of their lives.” — Henry David Thoreau

Education has expanded and evolved in ways that Thoreau would likely never have imagined. What is interesting in Walden is that Thoreau does not dwell on or even draw attention to education’s purpose, possibly because of his own perception of its purpose. As he discussed throughout Walden he saw education not as a means to an end, but as an end in itself. What else would one possibly want to do in one’s old age, but continue studying and learning? It’s possible he did not dwell on the matter because he viewed it as so obvious.

During my research I came to realize that American universities have not remained true to the concept of the university as originally established by the German model. The same phrases are used such as Bildung, the education process of self-cultivation or personal and cultural maturation, or as we say it here at Georgetown...educating the whole person, but that does not happen at every university.

Amid the forces of Neoliberalism in a capitalist democracy, education in America is struggling for educational identity. With the expected chaos resulting from the creation and evolution of knowledge along with the ensuing chaos of trying to communicate that knowledge, America has created a farcical representation of what neoliberal politicians and capitalists want.... not what America’s students need.

The creation and acquisition of knowledge has been chaotic since the beginning of recorded history, with pedagogy used as a tool in the struggle for the minds of the most impressionable. Chaos is not always a bad thing when defined as the inherent unpredictability in the behavior of a complex natural system, which is where the creation of knowledge begins. Without this chaos there would be no new knowledge, only a repetition of what came before.

Societal human values are advanced by liberal education moving education beyond the dualities and contentiousness of the contemporary progressive and traditional approaches. There must be a cogent philosophy of education and educational pedagogy to educate the whole person. Education should be a learning experience focused on educating through exposure to different faiths, cultures and beliefs and imbuing the student with the time-tested corpus of knowledge of Liberal Arts and Humanities.

Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies programs foster an environment where students may develop human values and intellectual skills of critical thinking and insights through intellectual inquiry. Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies engage students in the process of actively conceptualizing, analyzing, applying, and synthesizing knowledge gathered by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication and using the acquired knowledge as a guide to furthering the human values of a contemporary society.

As teachers and parents prepare subsequent generations to live and function in a pluralistic society, a truly democratic society must overcome class, racial, social, religious, and gender barriers, and schools must provide an environment in which differences, while acknowledged and celebrated, cause neither privilege nor stigma. To overcome these barriers, which are very real even in what is referred to as a democracy in America, requires a citizenry educated in the Liberal Arts and Humanities; a Liberal education.
Liberal education is in ascendance. While Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies curricula continue to grow there is confusion and even ignorance about the value and purpose of a liberal education, what a liberal education is, and how to communicate it to students. As we try to articulate our individual reasons for learning, whether it be for the diploma, job advancement, or enlightenment, there ultimately must be the inclusion of fundamental reasons: the search for truth, the acquisition of knowledge, and the betterment of humankind. Yet even the meaning of truth is elusive, reality is indeterminable, and objectivity is subjective. There is no known algorithm to produce truth; theories of truth are paradoxical, and even clearly articulating what you are saying when you make a claim of truth is linguistically arguable. Yet for all these challenges, humans press on to truth and enlightenment because our ability to understand each other and our attempt to grasp truth and understanding is our most serious endeavor.

It is my hope that this thesis will untangle the morass that has become Liberal Education and introduce the reader to the evolution, and to an extent, revolution, of Liberal Education as the interdisciplinary synthesis of multiple disciplines in the Liberal Arts and Humanities. It will also explore the manifestation of the current fundamental philosophy inculcating the values of the corpus of human knowledge and values to future generations to determine if interdisciplinarity and its numerous variants are possible.

As universities struggle to create a new paradigm that will give them the edge in the ‘education market’ and educators are caught up in the daily assault on their bottom line under the threat of termination if they do not comply, there are those who view education as just another marketable commodity akin to the daily releases of the latest electronic product or app or designer fashion. For the time being, that is a continuing battle not unlike other battles scholars have waged over multiple millennia to advance the creation and communication of knowledge.
Liberal Education is an enduring legacy of humanity given to us to nurture, contribute to and then pass along. So as the title suggests, chaos abounds in the birthing of new knowledge and as with the birthing of a new human, it is a moment of joy and enlightenment that is surpassed only by the joy of the arrival of a new human.

It is my singular hope readers of this thesis will come to better understand, and perhaps even have an epiphanal moment of their own and find the chaos within themselves, and understand the history and timeless value of Liberal Education by whatever nomenclature is decided, and “...pursue liberal studies the rest of their lives.”
Notes:

1. Religion and religious schools are not addressed directly or separately in this thesis. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider each doctrine within the context of pedagogy.

2. Subsections of the Liberal Arts are defined in the early *trivium* - the verbal arts of grammar, logic, and rhetoric; and in the *quadrivium* - the numerical arts of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. The term Liberal Arts has become associated with a body or clusters of study as distinct from the humanities, *studia humanitatis*. The term Humanities is a relatively modern concept that completes the Liberal Education corpus of knowledge and scholarship.

3. **Discipline** is a term that will be used throughout this thesis. There are four intellectual clusters identified that comport with the, (a) humanities, (2) social sciences, (3) science-based professions, and the (4) social professions, each having defined disciplines within. These clusters and disciplines will be discussed further. There are also **sub disciplinary** specialties beneath the major disciplines, each with their own changing communities of scholarship.

4. **Liberalism** is a philosophy with numerous variants. The history of Liberalism, as a philosophy, is long and complex, and I will discuss it in detail relevant to this thesis in Chapter 2, §7. **Neoliberalism** is a constituent term of Liberalism used throughout this thesis that is often misused and misunderstood. It is not a philosophy, and economists reject it as economic theory, instead considering it an ideology. However, it does have a complex and harmful relationship to education. A detailed explanation of Neoliberalism is explained in Chapter 2, §7.

5. **Liberal Education** is an approach to college learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. This approach emphasizes broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g., science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth achievement in a specific field of interest. It helps students develop a sense of social responsibility; strong intellectual and practical skills that span all major fields of study, such as communication, analytical, and problem-solving skills; and the demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.

6. There are combinations and/or synthesis of **disciplines** or **sub disciplines** that are commonly referred to as **Liberal Studies** and **Interdisciplinary Studies**.

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Liberal Studies is defined as an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. This approach emphasizes broad knowledge in multiple disciplines as well as providing courses that are the synthetization of specialized disciplinary subject matter. It helps students develop a sense of human values, social responsibility, and strong intellectual and practical skills that span all major fields of study as well as interdisciplinary examination of subjects in the humanities, arts, and sciences.

Interdisciplinary Studies is typically characterized by integration of information, data, methods, tools, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge into one curriculum. Both will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

7. When referencing the age groups commonly referred to as Millennials, the definition of, birth date ranges, and ages keep changing. The U.S. Census Bureau is used as the primary source to the extent they have data, but in the case of Millennials and post-Millennials they have no clear data or projections. The Pew Research Center provided statistical analysis of all these attributes in March 1, 2018, but they also issue a disclaimer that the data is subject to change depending on many variables. Population data for Millennials is references at >70 million, age range of 22-37, born 1981 to 1996 is considered a Millennial. Anyone born from 1997 onward is considered part of the new generation, popularly referred to as post-Millennial or Generation Z. Their population extrapolated from Center for Disease Control (CDC) data is 44,40,418. This data was collected by research of live births from CDC data and extrapolated for the individual years.

8. NOTE: As the acquisition of knowledge and pedagogy have evolved through thousands of years, one of the challenges is the reliability and clarity of the terminology used. It is particularly troubling in an essay addressing more than two millennia of knowledge and pedagogical evolution focused on what is articulated as Liberal Education and the value of Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies to humanity in the twenty-first century. The problem has been magnified disproportionally with time, specifically in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. A brief primer is provided in Appendix A to assist in sorting through the current, as well as evolving, terminology used in Liberal/Interdisciplinary Studies.
Chapter 1

Introduction

What Is Liberal Education?

Of all the civil rights for which the world has struggled and fought for 5,000 years, the right to learn is undoubtedly the most fundamental. --W.E.B. DuBois, The Freedom to Learn

In twenty-first century America, higher education has a problem with its value proposition. American college tuitions, far from being free as it is in many countries, are soaring and loans for college tuition are over one trillion dollars in the United States. The Neoliberal ideology (discussed in detail beginning p. 113) embraced by federal and state governments as well as corporations has effectively removed the human value of students and replaced it with an unregulated market driven business enterprise model. The Neoliberal vision of society is one in which competition for wealth is the only value and virtually all social decisions are left to unregulated markets. Total Quality Management (TQM), Six-Sigma, and other data-driven teacher/student assessment programs have removed the value of the human and turned students into customers to sell the “scientific,” “positivistic,” and “measurable” corporatized university pedagogy to.

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The growing cost of college combined with the increasing demand for students in career-ready fields or vocational jobs such as engineering, finance, computer science, and medicine has left many students questioning the value of a Liberal Education. Much of the conversation surrounding higher education is focused on the contribution potential of the individual to the market value and Return on Investment (ROI). Students are asking which majors have the greatest earning potential right out of college and which colleges produce graduates with the highest salaries. This thesis will address the questions: (1) Is a Liberal Education still relevant in the 21st Century, and (2) What is the value of Liberal Education? The value and obstacles to Liberal Education will be discussed at length throughout this thesis, but a definition to keep in mind during the reading of this thesis is that Liberal Studies is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. This approach emphasizes broad knowledge in multiple disciplines as well as providing courses that are the synthetization of specialized disciplinary subject matter in the form of Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies. A liberal education will teach students how to develop a sense of human values, social responsibility, and strong intellectual and practical skills that span all major fields of study as well as interdisciplinary examination of subjects in the humanities, arts, and sciences. Today’s students are tomorrow’s citizens that will attempt to solve the problems current and past generations created and others that will no doubt manifest in the future.

Problems are not solved by looking to history and the answers to historical problems alone, nor will they be solved by implementing futuristic, untested methods arrived at by opinion rather than analysis, planning, and testing. Planning for the present, regardless of its condition, is only triage attempted by bureaucracies ill-equipped to deal with any problem. Each generation must reassess its current and future education plans with consideration given to its human, social,
cultural, and political needs. To illuminate the evolution of society and education is to view the current period in the perspective of the development of human values, culture, and politics over time.

Education is the deliberate and systematic influence exerted by trained professional educators upon students through a combination of instruction, discipline, and development of their physical, intellectual, aesthetic, spiritual and social attributes. Liberal education is defined as:

An approach to college learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. This approach emphasizes broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g., science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth achievement in a specific field of interest. It helps students develop a sense of social responsibility; strong intellectual and practical skills that span all major fields of study, such as communication, analytical, and problem-solving skills; and the demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.  

The historical basis for the *artes liberales* (Liberal Arts) is the *trivium* (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music), that evolved and progressed over two millennia. The Humanities of the Renaissance were born of the intellectual oppression of the Medieval Ages. The modern Liberal Arts and Humanities have evolved from the general subjects of study of the early Presocratics through history to the modern categorization of knowledge specific disciplines and sub-disciplines of the twenty-first century.

Liberal Education is the progression of all of these into a synthesized and/or interdisciplinary approach to education that is inclusive of research resulting in the creation of new knowledge, embracing the idea of learning as idealized by John Henry Newman.

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Liberal Studies is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. This approach emphasizes broad knowledge in multiple disciplines as well as providing courses that are the synthetization of specialized disciplinary subject matter. It helps students develop a sense of human values, social responsibility, and strong intellectual and practical skills that span all major fields of study as well as interdisciplinary examination of subjects in the humanities, arts, and sciences.\(^8\)

Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies will be discussed in Chapter 4 §4 (p. 205).

The terms *trivium*, *quadrivium*, and even Liberal Arts are frequently referenced in history and philosophy of education texts, but there is no magic date when any were proclaimed as an entity. Meaning three ways or the place where three ways meet, the *trivium* became a shorthand reference to the language arts of grammar, dialectic (logic), and rhetoric forming the greater part of liberal arts education from the ancient Greeks through the Middle Ages. The study of language was always prioritized over studies of mathematics until the twentieth century when scientific thinking as part of the *quadrivium* was accorded the same prominence in the Liberal Arts curriculum as the *trivium*.

The two elements of a unified Liberal Arts tradition that incorporated the arts of both speech (*trivium*) and reason (*quadrivium*) were often in competition with one another where philosophers and orators, or rhetoricians, vied for control of the ancient curriculum that resulted in two distinct ideals. Both ideals represented the best way for the citizen to live a good life, but the methods to a good life differed as much as the ideals. Philosophers argued for the philosophy of logical thought as the best method to acquire knowledge, while orators argued that general learning and persuasive speech was the proper method.\(^9\)

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\(^8\) L. Creech definition.

Greek educators of both ideals believed they were teaching *paideia*, which initially meant childrearing, but in the fourth century was extended as the highest possible *arete* (virtue) to mean the “…sum total of all ideal perfections of mind and body,” to the next generation.\(^\text{10}\) Both orators and philosophers agreed on the meaning of *logos*,\(^\text{11}\) translated as wisdom, word, speech, or reason. Thus the Liberal Arts tradition began with a divide, most notably the conflict between Plato and Isocrates, between those who conceived of education as an exercise in speech and those who believed it should be an exercise in reason.\(^\text{12}\)

Chapter Two will examine the key people and periods or eras that influenced the evolution of creating and teaching knowledge in what became the Liberal Arts and Humanities. I will further examine how they evolved into the synthesized and interdisciplinary studies known as Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies and the distinction between the two.

The Presocratics of antiquity are often referred to as early philosophers, but a more accurate contemporary description may be that of generalist, or to use today’s modern description, interdisciplinary, with the distinguishing feature being their emphasis on questions of many subjects of interest. Heraclitus of Ephesus described the Presocratic ethos as, “Men who love wisdom must be inquirers into very many things indeed.”\(^\text{13}\)

Only fragments of the writings of this period survive, but the significance of the

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\(^\text{13}\) Kathleen Freeman, *Ancilla to The Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, UK: Harvard University Press, 1996), 27.
Presocratics is that they began to define the problems which would later become the basis for further study. The range of Presocratic thought reflected in these document fragments shows that they did not limit the scope of their inquiry to subjects of interest only, but extended to religious and ethical thought, the nature of perception and understanding, the nature of explanation, and the roles of matter, form, causal mechanisms, and structure in the world.

Thinkers of the Classical Period, among them Plato and Isocrates, referred to a general education consisting of the study of various arts such as rhetoric and dialectic. Although the Greeks knew of the subject matter of each of the Liberal Arts later introduced in the medieval trivium and quadrivium, no ancient Greek educator combined them into a body of study. The Liberal Arts are implicit in Plato’s The Republic. Isocrates’ contribution to modern Western education has often been overlooked and ignored, but is arguably one of the most important contributors to the Western pedagogy model that exists today.

There were also Romans in antiquity such as Seneca the Younger,14 who devoted an entire epistle to the Liberal Arts, and clergy such as Augustine of Hippo15 who disparaged the Liberal Arts as heretical, then decided that the Liberal Arts had merit in teaching religion and the glory of God.

Cicero, Varro, Quintilian, and other Roman writers from the first century BCE to the first century CE actually used the term artes liberalis when they wrote of education. Cicero referred specifically to the Liberal Arts in On the Orator as the best preparation not only for a career, but for a long life of living and learning, though this was not the final iteration of the Liberal Arts of


15 Now Algeria in North Africa.
the trivium and quadrivium that they would later become.\textsuperscript{16} Varro, an encyclopedist and contemporary of Cicero whose works were often cited, counted as many as nine arts including medicine and architecture though his seminal work on the subject was lost long ago.\textsuperscript{17}

Not until the fifth century CE in \textit{The Marriage of Philology and Mercury} by Martianus Capella is there a reference to the \textit{seven liberal arts} which were organized into a systematic course of study.\textsuperscript{18} Through the fourteenth century thinkers and scholars focused on what liberal arts were and how to define them as the seven liberal arts matured to disciplines recognized as fundamental branches of knowledge. One might conclude that this would be a period where the liberal arts would flourish with scholars and educators applying the arts and breaking new intellectual ground. Not only did this not happen, but the Liberal Arts were almost destroyed during the period leading up to the Renaissance.

The Renaissance was the transition from the Middle Ages or Medieval Period of intellectual and social oppression to a period of cultural upheaval and chaos of social, cultural, political and artistic rebirth where humans were collectively engaged in life. The significant change in the creation, acquisition and dissemination of knowledge was the continuation of the cultural movement of humanism which augmented the \textit{trivium}'s disciplines of grammar, logic, and rhetoric with other disciplines reflecting human emotion and realism.

As science was expanding the bounds of knowledge beyond the time-tested classical tradition during the early eighteenth century, the ideals of the Enlightenment began to emerge as


\textsuperscript{17} David Lindberg, \textit{The Beginnings of Western Science} (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 137.

thinkers began to confront the relationship between scientific progress and the emergence of a free society. Enlightenment is premised on a radically different understanding of freedom than that which animated the classical liberal arts ideal. For the Ancient, Medieval, and Renaissance educator, a liberal education made men free by ‘binding’ them to a common culture by means of intellectual and moral discipline. Enlightenment thinkers and educators believed learning should lead to an individualistic, open freedom that would lead to the next two eras of change; Modernity and Postmodernity. Enlightenment had been overcome by Late Modernity; the last of the three stages or time periods within Modernity to be addressed in this essay.

In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries the Liberal Arts and Humanities were challenged by Progressives and Postmodernists. Contemporary education activists, or Progressives, advocated education as an eclectic mix of curricula based fundamentally in experiential learning and the fallacious principle that all people are equal and, therefore, entitled to equal education. An additional aspect to be considered during Modernity is Neoliberalism in a capitalist democracy, an ideology that continues to have a direct effect on education. The Neoliberal ideology tacitly embraced by the federal government advocated the equally fallacious idea that all people are not equal because each person had a market value. To the Neoliberal the entitlement to education depends on the cultural will of the people or what they can afford, and the degree of education they receive depends on what those in authority presume to be sufficient. Additionally, and most important to Neoliberals, is the market value of selecting a person for higher education. An equally important question, but one Neoliberals do not address is, who gets to decide who is selected and what they will be taught. Neoliberalism will be addressed further in Chapter 2, p. 114.
The Postmodern Era did not replace the Modern Era, but rather collided with it. The creation of new knowledge and synthesis of existing knowledge in America faced the turmoil of a dystopia where government controls access to education by controlling funding available for education as it continues in its attempt to control pedagogy and curricula.

Throughout history humankind has debated how best to communicate knowledge. When problems arise with no ready solution, or there are many people with differing, conflicting ideas regarding the solution, some will appeal to the past to support their position. An analysis of a current problem with a view forward to the future requires an understanding of the past. There are valid, tested theories that can help us better understand our problems by studying how we arrived at the current condition. The modern conflicts arose when modern Traditionalists insisted on references to past solutions to the current problems, while Progressives embraced the *reductio ad Absurdum* or the ‘argument by ignorance’\(^\text{19}\) method of problem-solving in the belief that problems will be solved by new, untried ideas that change the current social and intellectual environment without understanding what has been tried before.

Multiple cultural phenomena of the 1960s and 1970s brought about cultural paradigm shifts that continue to resonate in the 21\(^{\text{st}}\) century. The long overdue Civil Rights Act of 1964 codified an end to segregation, but integration brought with it new cultural, social, and legal problems that have not been effectively addressed. The very laws that were implemented to eliminate segregation and discrimination have been negated by government agencies and federal courts overreaching their authority and reinstating segregation and discrimination in public

schools. As an example, the U.S. Department of Education (DoE) continues to require students to be classified by ill-defined and illogical racial categories having no basis in science.\footnote{Sally Haslenger, “(What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?” \textit{Nôus}, 34, no. 1 (March, 2000): 31-55. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2671972?origin=JSTOR-pdf&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents (accessed February 7, 2017).}

The Freedom of Speech movement and the Vietnam Anti-War Movements brought about the end of the Vietnam war, but it was not without tremendous cost of students killed by police and American military on college campuses. An additional consequence was that the movement was influential in ending the draft in 1973, where young men age eighteen and older no longer had to worry about being involuntarily conscripted into the military. With the imminent threat of war temporarily diminished for the individual, new threats in the form of government instability, economic uncertainty, and the realization that twenty-first century college graduates would have to shoulder the burden of the chaos in education and by extension civil society.

The creation of the personal computer in 1975 ushered in the Age of Information, also referred to as the Technology Age or Digital Age, that dramatically changed the paradigm of what and how students learned. The amount of data available and the speed at which students could access data is unprecedented in history. However, information alone is not knowledge, and without ethical and intellectual judgment which cannot be programmed into a machine, the Age of Information is becoming the Age of Ignorance. As John Dewey observed: “The problem of securing to the liberal arts college its due junction in democratic society is that of seeing to it that the technical subjects which are now socially necessary acquire a humane direction.”\footnote{John Dewey, “The Problem of the Liberal Arts College,” \textit{The American Scholar} 13, no. 4 (Autumn, 1944): 393. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41206764?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents (accessed February 7, 2017).}
Liberal education is partially a function of culture, responding to the needs of citizens in a democratic society. America is far too large and diverse for a one size fits all education curriculum managed by a centralized arbiter of pedagogy. The result since the creation of the Department of Education (DoE) in 1979 has been a dilution of education leadership in the states by the interference of the DoE. The long list of policies that are enforced as though they are law has resulted in chaos and confusion at the state and district level. More to the point, even the U.S. Library of Congress which records, catalogs, and maintains copies of all laws said they do not know how many laws there are and it would be impossible to determine.22

Chapter Three will examine the government’s attempts to establish and control pedagogy and curriculum. Since the early 1980s there has been no shortage of experts and education authorities positing that American student intellectual attainment is declining, attributing the decline to a plethora of causes as though the problem has a simple solution. The reality is that liberal education is experiencing a resurgence, especially in secondary schools and at universities, where it is increasingly seen as doing more than prepare students for graduate school or a profession. However, the resurgence is accompanied by considerable confusion and debate about the nature and aims of a liberal education. The confusion and debate provided an open door for governments and politicians at every level to exploit what was a natural, continuing evolution of knowledge and with it, education.

Chapter Four will continue with the intervention of outside forces into education. I will examine curriculum and the challenges facing modern education pedagogy as well as the continuing value of Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies.

America is the most ethnically and culturally diverse country in the world, but there is no single, unique American culture. There is, however, a government collection of ethnicity percentages that are dependent on definition and statistical reporting by the states to the U.S. government, but with no standard for all states to follow in data collection and reporting. With the distrust of the federal bureaucracy, many states have resisted providing student data as being an intrusion of individual rights to privacy. Additionally, the government continues to practice a form of racial segregation by categorization of students by race, using continually changing definitions of a racial category, with no foundation in science.

While pedagogy and curriculum are not, nor are they likely to be, standardized nationally there are common problems most school districts share. Many of the problems are in some way linked back to law and government intervention examined in Chapter Three. The problems are many and because there have been so many false solutions, the acceptance by students and parents are difficult to acquire. The problems extend into the corporatized university operating on a Neoliberal ‘for profit’ business model. The influx of government and corporate funding has a compromising effect on curricula taught, degrees offered, even the standards for student acceptance.

In an era of instant online communications where government and industry disseminate competing ideological propaganda vying for control of what American youth are taught, parents and students are seeking answers in the din of incoherent rhetoric. Over multiple millennia the concept of liberal education has provided the foundation for the creation, study, and dissemination of knowledge.

The pages that follow will seek to untangle the chaotic and anecdotal commentary and bring clarity and coherence to the discussion of Liberal Education as the foundation of a
student’s cultural and intellectual educational needs, as well as illustrate the continuing relevance of Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies as part of the Liberal Education corpus of knowledge into the twenty-first century.
Chapter 2

**Evolution of Liberal Education**

When we ask about the relationship of a liberal education to citizenship, we are asking a question with a long history in the Western philosophical tradition. We are drawing on Socrates' concept of 'the examined life,' on Aristotle's notions of reflective citizenship, and above all on Greek and Roman Stoic notions of an education that is 'liberal' in that it liberates the mind from bondage of habit and custom, producing people who can function with sensitivity and alertness as citizens of the whole world.


The period from approximately 600 BCE to 500 CE was the period which the foundational knowledge was established that future thinkers and scholars would build upon. It was during this period that the basic concepts of not only acquiring knowledge, but of how to communicate knowledge began. Scholars and educators of later eras have presented new ideas and technologies unimagined by thinkers of this era, but they were in some fashion likely motivated by adaptations of ideas developed during this period. They passed on their knowledge and methods that later became the basic tenets of the tradition of Western knowledge and educational thought.

For hundreds of years the Liberal Arts and Humanities, by various names and in various iterations, evolved with the ebb and flow of history. The thinkers or generalists of the Presocratic era are the oldest where we have recorded data of their inquiry and accomplishments, and that is fragmentary. The creation of new knowledge continued from Athens and Rome of the Classical Era; survived the demographic, cultural and economic deterioration in Western Europe following the decline of the Roman Empire; survived the chaos of the Renaissance and the liberalism, neo-classicism, and scientific revolution of the Enlightenment.
Enlightenment was overcome by Late Modernity, the last of the three stages or time periods of Modernity that will be addressed in this essay. However, there is an additional aspect to be considered during Modernity, an ideology that continues to influence and have a direct effect on education; Neoliberal capitalistic democracy.

There is also the Postmodern Era which scholars argue that it either does not exist or it is only a philosophical theory. I will argue that while the Postmodern Era is a theory, it is also an era that did not replace, but rather collided with the Modern Era and continues today.

The creation of new knowledge and the synthesis of existing knowledge in America faces the turmoil of a dystopia where the government controls access to education by controlling finances available for education and continues in its attempt to control pedagogy and curricula. This chapter will address the key people or events who influenced the development of educational pedagogy and moved Liberal Education, and with it the Liberal Arts and Humanities, forward through history.

It is with respectful apologies to the spirit of each of the intellectuals discussed in this chapter that only their significant contribution to Liberal Education is described. Each of the subjects in this chapter can receive, and has received innumerable books and dissertations devoted to their lives and accomplishments, due to their significant contributions to the progress of education scholarship on a number of subjects.

§1. Presocratics 8th to 5th Century BCE

The Presocratics of antiquity are often described as early philosophers, a sweeping description and not totally accurate term to describe them. A more accurate contemporary description is that of generalists or interdisciplinarians, given that they addressed issues in a combination of subjects of interest. Heraclitus of Ephesus described the Presocratic ethos that
sounds much like that of the modern Liberal Studies student: “Men who love wisdom must be inquirers into very many things indeed.”

The term “Presocratic philosophers,” first coined in the nineteenth century by Hermann Diels (1848-1922), was intended to mark a contrast between Plato and by extension his mentor Socrates, who were interested in moral problems, and their predecessors who were primarily concerned with cosmological and physical speculation. The difficulty in grouping such diverse thinkers in one category, such as “Presocratic philosophers,” is the inclusion of a group of thinkers from different places and times, many of whom had different interests. To call them all “Presocratic” thinkers is too sweepingly broad, since there are differences as well as similarities. Aristotle referenced this group as ‘ancients’ or spoke of them by the geographical location they were from and in some instances referenced them as having a “…school of philosophy…” though he did not name the school. In other instances he referred to some of them by the school of philosophy, such as “…Pythagoreans…”

The ‘Presocratic’ thinkers were the key to establishing Western philosophical and liberal education thought as we know it today. The term was not officially pronounced or codified, but gained acceptance from Diels’ work and has since gained universal usage when discussing thinkers and philosophers prior to Socrates. “Presocratic” is also inaccurate as a chronological

1 Kathleen Freeman, *Ancilla to The Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948/96), 27.

2 Ibid., X. Note: Diels comment that Freeman refers to is in his book Presocratic Fragments 5th that is not interpreted into English.


4 Ibid., 1561.
term because some of those typically identified as Presocratics were contemporaries of Socrates.  

Some of the early Greek thinkers explored issues of ethics and the best way for humans to live, but they also investigated topics such as religious and ethical thought, the nature of perception and understanding, mathematics, meteorology, the nature of explanation, and the roles of matter, form, causal mechanisms, and structure in the world.  

Hermann Diels seminal work, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (The Fragments of the Presocratics), translated by Freeman, documented a contrast between Socrates and his predecessors through the surviving fragments of their written work. Unfortunately, a complete understanding of the Presocratics is complicated by the incompleteness of their surviving writings. The significance of the fragments is they began to define the problems which would later become the basis for further study.

The range of Presocratic thought illustrates that they were not limited to a small audience of rationalistic intellectuals, but they passed on what later became the basic concerns of philosophy to Plato and Aristotle as well as others, and eventually became the basis upon which the disciplines of the Liberal Arts and Humanities were established.

§2. Classical Period 5th BCE to 7th CE

The Classical Period refers to an era when theories of thought began to coalesce as learning systems or methods, overlapping the Presocratics. While there were many thinkers from this period, the first part of the era was marked by two men who so dominated philosophical thought of their age that their names, rather than the names of schools or cities, are used to


identify the schools of thought in their life time: Plato, and Aristotle. There are additional thinkers, such as Plato’s mentor Socrates, who contributed to the liberal education body of knowledge, but the thoughts of Plato and Aristotle on education were well documented and preserved for future generations.

The seven liberal arts that would later include the studies of education in the Middle Ages were an inheritance from classical antiquity. Their origin, though not specifically stated as liberal arts, is founded in Greek education. Aristotle defined “...the liberal sciences...”\(^7\) as the proper subjects free men should study, not because they were immediately practical or useful, but because of the intellectual and moral distinction acquired. The terms “liberal arts,” “liberal studies” and “liberal sciences” did not mean the whole of human knowledge or Greek culture, nor were they used in a uniform sense. They referred primarily to the specific body of school studies of general education of youth in preparation of the higher liberal studies which were more concisely referred to as philosophy.

The main distinction between the “liberal arts,” “liberal studies,” “liberal sciences,” and philosophy was the distinction between gymnasial or secondary education studies and university education. While the terms “liberal arts,” “liberal studies” and “liberal sciences” were not referred to consistently, Greek writers’ use of the word “education” referred to them as the body of school studies. The terms are so related that Pythagoras said, “Education must come before philosophy,”\(^8\) which meant that the Greeks trained in the liberal arts in order to proceed to higher

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level studies. Philosophy was the goal of the preliminary studies and was also referred to as a liberal art. Aristotle considered philosophy a liberal science and said, “If men indeed began to philosophize to escape ignorance, it is clear that they pursued science for the sake of knowledge and not necessarily any utility.” The studies that came to be known as liberal arts (artes liberalis) were grammar, rhetoric, dialectics, music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. The Greeks did not delineate specific studies or even how many studies there were, only that they were liberal arts.

It was not the Greeks alone who advanced the idea of liberal education. Beginning with Cicero the artes liberales were appropriated by Rome to become the foundation for educating the Roman gentleman. Cicero’s many references to the arts are evidence of how educated Romans of the late Republic understood the studies of the Greeks.

It was not only the writings of Cicero that saved the liberal arts for the Middle Ages. There were also the writings of his contemporary, Varro, who provided a list of the arts that passed from Greek to Roman education in Guide to the Nine Disciplines.

During the early Empire, the liberal arts are traced in the writings of the younger Seneca and Quintilian, both of whom knew of the writings of Varro and referred to him as their mentor. In Seneca’s famous Epistle to Lucilius on liberal studies, five of the arts were listed and described. After Seneca came Quintilian, in whose writings the arts are more strictly coordinated as a complete course of school instruction. He wrote in his Institutes of Oratory of the departments of study that needed to be pursued “…in order that the circle of instruction, which the Greeks call enuklios paideia, may be completed.”

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Plato

Plato (~ 428/427 or 424/423 BCE - ~ 348/347 BCE) belonged to a family long involved in the politics of Athens. Growing up in a political family it would not have been unexpected for him to follow that direction as well. Instead, disillusioned at the violence and corruption of Athenian political life and angry at the death sentence imposed on his friend and mentor, Socrates, Plato chose a life of inquiry to try and understand the ills of Athenian society.

Considering Plato’s experience it is surprising that Plato’s dialogues, which expanded on his philosophical theory of the education of Athenian young, would take such a paternalistic turn in the belief that the ills of society would not change until rulers became philosophers.

The middle transitional dialogues distinguish Socrates’ quest for knowledge from the performances of the sophists and the teachings of the poets that led to the Republic by Plato.

Plato viewed education as a means and not an end or isolated process. The Republic described education as the primary means by which the conditions of living well can be fulfilled.

Plato developed a theory of education in The Republic that prepared young citizens for life in service to the state. Socrates said, “...we shall find it difficult to improve on the time honoured [sic] distinction between the physical training we give to the body and the education we give to the mind and character.”

The Republic was an investigation of the educative role that the government of a community played in forming the opinions and habits upon which all inquiry resided. Plato’s starting point for a youth’s education began at a young age with a common culture shared by all.

10 Cycle or circle of disciplinary school studies.


members of the society. The program was strict and enforced against any deviation from the established paradigm.\textsuperscript{13} The early program included children’s pastimes, music, gymnastics, and public art and sculptures in the temples. In addition to the education common for all, future ruler-guardians continued their studies to include arithmetic, plane and solid geometry, astronomy, harmonic theory.\textsuperscript{14} Men and women who absorbed the mathematical-logical structure of cosmic harmony and demonstrated the passion and philosophical ability and temperament were introduced to dialectic.\textsuperscript{15} However, because opinion was embedded and expressed in social practices and political institutions, the task of the wise educator had political ramifications.

Plato assumed that the philosopher or lawgiver would shape human nature to his pattern,\textsuperscript{16} that the children of the first generation could be made to accept any teaching the lawgiver chose for them to believe.\textsuperscript{17} Following the first generation’s acceptance or indoctrination, a unanimous public opinion created by education\textsuperscript{18} and preserved by laws that forbid its contradiction\textsuperscript{19} could subdue instinct\textsuperscript{20} and hold in check the desire for innovation.\textsuperscript{21}

If the theory of education is to be effective, it must address the smallest details of the political system including the essence of the government as well as the laws of the local

\footnotesize{
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{14}] Ibid., 521a – 537c, 249 – 270.
\item[\textsuperscript{15}] Ibid., 531a – 540e, 262 – 274.
\item[\textsuperscript{16}] Ibid., 501a-b, 223-4.
\item[\textsuperscript{17}] Ibid., 341a, 21
\item[\textsuperscript{18}] Ibid., 367a, 51.
\item[\textsuperscript{19}] Ibid., 392a, 84.
\item[\textsuperscript{20}] Ibid., 838b, 289.
\end{itemize}
}
government. This paternalistic method sounds utopian, and for it to function it would have to assume control of every aspect of its member’s lives, an undesirable consequence not unlike that articulated by George Orwell\textsuperscript{22} for future generations. Plato’s two-fold system of education as a whole suffered from the lack of any idea of evolution and a lack of sympathy or even basic concern with those less intellectually gifted by nature.

The most apparent need for, and stimulant to the acceptance of, literacy in Classical Athens was democracy. Athenians used the written word in temples, in governing bodies, and the courts. Educational writings rarely referred to the many practical or political uses of literacy because there were so many documents such as laws, contracts, banking transactions and personal as well as professional and diplomatic relations.

From the fifth century, when learning letters was given no specific value, literacy led to reading literature which was necessary for a broad range of higher political and intellectual studies. This was not a uniformly welcomed development. The encroachment of literacy on culture provoked stringent criticism. In The Laws universal literacy was taken for granted, but Plato gave no indication that any of the later stages of education were performed through the written word, even at the most advanced level where it is hard to imagine otherwise. It is difficult to imagine the philosopher-kings being trained without it.

The increasing mediation of culture through the written word was not totally universal. Poetry continued to be performed in public and private until the end of antiquity. Teachers did not go out of business, but some felt it worthwhile to protest with the most striking element of these protests being the identity of the protesters. Those who objected to the increased prevalence of reading for the public were intellectuals and aristocrats who appeared to favor

literacy, but without the aid of writing which was considered too sophisticated and specialized.

The explanation of all these unexpected and apparently contradictory phenomena may lie in the context in which such passages occur. Education was presented as a preparation for political life, and the subject matter placed at the top of the educational ladder was always the most important for political leadership: philosophy in the case of Plato. The relative value of different educational disciplines was therefore related to the person who learned them and their position in the state. There would be a comparable evaluation of the value of education in the twenty- and twenty-first centuries under Neoliberal ideology.

Plato's reaction to the growth of literacy was different as well as controversial. Rather than relocating education and culture to increasingly elitist activities, Plato denied that texts can teach anything, asserting that the important things a student needed to learn such as virtue were learned experientially. On the surface Plato’s method did not appear excessively elitist, but in practice it was actually more so because instruction in virtue required a high degree of literacy, a highly intellectual preparatory education, and it resulted in the elite philosopher-kings.

**Isocrates**

While Plato is an important historical figure of philosophy, consensus is lacking among scholars that Plato’s theories were the original and dominant influence of educational pedagogy. The confusion arose from the juxtaposition of theoretical philosophy (Plato) with applied education theory (Isocrates); philosophical tradition versus oratorical tradition. Isocrates viewed the orator as one who possessed rhetorical skill as well as a wide knowledge of philosophy, science, and the arts that promoted the Greek ideals of freedom, self-control, and virtue.

The rhetorical strain of the liberal arts tradition began in the fourth century BCE with Isocrates, whose writings on rhetoric and education laid the foundation for a philosophy of
education that would endure for centuries after his death. As head of a popular school in Athens, Isocrates (435 BCE – 338 BCE) opposed Plato and his school by equating the dialectical method of philosophy with argument for its own sake. Isocrates attacked not only the followers of Plato, but the teachers of political theory and rhetoric as well. He viewed most of the leading intellectuals of his day as sophists who cleverly twisted words yet possessed little true wisdom.\textsuperscript{23}

Isocrates lived in a society experimenting with the idea of self-rule where the education of citizens for leadership was of paramount importance. Greek men who participated in the public sphere of culture had to learn the fundamentals of oratory to engage in legislative debate, to argue in court, and to convince fellow citizens of the correctness of their proposed course of action. While many teachers of rhetoric had reduced oratory to its most basic mechanical skills, Isocrates attempted to combine technique with rational judgment. Isocrates argued that philosophical contemplation would not improve an orator’s ability to reason and speak effectively, but that the lack of contemplation would remove him from the public sphere where he had the most influence.\textsuperscript{24}

Isocrates was concerned with Athenian educational reform primarily as a philosophical examination and articulation of the common properties of education. He did not deny the diversity of educational thought and practice, but looked for the educational commonalities in which all humans engaged. According to Isocrates, the primary questions in educational thought and practice were:


\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
(1) What is the value of education? and,
(2) How do we decide what the value of education should be?

Isocrates was more utilitarian than the philosophers not only because he was interested in the direct effect of rhetoric upon society, but because he was more theoretical than the sophists. He recognized that an orator who aspired to be a great statesman must possess broad knowledge and virtuous character. As a creative process, rhetoric allows the orator to take the same ideas glorified by the philosophers and express them in such a way that others are moved to behave ethically and wisely. Since “...none of the things that are done with intelligence are done without the aid of speech...,” the truly wise man must always move beyond the realm of private thought and into the realm of public expression. In Against the Sophists Isocrates complained that some Sophists confused logos (rational knowledge) with grammar, suggesting that in some circles of his time literacy was seen as a necessary precursor to speaking or to reasoned discourse of any kind.

Twentieth-century historians of ancient Greek education, Henri-Irénée Marrou and James Muir, asserted that Isocrates’ influence on the educational system of Greece far exceeded that of Plato who addressed education from the perspective of political philosophy only with regard to educating leaders.

Aubrey Gwynn maintained that, “...the educational programme [sic] of Isocrates demands

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closer attention: partly for its intrinsic interest, partly because of its immense and abiding influence on Graeco-Roman education.”

Muir argued, “Isocrates, and not the Socratic philosophers (Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon), was the most influential educational theorist in history, and his ideas are especially pervasive in Western educational thought and practice.”

Although Isocrates is seldom referenced in English language textbooks on the history of education, Moses Hadas reached the conclusion that is common in classical scholarship: “It was the program of Isocrates which has shaped European education to this day, which has kept humanism alive, and which has given Western civilization such unity as it possesses.”

The disagreement is not among educators, classicists or philosophers regarding whether Plato or Isocrates was the greatest influence on Western education, nor is there any demeaning rhetoric in opposition to the historical standing of either. However, the lack of contemporary scholarly literature concerning Isocrates’ education theory suggests that contemporary educators have simply not addressed the historical context or the Isocratic tradition’s theory of western education. The reasons for the neglect is unclear, but it is important that contemporary educational theorists reconsider the history of educational thought, and revisit how persuasive the influence of Isocrates continues to be.

One reason may have been that Isocrates’ conceptions of the relation of knowledge to action worked best in a flexible democratic society, where Plato’s and Aristotle’s conceptions followed by aristocratic society could pursue their studies without interaction with those outside their social stratum.


The Isocratic idea of education is derived from political doctrine. Isocrates argued that education is a political enterprise that must be universal and employed as a means to provide the student with the knowledge and skills required by the prevailing political doctrine. The method to define and implement the value of education requires an understanding of the political doctrine before making any educational judgment, and how the pedagogy should be implemented through the curriculum and teaching methods. Western educational thought and education value arose because of the Isocratic conception of education as a political enterprise that served the political goals and implemented standards derived from political doctrine. A broad understanding of Isocratic theory is necessary to understand how political doctrine effects a population professing democratic government. An observation voiced by British education philosophers Phillip O’Hear and John White and shared by contemporary educators:

The main argument for shifting from professional to political control of the broad framework of the curriculum is that questions about the aims and content of the curriculum are intimately connected with views about the kind of society we wish to live in. 32

O’Hear and White suggested that education is ‘connected with’ and likely ‘subordinate to’ political opinions of what a good society is. The question of who gets to decide what the pedagogy is and what it will be haunted policy makers of Isocrates’ era as it does in the twenty first century.

Education pedagogy that follows political doctrine ends up controlled by political operatives such as elected officials, and subordinately their staff, government agencies, and even contractors and university administration will control the curriculum instead of trained educators. The result is a turnaround in the argument for liberal education.

Aristotle

Aristotle’s (384 BCE – 322 BCE) theory of education went beyond Isocrates’ political enterprise approach. His theory was based on politics that reflected how a pedagogy should function in an idealized democracy, but the ultimate effect of his ideas limited access to education on the grounds of ability, wealth, and social standing.

Aristotle said that a city's educational system determined the character of its future citizens, therefore the system must serve the needs of the city. To meet the needs of the city Aristotle recommended a system of public education which he viewed as preferable to parents having their children privately tutored.

In *The Politics* Aristotle questioned whether the “superintendence” of a child should be “...common or on a private basis...”, ultimately deciding that, “...superintendence of it should be common and not on a private basis...”. Aristotle’s guardianship of the child was not unlike that of Plato, but more concealed under the cloak of democracy. Aristotle went further by assigning pedagogical responsibility to the state where, “...the Legislator must, therefore, make the education of the young his object above all would be disputed by no one.”

Aristotle recognized the confusion regarding how a student should be trained. From his perspective there were arguments to be made between teaching children what would be useful or moral, or for teaching pure knowledge for its own sake. A parent’s duty was to prepare children for a state education where they studied subjects that the state determined were “useful,” but to

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34 Ibid., 1337al8, 229.
Aristotle the state did not make clear what it considered useful.\textsuperscript{35} He considered some practical knowledge as acceptable, but cautioned that children should not be demeaned by learning menial labor. Knowledge was acceptable only to the extent that it provided personal satisfaction or helped a friend, but was dangerous when it became a skill and performed a service to others.\textsuperscript{36}

He viewed it as acceptable to teach moral goodness, though there were many different ideas of what was good and how it should be taught.\textsuperscript{37} One perspective on subjects as useful was those which were “...useful things that will not make the one sharing in them vulgar.” He defined vulgar as “...the sorts of arts that bring the body into a worse state and wage-earning sorts of work, for they make the mind a thing abject and lacking in leisure.”\textsuperscript{38}

Not all youth were educated under Aristotle’s theory of education. Only those who qualified and demonstrated a high degree of ability would be educated. They were also taken only from the ranks of the wealthy assuming only the wealthy would meet the requirement.\textsuperscript{39}

An additional contradiction arose in determining the status or nature of slaves and their training. There were two elements to Aristotle’s theory of slavery; those who were natural slaves and those who were enemies in war. Of the two groups, “...the best born will become slaves and offspring of slaves if they happen to be captured and sold.”\textsuperscript{40} Part of Aristotle’s theory was that the “...managers of children must investigate their pastime, particularly so as to ensure that as

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Ibid., 1337bl.5, 230.
\item Ibid., 1337bl.18, 230.
\item Ibid., 1337bl.44, 230.
\item Ibid., 1337bl.10, 230.
\item Ibid., 1337al, 229.
\item Ibid., 1255-26, 42.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
little of it as possible will be with slaves.”  

According to Aristotle the cultural uses of education were not alternatives to the practical ones. They were practical in the political context because they equipped individuals to act as political leaders, but they represented a practical training on a higher level than that required for signing documents or casting votes or doing accounts. Aristotle was a political theorist concerned with controlling those who, within the framework of a democracy, had access to political power. Aristotle asserted that while education should be run by the state and available to everyone, it was neither available to all nor run by the state in his day.  

Aristotle realized that before one could study the nature of the ideal state, one must first examine the nature of the best way of life that would lead to happiness, excellence, and human welfare. Since Aristotle defined the concept according to the nature of humans, the qualities of the best state likewise depended upon human nature. He asserted that the answer to all of the above lay with educating youth in preparation for positions of leadership in the future and that responsibility resided with the state; “…that the legislator must, therefore, make the education of the young his object above all would be disputed by no one.”  

He maintained that there was a need for a standardized education system; “…it is evident that education must necessarily be one and the same for all…”  

The challenge was the same articulated by Isocrates: who would determine what was studied and establish a universal curriculum and how it would comport with the political

41 Ibid., 1336bl-40, 227.
42 Ibid., 1336bl-40, 227.
43 Ibid., 1337al-15, 229.
44 Ibid., 1337al-20, 229.
environment of Greece? This was a problem not unlike that evident in contemporary America.

He also recognized the need for liberal education; “…there are four things they customarily educate in: letters, gymnastics, music, and fourth, some in expertise in drawing – expertise in letters and drawing as being useful for life and having many uses, gymnastic as contributing to courage…”

Both Aristotle and Isocrates used cultural education as a regulatory mechanism and argued that education gave individuals the tools they need to become good political leaders and limited access to education to those who were wealthy, able, and educated. Simply being able to read and write, in the scheme of Aristotle and Isocrates, would get an Athenian nowhere in politics. Both attempted to keep the power that both wanted to derive from literacy within the smallest possible group of people, and both promoted the view that within a democratic framework the state is best run by a narrow social and intellectual elite. The ways in which Aristotle and Isocrates formulated their hierarchies of educational disciplines had wider implications than their immediate political context. Between them the two thinkers sketched for the first time an educational system in which literacy in Greek literature and culture formed a fundamental requirement with political power as the final aim.

Isocrates expressed it most clearly:

So far has Athens left the rest of mankind behind in thought and expression that her pupils have become the teachers of the world, and she has made the name of Hellas distinctive no longer of race, but of intellect, and the title of Hellene a badge of education rather than of common descent.

He was not simply taking credit for cultural integration among his achievements or the

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achievements of the city, but claiming for himself and for Athens the first political ascendancy based on a system of literate cultural education. For the first time literacy and politics were not just co-existent or co-related, but intimately and necessarily linked.

Underlying all fourth-century BCE writings is the conclusion that literacy could not be ignored. In Isocrates and Aristotle there was an assumption that it was necessary to be literate in order to acquire or practice any activity which involved reading or writing. Establishing literacy was crucial as the foundation of all future cultural and intellectual education.

The achievement of Hellenistic Greeks was to turn literacy and literate education into a state-encouraged instrument of socio-political regulation, which fed the bureaucracies of the Macedonian kingdoms and encouraged a sense of social and cultural identity among widely disparate peoples. Establishing a cultural identity was a key feature of the Greek arts which the Romans would also adapt to their own society which was under populated by native Romans and overpopulated by conquered peoples who could be acculturated into citizens of Rome.

**Cicero**

Classical and post-Classical Greece was Latinized by Cicero (106 BCE – 43 BCE) who adopted the Hellenic ideas to a large extent, although they were eventually developed into a more nationalistic educational program. Cicero articulated the subject matter of the curriculum in *De Oratore* (The Orator), where he defined the topics to be included in textbooks:

...in music, numbers, sounds, and measures; in geometry, lines, figures, spaces, magnitudes; in astronomy, the revolution of the heavens, the rising, setting, and other motions of the stars; in grammar, the peculiar tone of pronunciation, and, finally, in this very art of oratory, invention, arrangement, memory, delivery.\(^{47}\)

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Cicero illustrated, though in different terms, what would later become the \textit{trivium} and \textit{quadrivium}. As a Roman senator and lawyer, he was more concerned with rhetoric and oratory than with other disciplines and considered rhetoric the foundation of the ideal orator’s education rather than that of a scientific curriculum. However, even though rhetoric and oratory was his primary concern, Cicero spoke of the arts as not only a necessity for a free man who must function in society, but he also considered the arts as fundamental training to bring together humanity.\footnote{Ibid., III.15, 58.}

Cicero’s \textit{De Oratore} confronts the controversial question of the appropriate role and content of the liberal arts in the education of the specialist or disciplinarian today. The argument Cicero presents is one that continues to polarize American educators, that of interdisciplinarity.

The false dichotomy between liberal education and career preparation, which is at the core of Cicero’s dialogue, is very much alive in twenty-first century America. A more serious consequence is that the perceived separation between general and specialized education has proven educationally counterproductive, not only within the academy, but in society at large.

Even if the question of how to combine the general and specialized components of the curriculum were resolved, a corollary and perhaps more intractable problem would remain. While liberal education remains an American ideal, disagreement over its content continues to thwart serious efforts to realize or even approximate that ideal. The assertion that it is impossible or even undesirable to define what an educated person ought to know in the face of explosions of new knowledge has been invoked periodically for successive changes in the evolution of the curriculum of American higher education. Such responses to change are often misleading, whether raised in support of greater specialization or as a barrier against attempts to restore a
common general education in the liberal arts. The parameters of the current debate over
reforming the curriculum are reminiscent of the lines of the dialectic that Cicero posed in the De
Oratore, a work that has been described as “...a masterpiece which may not be unfairly be called
the orator’s program of general education reform.”\footnote{Aubrey Gwynn, \textit{Roman Education: From Cicero to Quintilian} (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1926), 81.}

It is not by accident the shapers of the Renaissance turned to Cicero’s educational
philosophy for inspiration. Aubrey Gwynn said three decades ago that no other dialogue has had
more permanent influence on the history of Graeco-Roman and European culture than the \textit{De
Oratore}.\footnote{Ibid.}

Cicero’s preoccupation with liberal education surfaced as early as his \textit{De Inventione}
(published somewhere between his 16\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} birthday)\footnote{Cicero, \textit{On the Orator: Books 1-2 Loeb Classical Library 348}, tr. E. W. Sutton, H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942), 1.5.} and was developed
programmatically in the sequence of \textit{Rhetorica, Brutus, Orator}, and the missing \textit{Hortensius} that
followed the publication of the \textit{De Oratore}. Throughout the Ciceronian corpus there is a
consistent concern about reform of the Roman educational program and an idealistic
commitment to the practical value of a core curriculum for Roman citizens based on the Greeks’
comprehensive and critical approach to learning.

The Romans’ acknowledgement of their debt to Greece as their intellectual ancestor is
ubiquitous in Cicero’s works. Cicero was critical of the Roman educational system when he
stated: “We, however, taught no doubt by Greek example, both read and learn by heart
from boyhood the words of the poets and regard such instruction and teaching as a free
man’s heritage.” Cicero argued for a more comprehensive approach to higher education beyond that of the lower schools, as preparation for a professional career as well as a civilized life. The highest goal articulated in his educational theory was *humanitas*, an ideal that surfaced throughout his writings, is expressly stated in the words of Scipio: “...while others are called men, only those who are skilled in the specifically human arts are worthy of the name.”

There has been disagreement among scholars regarding whether Cicero used terms like *humanitatis artes* and *studia humanitatis* as synonyms for *artes liberales*, but there is no uncertainty about what Cicero meant by the phrase *artes liberales*. He demonstrated the value that he accorded to *humanitas* in the *De Oratore* as the best preparation not only for a career, but also for life-long learning and civilized living.

In the *De Oratore* Cicero identified the eternal principles of a liberal arts education, and provided a debate about its practicality that has merit not only for Roman society, but for any society.

[132] XXXIII. “That is not the only loss,” Crassus rejoined, “but there are a great many others also that have been inflicted on the wide domain of science by its being split up into separate departments. Do you really suppose that in the time of the great Hippocrates of Cos there were some physicians who specialized in medicine and others in surgery and others in ophthalmic cases? or that mathematics in the hands of Euclid or Archimedes, or music with Damon or Aristoxenus, or even literature with Aristophanes or Callimachus were such entirely separate subjects that nobody embraced culture as a whole, but instead of that everybody chose for himself a different division [133] to work in?[^55]


Crassus asserted that it was necessary to move beyond the isolated training of the standard curriculum and require the widest possible program of study. He objected to the restrictions of traditional training and argued for critical studies in the liberal arts that would include reading the poets and authors in all the *bonae artes* (good skills) and providing an informed understanding of history, law, and political philosophy.

[36] And as History, which bears witness to the passing of the ages, sheds light upon reality, give life to recollection and guidance to human existence, and brings tidings of ancient days...

[157] Then at last must our Oratory be conducted out of this sheltered training-ground at home, right into action, into the dust and uproar, into the camp and the fighting-line of public debate; she must face putting everything to the proof and test the strength of her talent, and her secluded preparation must be brought forth into the daylight of reality. We must also read the poets, acquaint ourselves with histories, study and peruse the masters and authors in every excellent art, and by way of practice praise, expound, emend, criticize and confute them; we must argue every question on both sides, and bring out on every topic whatever points can be deemed plausible; besides this we must become learned in the common law and familiar with the statutes, and must contemplate all the olden time, and investigate the ways of the senate, political philosophy, the rights of allies, the treaties and conventions, and the policy of empire; and lastly we have to cull, from all the forms of pleasantry, a certain charm of humour, with which to give a sprinkle of salt, as it were, to all of our discourse.  

His goal was not only to gain knowledge of all these fields, but to critically review, argue against, question, refute, and criticize every issue. His stated objective reads like the goals of a liberal education, which invariably include acquisition of knowledge and critical thinking skills.

Antonius rebutted with the counter-argument that what is needed is not general knowledge, but the ability to use language that is pleasing to audiences and convincing arguments that can win cases in law courts and the public forum:


[239] I ask then, of what service was legal knowledge to an advocate in those case, when that learned lawyer was bound to come off victorious, who had been upheld, not by his own dexterity but by a stranger’s, that is to say, not by legal knowledge but by eloquence?57

He continued to state that the pursuit of philosophy might be counterproductive to successful practice, since it could lead to disapproving as unethical or unseemly some of the most effective techniques in pleading cases: “[227] Publius Rutilius Rufus, a man of learning and devoted to philosophy, used to say they were not only wanting in discretion, but positively unseemly and disgraceful.”58 Noting that one can always look up special points of law, Antonius’ clinching argument was that of the narrow specialist of any day. While he did not object to studying other subjects, he maintained that the expert specialist needs to spend all his time on his single vocation:

...let him be shut up within the sphere of the daily intercourse and public life of bodies politic; and forsaking all other pursuits, be they as noble and glorious as you please, let him press forward night and day (so to speak) in this single vocation...59

Although the traditional account of the origin of the American concept of the liberal arts is influenced by Isocrates, the American ideal paradigm for a liberal arts curriculum is closer in its general outlines to the major categories of the Ciceronian ideal. The similarity in ideals suggests that De Oratore, which is the centerpiece for the Ciceronian educational philosophy and for the practicality of liberal arts education, may well serve as a valid guide in shaping the curricula of American colleges and high schools. It is also the first and most visible sign of politics influence in education.


58 Ibid., 227, p. 163.

59 Ibid., 260, p. 191.
Varro

One of the least known and recognized yet most prolific writers of the Classical Period was a contemporary of Cicero, Marcus Terentius Varro (116 BCE- 27 BCE). Varro was of the equestrian rank, growing up in a family of farmers, but rising through the sociétal and military hierarchy to command one of Pompey's armies. Later Caesar would appoint him to oversee the public library of Rome in 47 BCE. From Varro, we got the first systematic treatment of the Liberal Arts in Disciplinarum Libri Novem, translated as Guide to the Nine Disciplines. Unfortunately, the text was lost during the Middle Ages, but not before it influenced Martianus Capella’s On the Marriage of Philology and Mercury. Varro’s Guide to the Nine Disciplines was an encyclopedic work in which the subjects of grammar, logic, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and music were treated, as well as architecture and medicine. By the fourth century CE the curriculum of schools in the Roman Empire had become a fixed course in seven of the liberal arts noted by Varro.

Seneca

Of all the writers in antiquity, few were more direct in their views of liberal studies than first century Roman Stoic philosopher and statesman Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4 BCE - 65CE), also referred to as Seneca the Younger. Seneca’s Epistles are a collection of one hundred twenty-four letters he wrote to his friend and correspondent, Lucilius Junior, procurator of Sicily during the reign of Nero. Lucilius asked Seneca’s view of liberal studies to which he provide a lengthy response in volume two:

You have been wishing to know my views with regard to liberal studies. My answer is this: I respect no study, and deem no study good, which results in money-making. Such studies are profit-bringing occupations, useful only in so far as they give the mind a preparation and do not engage it permanently. One should linger upon them only so long as the mind can occupy itself with nothing greater, they are our apprenticeship, not our real work. Hence you see why “liberal studies” are so called; it is because they are studies
worthy of a free-born gentleman. But there is only one really liberal study, that which gives a man his liberty. It is the study of wisdom, and that is lofty, brave, and great-souled. All other studies are puny and puerile.\textsuperscript{60}

This passage is misleading by representing Seneca as a proponent of liberal studies; he did not in the modern-day sense embrace the \textit{trivium} or \textit{quadrivium}. A more complete reading of his letters indicates his disdain for anything not contributing to educating the youth in virtue, but in a back-handed way he acknowledged liberal studies as the source of knowledge while suggesting that there are better ways to spend one’s time:

\begin{quote}
41. A man who wishes to know many things must know such things as these, and must take no thought of all the time which one loses by ill-health, public duties, private duties, daily duties, and sleep. Apply the measure to the years of your life; they have no room for all these things.\textsuperscript{61}
\end{quote}

The culmination of the studies addressed by Seneca is wisdom:

\begin{quote}
Wisdom is a large and spacious thing. It needs plenty of free room. One must learn about things divine and human, the past and the future, the ephemeral and the eternal; and one must learn about Time.\textsuperscript{62}
\end{quote}

Seneca made what was, for a Stoic, an unintentional advocacy for liberal studies that scholars would make years later as he recognized and articulated at length the value of liberal studies. His Stoicism reflected the view that one should search one’s inner self, a view possibly linked to the God that Augustine would later embrace. However, his style and message was severely criticized by one of the most prolific Roman orators and educators: Quintilian.


\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 141.
Quintilian

Marcus Fabius Quintilianus (35-95 CE) was born shortly after Pontius Pilate ordered Jesus Christ to be crucified to death on the cross. It was a time of social unrest as Quintilian lived through the rise and deadly fall of ten emperors in his lifetime. Much of what is known of Quintilian, not only regarding his education philosophy and his insights on oratory, but his place in the social attitude of the Roman world, is learned through his major work, *The Institutes of Oratory* (*Institutio Oratoria*), a comprehensive training program in twelve volumes.

Quintilian was appointed by Vespasian as the first endowed chair of rhetoric in Rome which also made him one of the first publicly-paid teachers in western civilization. His earlier profession was what would be referred to in contemporary society as a lawyer, arguing cases before courts when arguments were settled more due to the orators’ influence than on the rule of law, another situation little changed in twenty-first century America. He recognized that the skills that were honed through declamation could also be applied to non-jurisprudential civic matters, especially in concerns that required arguments and deliberation over issues of value to the individual.

Quintilian was a rich and successful professional who later served under Domitian, the son of Vespian and also as the tutor to the two children of Flavius Clemens, who were destined to be the heirs of Domitian, although Domitian had Clemens put to death for atheism.

Quintilian was the leading Roman advocate of the seven Liberal Arts as he wrote in his *Institutio Oratoria*. He began writing this work after retiring from public service, describing how his own educational philosophy could be practically and systematically implemented. Quintilian believed that education should be for all, not just the wealthy, if society is going to move away from corruption. He viewed children of the poor in particular need, and he also viewed the
children of the wealthy as particularly at risk due to their early lives of extravagance or privilege, which provided them an illusion of comfort and security. He cautioned parents on how they trained their children, warning them that education begins at the beginning of their lives. “Would that we ourselves did not corrupt the morals of our children! We enervate their very infancy with luxuries...we for the palate of children before their pronunciation.”  

He saw education as more than just a ticket for the wealthy to the good life of status, power, and possessions. He viewed the purpose of education to serve as a humanizing endeavor that nurtured their intellectual and moral needs as well as preparing them to take their place in society.

Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria* was composed of twelve books, each focused on a different aspect of rhetoric. The first book explained the duties of the rhetoric teacher, the second the rudiments of rhetorical instruction, the third through the seventh focused on eloquence, memory, and delivery, and the last five books brought together the entire philosophy as part of the character building process.

Books one, two, and twelve elaborate on pedagogy and the outcome of a liberal education. In book one he explains, “My aim, then, is the education of the perfect orator....The first essential for such a one is that he should be a good man.”  

In book twelve he continues to explain, “The orator then, whom I am concerned to form, shall be the orator as defined by Marcus Cato, ‘a good man, skilled in speaking.’”

In Quintilian’s classroom, the personal discipline and moral judgment practiced on a

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65 Ibid., 355.
daily basis were augmented by writing and debating ethical issues raised in the reading of the texts. In a real sense, Quintilian recognized the interdisciplinary nature of reading, writing, and speaking, as well as listening, which, when combined improved the individual’s overall learning.

There is an abundance of criticism in Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria*, both positive and negative. Quintilian’s philosophy is drawn from Isocrates assertion that the orator should advocate ethical values that are predicated on the presupposition that the values argued for will benefit society. He considered Cicero a master orator as well as a theorist. Quintilian once adopted the unique procedure of quoting long passages of *De oratore* to provide a framework for his own discussion of Tropes and Figures.66

His praise for Isocrates was high; “It is to the school of Isocrates that we owe the greatest orators.”67 However, even though Isocrates was an advocate of philosophical training, Quintilian was not an advocate of philosophy as the primary subject for accomplishing his goals. He made it clear that he did not advocate for philosophy by asking,

... no other way of life is more remote from the duties of a citizen and the task of an orator generally. What philosopher has ever been such in the courts or distinguished himself in public assemblies? What philosopher has ever been active in the government of the state, the very subject on which so many of them give advice?68


Quintilian was also critical of the path some rhetors had taken. From his perspective he thought that the teaching of rhetoric had abandoned philosophy and, as a result, virtue was no longer a focus of the public and virtue had become little more than academic bantering. Quintilian did not want orators to become philosophers, but he did believe that philosophy was an indispensable component of the proper education of orators. Quintilian understood speaking and writing as separate competencies, but interactive and symbiotic in their mutual benefits. Contesting and deliberating questions of value and preference through argument and persuasion would become increasingly necessary in recognizing social needs and the path to solutions for social problems. The developmental learning objectives of rhetoric and literacy as Quintilian integrated them into his pedagogy would prove critical to the survival of literacy in the Middle Ages and the challenges to the progress of liberal education at the beginning of the Renaissance.

§3. Middle Ages 5th to 14th Centuries CE

Saint Augustine of Hippo

One of the most identifiable people of the age is the cleric Augustine of Hippo (354 CE – 430 CE). He was a bridge to the Middle Ages and an advocate of the value of the Liberal Arts. While he referenced Seneca in his writings, Augustine’s references in The City of God are very critical of Seneca’s philosophy and writing and in his early writings were not in strong support of the liberal arts. However, as Augustine’s philosophy of education evolved his position came to be more in line with that articulated by Seneca. While he awaited baptism in Milan he wrote


70 Ibid., 12.2.6.

71 Augustine of Hippo, City of God, tr. J. Shaw (Chicago, IL: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. 1952), VI, 10.
seven individual treatises on each of the disciplines, of which only two survive.\footnote{Augustine of Hippo, \textit{The Retractations}, tr. Sister Mary Inez Bogan (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1968), I.5, 21.} At this point in his life he rejected philosophy and rhetoric as pagan disciplines while at the same time using the very principles Cicero had earlier articulated. Augustine considered rhetoric and philosophy to be pagan, but as he considered his religious commitment he also came to realize that the use of the Liberal Arts as a tool for educating was not merely useful for conveying information, but for engendering in the soul of the student an understanding of the perfect way of living in order to achieve the ultimate human goal of true happiness. For Augustine, education had one central purpose: to help people understand the difference between themselves and God:

\begin{quote}
All instruction in wisdom, the purpose of which is the education of men, is for distinguishing the creator and the creature, and worshiping the one as Lord and confessing the other as subject.\footnote{Augustine of Hippo, \textit{Eighty-Three Different Questions}, tr. David L. Mosher (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2002), 81.}
\end{quote}

As Augustine’s thinking matured, he put so many of his thoughts in writing that it is not difficult to find passages that contradict later statements, as is the case in passages referring to the Liberal Arts. However, he eventually concluded that the pagan arts could be used in praise of God as well.

Augustine referred to the studies as liberal because they were related to the mind that is free and not linked to only one experience. Not only did he believe that the liberal arts were related to a free mind, but they were meant to be arts whose primary purpose was to produce acts of the mind:

\begin{quote}
Such studies are the way to the highest things, the way of reason, which chooses for itself ordered steps lest it fall from the height. The steps are the various liberal arts.\footnote{Augustine of Hippo, \textit{De Ordine}, tr. Silvano Borruso (South Bend, IN.: St. Augustine’s Press, 2007), I, 8, 24.}
\end{quote}
The Liberal Arts were not an end in themselves. They were only steps that allowed the mind to act on instructions of how to live the intelligent or good life. From Augustine we learn that there were listeners who appreciated music purely for music’s sake in the fourth century. He spoke of various things that make men happy:

Many decide that for them the happy life is found in vocal music and in the sounds of string instruments and auloi. Whenever these are absent, they account themselves unhappy, whereas when they are at hand, they are thrilled with joy.\(^75\)

He reiterated throughout his writings that only by attaining the goal of the supernatural life as achieved in baptism could people change their restlessness into good. Augustine said that education, referring to the Liberal Arts, was an integral part of the soul moving to higher levels of spirituality and understanding; “Only the mind has life with reason; for God has life with reason since in Him there is the highest life and the highest reason...Whatever is understood is so always.”\(^76\)

What Augustine saw in the philosophical schools that practiced the Liberal Arts were the tools necessary to guide students to their ultimate goal.

...for instruction in the liberal arts, if only it is moderate and concise, produces devotees more alert and steadfast and better equipped for embracing truth...\(^77\)

Augustine understood that these intellectual tools were to be designed to educate the minds of the young, and the way to do that was through the verbal instruction of a teacher.

Studies were not only to be read, but also to be heard. Simply reading or even memorizing dialogues does not enlighten a student. Only through an instructor who understands the text can

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the words be fashioned in such a way that the material can be understood and assimilated by the student. Augustine wrote of the overall inclusive value of the Liberal Arts as part of a larger work, not as a single treatise on the Liberal Arts.

**Martianus Minneus Felix Capella**

The most widely used textbook during the early Middle Ages was also the first to limit the Liberal Arts to seven: *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii, (On the Marriage of Philology and Mercury)* where the *trivium* and *quadrivium* of the Liberal Arts were brought together in one work. So little is known about its author, Martianus Minneus Felix Capella (fl. c. 410 - 420) that scholars cannot agree on where he was born and lived.

The seminal translation of the work is by William Harris Stahl, Richard Johnson and E.L. Burge at Columbia University in 1997, who credit Martianus as the founder of the *trivium* and *quadrivium* in medieval education. In an age when books were scarce, Martianus’ imaginative depiction of the liberal arts as the handmaids to learning stimulated the interest of students while simultaneously instructing them. William Harris Stahl observed:

> We moderns may be repelled by the style and content of the *De nuptiis*, but vernacular readers and medieval students seeking an introduction to the learned arts and finding in Martianus’ work a fairly compact treatise dressed in fantasy and allegory were both charmed and edified by it.

In speaking of the significance of Martianus’ work, Stahl stated:

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One cannot read Martianus’ book cursorily – one must tackle it – and the reader is immediately at a loss to explain how a book so dull and difficult could have been one of the most popular books of Western Europe for nearly a thousand years.\textsuperscript{80}

The book is difficult to read for modern readers in the English translation, and even more so in the Latin, because the style shifts back and forth between prose and poetry, resulting in translations seldom being attempted except by scholars. Written in the fifth century this allegory representing the union of learning and eloquence adheres to Roman religion by depicting the Liberal Arts as the path to winning immortality and fellowship with the gods. The teaching of salvation through \textit{paideia}, though considered improper by medieval Christians, did not deter medieval Christians from relying on Martianus in their study of the Liberal Arts.

Scholars have used locations referenced in his work, people Martianus spoke about and even the style of his prose to date his work, but there is no agreement regarding when and where he lived. There has also been speculation about his profession, such as that he was a farmer or ploughman; “...the owner of a small piece of land with stupid ploughmen for neighbours, and making very little money-striving...”\textsuperscript{81} Other scholars speculate that he may have been a lawyer arguing before the proconsul of Africa, but there is no documentation surviving to support any of the speculation and even controversy about the Latin translation of the work.\textsuperscript{82}

In the Middle Ages rhetoric and classical studies were an important part of the curriculum. \textit{On the Marriage of Philology and Mercury} brought the seven Liberal Arts,
personified as seven sisters, into the classroom. Each of the seven sisters, who were bridesmaids at the wedding and representing one of the Liberal Arts had lengthy and eloquent speeches about her specialty. Another attraction of the work is the form. Most Roman educational writing of the time was presented as a written lecture, but Martianus adopted the Greek narrative form, which made learning more palatable.

Stahl described the book on astronomy as the shortest and best in Martianus’ writing on the Liberal Arts. Unfortunately, this short piece on astronomical knowledge was the best the Middle Ages had to offer to students until the revival of Greco-Arabic learning in the twelfth century.83

Capella described the study of language arts as a technical, overly-analytical endeavor, likely boring to students. Grammar embraced the linguistic study of letters, syllables, declensions, and literature. Classic texts were not read for their imaginative power, their moral example, or their elegance of style. Rather, they were studied for their structure, rhetorical figures, etymology, and mythological references. Dialectic was treated as a sub-category of rhetoric based on the formal logic of Aristotle, minus any listing of common fallacies. The role of dialectic in medieval education, according to Richard Johnson, was primarily to “…train the power of reasoning, to discover and fortify the arguments which rhetoric would then use.”84 Martianus presented the art of rhetoric as a combination of the theories of Cicero and Quintilian with political and legal themes from the Roman Republic and ancient Greece providing the examples on which the rhetorical forms and figures were based.85

83 Ibid., 174.
84 Ibid., 95.
85 Ibid., 174.
On the Marriage is not only influential in the preservation and propagation of classical learning from the fifth to the twelfth centuries, but also as a handbook on the Liberal Arts. It epitomizes the lack of original thought that characterized the period as well as presenting the ideas of classical authors such as Aristotle and Cicero through other interpreters. In describing Martianus’ writing ability Stahl said it, “...bears comparison with a term paper written by a high school senior of good standing who has a knack of turning out papers with a minimum of effort.” Modern sensibilities may find in On the Marriage a combination of pedantic tone and florid style which make the work nearly unreadable, but as Stahl noted, Martianus does provide a complete picture of Roman education during the late Republic and early Empire.

There have been and continue to be detractors of Martianus who question his competency in any of the arts, particularly mathematics and astronomy. However, he was the first author to allegorize the seven Liberal Arts that inspired future students and scholars to further define the Liberal Arts as they evolved during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. The fact that his work still exists and is translated and studied by Latin scholars attests to its scholarly value.

Boethius

While The Consolation of Philosophy is widely read among Philosophy students, the significance of the origin of the term quadrivium is often neglected. Anicius Manlius Severinus Boëthius, (480 CE – 524 CE) commonly known as Boethius, used Cicero’s and Seneca’s works as models, but he took learning and the acquisition of knowledge from the lower to higher levels of education.

86 Ibid., 234.
87 Ibid., 231-243.
In the text, Lady Philosophy leads the prisoner, Boethius, through a succession of problems to be solved using the mathematical sciences (astronomy, music, geometry, arithmetic). Utilizing the capabilities of sensation in book one, music in book two, and the geometry of reason in books three and four, she finally brings all the forms together in unity as the simplicity of the resolution of problems presented to the Prisoner. Each step in the process forced the Prisoner to use each of the sciences to solve a problem in order to move to the next step creating a sequence of continuity from one to the next.

There is argument among scholars regarding whether there is a logical progression. Nor is there agreement that the conclusion for the previous problem must be reached in order to proceed to the next, yet there is a relationship of each of the components in the solving of each individual problem. Part of the tension or argument is how the senses can contradict imagination, but imagination can reveal a greater truth concerning the same issue. Elaine Scarry suggested there is a steady progression of prose from book 1 to book 5, though the progression is not progressive, because the book 3 paradigm is inconsistent with the rest of the progression; “...there is a steady upward progression from the realm of sense in book 1 to the realm of Insight in book 5.”

She further explained her observation of the break in the progression:

While the other four books follow one another through successive levels of the cognitive hierarchy, through successive levels of the created material world, the central book of the Consolation is lifted out of and above the material world of creation.

While Boethius’ Consolation is the story that ultimately manifests the quadrivium through poetic analogy, it is more than analogy. The Consolation illustrates the progression of


89 Ibid., 156.
the four components from the lower senses to higher reason, at each step leading the Prisoner to a higher level of knowledge and understanding.

This, therefore, is the quadrivium by which we bring a superior mind from the knowledge offered by the senses to the more certain things of the intellect. There are various steps and certain dimensions of progressing by which the mind is able to ascend so that by means of the eye of the mind, which is composed of many corporeal eyes and is of higher dignity than they, truth can be investigated and beheld. This eye, I say, submerged and surrounded by the corporeal senses, is in turn illuminated by the disciplines of the quadrivium.90

Boethius described the methods of knowing and how they correspond to mathematics:

The senses examine his shape as constituted in matter, while imagination considers his shape alone without matter. Reason transcends imagination, too, and with a universal consideration reflects upon the species inherent in individual instances. But there exists the more exalted eye of intelligence which passes beyond the sphere of the universe to behold the simple form itself with the pure vision of the mind.91

The foundation for the argument is that knowledge is dependent upon the cognitive capacity of the student and not the knowledge to be acquired.92

Boethius wrote no general text describing the seven Liberal Arts nor is there any indication the seven arts were of any relevance to him other than the four of the quadrivium. His historical significance is also in the fact that his writings and translations served as textbooks and as a source from which other writers on the arts were to draw from.

90 Michael Masi, Boethian Number: A Translation of the De Institutione Arithmetica (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Rodopi, 1983), 73.


Cassiodorus

Flavius Magnus Aurelius Senator Cassiodorus (485-585 CE) advocated for the Liberal Arts by continuing the path followed by Augustine and Martianus Capella as he distinguished the Liberal Arts, notably grammar and rhetoric, from the sciences, and dialectics which he considered part art and part science. He attempted to bridge the sixth century cultural divides between East and West, Greek and Latin culture, the Romans and Goths, and between Christian people and their rulers. Cassiodorus is most famous for his *Introduction to Divine and Human Readings*, but his theoretical work relied on and referenced his *Commentary on the Psalms*, his earlier attempt to work out the practical relationship between biblical and secular learning. In the *Introduction* Cassiodorus recommended the *Commentary* to his readers: “May your library possess a copy of this work.”93 The *Commentary on the Psalms* was the least studied of Cassiodorus's works, but through it he attempted to establish the Bible as the source for all the liberal arts and a model for rhetorical imitation.

In his preface to the *Introduction*, Cassiodorus emphasized that the books of the Bible must be read to maintain the Augustinian precept, “...that which is evidently said rather obscurely in one book is set down more clearly in another.”94 He asserted that the “...novices of Christ...” may proceed to other books only after they have learned the Psalms,95 the first book to be undertaken in Cassiodorus's program of developing commentary of the Bible.96 Twice in the *Introduction* Cassiodorus referenced his *Commentary on the Psalms* as the place where he had


94 Ibid., 4.

95 Ibid., 68.

96 Ibid., 1.4.1, 82-3.
demonstrated the biblical origin of all the liberal arts:

For it is agreed that in the origin of spiritual wisdom, as it were, evidences of these matters were sown abroad in the manner of seeds, which instructors in secular letters later most wisely transferred to the own rules; we have shown our approval of this action...in our expounding of the Psalter...If anyone deigns to read my remarks...he will perceive, as other Fathers have stated in no uncertain terms, that something has arisen from the Divine Scriptures which teachers of secular letters have subsequently transferred to their own studies.  

What sets Cassiodorus's commentary apart from other allegorical interpretations of the Psalms is they are not theological, but pedagogical. Cassiodorus was not only interested in the spiritual benefits available from the Psalms, but also the didactic benefits. He made the Psalter a part of the Liberal Arts and “...taught the seeds of the artes were planted from the beginning of time in the wisdom of God and in Holy Scripture; the teachers of the secular disciplines had received them thence and had reduced them to their own systems of rules.” This enabled readers to draw from the knowledge of the Liberal Arts and better understand the scriptural texts and allow them to do their own analysis. This acceptance of the Psalter as textbook is a fundamental theory about the Liberal Arts extending back to Clement of Alexandria, but never understood and presented as well as by Cassiodorus.

Until the fourteenth century, thinkers and scholars focused on what liberal arts were and how to define them. Augustine, Capella, Boethius, and Cassiodorus began to identify the seven arts that were to become disciplines, recognized as fundamental branches of knowledge, by the end of the Medieval Period, in the fourteenth century. This definition and establishment of the Liberal Arts would be necessary for them to survive the beginnings of the Renaissance.

97 Ibid.


99 Ibid.
The advent of the printing press (c. 1440-50) made the widespread communication of existing literature available which in turn spurred the interest in reading and created a demand for knowledge that would presumably allow the Liberal Arts to flourish. Access to literature and citizens learning to read created chaos with education, the church, and the Liberal Arts in particular. The Liberal Arts should have flourished, but not until later during the period of rebellion and chaos of a new intellectual ideology called the Renaissance. In that era a new cultural, social, and education movement called Humanism revived an interest in ancient Greek and Roman thought that had all but died out between the time of Cassiodorus and the fourteenth century.

§4. Renaissance [14th to 17th Centuries]

The Renaissance ushered in an age of rebirth and learning that began in Italy as an explosion of literary, artistic, cultural, and intellectual energy that occurred during the transition from the Middle Ages.

The period of the Renaissance brought an unprecedented richness and vitality to every aspect of human endeavor unlike any period before it. The technology of the printing press provided access to unprecedented amounts of information, bringing with it the challenge of how to organize information in a manner that humans could process and use. People witnessed the saturation of their daily lives with information as well as the way in which public issues and social life were increasingly affected by information. It was an age of new discoveries that resulted in changes of great importance for Western civilization as illustrated by Copernicus, who developed a model showing the sun at the center of the universe rather than the earth; Martin Luther who challenged the authority of the Catholic Church; together with many artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and others.
However, much had to happen before the Renaissance could achieve the greatness attributed to it historically. The study of Renaissance culture was influenced by civic humanism, but humanism before 1400 was still tightly linked to the Middle Ages. Humanism was not simply a literary revival of the classics, but an intellectual movement that reflected the environment of the Italian city-states, particularly that of Florence. As an approach to Renaissance culture, the idea of civic humanism directed a scholar’s attention to the connections between intellectual life and the social and political setting in which it existed. The Aristotelianism of Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century had aroused the enthusiasm and led to some of the greatest achievements in human history to date, but the culture of the universities had become scholastic in practice, dealing with abstract ideas and so captivated with their accomplishments they neglected the humanistic need of the people who were unable to share in their successes.

Scholars such as Petrarch (1304 – 1374 CE) rediscovered the Latin authors as a means to bring temperance, moral values, and humanitas to mankind. These scholars viewed the Latin poets, orators, and historians as providing insight into humanity with a more virtuous perspective on life. These studies were later called “human studies” (studia humanitatis).

The humanist movement developed in two separate stages. In the first, humanism was scholarly and literary, and in the second it became civic. While early Renaissance scholars were embracing the thinking of the ancients such as Cicero and questioning the teachings of the church, the two had become inextricably intertwined and could not be separated without undesirable outcomes. In their haste to rebel against the church, oppressive governments, and the Middle Ages in general, they also sought to understand the world around them and embraced that which appealed to human spirit.
Not until the second stage that began around 1400 did the trend of cultural life in Italy look back to the pure traditions of antiquity and move forward to a new perspective of humankind and the world. The fourteenth-century humanists, “…compounding medieval ascetic ideals with stoic precepts, believed that the true sage ought to keep aloof from society and public duties,”\(^{100}\) but they did not easily let go of the old ideals. Renaissance thinkers were referred to as humanists because of their emphasis on the human realm, excluding logic and adding history, and moral philosophy to available studies. However, they also made poetry an important member of the curriculum. The educational curriculum of humanism spread throughout Europe during the sixteenth century and became the foundation for the schooling of European elites, the functionaries of political administration, the clergy of churches, and the professions of law and medicine.

The criticism of the Renaissance was rising against the church, but science would not gather sufficient followers to effect change until later eras. The challenge was for Renaissance thinkers to move forward while keeping their writings within the general framework of Christianity.

**Francesco Petrarch**

Humanists initially viewed the classical period as a period of stagnation where scholarship in the Liberal Arts did little to improve the human condition. Francesco Petrarch (1304 – 1374 CE), Italian scholar and poet, was the first to view the juxtaposition of the ancients

with the scholarship of his time as a break from the dogmatic instruction of religious clerics to individual freedom of beliefs.

Citizenship to the Humanists was, as it was to the ancients, the highest end or outcome of education. The gradual change in the evaluation of the secular world that occurred during the fourteenth century also led to the pursuit of virtue and ethical wisdom as an attainable aim in human life.

Petrarch proposed in De vita solitaria (On the Solitary Life) an innovative vision of the function of the intellectual. At the core of this vision was his definition of humanistic otium, or leisure. Petrarch’s conclusion favoring solitude as literary leisure had its paradigm in the
Familiar Letters IV.1 to Dionigi da Borgo San Sepolcro, Francesco’s confessor, known as The Ascent to Mount Ventoux. The letter tells of Francesco’s, and his brother Gherardo's, ascent to Mount Ventoux in Provence, and symbolically illustrated the two brothers' different choices of life. Gherardo took a direct path that led to the top quicker. Francesco took a longer path that led back to the valley and through woods, but reached the same peak where his brother was waiting. The narrative illustrated two paths with equivalent outcomes. Francesco introduced the idea of lay solitude that leads people to God through contributions to the edification of the Christian society. The lay climber, Francesco, wanders through the vicissitudes of life, living in isolation and only comforted by a few friends as he keeps his focus on an earthly goal while living a morally exemplary life and doing good works useful to the ethical reform of society. By espousing his view of lay solitude, Francesco implicitly demonstrates that religion is not the only way to Salvation, but that it can be achieved through a knowledge of human nature. The human

way does not renounce the world, but accepts it. He believed acceptance can occur through investigation of the self, leading to the knowledge of the human mind. It is not an abstract speculation of causes, but researches the principles of human actions with the ultimate goal of acquiring the knowledge of what makes a person good and useful to others. The letter illustrates a main tenet of Petrarch’s thought: that pursuing virtue is the most important effort man can possibly make within the limits of his rational capacities, and that this effort must always balance speculation on the self and civic commitment.

Petrarch wrote a number of letters to important deceased figures of antiquity, particularly Cicero. The letters shine some light on his philosophy. In the first of two letters he wrote to Cicero that he was critical of Cicero’s teaching of the arts:

Like Brutus, I feel no confidence in the arts in which you are so proficient. What, pray, does it profit a man to teach others, and to be prating always about virtue, in high-sounding words, if he fails to give heed to his own instructions?

This passage reflects Petrarch’s dissatisfaction with the arts of antiquity and how they were taught. His letters had the effect of supplanting medieval Latin with classical Latin as the language of discourse for educated men everywhere. In a subsequent letter from Petrarch to Cicero, he had a different perspective:

It is from your well-springs that we draw the streams that water our meads. You, we freely acknowledge, are the leader who marshals us; yours are the words of encouragement that sustain us; yours is the light that illumines the path before us. In a


word, it is under your auspices that we have attained to such little skill in this art of writing as we may possess. . . .

Petrarch read the ancients to satisfy spiritual, and not material, needs. He was the first writer in the West to give full cultural expression to the anxieties caused by the breakdown of the ancient belief in the unity of the individual in the cosmos.

He read the biographies of ancient Romans and hoped to strengthen himself by comparing his courage to theirs. For Petrarch, forming moral character through the study of the ancients was a lifelong endeavor. The ancient’s battles were real and physical while his were psychological, but that made no difference to Petrarch. He wanted to understand how they persevered and learn how to withstand the blows of life by emulating what he believed was the inner strength of his ancient heroes. Petrarch said that except for conversations with men of wisdom there was nothing better for relieving anxieties than “...the continual and night-long reading of the records of noble writers.”

Nineteenth century historian Georg Ludwig Voigt eloquently described Petrarch’s importance and role as the founding father of Humanism, as well as his role in advancing scholarship and intellectualism during the Renaissance:

Not only did he rouse classical antiquity from its long winter sleep and infuse new life into a paralyzed world; he led in the struggle against existing inertia and foresaw a new era as the outcome of this conflict. He pointed out a field of arduous and endless effort, but one yielding rich returns. He gave direction to the talents of hundreds, and if he was, before many generations, excelled in more than one respect, it was only as the discoverer of the New World would ere long have had to give way before the knowledge of a schoolboy. Not only in the history of literature in Italy does the name of Petrarch shine as a star of the first magnitude, but in the history of the civilized world, yea, in the history of

104 Ibid.

the human intellect itself.\textsuperscript{106}

We gain insight into Petrarch’s philosophy through his letters to the ancients. Petrarch was to some extent conflicted between the doctrine of the church and progressivism of humanism, but managed to find the bridge between the church using the arguments of Aristotle and Jerome and referencing the ancient ways of Cicero and others.

\textbf{Leonardo Bruni}

The importance of presentation or form was illustrated by fifteenth century Italian humanist and historian Leonardo Bruni (1370 – 1444 CE), the most famous humanist and humanistic historian of Florence. Bruni said real studies do not lead people into idle solitude.

\begin{quote}
Among the stay-at-homes, withdrawn from human society, I have never seen one who could count up to three. A lofty and distinguished mind does not need such fetters. ... To stand aside from the interchange of ideas with others is characteristic of those whose inferior minds are incapable of understanding anything.\textsuperscript{107}
\end{quote}

Nowhere else did the citizen find liberation from his/her medieval past, but in a determined alliance with the classical ideas of citizenship.

In the early fifteenth century Bruni wrote in a letter to Niccolo Strozzi, a member of the wealthy and politically powerful Strozzi family that would eventually merge with the Medici family, describing to him the educational program that was just beginning to be known as the \textit{studia humanitatis} or human studies. These letters provide some of the earliest description of what the humanities were like in the early Renaissance. In one of the letters Bruni urged him to concentrate his studies on the humanities:

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}


Let your study be twofold, first in the skill of letters, not the vulgar and common kind, but one which is more diligent and penetrating, and in this I very much want you to excel; and second in the knowledge of those things which pertain to life and moral character. These two are therefore called the humanities, because they perfect and adorn a human being.  

Bruni further urged him to expand his studies, to study not only the works of philosophers, but of orators and historians as well.

Bruni went into the details of the subject matter in his treatise *De studiis et litteris*, “On Studies and Letters,” a treatise he wrote in a letter to Battista di Montefeltro, his student and wife of the Lord of Pesaro. He told her to continue learning and become an educated woman as he explained to her what he meant by educated and learning:

For true learning has almost died away amongst us. True learning, I say: not a mere acquaintance with that vulgar, threadbare jargon which satisfies those who devote themselves to Theology; but sound learning in its proper and legitimate sense, viz., the knowledge of realities—Facts and Principles—united to a perfect familiarity with Letters and the art of expression. Now this combination we find in Lactantius, in Augustine, or in Jerome; each of them at once a great theologian and profoundly versed in literature. But turn from them to their successors of today: how must we blush for their ignorance of the whole field of Letters!  

He provided Battista with a list of both secular and sacred writers to read and told her she should read only what was written by one of those writers. By telling Battista to read only what was written by one of his model writers, he excluded from her education the scholastic writers of his time because of their failure to write well. He viewed theologians as obsessed with formal logic that corrupted their thinking and their writing. He went on to tell her that knowledge must be accompanied by power of expression:


Proficiency in literary form, not accompanied by broad acquaintance with facts and truths, is a barren attainment, whilst information, however vast, which lacks all grace of expression would seem to be put under a bushel or partly thrown away.\textsuperscript{110}

Echoing the sentiments of Isocrates and Quintilian, the humanists championed learning that was broad rather than deep, literary rather than philosophical, and dogmatic rather than speculative. By Bruni’s standards, no book written in Latin after the time of Augustine was worthy of serious study.\textsuperscript{111}

Humanists of Bruni’s time were divided over how much they could divert from the style and usage of Cicero and other model Roman writers. Bruni asserted the models to be followed should be the great writers of classical antiquity, not those associated with the Middle Ages who were vulgar in their style and content. For Bruni, Roman writers of antiquity such as Cicero were writers to read and imitate. His admonition to read only those he believed best exemplified the humanist tradition provided Battista with the best to imitate, but prevented her from reading other writers who may have been less skillful yet provided a variety of styles from which to learn. In the Renaissance a humanist was a teacher or scholar of Greek and Latin, and Bruni believed there were specific secular disciplines relevant to life and moral character: moral philosophy, history, oratory, and poetry. Human studies as Bruni described them contained a specific literary curriculum: the liberal arts as defined at the time were not part of it.\textsuperscript{112}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 132.
  \item \textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 124.
  
  \textbf{NOTE:} The National Endowment for the Humanities, for example, defines the humanities as language, both modern and classic linguistics, literature, history, jurisprudence, philosophy, archaeology, the history, criticism and practice of the arts, and those aspects of the social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods.
\end{itemize}
Petrus Paulus Vergerius

Petrus Paulus Vergerius (1370-1444) was born at Capo d'Istria. He was associated with Humanism at Padua, studying with Vittorino da Feltre. After studying at Padua he moved to Florence, where he taught Logic, and studied Civil and Canon Law. In 1391 he returned to Padua, as Doctor Artium, as Doctor Medicinae, and as professor of Logic. While he was teaching Logic he began to move away from the traditional scholastic method and employed what today would be considered a modern style of Dialectic. By the time of his arrival in Florence he had enthusiastically embraced the Humanist ideology. In 1404 he wrote the Treatise De ingenuis moribus (The Liberal Treatise of Morals), for the use of Ubertinus, the son of Francesco Carrara, the Lord of Padua. This work was among the most widely read of all the classical literature for a century and a half after publication. In the sixteenth century it was studied in schools; a former student and professor, Carlo Combi, affirmed that he was “...one of the most illustrious of the long series of Italian educators, and the first to approach the subject upon the new lines, and with the larger scope, rendered possible by the Revival and demanded by the altered conditions of society.”

Vergerius’ Treatise advocated subjects and defended methods of instruction that had previously either been neglected or prohibited. He was the exemplary Humanist who wrote natural Greek and Latin as demonstrated by his Treatise which was his most important contribution to classical learning. The main characteristic of the Treatise lies in the union of


Classical enthusiasm with Christianity: “With what is most commonly believed in all humanism, it is indeed a truly agreeable arrangement of thoughts, considered opposed to each other by the two opposing schools that reject it,”¹¹⁵ which has been the ideal of Humanist education ever since.

In shifting the intellectual focus from theology to humanity, the humanists, who placed less value on mathematics and natural science, prepared the way for the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century scientists. In three hundred years’ natural science would gain the authority that had been the domain of classical authors and the Church for almost two millennia.

Paradoxically, in the very recovery of the ancient authors and reverence for the classical rhetorical ideal, the Renaissance humanists made it possible for the development of modern science, which would upset the rhetorical ideal. However, contrary to some scholars such as Kimball and to a lesser extent Proctor, liberal education was not simply a competition between orators and philosophers. While there were discontinuities in cultural inheritance, the Renaissance humanists transformed classical culture as they recovered it, illustrating the contrast in the Liberal Arts tradition as “…not between the orators and the philosophers, but between ancient and modern self-consciousness.”¹¹⁶

Vittorino da Feltre

The Medieval school model was centered in the church, with the Pope the highest authority, but with local clerics having power delegated by him. Teachers were licensed by these officials and exercised general supervision over the schools. As the Renaissance progressed,

¹¹⁵ Ibid., xlvii.

cathedral schools would play an important role in European universities, but that authority would diminish as towns grew and won the right to establish schools and bypass the local clerics, going directly to the Pope.

As part of the general demand for rights against the church, Renaissance rulers began to exercise greater control over education. The Italian nobility in the cities set up schools in their courts to educate noble children. Vittorino de Feltre (1378 – 1446) was responsible for establishing the model school of the period.

Vittorino left home at the age of eighteen and entered the University of Padua in 1396, remaining for the next twenty-seven years as a teacher and scholar until he received his doctorate. Vittorino established a school according to the ideas of Cicero and Quintilian as he interpreted them. He not only taught the children of nobility, but also took in lower class boys.

In 1422 Vittorino left Padua for Venice where he conducted a school for the sons of Venetian patricians from various parts of Italy who were attracted by his reputation. At Venice he took students as boarders into his house and his reputation allowed him large fees for his tuition. In 1423, Gianfrancesco Gonzaga offered him an opportunity to set up a school in the Castello in Mantua. There Vittorino and the children of the Marquis lived and worked. Over time, other pupils from families of standing were added, and eventually a number of poor students chosen by Vittorino were added, whose tuition, board, and clothing were paid for by Vittorino and the charity of the Marquis and his wife. Equality of opportunity was an essential principle of Vittorino’s doctrine of education.

The general aims of the Mantuan school developed by Vittorino during his twenty-two years there was to effect a reconciliation between the moral and religious teaching of the Church and classical instruction along the lines of Quintilian. The breadth of Vittorino's conception of a
humanist course of training stands out even more impressively as a part of his philosophy of education, which was to train mind, body and spirit as one. He viewed education as practical in the sense that it prepared youth for a life of service, training both mind and character. He did not view a sound knowledge of literature or language as simply for those of leisure, but a major element in molding the citizen.

Vittorino’s curriculum included all seven of the Liberal Arts with the exception of logic. Logic was omitted due to Vittorino’s bad experiences with Medieval scholasticism. The significance of the curriculum was the humanistic reinterpretation of the Liberal Arts to include recreation as well as physical training.

During the years he spent at Mantua he established and perfected the first great school of the Renaissance whose curriculum and method was a landmark of critical importance in the history of classical education. Vittorino believed that all persons who wished to be cultured and educated must know Latin and Greek. This was an educational legacy of the Renaissance to the modern world.

§5. Enlightenment [17th through 18th Centuries]

There is no specific date on a historical time line that recognizes the end of the Renaissance and the beginning of the Enlightenment Period. Where the Renaissance was the transition from the Middle Age or Medieval period of cultural upheaval to a period of social, cultural, political and artistic chaotic rebirth where humans were engaged in life, Enlightenment thinkers began to confront the relationship between technological and scientific progress and the emergence of a free society.

During the early eighteenth century as science was expanding the boundaries of knowledge beyond the time-tested classical tradition, a new educational ideal began to emerge.
This new ideal is premised on a radically different understanding of freedom than that which animated the classical *artes liberales* ideal. For the Ancient, Medieval, and Renaissance educator, the Liberal Arts of learning made men free by ‘binding’ them to a common culture by means of intellectual and moral discipline. Enlightenment thinkers and educators believed learning should lead to an individualistic, open freedom.

The meaning of the word *liberal* changed during the eighteenth century from “licentious” to “open-minded.” There are seven characteristics identified with the liberal-free ideal: (1) freedom from *a priori* strictures and standards, 2) intellect and rationality, 3) epistemological skepticism, 4) tolerance, 5) egalitarianism, 6) individual volition, and 7) freedom of intellect as an end in itself.

While Humanists and Enlightenment rationalists were united in their opposition to traditional scholastic methods of study, they disagreed on the use of the classical tradition. Humanists advocated a rhetorical education culminating in oratorical skills and moral virtue with a foundation in the ancient classics while rationalists argued for the importance of mathematics, natural science, and the philosophical search for truth. Enlightenment thinkers challenged the conventional scientific beliefs of Plato and Aristotle and pressed for a curriculum based on scientific discoveries. That new scientific learning had begun during the twelfth century Renaissance and continued with Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, and Newton – in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries - who achieved an authority not dependent upon acceptance into the classical tradition.


\[118\] Ibid., 115.
There was no shortage of notable intellectuals or accomplishments of the Enlightenment, and while their work in political science, philosophy and other disciplines had some impact on education, few addressed the pedagogy of curriculum and the structure of the education system.

**John Amos Comenius**

John Amos Comenius (1592 – 1670) of Moravia could chronologically fit into either the Renaissance or Enlightenment period. He was one of the earliest advocates of universal education, a concept about which he wrote in his book *Didactica Magna* (*Great Didactic*) where he outlined a progressive school structure similar to that used in the current American public school system; kindergarten, elementary school, secondary school, and university.

Comenius did not eliminate the majority of the subject matters in the Liberal Arts or discount certain writers as did Bruni, but instead attempted to apply substance to an educational process that had drifted away from any cogent structure. He was the first to introduce pictures in textbooks written in the vernacular instead of Latin. He also believed that effective teaching was based on the gradual intellectual growth from simple to more advanced concepts that were supported by the development of logical thinking, moving from memorization to a more experiential method. Comenius viewed education not only as a tool used to train a child at school or in the home, but as a process that would affect a person’s entire life and the countless social adjustments and decisions that they would eventually be forced to make. He went into

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great detail regarding not only the structure of the school, but the method by which the student would be taught.121

In developing his philosophy of education, Comenius emphasized seven principles:

1. the use of objects or pictures to illustrate concepts;
2. applying the lessons learned to the student’s everyday life;
3. presenting lessons directly and simply;
4. emphasizing general principles before the details;
5. emphasizing that all creatures and objects are part of a whole universe;
6. presenting lessons in sequence, stressing one thing at a time;
7. not leaving a specific subject until the student understands it.122

Comenius viewed the child as being in the process of spontaneous development with individual study, independent exercises, and age appropriate studies necessary to the student’s education as evidenced by experiential approach:

If you give them a precept, it makes but little impression; if you point out that others are doing something, they imitate without being told to do so.123

One of Comenius’ most significant acknowledgements and recommendations is that of opportunities for women in education. Throughout history women were largely relegated to the home, and if any education was allowed it usually took the form of topics related to housekeeping. Comenius made a rare and, for the time, controversial assertion regarding the education of women:

Nor can any sufficient reason be given why the weaker sex (to give a word of advice on this point in particular) should be altogether excluded from the pursuit of knowledge (whether in Latin or in their mother-tongue), They also are formed in the image of God, and share in His grace and in the kingdom of the world to come. They are endowed with


123 Ibid., 64.
equal sharpness of mind and capacity for knowledge (often with more than the opposite
sex), and they are able to attain the highest positions, since they have often been called by
God Himself to rule over nations, to give sound advice to kings and princes, to the study
of medicine and of other things which benefit the human race, even to the office of
prophesying and of inveighing against priests and bishops. Why, therefore, should we
admit them to the alphabet, and afterwards drive them away from books? Do we fear
their folly?\textsuperscript{124}

Comenius has been referred to as the father of modern education, and while his principles of
education were widely accepted in his time as well as being partially retained today, his
assertions regarding education of women have not been fully realized even in the twenty-first
century. A contemporary reader of the \textit{Great Didactic (Didactica Magna)} would not have to read
far to realize that Comenius advocated for what is referred to by modern day scholars and
educators as the progressive approach to education. Many of the ideas in the \textit{Great Didactic} are
reflected in the ideas of twentieth-century philosopher and educator John Dewey who advocated
for education reform that reflected similar ideas put forth by Comenius three hundred years
earlier.

\textbf{Jean-Jacques Rousseau}

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 1778) was a political philosopher of the Enlightenment
whose political and social thought influenced not only the French Revolution, but also addressed
education through his book \textit{Emile}, a treatise on the nature of education as well as on the nature of
man.

He asserted that students being subordinated to teachers and memorizing only facts
would not lead to acceptable educational outcomes. His educational thought was accurately
summarized in his statement in \textit{Emile}: “Plants are fashioned by cultivation, man by
education...we are born weak, we need strength; helpless, we need aid; foolish, we need reason.

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 68.
All that we lack at birth...is the gift of education." He considered it the, “...best and most important of all my writings.

Rousseau’s philosophy of education was not concerned with particular methods and techniques of teaching, but with developing the student’s character and moral sense so that they might learn to practice self-control and remain virtuous in the society in which they have to live. He was one of the first to advocate age and development-appropriate education whose description of the stages of development reflected his ideas of the evolution of culture. He believed that the ultimate goal of education was to develop a person’s ability to reason, but the appropriate age for this is between twelve and sixteen. Any younger and the child will not be able to understand abstract concepts; any older and the concepts will be confusing as being out of sequence. Rousseau stated:

Reason with children...it is in the height of fashion at present, and I hardly think it is justified by its results...You begin at the wrong end, you make the end the means. If children understood reason, they would not need education...”

In book one Rousseau wrote, “God makes all things good; man meddles with them and they become evil,” which did not endear him to the humanists. In Chapter Four he followed with, “...a rule for the sentiments that one ought to follow in religious matters, but... an example of the way one can reason with one’s pupil in order not to diverge from the method I have tried to establish,” which resulted in Emile being not only banned, but burned publicly in Paris and

128 Ibid., 5.
129 Ibid. 313.
Geneva. It should not have mattered to Rousseau since he hated books; “I hate books; they only teach us to talk about things we know nothing about.”

Equality for women in education was not a positive attribute for Rousseau. Rousseau is criticized not only for his treatment of women in education, but his position regarding a woman’s station in life in general. He asserted that women had a place in society unlike that of men and should keep to what they know; “Consult the women’s opinion in bodily matters, in all that concerns the senses...When women are what they ought to be, they will keep to what they can understand, and their judgment will be right.” To say that Rousseau’s proposal for the education of Sophie in Emile is sexist is generous.

Thus the whole education of women ought to be relative to men. To please men, to be useful to them, to make themselves loved and honored by them, to educate them when young, to care for them when grown, to counsel them, to console them, to make their lives agreeable and sweet to them—these are the duties of woman at all times and what they be taught from infancy.

For all of Rousseau’s progressive attributes and influence on education he was not exactly an exemplary father. He has been criticized for the treatment of his own children, albeit illegitimate. Rousseau had a brief relationship with a working class woman, Therése Levasseur and had five children whom he relegated to an orphanage, the Home for Lost Children. There is no historical record of the children after their abandonment by their father.

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130 Ibid., 147.

131 Ibid., 306.


This essay does not question the efficacy of Rousseau’s political writings or his own parenting or lack thereof, but because of the popularity of his treatise *Emile* on how to best raise and educate a child, it must be addressed. Rousseau addresses the topic through the fictitious character, Émile. The book is part novel, part philosophical treatise on the natural goodness of human beings and how to preserve that goodness through an education that does not corrupt.

Rousseau’s process uses a master who controls every aspect of the boy constantly, not through orders, but through a sort of behavioral engineering. In the ‘Rousseaurian’ philosophy of education, there are four stages that are followed by some educators today: (1) the vulnerable-child idea that children must be protected from learning the wrong things; (2) the stage-of-development that says children can learn only certain kinds of things at certain ages; (3) the controllability hypothesis that it is possible to know a child so well that what and how they learn can be controlled; and (4) the lone-child-in-nature theory that children learn mostly or entirely from interacting with natural objects in their environment.

Rousseau’s master character manipulates Émile’s environment such that the boy always voluntarily chooses to do exactly what the master says is good for him. Émile is isolated from all social interaction with the master as his sole companion. He has also been isolated from all literature except *Robinson Crusoe*. Rousseau asserted that particular book alone provided the correct stimulus to motivate Émile’s thoughts and fantasies, and to guide him in a healthy direction.

Émile plays and apparently believes that he is free, but in reality he learns only the lessons the master has chosen for him. Far from trusting the natural inclinations of the child, Rousseau’s vision is one where every lesson learned and every decision made by Émile is dictated by the master, who has dedicated most of his adult life to the education of just one boy.
Rousseau asserted that Émile, or any child, must be protected from learning the wrong things. The problem in this ‘God-like’ pedagogy is the focus on protecting Émile from learning the wrong lessons at the expense of Émile learning the right lessons. This concern follows from the very first line in the book: “God makes all things good; man meddles with them and they become evil.”\textsuperscript{134} To Rousseau, nature is good and society is evil and only Rousseau, through his mouthpiece, the master, knows the difference. Émile’s education must last at least until he is an adult and has acquired the strength of character needed in order to resist Rousseau’s idea of society’s evils.

Rousseau contradicts his own theories when he admits that such a teacher as the master would have to be a superhuman being with untold powers of observation and reason who could and would dedicate his entire life to the education of a single child.

Rousseau wrote only one book on education, but his convoluted and fictitious message of nature and nurture in education has influenced many later educators who have sought to establish a stable education process. As a fictitious novel, Emile may or may not be entertaining, but as educational pedagogy it is not a good scenario and would not likely be embraced by a teacher in today’s society.

\textbf{Nicolas de Condorcet}

Nicolas de Condorcet (1743 – 1794), was by any measure a remarkable and heroic figure of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Condorcet was a French philosopher and political scientist, and more importantly an early advocate for free and equal public education as well as equal rights for women and people of all races.

When the French Revolution began, he was one of the last authentic survivors of the spirit of the Enlightenment to remain true to the Enlightenment principles. In September 1791 he was elected to the Legislative Assembly to represent Paris and became a member of the Public Instruction Committee, which was responsible for the reform of schools. Reorganizing education in France had been an issue since Louis-René de Caradeuc de La Chalotais wrote the *Essai d’éducation nationale et plan d’études pour la jeunesse* (National Education Essay and Study Plan for Youth) in 1763 attacking the religious monopoly over education.

The political situation in France was tense and the time for education theory was past. Condorcet and a five-member committee wrote a report, *Rapport et projet de décret sur l’organisation générale de l’instruction publique* (Report and Draft Decree on the General Organization of Public Education) in 1792, but for political reasons it was not reviewed by the authorities and it never received any attention. The idea of free, compulsory, non-religious, universal, public education, which Condorcet advocated in the report, would not happen until a century later.

Condorcet made a clear distinction between ‘instruction’ of fundamental moral and intellectual tools and sciences, and ‘education’ as the inculcation of social and religious beliefs. He believed that the republic must have the authority to expand ‘instruction’ and make it compulsory. However, where ‘instruction’ must be public, education must be private. Religious worship could not be allowed in public ‘instruction’ though the state must allow individual freedom of beliefs in private. Condorcet did not impugn the Church, the faith, nor religious

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135 *The Emergence of Human Rights in Europe: an Anthology*, coordinated by Jean Carpentier, et al. (Strasbourg, FR: Council of Europe Publications, c2001), 49-51. https://books.google.com/books?id=gylgwz_JDGkC&pg=PA49&lpg=PA49&dq=condorcet+Report+and+draft+decree&source=bl&ots=3xzbJaRb_1&sig=xeQxOQ-
education. He simply asserted that there is a common core of instruction that everyone must receive not only for political reasons of national unity, but more importantly, as a simple humanitarian duty.

In his 1792 report Condorcet made clear his philosophical theory of the education of the individual and the citizen. Instruction is the price paid for freedom and must be compulsory, free of charge, and accessible to all regardless of financial standing, social class, or gender.

The last line of the report was one of the ‘political reasons’ that the report was never moved forward, and one of many reasons Condorcet was eventually imprisoned.

...no part of the government should have either the authority or even the means to prevent the development of new truths, the teaching of theories contrary to its particular politics or its momentary interests.\(^\text{136}\)

In the *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*,\(^\text{137}\) Condorcet articulated the Enlightenment view that conditions essential to human progress centers around both the abolition of inequality in education and the spread of knowledge to the general population. This would produce not only enlightenment, but liberty as well. Condorcet conceived the first comprehensive public education plan during the French Revolution. It was designed to protect democracy against the tensions between two core virtues, freedom and equality.

Condorcet’s plan of 1792 was the chief means of ensuring the well-being of the State. For that reason, public instruction must be the direct concern of the State itself. While Condorcet accepted the principle of a state-controlled system of education, he proposed to separate

\(^\text{136}\) Ibid., 51.

education from politics by creating an autonomous system of education controlled entirely by the teaching profession.

Condorcet’s theory went further to publicly assert the idea that women, implicitly omitted until Condorcet’s plan, must be educated not only as mothers of their children, but also as intellectual companions for their husbands. He described equality as not being qualified by one's sex:

And here we may observe, how much the abolition of the usages authorized by this prejudice, and of the laws which it has dictated, would tend to augment the happiness of families; to render common the virtues of domestic life, the fountain-head of all the others; to favour instruction, and, especially, to make it truly general, either because it would be extended to both sexes with greater equality, or because it cannot become general, even to men, without the concurrence of the mothers of families.  

His fundamental idea was that of a human perfectibility which manifested itself in continuous progress in the past, and would lead to infinite progress in the future.

Such is the object of the work I have undertaken; the result of which will be to show, from reasoning and from facts, that no bounds have been fixed to the improvement of the human faculties; that the perfectibility of man is absolutely indefinite; that the progress of this perfectibility, henceforth above the control of every power that would impede it, has no other limit than the duration of the globe upon which nature has placed us.

Condorcet began to see the militant anti-clericalism as political and inadequate to accomplish any real education reform. To remove the church from the schools and replace them with the dogmatism of the new revolutionary government accomplished nothing. Condorcet viewed the impending installation of government appointees as nothing more than a substitute priesthood and understood the intellectual danger that this represented. The new revolutionary power was on the path to place the school in the service of the revolutionary ideology. The


139 Ibid.
educational plans of the revolutionary authorities were intended to substitute political indoctrination for elementary instruction and to eliminate any influences that might detract from the ideological training of the children. Instruction had become of secondary importance. The priority had become the total control of the child as a tool of the revolutionary state. Condorcet viewed the new regime as nothing more than a political aberration that was no better than the clergy had been. In his *Report and draft decree on the general organization of public education in France during the Revolution* Condorcet aimed his criticisms against Maximilien Robespierre, an influential leader of the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror:

If you call a school a national temple, if your teacher is a magistrate, you add to the statements made in that place by that man an authority that is foreign not only to the evidence necessary to arrive at the truth but also to the type of authority that, without impeding the progress of knowledge, may influence our provisional belief—the belief that accounts for the known superiority of the Enlightenment. I am right to believe a physical experiment on the authority of a scholar whose science and accuracy I have checked; I should be an idiot to believe it on the authority of a high priest or grand official. There is no hope for the salvation of human reason unless this same rule is applied to ethics and politics. Let us therefore hasten to prefer reasoning to eloquence and books to speakers and bring at last to the moral sciences the philosophy and method of the physical sciences.\(^{140}\)

Condorcet referred to the new political class as nothing more than priests in disguise. Robespierre never forgave Condorcet for what he perceived as a betrayal of the revolution. Condorcet submitted his plan to the National Assembly on 20 April 1792 where it was immediately discarded. As a result of his advocacy and perceived betrayal of the revolution, Condorcet fell from favor with the revolutionary establishment and on 28 March 1794 he was arrested and imprisoned. He was found the following day dead in his prison cell of undetermined causes.

Immanuel Kant

Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804) was a teacher for more than fifty years, but his educational focus was not only on the development of curricula, but on what he considered the restoration of the rights of humanity. He articulated human rights in his moral thought as a pedagogical method which facilitated the self-consciousness and efficacy of morality in the individual. By being assured of freedom and liberty man was free to pursue intellectual thought. Kant’s reference to Liberal Education came in the form of his articulation of the disciplines necessary to educate a person.

What is so compelling about Kant’s work as it relates to education is that he does not write in a vacuum, writing down thoughts until complete then moving on to the next project. Throughout his corpus of work can be seen linkages of thought tying to other elements previously written that reinforce a mind not compartmentalized, where each compartment is separate and possibly forgotten, but a thought process that appears to progress as his philosophy matures. As a professional educator he addressed, either directly or indirectly, the method and process of learning. One such work that focuses exclusively on education is Kant on Education, a relatively short, 121-page (minus end pieces and publisher adverts) work in which Kant brings together his pedagogy of education in a clear, concise project, leaving no doubt of his position on the subject.\(^{141}\)

In his lectures on anthropology, aesthetics, and pedagogy, Kant emphasized the need for education and, by extension, for attending to the education of the educator. He viewed human

beings as no more than what education made of them, but they could only be educated by other humans. He considered himself an educator of the teachers who, in turn, were responsible for educating young people and guiding them on a path of wisdom:

...science is the narrow gate that leads to the doctrine of wisdom, when by this is understood not merely what one ought to do but what should serve as a guide to teachers in laying out plainly and well the path to wisdom which everyone should follow, and in keeping others from going astray.  

Kant observed that, “...if teachers and priests were educated, if the concepts of pure morality would prevail among them, then . . . the whole could afterwards be educated.” The resulting task was clear: it was incumbent on every generation to work on the plan of a more purposeful education. Kant asserted that the “…the greatest and most difficult problem to which man can devote himself is the problem of education.”

In the context of the tradition in which Kant wrote and thought, it was a shared assumption that the training or cultivation of reason, largely through logic, was the foundation of education for human beings throughout their life. Philosophy was key in the pedagogical role. It was not just about reason, but rather should serve as the tool of an instructor of reason. He understood the lack of standard education requirements and also recognized the necessity of having a standard curriculum not only for current students, but for students to come:

Under the present educational system man does not fully attain to the object of his being; for in what various ways men live! Uniformity can only result when all men act according to the same principles, which principles would have to become with them a


second nature. What we can do is to work out a scheme of education better suited to further its objects, and hand down to posterity directions as to how this scheme may be carried into practice, so that they might be able to realize it gradually.  

While Kant did not specify the contents of a curriculum, he described the disciplines as logic, philosophy, grammar: “... the study of grammar must always, to a certain extent, come first.” Additionally, “... knowledge and speech (ease in speaking, fluency, eloquence) must be united” in order for the child to learn to distinguish between truth and belief. 

If Kant were successful in the execution of his pedagogical principle his students would not only acquire knowledge, but also learn how to think critically; “It is not enough that children be trained; the most important thing is that they learn to think.” His own theory of philosophy would then result in a change in how his students used their reasoning capacity. In the Critique of Judgment, Kant stated what the nature of the relation must be between student and teacher for that to occur:

The master must show the pupil what he should make and how he should make it; and the universal rules, to which he finally reduces his method, can serve to recall upon occasion its chief moments rather than dictate them to the pupil. 

One point of particular importance was with regard to the treatment of an idea where the word “idea” referred to a concept of perfection not yet experienced. Kant first introduced this point in the Critique of Pure Reason, when he admonished:

145 Ibid., 9.
146 Ibid., 76.
147 Ibid., 75.
149 Ibid., Chapter XIV, Methods in Aesthetic Instruction – Methodology of Taste, 290.
I beseech those who have the interests of philosophy at heart (which is more than is the case with most people) that, if they find themselves convinced ... they be careful to preserve the expression ‘idea’ in its original meaning, that it may not become one of those expressions that are commonly used to indicate any and every species of representation, in a happy-go-lucky confusion... 

By construing pedagogy to be such a concept of perfection, Kant gave critical formulation to the task he believed to be required of every generation.

It is not a great leap from Kant and Rousseau’s assertions of how a child should be educated during the Enlightenment to the battle over what education should look like in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Thomas Jefferson

Politicians and elected officials do not hold a place of high ethical standing in this thesis largely because the obstacles and challenges to liberal education are of their making. However, there are occasionally exceptions to the norm, and Thomas Jefferson (1743 – 1826) must be included mostly for his political vision with a moral underpinning that he viewed as dependent on liberal education, necessary both for the citizenry and for those who would govern. Jefferson was one of if not the most prolific thinker and writer not only of early American politics, but of the Enlightenment Period overall. The corpus of his work on education alone has filled volumes, but for this thesis his fundamental tenets of liberal education in a democracy will be addressed. However, for all his progressive and enlightened thought there is a darker side of Jefferson’s policies.

He believed that education was the only way that a tyrannical government could be prevented.

Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people

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themselves therefore are its only safe depositories. And to render them safe, their minds must be improved to a certain degree.\textsuperscript{151}

Jefferson did not necessarily subscribe to the general Rousseaurian view of the natural goodness of all persons, but instead a general observation and study of works such as Kames’s \textit{Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion}, that a governmental structure must be put into place in order to assure that the natural rights of humans would be preserved.

In an 1814 letter to John Adams, Jefferson shared his view of the poor state of education in America at the time as students after the revolution thought that they would “...acquire all learning in their mother’s womb...” and no longer need books. He viewed experience as being neglected where students seemed to think that knowledge was innate. Small private schools were common where “…one or two men, possessing Latin, and sometimes Greek, a knowledge of the globes, and the first six books of Euclid, imagine and communicate this as the sum of science.”\textsuperscript{152}

Jefferson’s complaint was that students were given a finishing-school education and then deemed themselves educated and ready for the world. Education, for Jefferson, was broad and visceral—it catered to the whole person and involved the whole community. Most significantly, it was ongoing.

In a letter to Joseph Cabell on September 9, 1817 Jefferson articulated six features of his aims:

1. Basic education should be available to all.


2. Education should be tax supported.
3. Education should be free from religious dictation.
4. The educational system should be controlled at the local level.
5. The upper levels of education should feature free inquiry.
6. The mentally proficient should be enabled to pursue education to the highest levels at public expense.\textsuperscript{153}

There were many points Jefferson addressed as an advocate of Liberal Education, and there are four of particular importance not only from a historical perspective, but of relevance today.

On the importance of lifelong learning and continuing education, Jefferson wrote to William Green Munford:

\textit{It is impossible for a man who takes a survey of what is already known not to see what an immensity in every branch of science yet remains to be discovered, and that too of articles to which our faculties seem adequate.}\textsuperscript{154}

To Jefferson the aim of education was to give persons the tools they would need to make them involved in social and political life, free, and happy.\textsuperscript{155} For that to occur, there had to be the desire to learn. In a democracy, citizens could choose, or not, to participate in every aspect of their government, but to Jefferson it did not mean the freedom to do as one pleased whenever one pleased.

Jefferson also recognized the limitations that citizens imposed on themselves. In a letter to Pierre Samuel Dupont de Nemours he wrote:

\textit{Although I do not, with some enthusiasts, believe that the human condition will ever advance to such a state of perfection as that there shall no longer be pain or vice in the}


world, yet I believe it susceptible of much improvement, and most of all in matters of
government and religion; and that the diffusion of knowledge among the people is to be
the instrument by which it is to be effected.\textsuperscript{156}

Jefferson retained a special fondness for the classics of Greek and Roman literature,
though there is no evidence his fondness translated to inclusion in the curriculum as part of a
practical education. Jefferson wrote of his opinion on the classics in a letter to John Brazier,
observing that the Greek and Roman authors were models of “...pure taste in writing...” and
models of a “...rational and chaste style...” in contrast to the “...inflated style...” of people of
northern states or the “...hyperbolic and vague style...” of the easterners.\textsuperscript{157} He recognized and
viewed as an indulgence the ability to read Greek and Roman authors in their own languages as
an, “...innocent and elegant luxury...,” but also as one that was addressed not merely to the
senses.\textsuperscript{158} He wrote passionately and eloquently:

When the decays of age have enfeebled the useful energies of the mind, the classical
pages fill up the vacuum of ennui, and become sweet composers to that rest of the grave
into which we are all sooner or later to descend.\textsuperscript{159}

Jefferson’s systemic reforms for American education did include elementary-level
education for females, but he did not anticipate any need for women to be educated beyond the
most fundamental level. That is not to say that he did not have much to say about the important
function of women in American or in any society. As Brian Steele noted in his 2008 essay,
“Thomas Jefferson’s Gender Frontier,” Jefferson viewed women as natural equals of men.\textsuperscript{160}

America, 1984), 1387 - 1388.

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., 1423.

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid.

Jefferson’s only discussion of any length regarding female education was in a letter to Nathaniel Burwell; “A plan of female education has never been a subject of systematic contemplation with me.”\footnote{Thomas Jefferson, \textit{Thomas Jefferson: Writings}, ed. Merrill D. Peterson New York, NY: The Library of America, 1984), 1411.} He did concede that his daughters required an education that would enable them as mothers to educate their own children in the event of the death or incapacity of their father.

The third and fourth points of Jefferson’s thoughts on a liberal education arguably reflect most negatively on Jefferson as an enlightened person; that of the equal and civil rights of African-Americans and Native Americans, an issue that continues to permeate American Liberal Education.

His most obvious disconnect from twenty-first century reality was his view of Native American Indian culture as backward, claiming that the Native American Indian were simply not naturally suited for anything beyond domesticity.

In his Second Inaugural Address, Jefferson considered the plight of American Indians:

Endowed with the faculties and the rights of men, breathing an ardent love of liberty and independence, and occupying a country which left them no desire but to be undisturbed, the stream of overflowing population from other regions directed itself on these shores; without power to divert, or habits to contend against, they have been overwhelmed by the current, or driven before it.\footnote{Thomas Jefferson, \textit{Thomas Jefferson: Writings}, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York, NY: The Library of America, 1984), 520.}

His position was that they must be taught how to farm and other domestic skills so that they could assimilate into a society that cultivated the intellectual and advance moral and social pleasure that he believed they lacked. Jefferson saw opportunities for Native Americans depending on their ability to overcome what he considered bad habits. He wrote:
Native Americans were just as capable of being educated as Europeans, they simply resisted the attempted forced assimilation in another culture.

He spoke of the overwhelming invasion of Whites as though it was an inevitability and without capacities to defend against the overpowering invasion they could either integrate fully in White society or be destroyed by Whites. He did not seem to consider his proposal was nothing short of flippantly giving them a choice of genocide. For all his perceived concern for the Native American Indian there is no evidence he really considered what it was like to be a Native American, whose lands had been stolen and way of life their entire culture, was and still is to some extent being destroyed.

Education of Blacks was a more intractable issue than that of Native Americans for Jefferson because he believed Africans to be intellectually inferior to other humans. Unlike Native Americans, they had more exposure to White society without showing, to his point of view, any likelihood of assimilation. He seemed to miss the obvious point that being exposed to White culture as a slave tended to negate any potential intellectual attainment and increase the belief in inferiority through degradation.

Jefferson’s political reforms were both democratic and meritocratic. He sought democratically to narrow the gap between wealthy and poor, with the exceptions mentioned above, so that all could roughly have the same opportunity to secure for themselves their own

\[163\] Ibid.
happiness. He believed that he was setting up a system of education to train the most intelligent and virtuous to govern in the interest of the general public. Jefferson wrote to J. Correa de Serra (November 25, 1817) concerning the democratic component of educational reform:

...the object [of elementary schools] is to bring into action that mass of talents which lies buried in poverty in every country, for want of the means of development, and thus give activity to a mass of mind, which, in proportion to our population, shall be the double or treble of what it is in most countries”

Jefferson believed that the object of education was equality, and education of the masses was needed to level the playing field. He also believed that there needed to be useful education for those with the most promise in talents and virtue, and for that to occur there had to be reform in higher education.

Jefferson’s rationale for the systemization of education was economic, political, and philosophical. Economically, it was a matter of a waste of human resources where talented humans were mired in poverty. Politically, it was a matter of the needs of republican government where without reform government would not improve and progress. Philosophically, it was a matter of the morality of allowing intelligent minds that were equal by law and nature to be treated unevenly. That is where, for all the progressive thinking of Jefferson, his plan collapsed. Even in the context of the history of the time, humans as property or prisoners on reservations was a failure of the morality and philosophy of the time.

§6. Long 19th Century (Modern Era) 18th to 1979/91

Modernity is a term used in the Humanities and Social Sciences designating either a historical period or social and cultural norms and attitudes. It has its beginnings in post-medieval

Europe. Modernity has been associated with the cultural and intellectual movements and categorized into three periods:

- Early Modernity: 1500–1789 (or 1453–1789 in traditional historiography)
- Classical Modernity: 1789–1900
- Late Modernity: 1900–1979/91 (the end date reflects an ambiguity due to the disagreement among scholars on when, or if, Postmodernism began)¹⁶⁵

As with most timelines, there is debate over the exact dates of the time periods, but while the periods above may be argued, they reflect the approximate ranges for illustrative purposes.

There continues to be scholars who debate the time periods and definitions of Modernity and Postmodernism, when they existed and in what form. Modernism and Modernity are similar in meaning, but there is a subtle difference that is often confused. Modernity refers to a historical period that saw the evolution of capitalism and industrialization. Modernism refers to the trends in art, culture and social relations that are characterized by development of a modern world.

Modernity and Postmodernity are so entangled in debate and a web of assumptions and ideologies that they continue to receive ongoing critique. Much of the argument regarding the features of Postmodernity are associated with the self-serving critique of society, culture, politics, and economics and are already part of Modernity, of which some of these attributes are attributed to Modernity. It is due to this controversy this essay will separate the two eras, Modernity and Postmodernity, into timelines and ideology where possible, but because the competing arguments are so compelling will require more detailed explanation as the individual events are addressed in §7.

Modernity refers to a period, or multiple periods, where tradition was questioned and in some cases rejected. Freedom, equality, and individualism was prioritized; trust in scientific and technological progress replaced critical thought and inquiry; and a class system based on capitalism and a free market concept of Neoliberalism came into being. There are four main distinctions between Modernity and Neoliberalism; (1) the increased narcissism of Neoliberalism that removed the value of the human from the ideology; (2) lack of freedom for those who are cast aside as failed members of society; (3) the subtle removal of individual freedom for those excluded from the grand ideology as the fundamental tenet of Neoliberalism, the replacement of government by a market structure imposing not less, but more government control as capitalists and government merged as one; and (4) a resultant class system that blurred the previous economic class distinction and created a new, cultural order.

Modernity addressed the impact of human presence on human culture, institutions, and politics.166

The Modernist perspective as articulated by Marshall Berman is:

...to experience personal and social life as a maelstrom, to find one's world and oneself in perpetual disintegration and renewal, trouble and anguish, ambiguity and contradiction: to be part of a universe in which all that is solid melts into air. To be a modernist is to make oneself somehow at home in the maelstrom, to make its rhythms one’s own, to move within its currents in search of the forms of reality, of beauty, of freedom, of justice, that its fervid and perilous flow allows.167

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the United States was expanding to the west, and with that expansion came families with children and little or no provisions to provide for their education. Education of the period was progressive in that the oldest child taught the


167 Ibid., 345–346.
younger children increasingly complicated chores necessary for survival. There were few teachers available to teach any of the disciplines the child’s parents may have had the opportunity to study. It was not until the nineteenth century when towns and cities were being built that professional teachers came to the rural areas of America.

The earliest classrooms in America were male environments modeled after European schools. In the mid-19th century, the Civil War and westward expansion depleted the number of male teachers and brought rural women teachers to take the lead in educating young Americans. Emma Willard and Mary Lyon established training programs and served as role models for the first trained women teachers.

Mass recruitments of teachers by existing states, local communities, and territories were responsible for placing women teachers in Western frontier schools, southern schools for freed slaves, and missionary schools for American Indians. Women answered these calls, drawn by the promise of adventure, economic stability, independence, and possible marriage opportunities. The demand for teachers continued throughout the 1800s as legislation in many states required a school within 4 miles walking distance of every student. In the late 1800s, 90 percent of rural teaching positions were held by women. Higher education for women was virtually nonexistent, with many having to settle for training at the secondary or even primary level.

**Emma Hart Willard**

Emma Hart Willard (February 1787 – April 1870) is remembered primarily for her trailblazing efforts on behalf of women’s education, but she was first and foremost an educator. Her father, Samuel Hart, was a prosperous farmer and liberal thinker. He recognized Emma’s

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natural intellectual abilities and encouraged her in her studies, including her in conversations on subjects typically only discussed among men, such as philosophy and politics. While her father was supportive of her education, school systems of the time were not.

A common belief held at the time, at least by the clergy, was that women were to be academically and intellectually separated from men. According to nineteenth-century Unitarian minister George Washington Burnap, “She is in a measure dependent. She asks for wisdom, constancy, firmness, perseverance, and she is willing to repay it all by the surrender of the full treasure of her affections.”\textsuperscript{169} Women were restricted from attending college by the “...attributes of True Womanhood, “\textsuperscript{170} a system divided into four cardinal virtues of piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity through which a woman not only judged herself, but was judged by her husband, her neighbors and society.\textsuperscript{171}

Willard began teaching herself geometry at age twelve, entered the Berlin Academy at fifteen and eventually taught there. She was offered the position of principal at the women’s academy in Middlebury, Vermont in 1807.

She married the town physician in 1809 and although he supported her passion for education, married women were not allowed to be teachers. No colleges admitted women in the early 1800s so she studied the college textbooks of a male relative who boarded with the family. As she studied such books, she became aware of what women were missing.

\textsuperscript{169} George Washington Burnap, \textit{Lectures on the Sphere and Duties of Woman and Other Subjects},” (Baltimore, MD: John Murphy, Printer and Publisher, 1841), 49 https://ia802708.us.archive.org/26/items/lecturesonspher00burngoog/lecturesonspher00burngoog.pdf (accessed June 21, 2016).


\textsuperscript{171} Ibid.
Willard opened a school for girls in her home in Middlebury in 1812 to supplement the family’s income and eventually moved to Troy, New York, where she opened a school for women. It was there that she introduced her students to subjects that were not regularly taught to young women such as mathematics and philosophy, but she was careful for the time being not to suggest that women were equal to men in order to avoid the obvious confrontation that could derail her efforts.

Willard understood the obstacles she faced, but in 1819 she took the bold step of addressing her ideas about expanding women’s education to the New York legislature. Women were not allowed to speak in public, so she submitted a written proposal titled, “An Address to the Public, Particularly the Members of the Legislature of New York Proposing a Plan for Improving Female Education.” She not only submitted it to the legislature, but published the plan and sent copies to anyone who might support her ideas, including Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and James Monroe. Her impassioned speech addressed the failure of the legislature to assure the education of women:

...female education has been left to the mercy of private adventurers; and the consequence has been to our sex, the same, as it would have been to the other, had legislatures left their accommodations, and means of instruction, to chance also.  

Not content to advocate for just an education for women, Willard also addressed the types of education women might receive. She did not use the phrases “liberal education” or “liberal studies,” but she did make it clear that an education for women should include liberal arts subjects such as philosophy:

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Natural philosophy has not often been taught to our sex. Yet why should we be kept in ignorance of the great machinery of Nature, and left to the vulgar notion that nothing is curious but what deviates from her common course?...If mothers were acquainted with this science, they would communicate very many of its principles to their children in early youth.\textsuperscript{173}

In order to allow the legislators room to agree with her proposal while reeling from the idea of an educated woman, she explained that the college would be a seminary different from that the males:

\textit{...the absurdity of sending ladies to college, may, at first thought, strike everyone to whom this subject shall be proposed. I therefore hasten to observe, that the seminary here recommended, will be as different from those appropriated to the other sex, as the female character and duties are from the male.}\textsuperscript{174}

Unsurprisingly the legislators were shocked at all of her ideas, especially the teaching of anatomy to women. However, she found a patron in Governor DeWitt Clinton and other industrialists in Troy. They agreed to raise the town’s taxes, yielding enough money to open the Troy Female Seminary. Ninety girls enrolled the first year in 1814, but it was so expensive even with the endowment that only the wealthiest families could send their daughters. The school attracted the daughters of affluent families from throughout the country, showing how profoundly young women wanted an education. With all the progress Emma Willard made, it would be 1837 before Mary Lyon would open Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in Massachusetts, where middle-class girls could afford to attend.

\textbf{Mary Mason Lyon}

Mary Mason Lyon (February 1797 – March 1849) established Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, now Mount Holyoke College, in South Hadley, Massachusetts in 1837. Her vision was to combine intellectual challenge with moral purpose and make the seminary affordable for

\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., 19.

\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., 5.
students of modest means. Determined to follow Willard’s work at an even more advanced level, Lyon searched for interested donors. She raised funds for three years, obtaining sums that varied from six cents to hundreds of dollars. Lyon’s plan for Mount Holyoke was to offer a more challenging curriculum for women that was not offered anywhere at the time. Students were required to take math and science courses, and Lyon taught chemistry in addition to carrying out her administrative duties. The students also had to help with the chores around the school to keep the cost of tuition low. Lyon wanted to make her school affordable for young women from all economic backgrounds. Mary Lyon is remembered as an educational pioneer who not only provided a better education than had ever been offered to women before, but making it available regardless of social and economic status. Due to the foundation in the Liberal Arts and Humanities established by Lyon, Mount Holyoke currently has more than 2,000 students enrolled and is ranked 35th among Liberal Arts colleges in America.175

By the late 1890s education had been recognized as not only a necessity for an individual to get a job, but as a requirement for America to be competitive in the world. Even though the Civil War had ended decades ago, white Americans as well as scores of newly freed slaves needed jobs. America was in the beginning of the Industrial Revolution with mills and factories being built that would require skilled labor. America was also beginning to experience its own cultural and conceptual Renaissance, not unlike Europe had experienced when coming out of the Middle Ages, and its citizens needed education to meet the needs of commerce. By 1900, thirty states had compulsory attendance laws with local school boards established to administer education.

As in the European Renaissance the American education curriculum was similar in structure to European schools, relying on experience and current need to dictate what was taught and how it was taught. The primary courses taught were a mixture of the *trivium* with other courses such as a foreign language, mathematics and literature added, but Americans were dissatisfied with the traditional method of teaching by recitation and lecture and they wanted something new. The progressive education movement would bring Renaissance and Enlightenment values into American education.

The phrase, “progressive education,” was at least as confusing in the late nineteenth century when the term was coined as it is today. It was not just an era in history, but a broader movement that advocated change. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the importance of a cogent education pedagogy was being recognized by educators as a necessity to bring all the disparate philosophies of education together.

**Francis Parker**

Progressivism in the United States was identified initially with Francis Parker (1837 – 1902), an educator and advocate of progressivism in public schools. His fundamental philosophy centered on his belief of the individual child’s needs, that children should learn to write for enjoyment about the subjects that interested them, and the correct form would evolve as they practiced. He asserted that all writing should be connected to meaningful activities using the child’s existing vocabulary. However, he did not explain how a child’s vocabulary was to improve if s/he wrote using only the vocabulary s/he already knew. He also rejected tests to evaluate progress and grading as an indicator of how a child had done over a period of time. Any type of ranking system to evaluate how a student was progressing compared to his or her peers was strictly taboo. In a seeming contradiction of his pedagogy of centering on the individual
child’s needs, he was opposed to individual study as well as to standardization and repetition. What his critics ignored was the distinction between an individual child’s needs and individual study.

Between 1875 and 1880, Parker put his philosophy of education into practice when he served as superintendent of schools in Quincy, Massachusetts. There he developed the Quincy Method, which eliminated harsh discipline and de-emphasized rote memorization, replacing them with elements such as group activities, the teaching of the arts and sciences, and informal methods of instruction.

Alfred Marshall

Political economist Alfred Marshall (1842 – 1924) was one of the earliest economists who argued that democracy and capitalism were theoretically incompatible, but through taxable wealth government could fund public services, specifically education, allowing all citizens an opportunity to participate in a growing economy. In a functioning capitalist democracy education would be the catalyst that provided the equilibrium between the citizen and the economy.

Marshall recognized the value of education, not only to the individual citizen, but to the national economy as well; “The difference between the value of the labour of the educated man and that of the uneducated, is, as a rule, many times greater than the difference between the costs of the education.”176 To paraphrase, the value of a citizen who has been educated to participate in a democracy is far more than the cost of educating the citizen.

Marshall deviated from mainstream economists in addressing class distinction as part of the problem of the conflicts between democracy and capitalism. He believed that education was the solution to a functioning economy for various reasons, but he questioned whether a capitalistic system had inherent, irreconcilable flaws prohibiting his education theory or equality. He questioned “...whether the amelioration of the working classes has limits beyond which it cannot pass.”\textsuperscript{177}

Marshall observed a class distinction existed as an inherent flaw in a capitalist democracy because the poor working class was largely uneducated due to a lack of social structure to provide education to all but the wealthy. Society was a far different structure when Marshall wrote his theories in 1873 from what it is in the twenty-first century. There were classes not even recognized as workers such as slaves and women. Questions of gender difference beyond simply male and female were not even spoken of, let alone addressed. Religion was sometimes a detriment, but one which could be partially offset by education.

Marshall recognized that there would be what he referred to as “...morbid growths...” even in a pure democracy, but particularly in a capitalist democracy. He used ‘brickies,’ laborers who made bricks from mud, as an illustration of despair:

...lads and maidens, not eight years old, toiled in the brickfields under monstrous loads from five o'clock in the morning till eight o'clock at night their faces haggard, their limbs misshaped by their work, their bodies clothed with mud, and their minds saturated with filth.\textsuperscript{178}

Despair was the operative word, because under the situations he described, the ‘brickie’ could not conceive of any opportunity that would allow an escape from such brutal conditions.

To change the generational progression of ignorance, Marshall advocated investments in public

\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid., 9.
education by the government that would not only improve people’s lives, but increase national efficiency and production as well. Marshall asserted: “Everyone is to have in youth an education which is thorough while it lasts, and which lasts long.”

He continued:

The question is not whether all men will ultimately be equal—that they certainly will not—but whether progress may not go on steadily, if slowly, till the official distinction between working man and gentleman has passed away; till, by occupation at least, every man is a gentleman.

He was referring specifically to the value and kind of education associated with leisure, “They are learning to value education and leisure more than mere increase of wages and material comforts.”

Marshall recognized the correlation between a liberal education and success in life:

...wealth, in general, implies, a liberal education in youth, and throughout life broad interests and refined associations; and it is to these effects on character that the chief attractiveness of wealth is due.

It was his belief that a democracy could not survive without the intrinsic human values fostered by liberal education and perpetuated by a citizenry that shares in the culture and material welfare of a state or nation. While a democracy faces many challenges, without education no political

179 Ibid., 22.

180 Ibid., 13.


182 Ibid., 5.


184 Ibid., 22.
ideology will be sustainable. There will always be those who are denied participation, whether overtly or clandestinely, and the result of the denial of participation will be something other than a democracy.

**Emile Durkheim**

A noted philosopher turned sociologist, Emile Durkheim (1858 –1917) is often considered the father of French sociology, and brought new thinking into the education paradigm. Durkheim believed that educational systems had the characteristics of being external to the individual as well as having the power of constraint over them. The child does not choose their education initially; it is imposed upon him/her. Due to economic, social, or political gerrymandering, parents may have little choice in where and how their children are educated, resulting in differences in the normal or collective ideas of a geographical population group, such as a district or a state. Durkheim wrote:

> The man which education is obliged to make of us is not as nature has made him but as society wishes him to be; and I be such as its internal economy calls for.\(^\text{185}\)

> Each type of people has its own education, which is appropriate and which can serve to define it, in the same way as its own religious organization. Its education is one of the elements of its structure.\(^\text{186}\)

Education is so closely related to the social structure in a complex society that different pedagogies must emerge to meet the needs of a multicultural society.

Even today do we not see education vary with social class locality?... It is evident that the education of our children depend upon the chance of their having been born here or having these parents rather than others.\(^\text{187}\)


\(^\text{186}\) Ibid., 120.

\(^\text{187}\) Ibid., 68.
Even though Durkheim wrote *Education and Sociology* in 1922, these quotes resonate in contemporary education. The individual exists in a larger society, but his group...however that may be defined...does influence him. A student’s environment and social background determine not only the level of education s/he receives, but the level of achievement within a particular school.

Durkheim recognized that at some point education must become diverse. He attempted to find common elements that would apply to education in general. His last definition was:

> Education is the action exercised by the older generations on those not yet ready for social life. Its object is to awaken in the child those physical, intellectual, and moral states which are required of him both by his society as a whole, and by the milieu for which he is specially destined.\(^{188}\)

**John Dewey**

John Dewey (1859 – 1952) was of the same era as Parker and Durkheim and shared some of the same views on education such as the disdain for rote learning and memorization. He has been incorrectly vilified by contemporary education traditionalists because his philosophy of education and teaching methods and his support for the well-being of educators did not align with the traditionalists’ perspective of curriculum and pedagogy.

Dewey did not simply reject the philosophy and practice of traditional education out of hand. He knew that without a philosophy of what education should be there would be confusion and chaos that would solve no problems. He stated, “There is always the danger in a new movement that in rejecting the aims and methods of that which it would supplant, it may develop its principles negatively rather than positively and constructively.”\(^{189}\) He believed that although

\(^{188}\) Ibid., 71.

education was an experiential process, it was not a self-defining process, but part of the greater problem to be explored in order to learn from the experience and understand it. There is not a direct correlation between education and experience because, in Dewey’s point of view, not all experiences were necessarily educative.

Dewey did not see a pedagogical distinction between secondary and post-secondary education. He recognized early in his career that liberal education of the twentieth century was at risk of being isolated and deemed irrelevant by overwhelming contemporary forces at both the secondary and post-secondary level. If the student was not prepared, s/he would not be successful in post-secondary education where the dynamics between a liberal education and a technical education were not unlike those in the twenty-first century; “The distinction between liberal and useful arts is a product of the time when those engaged in industrial production were mechanics and artisans who occupied a servile social status.”

In 1944 he also observed that there were, then, as today, education policymakers who were creating policy for the wrong reasons, but that it was of little benefit to blame them; one should focus on the fundamental issue, that of social change.

Nothing can be sillier than attributing the problems of the contemporary liberal college in this country to the activities of a number of misguided educationalists, instead of to the impact of social forces which have continually gained in force.

Dewey also expressed concerns regarding another issue that is still present in twenty-first century pedagogy, that of the lack of human values in a technical education.

...those who are verbally active in this direction are not discouraging receipt of funds to


191 Ibid.
add still more new scientific and semi-vocational courses to an already swollen curriculum. The danger, to my mind, lies elsewhere. It is possible to freeze existing illiberal tendencies and to intensify existing undesirable splits and divisions, at a time when technical education is encroaching in many cases upon intelligent acquaintance with and use of the great humanistic products of the past, we find that reading and study of classics are being isolated and placed in sharp opposition to everything else. The problem of securing to the liberal arts college its due function in a democratic society is that of seeing to it that the technical subjects which are now socially necessary acquire a humane direction.192

The statement was made in reference to liberal arts colleges, but he also had the same view of education in secondary schools. The old traditional system evolved in the 1950s and 1960s to become a model similar to what Dewey spoke of in all his writing and lectures on education reform, a system with curricula driven by questions, a focus on intellectual skills and environment and the basic belief that the child is not simply a bucket into which knowledge can be poured into. However, progressive schools of Dewey’s time should not be confused with what are referred to as progressive schools in the late twentieth and early twenty first century.

The traditional education with which Dewey was familiar and of which he was critical has been criticized as one that imposed a will to comply upon students by outside pressures and from internal forces such as teachers. Students’ limited experiences made the adult nature of the imposed material irrelevant and hard to understand. Dewey was attacked from the political right as a socialist because he viewed education and learning as a social and interactive process and the school itself as a social institution through which social reform can and should take place.

The only true education comes through the stimulation of the child’s powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself. Through these demands he is stimulated to act as a member of a unity, to emerge from his original narrowness of

action and feeling, and to conceive of himself from the standpoint of the welfare of the group to which he belongs.\(^{193}\)

He believed students would thrive in an environment where they would be allowed to experience and interact with others, and all students would have the opportunity to take part in their own learning. He viewed the purpose of education not only as the acquisition of a pre-determined set of skills, but also as the realization of one’s full potential and ability to use those skills for the greater good. Dewey made no assumption that any child would continue to post-secondary education and believed that what a person needed in order to be a functioning member of a democracy must be taught during the secondary years. His educational convictions were perhaps best described in his “My Pedagogic Creed,”\(^{194}\) written in 1896 for the *School Journal*. It is so replete with striking statements of the centrality of the school to social progress and the centrality of the educational experience to all social understanding, that not only did he not modify it during his career, but others who developed their own pedagogical creeds included most of the basic tenets of Dewey’s document. After explaining the place of the school in rationally organized social change, elegantly rebutting the forced contrast between an individualism that lets the child run amok and a collectivism that stifles him, Dewey ended with the declaration, “I believe that in this way the teacher always is the prophet of the true God and ushers in the true kingdom of God.”\(^{195}\) Comparing the teacher to a prophet of God is a striking statement considering Dewey’s humanistic style of writing and avoidance of discussion of the divine, but nevertheless it does illustrate the value Dewey placed on teachers.


\(^{194}\) Ibid., 77-80.

\(^{195}\) Ibid.
In the contemporary description of progressive education, freedom is the rule, with students being relatively unconstrained by the teacher and selecting their courses based on their desires and interests. Dewey viewed this progressive approach of total freedom as no solution; “There can be no greater mistake…than to treat such freedom as an end in itself. It then tends to be destructive of the shared cooperative activities which are the normal source of order.”\textsuperscript{196} He believed that learning required structure and order and must be based on a clear theory of experience, not simply the whim of teachers or students: “...education must be conceived as a continuing reconstruction of experience; that the process and the goal of education are one and the same thing.”\textsuperscript{197} He also rejected the notion of a rigid curriculum – static and standardized at a point in time for all students - that allowed no opportunity for intellectual creativity. Curriculum that was static and standardized at a point in time for all students prevented any type of creativity by the student:

...to set up any end outside of education, as furnishing its goal and standard, is to deprive the educational process of much of its meaning and tends to make us rely upon false and external stimuli in dealing with the child.\textsuperscript{198}

The profundity of that statement, written in 1897, resonates in the twenty-first century. Dewey did not view education as a means to an end as viewed today, but as a means to the future. Establishing pedagogy for a specific occupation runs counter to Dewey’s belief in educating a student to be a fully functional member of the society in which they live. Dewey’s pedagogy is directly aligned with the aims of an interdisciplinary liberal education.

Dewey also viewed too much freedom as detrimental to the process:


\textsuperscript{198} Ibid.
It is equally fatal to an aim to permit capricious or discontinuous action in the name of spontaneous self-expression. An aim implies an orderly and ordered activity, one in which the order consists in the progressive completing of a process.¹⁹⁹

Dewey’s belief in using an experiential method as a component of teaching provided the opportunity for the teacher as well as student to exercise intellectual creativity in the course of study as well as having a plan or focus for material being studied:

Foresight of possible consequences leads to more careful and extensive observation of the nature and performances of the things he had to do with, and to laying out a plan – that is, of a certain order in the acts to be performed.

It is the same with the educator, whether parent or teacher. It is as absurd for the latter to set up their ‘own’ aims as the proper objects of the growth of the children as it would be for the farmer to set up an ideal of farming irrespective of conditions. Aims mean acceptance of responsibility for the observations, anticipations, and arrangements required in carrying on a function – whether farming or educating.²⁰⁰

Like Rousseau and Kant before, Dewey recognized that developing the person’s values, their character and morality, were the most important components of education. Their methods varied, but they all agreed the ends of education were not fixed and must be able to be modified in relation to changing conditions which sounds much like Enlightenment thinking. That, however, is where Dewey’s agreement with Rousseau ends.

As is always the situation, history cannot be taken out of context. Dewey’s educational philosophy was formulated and matured over a lifetime as an educator and a philosopher. While much of his pedagogy remains unchallenged, to take it out of the time in which it was written does not accurately relate it to the current day progressivism. We can learn of the historical Dewey, but as the case with all writers, we must analyze and attempt to interpret his work in an attempt to understand its current and potential contemporary application. He died at least twenty


²⁰⁰ Ibid., 125.
years before the beginning of the information or computer age, but his pedagogy remained strong well into the collision of Modernity/Neoliberalism/Postmodernity.

§7. Postmodernity 1979/91 to Present

For more than fifty years the concept of Postmodernity as an era or period, to the extent it is understood in the twenty-first century, has transformed Western thought. In the transition from Modernity to Postmodernity, entropy and chaos figure prominently in the discussion of change. It has presented a challenge across academic disciplines, becoming one of the most prominent issues in contemporary intellectual debate. To contrast Postmodernism to Modernism is to say Postmodernism is a rejection of Modernism which, as a category, implies that everything has led up to the here and now so that we need not attempt to envision any period beyond Modernity; to be Modern is sufficient. Postmodernism rejects this notion and denies the validity of any claim of Modernity to cognitive authority on which to base the stratification it depends on to be relevant. Postmodernity refers to a period of time, an era, anything after Modernity until something replaces Modernity, though Postmodernity arguably holds that distinction for the time being.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s the education system changed dramatically from a Liberal Arts and Humanities-based system of education to what is commonly referred to as child-centered progressive education. The U.S. Department of Education (DoE), created in 1979, initiated national standardized testing in an attempt to evaluate every student’s intellectual attainment. The DoE did not explain how it planned to administer national standardized testing since each school in each school district in each state in America had its own curriculum and grading rubric.\(^\text{201}\) National standardized testing failed to gain wide spread acceptance, but it was

a first attempt, albeit a failed one, at a national standardized curriculum, which is prohibited by Federal law.

The inauguration of Ronald Reagan as President of the United States in 1981 brought an ideology, Neoliberalism, that continues to be the political, social, and economic model used by government and corporations. Neoliberalism’s market driven value system evaluates a person’s value based only in quantifiable terms of their value to the market place. Those who are assessed as valueless are replaceable. In education, courses and curricula that cannot demonstrate positive market value based only on quantifiable terms are diminished or also considered replaceable. Neoliberalism, not as a philosophy, but as an aberrant constituent component of Modernity, was a constituent inspiration of the era of Postmodernity globally.

**Enter Neoliberalism**

Neoliberalism has become a widespread exhortation in political and academic debates with many authors suggesting that Neoliberalism is the dominant ideology shaping our world today. The word Neoliberalism is often used as a pejorative to lament the spread of capitalism and consumerism, as well as the perceived destruction of federal and state social programs.202

To understand Neoliberalism, it is helpful to have a rudimentary understanding of Liberalism and its relationship to Neoliberalism. As soon as one begins to examine Liberalism, it fractures into a variety of types with competing visions. Liberalism has a history in its many

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variants dating back to Marcus Aurelius (121 – 180 CE), but modern Liberalism as both a political and an intellectual tradition is mostly a modern phenomenon that started in the 18th century.

Early writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries viewed Liberalism as a presumption in favor of liberty, with liberty having precedence over any political agenda. A central question of liberal theory is whether political authority can be justified, and if so, how and to what extent.

Possibly the most referenced icon of modern day Neoliberals when discussing economic and political theory is Scottish Economist and Philosopher Adam Smith (1723 -1790). Smith has been celebrated by advocates of free market policies as the founder of free market economics and the original proponent of laissez faire economics.

There are economists that believe Smith has been incorrectly interpreted and misrepresented by Neoliberals as the founder of the free market concept. Economist Herbert Stein (1916 - 1999) argued that Smith:

...was not pure or doctrinaire about this idea. [free markets] He viewed government intervention in the market with great skepticism...yet he was prepared to accept or propose qualifications to that policy in the specific cases where he judged that their net effect would be beneficial and would not undermine the basically free character of the system.

A closer reading of Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* suggests there is more to his philosophy than simply free markets or market value. Smith wrote about taxes:


The subjects of every state ought to contribute towards the support of the government, as nearly as possible, in proportion to their respective abilities; that is, in proportion to the revenue which they respectively enjoy under the protection of the state.\textsuperscript{205} Smith also outlined his view of the financial responsibility of the government. Included in his requirements of a government is the enforcement of contracts and provide a system of justice, provide public goods and infrastructure. This included infrastructure expenses such as roads, bridges, canals, harbors, provide for national defense, and the responsibility to regulate banking. He wrote that it was the role of the government to provide goods “...of such a nature that the profit could never repay the expense to any individual...” He also specifically supported partial public subsidies for elementary education, and he argued for local rather than centralized control of education:

Even those public works which are of such a nature that they cannot afford any revenue for maintaining themselves... are always better maintained by a local or provincial revenue, under the management of a local and provincial administration, than by the general revenue of the state.\textsuperscript{206} (Wealth of Nations, V.i.d.18).

While economists have varying views of economics, none denies that there is a necessity for the government to provide for the common good. How it is accomplished varies, but a society or community has needs that the leadership must supply. The most fundamental difference of Neoliberalism is that Neoliberalism accepts no responsibility to the individual or society. It is only about the market and the individual Neoliberals well-being.

Modern Neoliberalism is a relatively new phenomenon that gained traction with a group of economists in 1947, led by Professor Friedrich Hayek, at the Mont Pelerin Society meeting in Switzerland. The agenda of the conference was to “...discuss the state and the possible fate of


\textsuperscript{206} Ibid.
liberalism in thinking and practice,” and is credited with establishing the modern Neoliberalism ideology. The organization sounds benignly ideological, but their “Statement of Aims” clearly articulates a paranoid aberration of freedom;

...that most precious possession of Western Man, freedom of thought and expression, is threatened by the spread of creeds which, claiming the privilege of tolerance when in the position of a minority, seek only to establish a position of power in which they can suppress and obliterate all views but their own.

The word ‘creeds’ that they refer to references minority cultures and religions that the Mont Pelerin group considered dangerous to the economy.

Economic liberalism was the prevalent economic theory in America until the 1980s when a perversion of the Hayek idea was introduced globally, first by Margaret Thatcher (1925 – 2013), former Prime Minister of England, and quickly adopted by Ronald Reagan (1911 – 1981) when he became President of the United States.

The modern usage of the word ‘Neoliberalism’ suggests that Liberalism has undergone a process of initial growth, decline, and finally a recent renewal. Alternatively, Neoliberalism might be perceived of as a separate and distinct ideology, related to, but not identical to ‘Liberalism.’ Anyone wanting to study Neoliberal ideology will find critical literature customarily viewed as a return to a specific aspect of the Liberal tradition; economic liberalism. Economic liberalism is the belief that states should abstain from intervening in the economy, and leave it up to individuals participating in institutions which are considered corporations or self-regulating markets.

‘Classical’ or ‘economic’ liberals favor laissez-faire economic policies because it is

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thought that they lead to more freedom or real democracy. *Modern* liberalism is characterized by allowing the state to become an active participant in the economy. This typically leads to a tendency to regulate the marketplace, and to have the state supply essential goods and services to everyone. Modern liberalism is generally situated to the political left of classical liberalism because it employs the state as an instrument for redistribution of wealth and power in order to create a society considered to be more decent or equitable.\textsuperscript{209}

However, Neoliberalism is not *just* an economic philosophy, nor is it *just* social philosophy. In fact, most economists reject it as neither economic philosophy or theory, instead referring to it as an ideology.\textsuperscript{210} Smith and Stein are both economists and philosophers writing about Liberalism from their respective disciplines, but the aberration named Neoliberalism requires additional definition.

Jeff Faux, the founder and former president of the Economic Policy Institute, defined neoliberalism: “Neoliberalism is a vision of society in which competition for wealth is the only recognized value and virtually all social decisions are left to unregulated markets. . . It is a world in which, in the words of a title to a 1996 book by Robert Kuttner, ‘everything [is] for sale.’”\textsuperscript{211}

Paul Treanor, the Dutch political philosopher and economist, wrote that, “Neoliberalism is not simply economic structure, it is a philosophy. This is most visible in attitudes to society, the individual and employment. Neo-liberals tend to see the world in terms of market


metaphors.”212

Neoliberalism is more like a loose set of ideas of how the relationship between the state and its external environment ought to be organized, rather than a political philosophy.213 It is also a view of reality that envisions all things in terms of quantifiable transactions. Once Neoliberalism becomes the social paradigm of a culture, then all activity is considered in terms of producing and selling goods. All activities then become easily quantified in terms of financial value, or whether they are profitable or not. According to Paul Treanor, Neoliberals would describe the process in the following way:

Market forces are also intensified by intensifying assessment, a development especially visible on the labour market. Even within a contract period, an employee will be subject to continuous assessment. The use of specialized software in call centers has provided some extreme examples: the time employees spend at the toilet is measured in seconds: this information is used to pressure the employee to spend less time away from the terminal. Firms with contracts are also increasingly subject to continuous assessment procedures, made possible by information technology.214

The Neoliberal doctrine values competition with each individual pursuing his or her own personal agenda with no regard for others. Neoliberal theorists argue that if each individual performed at a previously determined productivity level that was defined by a ‘to be determined entity,’ the entire system will benefit.

David Harvey of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York gave the concept a wide-ranging definition, which shed light on what kind of phenomenon Neoliberalism is:


213 Ibid.

214 Ibid., 7.
Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defense, police and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture. State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum because, according to the theory, the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit.  

According to Harvey, assigning a standard market value to everything is a critical element within the Neoliberal system. Without an assessed value, nothing can be bought, sold, or traded. One of the problems, however, is not in the assessment process itself, but in any society allowing the market to be the sole arbitrator of value. In the Neoliberal paradigm of market exclusivity, any system not based on the market is “valueless.”

This one dimensional, quantitative assessment of value diminishes and potentially destroys an individual’s self-worth, while also weakening the entire community by marginalizing the individual. Individuals who are assessed or evaluated only in quantifiable terms are replaceable, possibly by other individuals, but more likely automation that eliminates the human factor altogether. Harvey refers to this phenomenon as “the disposable worker.” When the “data-lust fallacy” drives the evaluation processes, the humanistic values of human existence

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216 Ibid., 165-169.

217 Ibid., 169.

218 Michael J. Strada, “Assessing the Assessment Decade,” *Liberal Education* 87, no. 4 (Fall 2001) 2,
such as loyalty, trust, and integrity are marginalized, and eventually labeled as subversive; then
the Neoliberal process becomes the status quo.

Neoliberalism is cloaked in terms such as human rights and universal values, but in
reality the human is omitted from the equation. The originators of modern Neoliberalism at the
Mount Pelerin Society Conference spoke about protecting people from intrusive governmental
interference, which in and of itself is not a bad idea. What happens instead is the individual
human value disappears, and is replaced by a system of quantifiable market driven profit and loss
margins which negates any illusion of protection from government interference. Judgments
based on absolute moral values are replaced by the sliding scale of material values that are
dictated by a fickle and unpredictable market.

Neoliberalism has become the current economic and social ideology practiced by
government officials, not by openly declaring it as a valid theory or philosophy, but by
implementing programs such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top (RTTT) that
incorporates the ideological concepts of material value and the value the potential college
graduate will have to the market place. The long term and far reaching effects of Neoliberalism
as both social and economic ideology has potentially negative effects not only on public higher
education, but on the individual student and the society they will live in and influence.

The Effect of Neoliberalism on Education

Quantifiable market value projections that represent a student’s potential value should not
be a factor in education, but in the aftermath of Reagan’s 1983 A Nation at Risk report, this

http://web.a.ebscohost.com.proxy.library.georgetown.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=765c167c-ff42-
404b-a5f1-f8c5cfe46e62%40sessionmgr4006 (accessed December 28, 2017). Strada, a professor of political science
at West Liberty State College, defines the “data lust fallacy” as the habit that assessment champions develop which
leads them to see only quantifiable data as having value.
accounted for the beginning of the negative views of American secondary education and teachers.\textsuperscript{219} Ironically, this same report Reagan staked his educational reputation on has no references to data sources to support its assertions. Nevertheless, the data-driven Total Quality Management (TQM) assessment program, Six-Sigma, and other similar programs that reflect the Neoliberal market value systems were viewed as necessary. These assumptions were based on the “evidence” of educational failure provided by a series of reports that were commissioned by various governmental agencies. Most of these reports were produced by committees that were dominated by business leaders, bureaucrats, former elected officials and administrators, but no teachers. The emergence of these reports can be traced back to the national panic about the alleged poor quality of the American educational system that followed the Soviet Union’s launch of the first artificial satellite, Sputnik I, in 1957.

These reports started with a white paper commonly referred to as the \textit{Eisenhower Report} in 1957\textsuperscript{220} and continued with \textit{A Nation at Risk} in 1983,\textsuperscript{221} the \textit{Governors’ Task Force} in 1991,\textsuperscript{222} and \textit{The Spellings’ Report} in 2006.\textsuperscript{223}

The Total Quality Management (TQM) assessment program was the first attempt at a

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{219} U. S. Department of Education, \textit{A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform} (Washington D.C., 1983).
  \item \textsuperscript{220} Boyd, \textit{The Eisenhower Report}, which was actually entitled \textit{Education Beyond High School}, suggested that colleges and universities shift from an academic model of education to a market-oriented, neoliberal model. The committee which produced the report was run by Wall Street lawyer, Devereux Josephs.
  \item \textsuperscript{223} U. S. Department of Education, \textit{A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education} (Washington, DC, 2006), iii.
\end{itemize}
data-driven teacher/student assessment. Educators at all levels were required to administer evaluation tests that allegedly measured learning in quantifiable terms. Typically, this meant measuring student success based on enrollment, transfer agreements, tuition, retention, graduation rates, and other variables that could be parsed to form the desired outcome. In the classroom it meant treating students as customers and products. Instructor knowledge was “sold” to the students who became “educated” citizens because they passed tests that had been designed to provide “quantifiable” results. This process sounds harmless enough. However, this type of assessment:

...seeks to measure student success...by students’ ability to attain certain measurable and demonstrable outcomes of which it is the facilitator’s (formerly “teacher’s”) responsibility to see that the customer (formerly “student”) achieves. Much of this theory focuses on the end product of a clearly defined process that students carry out that is applicable in the real world. His “real world” lacks any shade of grey or any unquantifiable, subjective process, thought, emotion or action that a “customer” needs to be prepared to encounter.224

The original idea of using TQM as a quantitative approach to measure the success of corporate institutions was instituted by the American Mathematician, W. Edwards Deming, who in the years following the Second World War used TQM to restructure the culture of the Japanese corporate world.225

The success of TQM persuaded educational leaders to copy the techniques and apply them to higher education. The white paper issued by The Public Strategies Group named A


Model for the Reinvented Higher Education System\textsuperscript{226} asserts that the old system of education based on the fundamentals of teaching and learning must be scrapped in favor of the neoliberal “enterprise model,”\textsuperscript{227} which sees the college as a “corporation.”\textsuperscript{228} The enterprise model emphasizes that the student is nothing more than a “customer,”\textsuperscript{229} and values only those results that are “measurable.”\textsuperscript{230} The paper goes so far as to suggest replacing “colleges” and “universities” with Neoliberal institutions referred to as “educational enterprises”\textsuperscript{231} headed by CEOs. Divisions and departments would be replaced by “teaching enterprises.”\textsuperscript{232}

The Education Committee of the National Academy of Sciences joined the campaign to restructure the educational system according to a quantitative model in 1959 when it held a series of meetings at a conference that came to be known as the Woods Hole Conference.\textsuperscript{233} The conference, which was jointly supported by the United States Office of Education, the RAND Corporation, and the National Science Foundation, was held in the aftermath of the Sputnik crisis with the explicit goal of readjusting educational methodology by making it “scientific,”


\textsuperscript{227} The Public Strategies Group, 1.

\textsuperscript{228} Ibid., 3.

\textsuperscript{229} Ibid., 1, 2, 3.

\textsuperscript{230} Ibid., 2.

\textsuperscript{231} Ibid., 5.

\textsuperscript{232} Ibid.

“positivistic,” and “measurable.” The overall result of the conference was a readjustment in educational practices at every level, from K through 12 to the post-secondary level, aimed at introducing “measurable outcomes, minimum proficiencies, and standardized tests.”

In 1958, one year before the Woods Hole Conference, the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) was passed by Congress. As a result of the Woods Hole Conference the NDEA allotted $1 billion for education for programs in mathematics and science, leaving the unquantifiable humanities with no additional funding.

The ironic part of the alleged crisis in education is that the educational system was never really broken in the first place. The Chairman of the University of Arkansas Department of Education Reform, Jay P. Greene, made this observation in relation to the A Nation at Risk report in his book, Education Myths. In a chapter, entitled, “The Myth of Decline,” Greene points out that a close examination of the evidence will demonstrate that schools, especially at the K though 12 level, have been performing as well as they performed in past decades. Greene sited evidence from the SAT and ACT scores showing that student performance levels were as high as they were in the past. He also pointed out that:

...the nation’s average scores on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) have remained relatively flat over the last three decades. While the nation’s average score on the SAT


235 Ibid., 9.

236 Ibid.


238 Ibid., 90.
verbal assessment did drop by 26 points between 1972 and 2002, scores on the math test rose by 7 points over the same thirty-year period.

Student performance on the American College Test (ACT) has also remained steady since 1990, the earliest year for which we have comparable information. National average test scores on the ACT remained the same in English and increased by 0.8 points in math. The story is much the same for scores in reading and science, which increased by 0.1 and 0.3 points, respectively.\textsuperscript{239}

Greene wrote that results reported by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) demonstrated that there is no educational crisis.\textsuperscript{240} In fact, test scores have actually gone up in many cases over the previous three decades. Greene also pointed out that reading scores climbed 4 points for fourth and eighth graders, and by 3 points for twelfth graders between 1971 and 1999. He also noted that math scores climbed for each grade between 1973 and 1999, and that science grades also increased for each grade between 1977 and 1999.\textsuperscript{241} He added that the percentage of learners in fourth, eighth and twelfth grades reaching proficiency levels went up in both reading and math.

The percentage of students reaching the highest reading proficiency levels (a score of 250 or higher for fourth graders and of 300 or higher for eighth and twelfth graders) increased by 0.3 percentage points for fourth graders, 4.7 percentage points for eighth graders and 0.6 points for twelfth graders. The math scores tell much the same story.\textsuperscript{242}

The 2015 NAEP results show no significant changes in Reading\textsuperscript{243} or Math.\textsuperscript{244} Despite this evidence, the picture that persists is that of an educational network that is extravagant, ineffective, and mismanaged.

\textsuperscript{239} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{240} Ibid., 88. The National Assessment of Educational Progress is usually referred to as the Nation’s Report Card.

\textsuperscript{241} Ibid., 88.

\textsuperscript{242} Ibid., 88-89.

The emphasis on quantifiable data has contributed to the loss of prestige, attention, and funding that the Liberal Arts and Humanities had experienced over the last three decades. Consequently, the Liberal Arts and Humanities are marginalized and are often penalized because such disciplines cannot be easily quantified. In some cases, in the struggle to develop rigid outcome statements and quantifiable assessment techniques, an institution will pay more attention and spend more money on mathematics and science, and less on the Liberal Arts and Humanities, because it yields more funding.

The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) has reported that, under pressure to produce quantifiable results especially in the wake of NCLB, school systems have manufactured a list of core subjects that all students must master. The important thing about these lists is that they invariably include the subjects that are easily quantifiable. Therefore, core subjects include reading, math, and science, but do not contain the arts. The NASBE’s report, entitled *The Complete Curriculum: Ensuring a Place for the Arts in America’s Schools*, states in part:

Perhaps most alarming are current education reforms, which have inadvertently placed the arts at risk as policy-makers and administrators, as they comply with new federal requirements, choose to narrow the curriculum in order to reach higher student achievement results in a few subjects.

The results of the NASBE report was seconded by the Center on Education Policy (CEP) which reported that most school districts in the United States reduced class time spent on the

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246 Ibid., 35.
'unquantifiable subjects in the Liberal Arts and Humanities in order to devote more time to the 'quantifiable subjects’ measured by standardized tests. Other studies conducted by CEP and by other education policy study groups, such as the Education Policy Studies Laboratory at Arizona State University, revealed some hidden, unintended consequences resulting from the Neoliberal, data-driven, standardized test procedures. The unintended consequences include the fact that many teachers tend to teach test taking techniques as often, if not more often, than they teach the actual subject matter. The studies also showed a tendency to focus on teacher-led classes rather than student-centered work. There was also a reduction of time spent on untested subjects, even when such changes are not mandated by the curriculum. Additional unintended consequences include an increase in the involvement of the federal government in the management of school funding, test making, and teacher certification, as well as an increase in student drop-out rates accompanied by a corresponding decrease in graduation rates. Other studies conducted by the CEP indicate that the movement to neoliberal, data-driven, standardized test procedures had no positive effect on either student achievement or instructor


249 Brett Jones and Robert Egley, “Voices from the Frontlines: Teachers’ Perceptions of High-Stakes Testing” Education Policy Analysis Archives 12, no.39 (August 9, 2004), http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v12n39/. Jones and Egley report specifically that the use of high-stake testing limits the curriculum, leads teachers —to teach to the test, and cuts down on the time that is available for teaching students.


effectiveness.\textsuperscript{252} Other data shows that schools who modified their teacher workforce to more closely reflect NCLB standards of teacher quality when the NCLB law was enacted showed a negative relationship between increasing the proportion of teachers with additional years of schooling and student growth.\textsuperscript{253} The data also showed no statistically meaningful relationship between teachers who are fully certified and student achievement.\textsuperscript{254} Among the most shocking of the unintended consequences was that standardized tests led to cheating by teachers and administrators in determining which student scores would be reported, student cheating on the test, and administrative misrepresentation of dropout figures.\textsuperscript{255}

The conclusion is that pedagogy in both the Liberal Arts and the Humanities cannot always be manipulated based upon external preconceived outcome requirements. External in this context refers to DoE or corporate influence. Nor can this learning be measured quantitatively. Sometimes learning takes place in an unplanned, unfocused, unmeasured way simply because the teacher has selected a subject for the class to discuss and asked the students a provocative and stimulating question. As Dr. Greene noted, there is evolution is education; there always has been, and at times chaotic.\textsuperscript{256} But the only crisis in education is the manufactured crisis by Neoliberals to assert political and social control.

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{253} Trish Tran, Testing the No Child Left Behind Act: Analyzing Assumptions About the Link Between Teacher Quality and Student Achievement. http://irle.berkeley.edu/culture/papers/tran08.pdf (accessed January 8, 2018).
\item\textsuperscript{254} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{255} Sharon L. Nichols and David C. Berliner, The Inevitable Corruption of Indicators and Educators Through High-Stake Testing: Executive Summary (Tempe, AZ: Education Policy Studies Laboratory, 2005).
\item\textsuperscript{256} Jay P. Greene, Education Myths: What Special-Interest Groups Want You to Believe about Our Schools – and Why It Isn’t So (New York, NY: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005).
\end{itemize}
The Postmodern Era

The idea of Postmodernity presupposes that there is, or was, a Modernity after which something could be “post.” Since the beginning of the current millennium there has been debate in many areas of society that issues previously in the forefront of Postmodernity are in the past and we are now in a different era yet to be articulated. Though the genealogy of Postmodernity is not established, we can find attributes of the Postmodern in the nineteenth-century writings of Kierkegaard, Marx, and Nietzsche.

Postmodernity was a result of Modernity where the ideology morphed from a state in which actions were guided by an overarching notion of the public good to a state in which individual political entrepreneurs accepted the assumption that free enterprise, if allowed to insert itself into every aspect of human enterprise, would make everybody better off and values like morality, justice, fairness, and empathy were abandoned or redefined in market terms; Neoliberalism.

Where Modernism was the acceptance of big politics, the book and library was the system for collecting knowledge, and belief in a master narrative of progress through science and technology. Postmodernism is a reaction to Modernism’s failed promise of using human reason to better mankind and make the world a better place. Because one of Modernism’s tenets was that absolutes did indeed exist, Postmodernism sought to correct the status quo by eliminating absolute truth and making everything relative to an individual’s beliefs and desires.

While the political demarcation line between the Left and Right is increasingly difficult to discern, Postmodern theory is clearly neither Left nor Right. Postmodernism rejected the certainty of Enlightenment thinking, and to a large extent religious belief, as advocates felt that the traditional forms of art, literature, religion, philosophy, education and other activities were
outdated and no longer met the needs of an industrialized world. If absolute truth does not exist, and if there is no way to discern right or wrong with certainty, then the conclusion must be that all beliefs must be considered equally valid or a Postmodern philosophical pluralism.

Jean-François Lyotard

Jean-François Lyotard (1924 – 1998) introduced the term Postmodernism into the modern philosophical lexicon in 1979257 in his book, The Postmodern Condition, where he defined it as, “Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity towards metanarratives.”258

Lyotard analyzed the concept of knowledge in Postmodern society as the end of grand narratives or metanarratives, which he considered a quintessential feature of Modernity. He viewed knowledge as “narratives” that embody the notions of legitimacy that guides “customary knowledge”259 and technical “language games,” guided only by internal rules.260 He viewed the grand narratives as no longer workable because the increase in computer data makes consensus impossible and makes the instability of knowledge a matter of principle.261 It also renders obsolete the linkage between knowledge and “the training of minds” and humanities notions of the subjectivity of understanding. As a result, the only criteria for knowledge become continuous innovation and practical effectiveness, which he referred to as “performativity.”


258 Ibid., xxiv.

259 Ibid., 19.

260 Ibid., 10.

261 Ibid., 61.
Since performativity increases the ability to produce proof increases the ability to be right... Power... is self-legitimating ever is wealthiest has the best chance of being right. An equation between wealth, efficiency, and truth is thus established.

He wrote of the changing circumstances of contemporary science and technology in what he perceived as a postmodern society. This focus allowed him to look at a number of questions about society, many of which are related to education and college administration and organization.

At the time Lyotard wrote *The Postmodern Condition* higher education was arguably still organized, constituted, and structured to search for truth, and was dependent for its legitimacy on a belief in the scientific method and science as a way of obtaining this goal. Science operated as an independent sphere with its own rules, and though not unaffected by the market, government, and the institutions they reside in, it was viewed as separate from them. Science enjoyed a dominant position in the academy, developed and lived by its own standards of excellence and it had been able to impose its perspectives on other areas of the academy, a paradigm Lyotard rejected.

Modernism was associated with higher education and the scientific mode of thinking and doing. Higher education promoted the concept that science - its forms, research, methods, and progress resulting from science - as the principal guarantors of the legitimacy of higher education. The belief in science and its assumptions and methods provided the basis for creating and justifying the hierarchies within colleges and the reward structures among academics. Much of higher education’s argument for autonomy was premised on scientific values relating to creativity, objectivity, and neutrality. Even where science and the scientific method are not dominant, as in the humanities, there are ongoing debates concerning whether the humanist disciplines should be more scientific.
Lyotard disagreed with the modernistic view of science on two grounds. First, he viewed science as just one more metanarrative that had no more legitimacy than any other metanarrative. Second, he believed that science in the postmodern world had morphed under the catch-all term, “technology”, and was judged by efficiency and effectiveness. Postmodernism made science problematic.

He viewed science as a discourse like any other discourse, a political terrain where power struggles took place for the control of meaning. If science is a discourse equal to any other discourse, then there is no meritocratic basis for privileging science over any other theories. This meant that there was no rational argument for keeping any discourse from finding a place in the curricula of colleges and universities. What is left is a series of power positions and contested viewpoints vying for a place in the academy with no real set of standards by which to judge their relative merits and no rules to follow that allow anyone to say yes or no to questions of inclusion and exclusion in the curriculum. This is the extreme consequence of relativism involved in the postmodern critique.

His notion that performativity - Lyotard’s neologism - would be the only viable criterion in a Postmodern world meant that higher education's sole reason for existence was its ability to contribute directly to the performativity of the economic system. To Lyotard, the task of universities and colleges had devolved to:

...create skills, and no longer ideals. . .. The transmission of knowledge is no longer designed to train an elite capable of guiding the nation towards its emancipation, but to supply the players capable of acceptably fulfilling their roles at the pragmatic posts required by its institutions.262

262 Ibid., 48.
He discussed the changing university as well as the future of the professor in the academy, predicting a dim future for higher education as it now exists. Lyotard described classes and seminars taught by professors as still being necessary, but reduced primarily to instructing students in the use of the terminals.\textsuperscript{263} If there were no legitimate grand narratives, there would be no need for professors to teach them. Instead one could rely on machines to teach students what they would need to know in a performatively driven society.

Lyotard was blunt in his view of the continued relevance of a professor in the classroom. In the cases of both the production and the transmission of knowledge, he contended that “...the process of delegitimation and the predominance of the performance criteria are sounding the end of professorial teaching as currently known.”\textsuperscript{264}

Lyotard was also concerned with questions of increasing power and language with an interest in legitimacy and how it was created. He saw discourse as a language game where players’ speech was viewed as moves directed at legitimating their language game and proving its superiority over other language games with “...the only credible goal...” being power and scholars “...purchased not to find truth, but to augment power.”\textsuperscript{265}

Universities are no longer democratic institutions, but repurposed tools realigned with the demands of the wider social and political system. The grand narratives may be disappearing, no longer able to compel consensus as they did before, leaving a fracturing and proliferation of language games with performativity as the new language game while science continues to work and generate new ideas to feed the Neoliberal beast.

\textsuperscript{263} Ibid., 50.
\textsuperscript{264} Ibid., 53.
\textsuperscript{265} Ibid., 46.
Michel Foucault

Michel Foucault (1926 – 1984) framed the issue of selves and performativity in *Discipline and Punish* (1979) and *The History of Sexuality Vol I* (1980) where he wrote of people being turned into useful, docile and practical individuals by processes of normalization in the disciplinary institutions of the human sciences. Foucault argued that knowledge, and particularly how it is communicated, is created by humans to attain power.

“We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth. This is the case in every society, but I believe that in ours . . . we are forced to produce the truth of power that our society demands, of which it has need, in order to function.” F👺6 He argued that those in political power created the idea of the individual and selectively communicated knowledge to reinforce the idea of the individual. F👻7

He developed the arguments challenging modernist theory of a link between human advancement and the progress of society. He specifically argued that human sciences were components of a causality of “...modes of objectification...” where the individual became objectified as a “...human subject...” to be studied. F👻8 Foucault was referring to the social sciences and explicitly psychology, sociology, literature, cultural anthropology and ethnology, psychiatry, and history. F👻9

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F👻8 Ibid., 208.

Foucault asserted that knowledge, and the communication of that knowledge, had been modified to meet social needs to legitimize the organization of humans into a mass society of disciplined, productive individual “subjects.”

He viewed the modern scientific study of the individual as part of “…the great nineteenth-century effort in discipline and normalization[sic]…” responsible for bureaucratic European society and the human sciences as the intellectual tool or, “…effective instruments for the formation and accumulation of knowledge—methods of observation, techniques of registration, procedures for investigation and research, apparatuses of control”. He had particular contempt for psychology as an insidious collusion with academia:

It was the emergence . . . of a new type of the supervision—both knowledge and power—over individuals who resisted disciplinary normalization . . . the supervision of normality was firmly encased in a medicine or a psychiatry that provided it with a sort of ‘scientificity’[sic].”

Foucault also derided other disciplines as “disciplinary technologies” that he believed were legitimized by disciplinary sciences, including schools, hospitals, and especially the military. He viewed the “internment of the mentally or physically ill as a way the modern human could purge itself of ‘the other’ that psychologically plagued it.”

Foucault believed that a scholar must recognize and resist the political association of power with knowledge or otherwise be compromised as a scholar: “The essential political

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271 Ibid., 61.


problem for the intellectual is not changing people’s consciousness — or what’s in their heads—but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth.”

Foucault warned of the link between knowledge and power; power which morphed in the 1980s from pure political power to a combination of corporate money buying political influence that translated into power of a magnitude beyond any Foucault would have experienced. He was particularly concerned with the manipulation of scholars by power, warning them that they should “struggle against the forms of power that transform [them] into its object and instrument in the sphere of ‘knowledge,’ ‘truth,’ ‘consciousness,’ and ‘discourse,...’” Foucault believed the modern scholar should be the embodiment of intellectual autonomy and freedom.

Foucault was not opposed to the idea of individualism, but the individuality coerced by an education system that fit a social mold created and funded by the power elite was, in his view, not individualism. For government to organize and control what knowledge is disseminated required the locus of “…the starting points of local conditions and particular needs...,” or an identifiable point where power can begin to exercise control.

Paulo Freire

Paulo Reglus Neves Freire (1921 –1997) was an advocate of critical pedagogy, a method initially defined by Freire and further developed by Henry Giroux and others as an “…educational movement, guided by passion and principle, to help students develop


consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action.”

Paulo Freire came to education pedagogy in the poverty of Recife, Brazil during the Great Depression. He did poorly in school with his life evolving around other poor children that would later shape his views on education. He was trained as a lawyer though he never practiced, but instead chose to work and teach in secondary schools. He was appointed Director of the Department of Education and Culture of the Social Service in the state of Pernambuco working with the illiterate poor where he began his study of liberation theology, a movement begun in the Catholic Church in Latin America in the 1950s that arose as a response to the poverty and social injustice of the region. In Brazil, literacy was a requirement to vote, not unlike America at the time.

He taught sugarcane workers to read and write at the Department of Cultural Extension of Recife University, but was imprisoned in 1964 as a traitor after a military coup and later exiled from Brazil. It was during this period that he published his seminal work, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, in 1968.

Freire believed that a system of class dominance created a culture of silence that instilled a negative, silenced and suppressed self-image within the oppressed. He believed a culture of silence can also cause the “...dominated individuals [to] lose the means by which to critically

respond to the culture that is forced on them by a dominant culture.”

Social domination of race and class are interlaced within the conventional education system, through which the “...culture of silence is formed by eliminating the paths of thought that lead to a language of critique.”

There is no such thing as a neutral education process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of generations into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the 'practice of freedom', the means by which men and women deal critically with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.

Freire’s philosophy of education came not only from the classical traditions, but also from Marxist philosophy. Freire was critical of the “banking concept of education” where the student was viewed as an “empty account” to be filled by the teacher. He asserted that “...it transforms students into receiving objects. It attempts to control thinking and action, leads men and women to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power.”

John Dewey often described education as a mechanism for social change, explaining that, “I believe that education is a regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness; and that the adjustment of individual activity on the basis of this social consciousness is the only sure method of social reconstruction.” Advocates of Freire’s work

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279 Ibid.


have incorrectly asserted that it is an updated version of Dewey’s concept that laid the foundation for critical pedagogy. It is an example of progressive ideology that advocated for student centered pedagogy where, theoretically, the curriculum was what the students determined it to be, but in reality it was in opposition to whatever happened to the accepted and dominant pedagogy, including the liberal arts and humanities. Dewey wanted education to produce citizens able to function in a democracy; Freire sought to develop a pedagogy of the oppressed that would produce revolutionary subjects with the capacity to overthrow oppression and create what he believed to be a more just social order. Freire’s ideas championed the idea that education should free the oppressed to regain their sense of humanity, but he acknowledged that the oppressed individual must play a role in his/her liberation. He stated:

No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption.283

Unless those he viewed as the oppressors were willing to rethink and change their way of life as he stated, “...Those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly...”284 then Freire’s idea of liberation would never occur.

Freire believed that:

...education makes sense because women and men learn that through learning they can make and remake themselves, because women and men are able to take responsibility for themselves as beings capable of knowing—of knowing that they know and knowing that they don’t...285

He further defined as a main tenet of critical pedagogy the idea that education must be a


284 Ibid., 42.

285 Ibid., 15.
political act that cannot be divorced from pedagogy. He continued to say that teachers and students must be made aware of the politics that surround education and that the method of teaching and the curriculum taught serves a political agenda. While teachers, students, and especially administrators bring their biases to some extent into the classroom, the challenge of critical pedagogy is how to separate the political ideology from pedagogy without removing political theory from pedagogy. Liberal Studies is an open door to intellectual ideas and theories, some of which can mature and become active approaches to effect change, but the pedagogy of Liberal Studies has as its foundation critical thinking, although there is arguably a political indoctrination being attempted such as critical pedagogy risks introducing. While this is arguably a reasonable observation, the question remains how to reform education and it is not clear that critical pedagogy alone is the answer.

**Henry Giroux**

Henry Giroux (b. 1943) described conservative pedagogy as “...a set of strategies and skills to use in order to teach prespecified subject matter. In this context, teaching becomes synonymous with a method, technique, or the practice of a craft—like skill training.” He continued to define critical pedagogy as opposed to conservative pedagogy as:

...critical pedagogy must be seen as a political and moral project and not a technique. Pedagogy is always political because it is connected to the acquisition of agency. As a political project, critical pedagogy illuminates the relationships among knowledge, authority, and power. It draws attention to questions concerning who has control over the conditions for the production of knowledge, values, and skills, and it illuminates how knowledge, identities, and authority are constructed within particular sets of social relations. Similarly, it draws attention to the fact that pedagogy is a deliberate attempt on the part of educators to influence how and what knowledge and subjectivities are produced within particular sets of social relations.287

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287 Ibid.
Critical pedagogy is not without its opponents. Philosopher John Searle argued that the proponents of critical pedagogy reject the Western corpus of knowledge with misplaced or ill-conceived theories:

Precisely by inculcating a critical attitude, the "canon" served to demythologize the conventional pieties of the American bourgeoisie and provided the student with a perspective from which to critically analyze American culture and institutions. Ironically, the same tradition is now regarded as oppressive. The texts once served an unmasking function; now we are told that it is the texts which must be unmasked.288

Searle’s assessment of critical pedagogy is incorrect in that it does not reject the Western canon, however, it may very well create the environment where the political status quo and its influence on education is questioned. Questioning the status quo is fundamental to critical pedagogy and especially critical thought. Giroux argued, “...the university is both a public trust and social good...it is a critical institution infused with the promise of cultivating intellectual insight, the imagination, inquisitiveness, risk-taking, social responsibility and the struggle for justice.”289

Giroux asserted there is a pedagogy founded on wealth that “...displaces, infantilizes and depoliticizes both students and large segments of the American public”290 and students are being manipulated by for-profit organizations in private/charter schools that have been turned into a “...private right rather than a public good.”291


291 Ibid.
Giroux viewed education pedagogy as about “...the struggle over identity just as much as it is a struggle over what counts as knowledge.”\textsuperscript{292} Giroux’s critical pedagogy is one of intervention where teachers have the responsibility to prepare students not for a job, but for learning to function successfully in an environment of political, economic, and ideological forces, not unlike Dewey’s theory of the preparation of students to function in a democratic society.

\textbf{E.D. Hirsch}

E.D. Hirsch (b. 1928) had indirect influence on contemporary education in the late twentieth century through his theory of Common Knowledge pedagogy.

According to Hirsch, since “...inferior education is today the primary cause of social and economic injustice, the struggle for equality of educational opportunity is in effect the new civil rights frontier.”\textsuperscript{293} Hirsch’s proposed pedagogy came about at a time when the progressive education movement was not yet eclectic, but a chaotic aberration of what had been referred to as progressive education after the Dewey era.

Hirsch became the proverbial lightening rod for education reform with his publication, \textit{Cultural Literacy}, which had an appendix called ‘The List’ of approximately five thousand words Americans should know and understand.\textsuperscript{294} The decades-long culture war had a new target

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that focused on the question: Who is the story of America about when ‘us’ is no longer by default ‘white’? Hirsch’s book was published just after Allan Bloom published *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987) and before Arthur Schlesinger Jr. published *The Disuniting of America* (1991), both of which generated controversy for their perceived cultural eliteness and intolerance of any non-Western position of absolutism.

America is too diverse to accept a national curriculum whose foundation is based on white Euro-centric ideology which was the foundation of Hirsch’s theory. Any proposal of a static curriculum within states and school districts when there is such a diversity of ethnicity that is the dynamic of a school district is destined to fail. Hirsch initially advocated a pedagogy that morphed into a curriculum which was viewed, unfairly, by multicultural progressives as racist. For those who actually read Hirsch’s book, the message is that the more serious challenge for Americans is to evolve a common culture that is greater than the sum of our increasingly diverse parts. It is not something that can or should be legislated.

Hirsch’s theory was challenged on two fundamental issues: (1) he advocated a common curriculum based on values and principles articulated by the nation’s founders, such as Thomas Jefferson, and (2) he advocated creating a knowledge-based curriculum for the nation’s elementary schools.

Contrary to popular opinion Hirsch did not develop the ‘Common Core’ that was advocated to the states by the DoE, though he was an advocate for a core curriculum. His theory was Core Knowledge, but not the Common Core theory that the government bureaucrats hijacked, manipulated and advanced at a cost to Hirsch’s reputation. The governments Common Core was a loose derivative of Hirsch’s theory, only with the attachment of governmental control.
Hirsch’s Core Knowledge program lost the support of teachers primarily due to the assumption that Hirsch’s program was the same one rolled out by the Department of Education whose policies and rules exercised dominance over teachers. In a 2014 Gallop Poll less than twenty per cent of teachers polled had any confidence in the Common Core. In 2015 a grassroots movement started to “opt-out” of common core.

The initial concept of Hirsch’s Common Knowledge was not an attempt at a one size fits all curriculum or pedagogy, but an attempt to identify a curriculum of core subjects of practical use to any student regardless of ethnicity, culture or any other categorical attribute. Hirsch’s theory that made him a lightning rod for critics was the question that has faced education reformers since Isocrates: who gets to decide the curriculum and pedagogy and what will it be?

**Conclusion**

As it was in the early Classical Period when education was viewed as necessary to support politics, politics continues to pervade education pedagogy. Politics, or social governance, is necessary for a civilized society to function, but politics has become more invasive until it is more dominant than ever in education, with politicians as the decisions-makers in how education should be structured. There has always been debate regarding the methods or pedagogy of education where educators along with the public could evolve with the changing needs of a populace, but the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries evolved to the point where the public role was being disenfranchised. The support of education by government has changed

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dramatically to become the indoctrination of a Neoliberal ideology of consumption and the global political agenda imposed by the United States government.

Chapter 3 will examine the events, policies, and legislation that the political establishment has employed in an attempt to reach its goals of total domination of education.
Chapter Three

Law and Federal Intervention in Education

Those persons, whom nature has endowed with genius and virtue, should be rendered by liberal education worthy to receive, and able to guard the sacred deposit of the rights and liberties of their fellow citizens; and . . . they should be called to that charge without regard to wealth, birth or other accidental condition or circumstance.

*Thomas Jefferson - Preamble to a Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge 1778 Papers 2:526--27*

Politics, society, religion, and education have been inextricably intertwined since the beginning of recorded history. To understand American education’s situation and the debate regarding curriculum in 2018 one has to look into the development and historical relationship of education with government in the course of American history.

§1 The National University - Federal intervention in education

From America’s beginnings the Constitution ignored education simply by not addressing it, which encouraged the establishment of schools by the states. As the states’ populations grew there was a growing concern regarding the lack of education for the training of citizens, a theme that would be echoed more than two centuries later by John Dewey. There were disagreements among elected officials on who would be educated, how they should be educated, what the curriculum should be, and who would pay for it. Elected officials in the federal government recognized that controlling the curriculum nationally allowed the dominant political ideology to be inculcated in every generation of young people. This was a theme that would continue in 2018.

In January, 1787, Philadelphia physician Benjamin Rush attempted to advance the government's role in education by advocating the establishment of a postgraduate university for
“...advanced research and instruction of a utilitarian type.”¹ George Washington supported a national university, leaving a gift in his last will and testament to fund the initiative.

Even though President Thomas Jefferson opposed the concept of a national university, he advocated for state-supported schools which he believed would identify the “best and the brightest” and allow all students regardless of income to attend. However, the idea was rejected by the Virginia legislature who believed that families and churches were sufficient to educate children.²

There were other attempts to revive interest in the idea of a national university, but with no success. The American public was apathetic to the idea based primarily on the concept of states’ rights philosophy. There was also opposition because of the concern that federal taxation would increase and the federal government in Washington would tax and disburse funds as it saw fit. As early as 1873 the American public was untrusting of their government as being under the influence of criminal rings of “…interlopers, lobbyists, and scoundrels from all parts of our country…” to the extent that the president of the National Educational Association spoke to the issue at the national conference.³

With the issuance of the Northwest Ordinance of 1785 -1787 the government took


unprecedented steps in promoting education by setting aside tracts of land for a public university in Ohio: “Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.” While the provisioning of education facilities was successful, the establishment of a national curriculum at any level was still contested. There was opposition by the religious element led by Yale President Timothy Dwight who, in 1814, asserted that European instructors would likely be teaching at a national university:

…they would not be Christians; but Edinburgh Reviewers – men who would throw religion out of the world with one stroke…There would be danger that such sentiments would be encouraged at our seat of government, for there is much irreligion there.  

There was another futile attempt to garner interest in the national university concept by John W. Hoyt - a lawyer, physician, as well as the governor of the newly chartered Territory of Wyoming. Hoyt also served as the President of the University of Wyoming. Hoyt campaigned for more than thirty years for the national university concept, but he was unsuccessful in garnering support of the National Educational Association at their national conference in 1873 as well as a sufficient number of U.S. Senators to pass the bill. Presidents Grant and Hayes sent

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letters endorsing the attempt to Congress, but there was academic opposition from Charles W. Eliot, President of Harvard University and Seth Low of Columbia University, along with additional opposition from “...the presidents of three or four smaller colleges, and from some of the supporters of the newly chartered American University.” Harvard President Charles W. Eliot was also chief adversary to the idea who recognized that having a central or national education nexus would only lead to the political intervention of the federal government, limiting if not curtailing intellectual freedom and suppress advocacy initiatives.

Bills were introduced in the U.S. Congress over the next sixty years, but the national university never came into being largely due to the federal government’s passage of the Morrill Land-Grant Acts that served to fragment support rather than consolidate it by providing public land to the states to sell and create land-grant colleges using the proceeds from the federal land sales. The Morrill Land-Grant Acts gave thirty thousand acres of public land to each Senator and Representative in Congress to establish “...land-grant colleges established for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts.”

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10 Ibid., 17 – 24.


12 U.S. Congress, Title 7 – AGRICULTURE CHAPTER 13 - AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGES SUBCHAPTER I - COLLEGE-AID LAND APPROPRIATION http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?h=1&new=true&section=1701&set=true&html=true&req=granuleid%3AUSC-prelim-title7-chapter13-subchapter1&num=0&saved=L3ByZWxpUB0aXRsZTcvY2hhcHRlcjEZL3NlYmNoYXB0ZXIx%7CJhbnVsZWNkO
The attempt to establish a national university was one of repeated attempts and repeated failures. The movement failed largely because typical American citizens, at a time when the U.S. Congress paid any attention to the desires of the American public at all, were indifferent to the idea because of the results of the Morrill Act. It also failed because there was also the intractable opposition by a small, but influential group of university presidents. There were also numerous colleges, universities and other institutions that rejected the notion of the ideals of the national university as an attempt to exercise control over the states and ultimately over their schools. The last reason was to be repeated later in the twentieth century.

§2. Militarization of the Academy – The second attempt at the National University

The subject of military academies is often omitted from the discussion of the evolution of American education history as an aberration or specialty niche in education, but it has played and continues to play a pervasive role in universities, and to an increasing extent on university and even high school campuses as Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC).

The concept of schools created expressively for the training of military officers was met with resistance and suspicion, considered by some representatives in Congress to be representative of an undemocratic caste system and an attempted overreach of federal power. The objection to the concept as an undemocratic caste system was ironic considering the existing racial caste system or racial categorization perpetuated by the federal government, not only in education, but in every aspect of life.

American involvement in wars, particularly the Revolutionary War and American Civil War, created serious disruptions to all colleges with young men being taken to defend against the
British, then to fight for their respective sides against other Americans in the Civil War.

While the Morrill Land-Grant Acts of 1862 had a stipulation that military training be provided in all land grant universities, the university had the discretion to decide whether training would be mandatory or voluntary for students. The plan was to have a small standing armed force which would be backed up by civilians taking military training at colleges in the event of war. Some colleges did establish military training units on campuses and make the training compulsory, but the military presence was not well received on all campuses, such as the University of Wisconsin and University of Illinois, where students protested against the action. The act did address the plan to educate for the general well-being, and for the first time used the term liberal education:

...by each State which may take and claim the benefit of this subchapter, to the endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.

The next step was establishing a Students Army Training Corps where the government contracted with more than five hundred colleges to provide “...subsistence, quarter, and military

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14 Seymour M Lipset and Gerald M. Schaflander, Passion and Politics: Student Activism in America (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1972), 138.

and academic instruction...” for students who agreed to become cadets and submit to service as the War Department required. This was the foot in the door for the government and especially the military in the civilian education system.

The federal government secured its position in the academy during World War II when declining admissions and increased costs put colleges into the untenable position of having to depend on the government for financial assistance. The assistance came in the form of contracts providing as much as fifty per cent of the income while expanding its research projects and training programs into the colleges, entrenching the federal government deeper into the American college system than ever before; a practice that would never be fully retracted from colleges.17

The concept began benignly enough with the government arguing that the academies represented a valid component of the federal responsibility to defend the Union. In 1800, Secretary of War James McHenry endorsed plans for an academy for each branch of the military, but there was a strong anti-Federalist political environment and the only part of McHenry’s plan completed was establishing the United States Military Academy (USMA).18 The academy was not much more than a few buildings at West Point, New York, with no permanent instructors. Cadets were trained much like physicians and lawyers were at the time; by apprenticing under senior military officers. When Major Sylvanus Thayer became superintendent in 1817 he structured the USMA in a manner similar to that of other four-year institutions. The USMA’s primary education focus was engineering until the beginning of the Civil War, and the graduates

17 Ibid.
were much in demand not only for military engineering projects, but also for the projects of private companies.

The military academy concept was not left alone to continue without political criticism. President Andrew Jackson (1829 – 1837) was critical of the increasing admission requirements, and forced Thayer to resign as superintendent. In order to quell the criticism, congress mandated that cadets would be accepted for admission to West Point under an apportionment plan and each would be selected by the Representative from his congressional district.

In the early twentieth century admissions requirements to West Point and the Naval Academy at Annapolis Maryland, that was created in 1845 to augment the ongoing attempt to militarize education, were changed. Candidates were provided a full scholarship that covered tuition and all expenses, and in return they signed a contract stating that they would serve in the military for a fixed number of years. The concept of the national service academy, together with the training agreements with the land grant universities, was not only generally accepted, but extended to include other branches of the military. By 1954 every military branch had its own training academy fully funded by the American taxpayer, including the U.S. Merchant Marine. The national university as originally proposed was not totally implemented, but the service academies were a furtive beginning.

The legacy of war and the militarization of the academia continued with the passage of the National Defense Acts of 1916 and 1920, which took the additional steps of providing Reserve Officer Training Corps. The programs under both acts applied to all colleges, both public and private, but the colleges did have the right to decide whether to participate or not.

In the 1880s students at the University of Wisconsin and the University of Illinois had protested against the establishment of military training programs and the presence of military on
campus; in 1956 students at the University of California – Berkeley began a six-year protest against compulsory ROTC training for all male students as well as a protest against conferring degrees on graduates of the Military Science Department. Students argued that the ROTC students were not required to comply with the same academic standards, such as teaching and grading, that the university required of all students for graduation. In 1962, the University of California Regents voted to end compulsory ROTC training at all California state universities.  

These are two illustrations of the rebellion against the militarization of the college campus and curriculum over two centuries, and there would be more as the rebellion against the militarization of the university’s and curriculum continued.

During a Freedom of Speech movement protest against the war in Vietnam on May 15, 1969 at University of California – Berkeley, one student was shot dead by police, with scores stabbed with bayonets by U.S. Army National Guardsman. On May 4, 1970, students at Kent State University were part of the Freedom of Speech movement protesting against the war in Vietnam and the presence of military on campus. Eight students were shot and wounded and four were shot and killed by U.S. Army National Guardsman. Eleven days later, two students were killed and twelve wounded at Jackson State University by police who fired indiscriminately into an occupied dorm.

The national sentiment against government-forced militarization of college campuses only worsened as the Vietnam War escalated. As schools around the country decided to remove

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20 Ibid., 420-424.

ROTC from their programs and campuses, the federal government struck back with intensity.

In 1994, reacting to the continuing denial of ROTC activities and military recruiting on campuses, Representative Gerald Solomon (R-NY) introduced an amendment to existing law that would deny any funding for any purpose from any government agency to colleges that prevented ROTC activities on campus or denied military recruiting on campuses.\textsuperscript{22} The law also gave the government the authority to collect personal information on students. Specifically, it gave:

- access by military recruiters for purposes of military recruiting to the following information pertaining to students (who are 17 years of age or older) enrolled at that institution (or any sub element of that institution):
  (A) Names, addresses, and telephone listings.
  (B) Date and place of birth, levels of education, academic majors, degrees received, and the most recent educational institution enrolled in by the student.\textsuperscript{23}

The government did not accomplish its initial goal of a national university, but it had inserted the military into the colleges with the help of the American taxpayer, who had been opposed to the concept from the beginning. The government continues to pass amendments to laws inserting military onto American college campuses and pay for it with taxpayer money.

\section*{§3 Law, Law and More Law - Enter the U.S. Department of Education}

From America’s beginning the federal government did not assume, nor was it constitutionally given, a role in education. States and localities chose to teach their youth and the states, which included parents, students, teachers, administrators as well as state politicians, rejecting any attempts by the federal government to insert itself into local education.

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It was early in the republic, as early as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, that the idea of the national university was first proposed. Washington and Jefferson, proponent and opponent of the idea respectively, debated the issues from what may be viewed from the present day vantage point as possibly egoistic motives. However, the idea of political doctrine in education pedagogy has ancient roots going back to Isocrates and Plato.\textsuperscript{24}

Curriculum had not yet become quite the instrument of political indoctrination in the early stages of the American experience that it has become in the twenty-first century. Curriculum was primarily the Liberal Arts and Humanities, but engineering and various scientific disciplines were attracting the attention of federal bureaucrats who recognized that advancements in technology would mean revenue generation which in turn would mean more tax money for them to spend.

The federal bureaucracy had not given up on gaining some control of college education. President Andrew Johnson established the first Department of Education in 1867, but in 1869 Congress demoted the department to a bureau in the Department of the Interior. In 1930 it moved to the Federal Security Agency and in 1953 to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare where it remained as the Office of Education until 1979.

The precedent has been that public education falls primarily under the authority of state and local governments.\textsuperscript{25} While the founders clearly understood the importance of an educated electorate to a functioning democracy\textsuperscript{26} it was not until the early 19th century that common schools, the precursors to our contemporary schools, arose and not until the early 20th century

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\textsuperscript{24} see above, 44, 45.


\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., §1.01[5][a] (quoting George Washington about the importance of education).
that anything resembling the modern public education system began to take form.\(^{27}\) The needs and priorities of the states varied greatly,\(^ {28}\) and the Constitution's silence on public education suggests that the founders intended it to be an issue under the purview of the states.\(^ {29}\)

The middle of the 20th century brought about major developments that forced the federal government's hand in taking an active role in public education.\(^ {30}\) Colleges adjusted and survived two world wars and the great depression. They also survived a series of presidential committee reports. The first of two presidential actions advocating for progress in education was *The Truman Report*,\(^ {31}\) six volumes that were considered innovative, socially progressive and in the interests of all Americans, with many of its recommendations either enacted or still being implemented today. The report addressed accessibility, education for all, and the introduction of community colleges and adult education. The increasing role of research was also a recurring topic.

The second was The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), the centerpiece of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty.\(^ {32}\) Title I of the ESEA provided funds for the education of children in low-income families. It also provided school districts funding if

\(^{27}\) Ibid., §1.01 [6][b] (describing the emergence of the "six-three-three" system of elementary, middle, and high schools).

\(^{28}\) Ibid., § 1.01[2] (describing the functions early schooling served in various regions of the country).

\(^{29}\) Ibid., §3.01(1).

\(^{30}\) Ibid., §1.01[6][a].


either 3% or at least 100 school-aged children in a given district were from low-income families.\textsuperscript{33} Tax money was provided to the Office of Education (OoE), who then passed the balance along to the states after the OoE costs of handling the money was deducted.\textsuperscript{34} The funds were intended to be distributed to school districts according to federally mandated rules governing how the districts would be allocated the funding. However, once the remaining funding arrived at the local district or school, the funds were used at the discretion of local authorities for children in those attendance areas where at least half the families lived in poverty.\textsuperscript{35}

From the beginning, critics of the law complained from two perspectives, either that the funding was too controlled and bound up in red tape, or that it was not accounted for at all.\textsuperscript{36} In what could be described as either noncompliance in the application of the intent of the law, or gross management incompetence, children who met the poverty requirements living in attendance areas that did not meet impoverishment requirements did not receive funds while children from wealthier families who lived in an area that met the requirements received the federal money.\textsuperscript{37} Critics of the law charged that affluent districts, such as Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin, were “stealing” money the writers of the law intended for the poor. In response to the criticism the Congressional Representative for Whitefish Bay responded, “If they [his fellow

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid. Title II allocated funds for school libraries and instructional materials, Title III covered supplementary educational centers and services, Title IV was earmarked for research into effective teaching methods, and Title V gave money directly to State Departments of Education to help implement the other provisions of the act.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 149.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 160.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
members of Congress] write stupid laws, well, that’s their problem.”

It was this sort of blatant manipulation of aid and disregard for the law’s underlying purposes that led to worries that the ESEA might become a financial delivery system with no real effect on school programs or student achievement in low-income areas. Senator Robert Kennedy (D-NY) insisted that the ESEA include regular evaluations to ensure federal aid was reaching its intended population and producing the results specified, but Congress ignored the proposed addition.

For the first decade under ESEA, the funding model changed very little. However, in subsequent congressional reauthorizations of the law and funding, the number of federally-funded programs increased dramatically. Under this model, known as categorical funding, particular grants were earmarked for particular programs. States and districts could get additional funding for specific student groups including low-income, racial minority, non-native English speaking, or handicapped children.

The election of Ronald Reagan changed that model. As part of his agenda to decrease the debt and diminish the size of the central government, Reagan’s administration cut deeply into funding of categorical programs. Congress cut more than a billion dollars in federal aid to

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39 Ibid., 12.


41 Ibid., 36.

42 Ibid., 28-29.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., 45.
schools and the remaining funds changed from categorical programs into block grant programs.\textsuperscript{45}

A block grant is a large sum of money granted by the federal government to a local government with only general guidelines as to how the money is to be spent. By comparison, a categorical grant has rules defining how the money may be spent. With the changed funding structure, the federal government provided less money to states and school districts and removed restrictions on how the funds could be spent.\textsuperscript{46} States were no longer required to spend the money for programs targeting students with the greatest needs.\textsuperscript{47} Even though the amount of funding was cut, states and local governments were willing to accept the change because there were no provisions stipulating how the money was to spent, leaving that to the discretion of the local administrator.

It was in the midst of this giant shift in federal education policy that Federal Education Commissioner Terrell Bell released A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform,\textsuperscript{48} the dramatic and potentially damaging answer to the blame question, which was a key driver in the increase in standardized testing that was to follow. This report painted a scathing picture of American schools, pointing out a precipitous drop in high school students’ SAT scores since the late 1950s.\textsuperscript{49} The report suggested that the federal government’s pursuit of equity came at the expense of quality with neither being achieved.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 46.

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid. 47.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 49.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
It was an alarmist report warning of the impending crisis in American education and it recommended raising academic standards as it made not only the unsubstantiated, but inaccurate claim that American education was a failure, purporting that there was evidence confirming the failure.\textsuperscript{51}

For the first time in the history of our country, the educational skills of one generation will not surpass, will not equal, will not even approach those of their parents.\textsuperscript{52}

In a press conference in the White House Oval office Reagan melodramatically waved in the air a copy of \textit{A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform. An Open Letter to the American People. A Report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education} (Nation at Risk) as he criticized education for failing America’s students and criticized the 1983 students for scoring lower than the 1963 students.\textsuperscript{53} The document continued on for 24 of the 48 pages excoriating teachers and particularly students for the alleged failures.\textsuperscript{54} Nowhere in the document does the Reagan committee provide any references to the assertions made; there are only lists of names of people, places, events, and other listings with no correlation to the assertions in the report.

There are real challenges to education pedagogy, but they are not unexpected in a dynamic


\textsuperscript{54} The last 24 pages was the committee’s meeting schedule, list of members, and a list of credits not unlike those at the end of a move.
and growing society. The significance of the Reagan report was that it became a touchstone that began the Modern era attack on liberal education and by extension on teachers and students. The report asserted that the education system had “...lost sight of the basic purposes of schooling, and of the high expectations and disciplined effort needed to attain them...,” then recommended still more testing.\textsuperscript{55} The report provided fodder for news media and politicians to launch a misinformation campaign of education reform with no clear definition of the problem to be solved, or even whether there was a problem.

\textit{§4 Politics and the Office/Department of Education}

The promotion of the Office of Education (OoE) to the Department of Education (DoE) that began in 1978 was an exercise in special interest groups and campaign politics overwhelming the desires of the states and its citizens. In the period between 1908 and 1975, more than 130 bills had been introduced, with no success, in an effort to create a Department of Education as it exists in 2018.\textsuperscript{56}

The modern-day politicization and growing interest in a stronger Federal presence in education began in 1972 as the National Education Association (NEA) formed a political action committee, and in 1975 it joined forces with other unions to form the Labor Coalition Clearinghouse (LCC) and endorsed Jimmy Carter for president; the first time in the history of the organization it had ever endorsed a presidential candidate.\textsuperscript{57} The NEA averaged 4,000 members


\textsuperscript{57} Maurice R. Berube, \textit{American Presidents and Education. Contributions to the Study of Education Series},
per Congressional district, and formed the largest single group at the convention providing Carter with 172 votes, his largest group of delegates. The overall LCC influenced the selection of over 400 of the 3,000 delegates who attended the Democratic National Convention in 1976.\(^{58}\)

Carter had support from the NEA in the 1976 presidential election, but once elected it was unclear whether his Administration would consider department status for education. Creating a new department was in opposition to his campaign platform of streamlining the Federal government, but the opposition was more from his advisers, particularly Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) Joseph A. Califano, Jr., who was convinced that there should be as few direct reports to a president as possible. He believed that keeping the Office of Education in a large department like HEW allowed adjustments to be made internally. He also argued that putting education with HEW allowed better control of programs and that any necessary improvements in the delivery of health, education, and welfare could be made by an internal reorganization of HEW. He urged Carter to consider other options such as a review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).\(^{59}\)

Califano’s arguments were sympathetically received by others in the administration, particularly the Director of OMB, T. Bertram Lance, who agreed with Califano that the issue should be examined with no presumption in favor of a separate department. The members of the President's Reorganization Project (PRP) had no commitment to campaign promises and there


were those within the administration who wanted to make the components of HEW into departments within a department, much like the Department of Defense.

However, Carter was a populist politician and the commitment matched his own preferences and experiences in Georgia. The staff followed three basic precepts: “In Georgia we did...”, 'We promised...,” and “Jimmy says...”60 Yet the political ideology commitments to groups that could deliver large blocs of convention delegates and get out the vote prevailed and Vice-President Mondale, supported by the President’s closest adviser Hamilton Jordan, urged the President to follow through on the campaign promise. The president decided in June 1977 that the PRP staff should examine “…whether or not it was feasible to have a separate Department of Education.”61

The OMB report presented options, but no recommendations. The first option was a small department in HEW’s education department and a few education-related programs such as the National Science Foundation (NSF). The second option added the school lunch program, some training programs from the Department of Labor, and some Native American schools from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The third option preserved HEW and combined the senior offices of Assistant Secretary for Education and United States Commissioner of Education.

The president received the OMB report on November 28; it was clear that the president had committed himself to a new department. Members of his staff in the meeting said he was


determined to bring together programs from a number of different agencies. Even though the structure and ultimate mission of the new department had not been established, the President told the Congress in a message on 28 February 1978:

I have instructed the Office of Management and Budget and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to work with Congress on legislation needed to establish a Department of Education which will:
- let us focus on Federal educational policy, at the highest levels of our government;
- permit closer coordination of Federal education programs and other related activities;
- reduce Federal regulations and reporting requirements and cut duplication;
- assist school districts, teachers, and parents to make better use of local resources and ingenuity. 62

White House aides and OMB officials wanted a narrower departmental responsibility, mainly to get the department in place and get the campaign commitment out of the way. In order to establish the department there had to be a clearly defined mission, but the defining elements of that mission would come from other agencies in the bureaucracy who argued that things should be left as they were. The Department of Agriculture (USDA) asserted that the government could best serve producers and consumers by leaving all food-related programs in one department rather than by moving the school lunch scheme. The argument was made by the administration for shifting the scheme because it was educational, not nutritional.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) asserted that Native American schools should be left alone because of self-determination; Native Americans maintained that they had the right to control their own schools rather than being shuffled around simply to justify a bureaucratic management goal of consolidating education programs in one agency.

No agency wanted to allow work to be taken from their programs, which by extension included the associated budget for that work. Special interest groups worked with their bureaucratic allies to apply pressure to the administration as government agencies fought to preserve the status quo.\textsuperscript{63}

The White House decided to support Senator Abraham Ribicoff’s (D-Conn.) proposal due to fear the special interest groups and government agencies would take their efforts to preserve the status quo to Congress. The President preferred a broader department to control more agencies directly, but their immediate concern was pacification of the NEA and its allies.\textsuperscript{64}

Just before James T. McIntyre, Jr., Carter’s head of the OMB, was to testify to the Ribicoff committee, the president insisted that the new department be given more responsibilities than his advisers suggested. McIntyre was instructed to add more non-education programs to the list that the new DoE would control. The list that McIntyre presented to the committee was for 167 programs taken from 7 departments and agencies.

Neither Ribicoff nor the President’s list included all of the education programs of the federal government. Only about 30 programs from outside of the existing education department made the list leaving approximately 200 of them untouched. When Califano complained that only 1 of 55 student aid programs outside HEW had been included, the president’s staff argued that the other 54 were serving non-educational goals.

The bill’s supporters argued that the new DoE would improve management coordination by bringing together disparate programs. Education bore a disproportionate share of HEW


budget cuts because many federal education programs involved discretionary expenditure rather than expenditure to which recipients had a continuing entitlement. The critics argued that placing education with HEW was illogical since they had little operational connection. They further argued that Education in HEW also suffered from third- and fourth-level bureaucrats who had little interaction with the HEW secretary or the president.

As the legislative battle unfolded, first in the Senate, then in the House, the biggest fight was over Head Start, the social program for disadvantaged children, which had been an HEW program. President Carter had insisted that Head Start be included in the new department, apparently against the arguments of most of his advisers.\(^6^5\) He said the idea of community involvement would be good for the new department, but it was this involvement that groups served by Head Start opposed in the transfer. Its real purpose was not education, but child development. The transfer of Head Start was deleted from the bill.

There were other programs deleted during debate on the Senate floor. Senator Charles Percy (R-Ill.) gathered enough support to have the school lunch program deleted by voice vote in the full Senate. A motion by Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) and supported by Native American groups to delete the BIA Native American schools was agreed to on a floor vote. With the objectionable items stripped away, the bill was passed by the Senate.

The vote in the House committee was closer because of the distrust over the idea of the department itself. The distrust was increasing inside and outside the Congress by groups such as the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), which feared that the separate department would be

\(^{65}\) See the exchange between Senator Percy and OMB witnesses in Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, Department of Education Act of 1977: Hearings before the Committee on Governmental Affairs, pt. 2, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 20-21 March, 14, 18, 27 April, and 8, 16-17 May 1978, 671-74. https://babel.hathitrust.org/shcgi/pt?id=uc1.b5142226;view=1up;seq=1019 (accessed November 2, 2016).
unduly influenced by the much larger NEA. Other opponents denied that a new, more visible department could improve the quality of education unless it was accompanied by improved policies. Congressman Benjamin S. Rosenthal (D-N.Y.) noted that “‘visibility’ and ‘status’ are undefined catch phrases which hardly justify creation of a cabinet level department of education,” which he believed should be implemented “...only where there is a major national policy to carry out.”

There was also the fear of a national education policy fed by the suspicion that the DoE was nothing more than a back-door approach to make sure that the education policies that specific politicians favored would become the rule for the entire country. The fear of federal control was apparent in the congressional discussions. Even though the administration promised a decentralized education paradigm, the Senate committee had attached a series of amendments to the Ribicoff bill that took away rights of state and local governments and gave them to Washington. The House committee reported that “…one of the most persistent fears expressed [during the hearings] was that creation of such a department would lead to Federal control of education...” The House bill included the prohibition of federal direction, supervision, control, or even any attempt to influence local education programs. Even with this attachment many congressional members were still opposed to the bill. According to Rep. Peter H. Kostmayer (D-PA), “…the question that Congress must now decide . . . is simply how much influence should


67 Ibid., 13.
the Federal Government have on education in this country?”  

The opponents of the proposed DoE bill in the House threatened to hold up other bills if the DoE bill were to be brought to the floor. The Democratic leaders in the House did not force a floor fight, allowing the bill to lapse.  

The NEA and their Political Action Committees (NEA-PACs) were in full campaign mode as they raised over $3 million for candidates who agreed to support the bill when it was reintroduced. Incumbents who had favored the bill received five times as much financial support from the NEA than those who had opposed it.  

The primary task remaining was to put to rest the fears of federal control. The federal control issue had become such a liability the Senate committee said the new department, “...should not directly...improve American education. It is not intended to do so, because that is really the province and duty of the States and localities.” Once all the attachments were removed, the bill passed through the Senate. On 11 July, 1979 the House passed their version of the education department bill. Investigations suggested that the majority of legislators were ambivalent in their feelings regarding a separate department. Some legislators believed in the  

68 Ibid., 43.  


72 Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs 95th Cong., 1st session, Department of Education Act of 1977: Hearings before the Committee on Governmental Affairs, pt., 1, October 1977, 221. https://babel.hathitrust.org/shcgp/pt?id=uc1.b5142226;view=1up;seq=1019 (accessed November 2, 2016).
department, but others were in agreement with Congressman John Conyers (D-Mich.):

Although I can't say with any conviction that the creation of a Department of Education will be harmful in any important ways to education at state and local levels, I can't say with any assurance that it will have any tangible benefits, in the short- or long-run.73

This attitude reflected a characteristic of the proposed government reorganization: the new department could be supported because the changes were small and unlikely to affect other element of the government. The Department of Education officially came into existence on October 17, 1979.

The story of the creation of the DoE was one of political payback, special interest influence and lobbying, and the necessity to win otherwise the administration would look weak facing reelection. It would later expand its reach and power to include attempts at controlling the curriculum in the states.

§5. Control the Curriculum and You Control the Message

Shirley Hufstedler, a lawyer and later a Judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, was selected by President Carter to be the first Secretary of Education.74 It is unclear why Carter felt it prudent to select a lawyer, a profession far removed from education, but placing lawyers in positions for which they have no prior training or experience has become the norm in federal government. When asked what qualified her to be Secretary she said:

A lifelong interest in education, a very active concern throughout my life in working with educators and educational institutions, and, I hope, the degree of objectivity and

73 House Committee on Government Operations 95th Cong., 2d session, “Establishing a Department of Education: Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations on H.R. 13343 to Establish a Department of Education and for Other Purposes,” 17, 21, 31 July and 1-2 August 1978, 431, 615.

neutrality which characterizes an earlier dedication to the bench, both federal and state.\textsuperscript{75}

Hufstedler had three goals that focused on streamlining and strengthening the political workings of the Federal-state relationship. She pledged to reduce regulatory red tape for all Federal programs,\textsuperscript{76} and said that Federal-state-local cooperation should focus on individual students: “...one of the things that has been wrong is a lack of real commitment by state and local governments and in some respect the federal government to making quality education available to children.”\textsuperscript{77} When asked about the special interest influence of the NEA in creating the DoE, she said, “...students and parents and school administrators would immediately become aware of classroom electioneering and put a stop to it.”\textsuperscript{78} In an attempt to calm a wary congress, she also stressed that the Department would not attempt to interfere with local control by imposing restrictive regulations that prevented any interfering with curriculum: “Within the framework of the law and the Constitution, the local communities and states should determine what is to be taught.”\textsuperscript{79} Instead the DoE would work to identify successful models in the states that could be

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\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 445.


\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
shared with the rest of the nation.\textsuperscript{80}

Hufstedler envisioned a DoE that she considered to be proactive; “The education institutions of the U.S. must change in response to the changing needs of the country,”\textsuperscript{81} which was not a disagreeable notion, but the context of her comment is suggestive of the DoE determining the change, which was unlikely to happen from a centralized position in Washington. Given the diversity of cultures in America, her comment only served to promote suspicion of the department.

With the establishment of the U.S. Department of Education (DoE) in 1979 the Federal government had established a foothold yielding influence unprecedented in American history, an effort that the federal government had not been able to accomplish with the national university concept.\textsuperscript{82}

After taking office in 1981 the Reagan administration responded quickly to the developments of the previous administration by calling for vague federal goals such as “excellence” and stressing that federal aid should only be given to schools that demonstrated this nebulous trait.\textsuperscript{83} Talking to students at California’s Claremont Men’s College he said, “...it is naïve to think the DoE is anything but a first step toward federalizing education in this land...”


\textsuperscript{83} Ibid. 48.
and introduced “...a system of Federal licensing of all educational institutions in this land.”

In a harbinger of the oxymoronic policies that would develop in the field of federal education law, the report called for a “...nationwide [but not federal] system of state and local standardized tests.” This was the next iteration of federal education policy imposing punitive measures on states with vague instructions and a lack of codified objectives.

In 2001, the passage of No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) promised excellence in education by threatening schools perceived as underachieving with regard to ambiguous DoE definitions.

NCLB retained the Title I funding provision component which provided funding under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), but it created a multitude of new requirements to gain the funding. NCLB required states to administer standardized tests that assessed students on “...challenging academic content and achievement standards...” if they

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86 Ibid.


90 Ibid., 25.
wanted funding. NCLB further required states to adopt a metric of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) that would compare the progress of schools.\textsuperscript{91} This metric would be established and monitored by the DoE. States were required to institute penalties for schools that did not meet targets and to ensure that all students in all schools would be proficient in the content standards by 2014.\textsuperscript{92} If Title I schools did not meet their AYP targets, they faced a series of federally mandated penalties that could include shutting down schools or a state takeover of a district.\textsuperscript{93}

What is glaringly missing is that NCLB did not define what constituted challenging academic content, nor did it describe an annual test or even define what AYP meant.\textsuperscript{94} The result was that NCLB did not tell states what to do, just what would happen and how they would be penalized if they did not comply. The ambiguity or omission left the DoE an open door, but the trail of accountability was unclear with the National Council on Measurement in Education, a shadow nonprofit incorporated in the District of Columbia with the NEA, operating as a vestigial component of the DoE. What authority it functions under is unclear in its mission statement\textsuperscript{95} or bylaws.\textsuperscript{96} However, there is a National Association of Educational Progress (NAEP), a congressionally mandated program administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), both of which are located within the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 6-7.

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 8.

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 2 (describing new policies with no specificity on standards or practices).


Education Sciences (IES).\textsuperscript{97} When the NAEP was actually formed is unclear. Their web site says the NAEP was sponsored by the DoE in 1969, but there was no DoE until 1979.\textsuperscript{98} Their web site further states that Congress created a 26-member Governing Board in 1988, which is 19 years after they were allegedly doing work sponsored by the DoE, and 9 years after the DoE was actually created. The NAEP assessment operations are carried out by unspecified contractors whose identity was denied through a FOIA request under a proprietary rights provision protecting the government bidding process.\textsuperscript{99}

NCLB was an unpopular law with coalitions on both sides of the political aisle opposed for different reasons.\textsuperscript{100} Conservatives viewed it as too intrusive into the rights of states\textsuperscript{101} while teachers' unions observed that NCLB tied teacher salaries as well as continued employment to test scores.\textsuperscript{102} Many educators believed the undefined goal of a high level of performance was an unattainable goal from the beginning.\textsuperscript{103} NCLB was due for reauthorization in 2007,\textsuperscript{104} but there

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\textsuperscript{97} NAEP, NCES, USDoeIS, \textit{An Overview of NAEP} (Washington, D.C.: Hager Sharp, Inc., 2015) \\


\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 108.

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 107.

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was an intense partisan divide on reauthorization, with both parties moving the law further away from the original goals of ESEA. NCLB never accomplished its stated goals of 100% proficiency in reading and math tests, but it did increase the cost to the states for standardized testing from $423 million to $1.1 billion in 2012.\textsuperscript{105}

President Obama signed into law the Race to the Top (RTTP) program in February, 2009, which was effectively a contest to see who could get the most of the $4.35 billion in taxpayer dollars; as in the programs of his predecessors it was all tied to testing.\textsuperscript{106}

In March, 2010, President Obama attempted to modify NCLB by offering more money to states that developed improved assessments aligned with state standards with a focus on pupil attendance, graduation rates and ‘learning climate’ as well as improvement in test scores.\textsuperscript{107} It is no small irony that all the requirements imposed on state and local school districts to qualify for federal money by President Obama was to be enforced by his Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, who threatened to sue the DoE while head of Chicago Public Schools in 2004 because he was prohibited from using any federal taxpayer money for tutoring students in what was


\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.
classified by NCLB as ‘underperforming schools.’\textsuperscript{108}

President Obama’s \textit{Blueprint for Reform} of 2010 suggested amending NCLB further by adding additional objectives, including improving teacher effectiveness, providing information about schools to families, and implementing college and career-ready standards and assessments.\textsuperscript{109}

In February 2015, the House of Representatives was poised to vote on a reauthorization bill\textsuperscript{110} for NCLB. It appeared to have support to pass the house, but it was halted at the last minute by the Republicans.\textsuperscript{111} A primary reason for the bill being stopped came from education blogger Christel Swasey, a former high school English teacher from Utah, whose factually incorrect post on March 5, 2016 claimed that the bill would require states to adopt the Common Core Standards “...ended up in the inboxes, Facebook pages, and twitter feeds of parents, teachers, and education activists...” who contacted their representative demanding the bill be halted.\textsuperscript{112} After the confusion was sorted and more negotiation by both parties, President Obama

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Ibid.
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signed the Every Student Succeeds Act in December 2015. 113

After almost a century of standardized testing and more than three decades of accountability and validation, the same alleged problems are still cited for the perceived failure of today’s students at every level of education: poverty and inequity, racism, sexism, and homophobia, among others.

What the recent reform attempts have failed to address, like all those before them, was the ambiguity and outright absence of the requirements of standard curriculum. There was no fixed test score, no defined graduation rate, no understanding of what ‘pupil attendance’ really means, or what an acceptable ‘learning climate’ looks like. There are two key elements that metaphorically slam the door shut on the subject of testing and curriculum for the federal government.

First, in order to have a standardized test there must be a standardized curriculum against which to test. While the Obama Department of Education tried numerous approaches to a common core curriculum even though any attempt by the federal government was specifically prohibited by law, it was rejected by the states.

No provision of any applicable program shall be construed to authorize any department, agency, officer, or employee of the United States to exercise any direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum, program of instruction, administration, or personnel of any educational institution, school, or school system, or over the selection of library resources, textbooks, or other printed or published instructional materials by any educational institution or school system, or to require the assignment or transportation of students or teachers in order to overcome racial imbalance.114


Second, and directly linked to the first, is that there can be no standardized test without a standard from which to test; in this case, a standardized curriculum. Some states did buy in initially, but after they received the funding from Washington they opted out and kept the money. The end result was more taxpayer money spent on illegal or ineffective initiatives providing little if any direction, no accountability, and no positive outcome that can be discerned; business as usual in Washington, DC.

Chapter Four - Curriculum

Concepts, like individuals, have their histories, and are just as incapable of withstanding the ravages of time as are individuals

*Søren Kierkegaard – The Concept of Irony*

§1. Problems of American Liberal Education

This chapter will address the evolution of Postmodernism and value of Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies in the era of Postmodernity. As America’s population continues to increase from births as well as immigration, both the public and private education systems are facing challenges that, while not new, have become more complex than any previously faced.

Liberal Education is not only courses taught in a Liberal Arts or Humanities curriculum, but the acquisition and cultivation of intellectual skills of perception, analysis, communications, and critical thinking through an interdisciplinary curriculum rooted in human values and ethics necessary to function and live a productive life in a constantly changing chaotic world.¹

Curriculum is the primary tool to communicate knowledge in schools, but it has increasingly come under both direct and indirect influence of government at both state and federal level, as well as of corporations and what is commonly referred to as ‘nonprofit’ partisan testing organizations who receive hundreds of millions of dollars of tax exempt funding and benefits.

The communication of knowledge has not always been such a tangled morass, though it has always been a dynamic, even chaotic and evolving entity over many centuries. As discussed in Chapter Three, the American republic was not initially focused on education. It was left to the states and the parents and teachers in those states to determine how its children were to be

educated. That attitude was short lived as evidenced by the modern day entanglement with politics resulting from the recognition of education as a tool of partisan political indoctrination of students.

With the advances in technology and the increase of new knowledge came the evolution of pedagogy over the centuries, but nothing so dramatic as the corporatization of universities and experimental pedagogical change of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Universities have not only been corporatized, but Neoliberal attempts at privatization have turned education into a marketplace. The increasing cost of education, the advertised salary potential for graduates of STEM disciplines, and the issue of where to go for education are creating a din of incoherent rhetoric for students to try to understand.

The current generations that are coming of age and making decisions on their future – Millennials (age 22-37) and post-Millennials (<21) - are questioning the relevance and value of an education in disciplines that, from their perspective, have questionable value. There are more than 70 million Millennials and 44 million post-Millennials looking for answers regarding the path they should take to prepare for their future.

A goal of education is to bring out the natural instincts and attributes of human nature and allow it to flourish as part of a free and democratic society. John Dewey pointed out that for people to become involved, engaged, and create a truly functioning democracy that it would require an industrial democracy. That would mean democratizing commerce and eliminating the


3 See Note #7, page 6.

4 Ibid.
capitalist hierarchical structure. The idea is very main street America, but runs counter to the prevailing ideology of Neoliberalism. Until and unless Neoliberalism is replaced, politics will remain the shadow that is cast over the educational system, and the system will be one of indoctrination and control.

There are increasingly so many impediments to the creation of knowledge and teaching of that knowledge such as university corporatization, paradigm change from theoretical/applied pedagogy to technical/craft training, and the increasing cost of education. With the current generation’s reaction to Modernity’s status quo, that leaves them with seemingly impossible problems to solve. Education reform or possibly education revolution is needed.

As universities and students seek value, relevance, and meaning in education, university administrators search for the ‘next big thing’ to fill seats in classrooms as well as their coffers. Students are demanding evidence of the benefits and justification of the exorbitant cost of long-term university education. Majors in the Liberal Arts and Humanities have become targets of elected officials declaring the Liberal Arts and Humanities are poor study choices and a wasteful investment of public money.

Programs within disciplinary departments are questioned by students looking for a job after graduation. Students face the dilemma of choosing a career path requiring skills training to apply for work, or undertaking a course of study that will build on the past and serve them and humanity in the future. Too often administrators craft and market boutique programs with cafeteria curricula in hopes of attracting students. Another increasingly popular phrase is ‘professional studies,’ a branding tactic to attract students who might otherwise attend a two-year community college to achieve similar outcomes, tempting them with the ‘university brand’ or diploma at a pronounced increase in cost over the community college. These and other tactics to
conform to the corporate business model obscure the relevance and value of Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies to the success and future of the university, as well as to society in general.

Interdisciplinarity is a term used generically to describe a variety of pedagogical methods to cross disciplinary borders, and Liberal Studies that not only crosses borders, but synthesizes disciplinary content into cogent syllabi. There are Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) programs and Liberal Studies (LS) programs that already offer time-tested alternatives to majors in a specific discipline. These alternatives have existed, albeit with different names, and evolved with the creation, discovery, and evolution of new knowledge. An example is the American Studies program at Georgetown University whose web site advertises; “These core courses foster a common language and set of methodological approaches to interdisciplinary work.” Inter- and cross disciplinary studies programs are successful as evidenced by a more recent program addition at Georgetown, Designing the Future(s), initiated in 2017 that very closely resembles the Liberal Studies Program at Georgetown which began in 1974. Liberal education and interdisciplinary studies is not a new concept, but one that is undergoing change as students and university faculty adjust to societal change. It should not be in conflict with disciplinary studies, but an enhancement as a new pedagogy paradigm. However, what can only be described as academic redundancy such as the Interdisciplinary Studies Program at Georgetown which closely parallels the Liberal Studies Program at Georgetown, it is clear there is much value such as what the Liberal Studies Program provides. What is not clear is the motive for the redundancy


in a time of such financial restraint.

§2. Disciplines

The birth of the university model brought structure, albeit an evolving and changing structure, not only to the administrative model of education, but to pedagogy as well. Unlike the terminology used by modern historians, the term discipline was not used to describe the ‘department’ to which a faculty belonged to or ‘specialties’ taught by faculty. The structure was still generalist in a broad body of knowledge though they did have more finite areas of specialization which were precursors to disciplines as known today. While the trivium and quadrivium of the Liberal Arts and the new and evolving subject matters of the Humanities were foundational, the teaching faculty was identified with the ‘four faculty’ academic areas, which were also subject to change: theology, arts (trivium and quadrivium), medicine, and law. A professor or ‘faculty member’ was a generalist in one of the academic areas.7

There was continuing change or evolution occurring in universities, and there was some fundamental change in the basic structure of universities between 1500 and 1800, though terminology and academic rituals changed little over the centuries.8 What did change in the social, cultural, and political environment was a change in the structure or organization of universities, resulting in two university types.

First was the structural university model of the University of Paris which was made up of masters and students, with the masters being dominant, functioning as representatives of the


public authorities that ultimately controlled universities. Students had no control regarding pedagogy or curriculum, nor any other means to organize themselves. Teaching was based on the system of centralized teaching, grouping professors by disciplines and awarding degrees that described their content. The purpose in the structure was to train specialists.\textsuperscript{9} This was a departure from early modern education where the teachers were generalists.

The second model was the Bolognese model, in which the students formed the university and recruited the teachers. This Bologna-style was the standard used by early universities for centuries, but they were being replaced by the Parisian model as the state became stronger and more involved in education.

The structural university model of the University of Paris became the \textit{de facto} standard that evolved from the early modern period, but there were at least two other iterations.\textsuperscript{10} There was a tutorial model based on the system at the University of Oxford where teaching and organization was decentralized into educational communities or colleges, and knowledge was more generalist where instructors were generalists rather than narrowly focused specialists.\textsuperscript{11} There was also a combination of these models, the college-university, which used a centralized organization method, but had a centralized organization method while implementing a collegiate structure similar to Oxford that allowed for more control over students.\textsuperscript{12}

While the Liberal Arts and Humanities are a matter of historicity, how they evolved and have been employed over the centuries varied by university and administration. As new

\begin{itemize}
  \item[10] Ibid.
  \item[11] Ibid.
  \item[12] Ibid.
\end{itemize}
knowledge was created, new subjects of interest and study came into being with the ongoing evolution continuing until present day. What has retained some consistency in university structure is that of faculties of teaching, or professors, who are associated with a specific faculty. Faculty thus has a duel applied meaning, referring to a broad body of knowledge as well as to the professors who are experts in specific bodies of knowledge.

Early Modern (1500 – 1800) universities taught a curriculum established in the Middle Ages, but as the number of humanist professors increased they began to transform the curriculum to human studies, or studies students were interested in rather than required to take within the confines of a specialty. The introduction of the discovery and interpretation of ancient texts and languages into the university as well as society by early humanist scholars generally led to a more creative university environment. Creativity advanced not just the understanding of ancient texts, but adapted the new interpretation to invigorate further experimentation and research.\(^{13}\)

However, as humanism was the impetus for the scientific revolution and while scientific research initially began in the university, traditionalism in the universities inhibited scientific research faculty from attempting to question previous knowledge of nature, causing a distinct tension between universities and scientists.\(^{14}\)

In the 1970s universities were in the early stages of corporatization, or becoming ‘multiversities’ as Clark Kerr had described in 1963 in the Godkin Lectures at Harvard University, where he spoke of the corporatization and fractionalization of the modern


‘multiversity.’ He wrote, “The university started out as a single community ... of masters and students .... Today the large American university is, rather a whole series of communities.”

Kerr coined the term “multiversities” as a series of erosions in traditional practices where the undergraduate curriculum became more like a cafeteria menu. Students became “restless” as their search for curricula meeting their needs ended in “endless subdivisions” of disciplines. Faculty governance had crumbled, with faculty senates becoming debating societies and increasingly “...the avocation of active minorities.” To many faculty members, their university was no longer even a focus of concern. As Kerr observed they had become “...less members of the particular university and more colleagues within their national discipline groups...”

Kerr asserted that the importance of new knowledge and its effects were:

...reshaping the very nature and quality of the university. Old concepts of faculty-student relations, of research, of faculty-administration roles are being changed at a rate without parallel... We are in new times.

Kerr concluded his presentation with, “The process cannot be stopped. The results cannot be foreseen. It remains to adapt.”

The adaptation Kerr spoke of has not been fully implemented. The Postmodern approach


16 Ibid., 1.

17 Ibid., 72.

18 Ibid., 78.

19 Ibid., 32-33.

20 Ibid., 33.

21 Ibid. xii.

22 Ibid., 93.
of Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies was, and continues to be, a reaction to and rejection of the futile attempt at the adaptation to corporatization Kerr referred to.

There is debate regarding how disciplines differ from inter/trans/multi/cross disciplinary studies or whether there is a difference, and if there is a difference, whether it matters. Is it even possible not to be interdisciplinary in some way, or are there any criteria distinguishing interdisciplinary research from disciplinary research?

The argument has been so intense with so little agreement forthcoming that disciplinarians making arguments against the intrusion into their inviolate turf have inversely made the same incursions into other disciplines, arguing that their ideas can be traced back numerous centuries giving them de facto squatters rights over the knowledge domain in question even though their scholarship is relatively recent. In short, circular logic bordering on the foolish has prevailed. That is not to say that the scholars embroiled in the debate are foolish, but the imbroglio they find themselves involved in has no definition presented that satisfies all. There is little public debate that the fundamental argument is founded in self-serving interests, or put more succinctly; turf protection and control. There are generations of students trained since the 1960s up to the current period who have increasingly focused on very narrow subject matter, leaving them vulnerable and concerned by a social climate that is questioning the value of disciplinary education.

An example of the chaos resulting when government attempts to fix or restructure educational pedagogy is the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) taxonomic coding scheme developed in 1980 by the U.S. Department of Education’s (DoE) National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Using their Integrated Postsecondary Education System (IPEDS), the scheme was originally intended to be a report of “....generic categories into which program
completions data can be placed.”

It was not intended to reflect the exact titles of curricula of a specific major or field of studies used by individual institutions. The system was to “...reflect current practice, and are not a prescriptive list of officially recognized or permitted programs.”

However, the IPEDS method was a sampling of “catalog scans” of web sites of “…10 institutions that produced the greatest number of completions for each two-digit series in the CIP,” “…10 community college websites and over 25 liberal arts college websites...,” and “....a complete review of the programs at all military institutions was conducted, and special attention was given to developing comprehensive information on programs related to military science, military technologies, and homeland security.” The only thing of value coming from the IPEDS was the recognition that the DoE simply cast a very wide net to capture as much data as possible with little if any understanding of how to parse or interpret the data. The DoE has no committed count of the number of programs, curricula, or disciplines. Current research estimates place the number of academic curricula in universities in the range of more than “…8,530 definable fields of knowledge,” to 3,722 disciplines identified in the Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS) Series.

How the information collected or disseminated is integrated into the American education system is beyond the scope of this thesis, and possibly beyond the scope of the DoE to explain.


24 Ibid.


There is a circular methodology to the process whereby the DoE scans websites for programs or curricula or discipline data, and institutions in turn use that data, presumably for deciding what programs or curricula they will offer. The 8,530 definable disciplines identified by Julie Thompson-Klein was done in 1995, and the 3,722 disciplines identified by the HEGIS reflect data collected in 2010. The data is also from two distinct sources, Thompson-Klein and HEGIS, so which number, if either, is incorrect is impossible to know. When one reflects on the quadrivium and trivium of the Liberal Arts and the disciplines defined in the Humanities, the salient question is why there is such an expansion of complexity in curriculum? Granted, the corpus of human knowledge has evolved over millennia, but to segregate knowledge into so many disparate disciplines requires an answer to the simple question, “Why?”

The disciplinarian views academic work from between a narrow separation of boundaries that extend deeply within the discipline, structurally analogous to the function of procedural memory - which aids the performance of specific types of tasks without conscious awareness of previous experiences.

Interdisciplinary research utilizes the benefits of discipline-based research without its limitations, moving beyond the individual disciplines to cover aspects of a more complex problem. Interdisciplinarians rely on a process that may also be analogous to memory, such as cognitive or semantic memory, which is very broad but not always very deep, though that varies from person to person as does the cognitive capacity of the brain. The comparable memory model of skill acquisition involves breaking down the desired skill, or in this case disciplinary knowledge, into discriminated parts and understanding how all these parts may come together as
a whole for the correct performance of the task. The brain organizes these parts into schemas that direct and control the acquisition process.

Memory involving the human brain uses metacognition to inform it of how to think about thinking. The interdisciplinarian would use a similar metacognitive process to inform him/her regarding how to think about thinking regarding the knowledge that has been discriminated by schemas in order to be employed in a given project. Interdisciplinarians, by breadth or depth of knowledge, must be cautious when invoking the knowledge of multiple disciplines. There is the risk of going too deep within a boundary to subject matter that may be unresolved or invalidated. In an ‘interdisciplinary’ project, the interdisciplinarian would employ the services and skills of disciplinarians from the relevant disciplines for support in his/her ‘deep dive’ knowledge usage.

Disciplinary boundaries may deter disciplinarians from seeing the connections of various phenomena with other disciplines. There is the argument put forward by William Newell that complex border crossing phenomena are irreducible and cannot be understood adequately by using reductionist disciplinary approaches. The same reductionism employed by most disciplinarians results in increasingly narrow and deep specialization, making research less relevant outside of a given department and fostering an insularity rooted in ideological thinking or possibly ignorance of the benefits of crossing boundaries.

The main problem with the idea of ‘interdisciplinarity’ is that many people who use the term do not make clear what they understand a discipline to be or when a disciplinary boundary


is crossed or with what kind of consequence. Simply declaring a carved out parcel of facts a
‘discipline’ is not a solution because knowledge, depending on its complexity, is rarely unique to
the point where it can be claimed by one person or group of like-minded individuals.
Academic disciplines were created for a reason. They are and will remain relevant for the
foreseeable future, but they must be part of any reform. It is not by accident that while
disciplines were subdividing into numerous sub- and sub-sub disciplines during the 1970s that
the feared academic specter of Postmodernism took on new life and with it came Liberal Studies
and Interdisciplinary Studies. Postmodernism may well account for the creation of redundant
programs at Georgetown University as described §1. Problems of American Liberal Education
on page 184.

§3. The Death or Rebirth of the Grand Narrative?

Postmodernism and its effect on education has been accompanied by a range of
perspectives about what Postmodernism is and what it entails for educational theory and practice.
What the Modern and Postmodern concepts mean and their total significance to society requires
elucidation beyond the scope of this thesis. However, in the context of Liberal Education and
specifically Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies as agents of reform in the debate
regarding education pedagogy, Postmodernism is increasingly influential to pedagogy.

Postmodernism defies a neat, concise definition. It is often described for what it does;
the reaction to and rejection of Modernism, but that assumes a clear and concise definition of
Modernism. Literary theorist and professor of English Literature Terry Eagleton described
political Modernism:

In bracketing off the real social world, establishing a critical, negating distance between
itself and the ruling social order, modernism must simultaneously bracket off the political
forces which seek to transform that order. ... by removing itself from society into its own
impermeable space, the modernist work paradoxically reproduces—indeed intensifies—
the very illusion of aesthetic autonomy which marks the bourgeois humanist order it also protests against. Modernist works are ... discrete and bounded entities for all the free play within them, which is just what the bourgeois art institution understands.30

Eagleton argued that modernists are aware of their vested interest in commodification of knowledge in general and academia specifically that continues to protect a domain that allows them to continue unabated, resisting the social forces that would force a more open source type of pedagogy. As politics, both internal and external to the university, becomes increasingly controlled by neoliberal ideology whose focus is on production and consumption for personal gain which results in the desires of a few, the 1%, prevailing over the many without agreement of the whole will only increase. Postmodernism may also be seen as a perspective, a way to understand the conditions we live in31 or as a new historical era, but the concepts and ideas of Postmodernism still assert a troubling position for Modernism.32

There is, or was, a belief that universals could be discovered with reason and rationality through science as the best way to realize the truth. Politicians running for office promised that through democracy and science, and by extension the era of Modernity, there would or should be health care for all, elimination of hunger, crime, and poverty and create higher standards of living. The list continues with prosperity, economic stability, peace, and a progress defined by increasing control over nature and society.

Richard Bernstein observed that, the words ‘reason’ and ‘rationality’ now “...evoke images of domination, oppression, repression, patriarchy, sterility, violence, totality,


totalitarianism, and even terror.” With all the negative perspectives, Fascism, Nazism, Neoliberalism, and Communism, as well as capitalist democracy associated with Modernism, it should not be surprising Postmodernism caught on.

From all the political promises, there were supposed to be Middle class values that were good for society and for the individual. Parents wanted middle-class status with the attendant upward mobility and the way they believed this could be achieved was through education.

Higher education represented the idea that knowledge and skills acquired through education offered a path to success and that an arbitrary set of values based on rules of conduct that were constantly changing was good. In a multicultural, multiethnic, dynamic population that is becoming increasingly diverse globally, this description of the good life is not only unsustainable, but dependent on who is defining the good life. Modernism has proven to be a theory whose promises are too costly to groups within the population who may not enjoy any of the benefits.

Max Weber was one of the earliest social theorists to describe the modern economic order as one that had confined people in an ‘iron cage’ of work incentives. He wrote, “This order is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of machine production which today determine the lives of all the individuals who are born into this mechanism . . . with irresistible force.” He further described the Modern condition as having lost the sense that tradition would provide for society. The Postmodern perspective is that citizens have been

commodified, consumerized, and defined in terms of their market value, and the increasing value placed on technology and science at the expense of everything else was increasingly being viewed as the cause of societal problems, and by extension the paradigm shift in education to corporatized education. Weber’s reflections from 1905 was just the beginning of what was to become Postmodernism, and would later in the twentieth-century be expanded by Jean Baudrillard.

Michel Foucault’s view was much darker, suggesting an insidious effort to control the population as he argued that knowledge, and particularly how it is communicated, is created by humans to attain power and subjugate those without it.

We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth. This is the case in every society, but I believe that in ours . . . we are forced to produce the truth of power that our society demands, of which it has need, in order to function.”

He believed that those in political power created the fallacious idea of the individual and selectively communicated knowledge to reinforce the idea of the individual.

Foucault expanded his theory to include the power/ knowledge relationships in all institutions. He wrote of the prisons, asylums, as well as universities, but he made little distinction among them, viewing them all as inextricably bound together by knowledge and power. There could be no knowledge without power, and no power without knowledge. Following Foucault’s theory of the power/ knowledge relationship, there could never be any

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neutral, objective knowledge. Whatever knowledge came from research in the disciplines would always be linked to the quest for power. The modernist perspective is that each discipline is a separate and independent intellectual enterprise existing outside of politics. Foucault and other Postmodernists\textsuperscript{38} viewed disciplines as involved with politics both inside and outside the university, including economics, culture, and other external influences. From Foucault’s perspective – that there is no neutral or objective knowledge - there could be no interest in a discipline that had no legitimate rules for distinguishing meritorious from mediocre work. The interest was in the creation of power relations, and the power/knowledge relationship was embedded in debate where groups and individuals fight to control whatever truth or meaning is allowed.

Foucault’s interest was not in building a better society, but enabling small communities at the margins formed through identity politics. Modernist politicians typically market to the public how their ideology would benefit the larger community. They used categories such as race, class, gender, or even religion to separate citizens into special interest groups that they could make promises too. By keeping the various groups separate, a politician once elected was hard to hold accountable by any minority group for their failed promises. Foucault viewed such segregation as a way to justify the knowledge/power struggle, but in reality the plan never expanded to include those in the margins, only the majority. While the majority has remained primarily White and Anglo-Saxon, there has been a significant change over time. There are still the categorizations by race, class, gender, and religion, but a new category has expanded beyond class to include an additional class of wealth. The modern era has created a new class; the super-rich or one percenters who control ninety percent of all wealth. It is a minority of one percenters

\textsuperscript{38} Note: Foucault never considered himself a Postmodernist, rather an antimodernist.
in control, and the wealth is so large that they can control or at least influence institutions through grants and corporate funding. This is a direct effect of Neoliberalism on education. The corporatization of the university has resulted in class separation not only in society in general, but also within the university, with administrations enjoying the financial excesses while faculty and students are at the marginalized lower end of the economic scale.

In Foucault’s knowledge/power nexus where colleges and universities in a modernist era were viewed as arbiters of freedom, liberation, and emancipation through knowledge, knowledge and its pedagogical practice have become a mode of surveillance, regulation, and discipline through control.

Jean-François Lyotard, one of the earlier definers of Postmodernism took Foucault’s thesis further to suggest a darker view of the university’s future, suggesting that we may have reached, “... a very postmodern moment that finds the University nearing what may be its end.”39

Lyotard had one phrase in the beginning of his book on Postmodernism that defined and set the tone for the balance of his work on Postmodernism:

“Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives,”40 which rejected the belief in metanarratives or grand narratives that gave legitimacy to Modernism or referenced the term ‘modern’ which designated “...any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse - such as the dialectics of spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth.”41

The word ‘post’ referenced both the redefining of history by recollection and the definite

39 Jean-François Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (Minneapolis, MN: 1984), XXV.
40 Ibid., xxiv.
41 Ibid., xxiii.
exclusion of metaphysics and its derivatives. Lyotard argued that grand narratives no longer have
the ability to compel consensus as they once did. They are increasingly viewed with skepticism
and understood as masterful narratives and narratives of mastery. The importance of questioning
metanarratives in higher education is because metanarratives are the foundation of the modern
university and college life. They not only form the scientific-technological paradigm of higher
education, but also market the idea of higher education’s progress in the creation of knowledge
and solving vexing social problems.

Lyotard’s emphasis on the word “incredulity” was a source of criticism from scholars in
no small part due to his criticism of disciplines as metanarratives.42 He viewed university
departments as being so cloistered that any discourse was discursive and lacking contemporary
criticism.43 Members within university departments were understandably agitated with Lyotard
and others who questioned the internal purity and autonomy within the boundaries and protocols
of disciplines,44 but Lyotard considered disciplines a detriment to the established university
hierarchy and believed it necessary to change the paradigm. He also recognized that there were
those within university departments who viewed critical discourse as “…breeding fruitful
variants…” that would likely prove unacceptable to established department heads. He was also
aware that academic politics would view any criticism as “….transgressive….,” and would not
only marginalize their value, but exile them to a “….displacement and rearticulation of them.”45

The rejection of metanarratives was a radical approach leaving nothing in its place to

42 Nicholas Burbeles, “Postmodern doubt and philosophy of education,” Philosophy of Education 36

43 Victor E. Taylor, ed., Jean François Lyotard: Politics and History of Philosophy (New York, NY:
Routledge, 2006), 275.

44 Ibid.

account for or interpret events or provide structure for people’s beliefs and give meaning to their experiences. His position might have been more readily acceptable had he allowed metanarratives to be considered, allowing opportunity for change, rather than rejected totally. However, allowing them to be examined and modified may have answered Lyotard’s critics, but that would not have been consistent with fundamentalist Postmodern theory. Partly as a result of Lyotard’s narrative, incredulity and uncertainty became increasingly important components of Postmodern thinking. His narrative generated a skepticism toward the value of master narratives and towards the ideology of Modernism.

Once the idea of the metanarrative is understood the concept of Postmodernism, or Postmodernity or whatever term opponents wish to apply in an attempt to modify the idea in defense of Modernism, should be easier to understand. However, the irony is that all the many narratives published, and all the attempts to categorize Postmodernism and put it in a neatly defined place in the ideological history of ideas always fail. The reason they fail are that opponents, and in some instances advocates, of Postmodernism who continue to try to organize it, categorize it, package it, and plan for it, try to articulate its definition in a meaningful way to an uneducated public already weary of the seemingly unending prattle by many Modernists protecting their turf. They pass over the most simplistic description of what Postmodernism is; the reaction to and rejection of Modernism.

There are extraordinary changes taking place as education's form and place in society is undergoing far-reaching, unpredictable changes. We are no longer certain what role higher education will or should play in society: Bill Readings writes, “...the wider social role of the
University is now up for grabs. It is no longer clear what the place of the University is within society, nor what the exact nature of that society is.”

Jean Baudrillard originated the concepts of implosion, hyper reality, and simulacra to identify some of the changes in the Postmodern era. Baudrillard’s version of Postmodernism was extreme even for a Postmodernist, and while he focused largely on consumerism he noted the application to the broad consumption of knowledge. As a result of technological innovations, economic changes, and market globalism, the production and distribution of knowledge in the Postmodern period moved beyond the physical boundaries of the university. Knowledge could be produced, distributed, and consumed in many physical locations through the use of television, the Internet, corporations, think tanks, and government agencies. With knowledge dispersed globally and the demand for knowledge growing, its value continues to increase in the growing knowledge society.

With knowledge readily available to a person with a computer, tablet, smartphone or even smart television, it means that consumers of knowledge were in a stronger position to determine what knowledge was important and necessary. The widespread availability of knowledge became known as socially distributed knowledge. With consumers having greater access to knowledge, the monopoly on the sale of knowledge by universities was at risk.

As technological and economic forces increased dramatically, the government’s interest turned to corporate entities with deep pockets. No longer maintaining a monopoly on their major


48 Ibid.

product of knowledge, the dominant role of the university as the creators and purveyors of knowledge is in crisis.\footnote{Gerard Delanty, \textit{Challenging knowledge: The University in the Knowledge Society}, (Philadelphia, PA: SRHE and Open University Press, 2001), 105.}

Baudrillard used the word implosion to describe the boundary collapse affecting higher education in the postmodern era. Part of the twentieth century modernization process was the development of knowledge specialization, primarily by faculty, and was controlled and contained within the borders of the disciplines. However, there is fragmentation occurring within academia that is most noticeable in the further division of disciplines into more specialized entities resulting in the creation of still more new disciplines. This division of knowledge has been occurring since the mid-nineteenth century, but accelerated in the mid to late twentieth century. Not all of the divisions were made along already-established disciplinary borders. Many evolved by cross-discipline interchange in unrelated fields and new interdisciplinary fields of study.\footnote{Ingetraut Dahlberg, “Domain Interaction: Theory and Practice,” \textit{Advances in Knowledge Organization} 4 (1994): 60.}

A consequence of implosion is that, when a scholar from any field can cross the boundaries of any discipline, there is likely to be disciplinary rivalry beyond that of simply the budget process when competing for funding. This is occurring as disciplines are already crossing boundaries. Competing factions argue that without formal study and training in research methods and an understanding of a discipline’s lexicon, the teaching and research by outsiders lacks the credentialed, professional outcome of professional faculty trained in the discipline. There are significant contributions and interesting innovation and new perspectives that interdisciplinary scholars and researchers can bring to a field of inquiry. This is discussed in §4.
The population of the generations at risk from the corporatization of the universities are popularly referred to as (1) Millennials, born between 1981 and 1996, whose population is estimated at 70 million, representing roughly one-quarter of America’s population, and (2) Americans born from 1997 onward, known simply as post-Millennials, number approximately 44 million. Both generations combined represent approximately 42 per cent of American population. Both generations are being educated in an eclectic mix of pedagogy that continues to be debated and contested between competing factions. The significance is that the Millennials, who range from college age to those already in the market place, are not waiting to see how it is decided that they should be educated, but instead are taking control in being the relevant party in the discussion and decision-making process. They watched the events unfold around a common core curriculum and standardized testing, perhaps two of the grandest grand narratives of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In 2015 Millennials began opting out of the common core in states where the state government did not prohibit the opt-out provision.

Millennials are unique in history; they were born into and live in an environment that is increasingly a reaction to Modernity. As one size does not fit all in multicultural education, there is not a one size fits all description of Millennials; the only common denominator is the arbitrary age range assigned to the group. However, as an age group Millennials witnessed the aftermath


of the shift to Neoliberal politics from the 1980s that continued to evolve from what was loosely advertised as a democracy to a plutocracy/oligarchy that intervened and attempted to control every aspect of their lives.

The evolution of pedagogy and curriculum throughout history has often been contentious and chaotic, but pedagogy nevertheless continued to evolve with the creation of new knowledge to meet the human need. In the late nineteenth-century and into the twentieth-century pedagogy was moving from the traditionalist pedagogy described earlier in this thesis to the progressive approach that attempted to address education as it evolved at an increasingly nonlinear pace, faster than society could evolve with it. Postmodernism is a contentious, much debated subject that is not agreed upon as a reality. More accurately stated, it is a reaction to reality to be considered in education pedagogy and curriculum.

Foucault introduced the concepts of power and knowledge as foundational to the discussion of Postmodernism; Lyotard highlighted metanarrative and performativity as challenges to the disciplines and university survival; and Baudrillard introduced additions to the Postmodern lexicon to explain how the university is imploding. When viewed as a phenomenon or work in progress, the ideas and vocabularies associated with Postmodernism can be a formidable and, for some, a frightening task of identifying, communicating, and understanding important aspects of the status quo.

Since the late 1970s there has been a lack of, and in some instances, censuring of effective critical review of the effects of corporatization and government intrusion of the university. The Postmodern orientation can be useful in sorting out positive and negative aspects of the revolutionary period in which we live. The Postmodern position can help us to be skeptical
of unexamined claims of progress and show us where to search for and expose the consequences of unexamined claims.

The first decade of the millennium, viewed as part of a Postmodern era, demonstrates that Postmodernism not only exists, but a Postmodernism perspective can and should be used to identify and evaluate changes in education.

My treatment of the subject is not intended to be the final word or even a seminal account of Postmodernism and Modernism, but a reflection on a paradox in Postmodern educational thought by focusing on the attributes of Postmodernism relative to education and the unresolvable tension between the two and pedagogy.

My analysis is intended to serve as a collage illustrating the diverse manifestations of Postmodern thought and the inescapable incongruity on education. The incongruity is a segue into the reform possibilities of Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies.

§4. Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies as Agents of Reform

As if Postmodernity were not enough to thoroughly confuse the issue, there are two other entrants into the Liberal Education issue; Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies. Throughout this essay I have used the phrase Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies as an identifier to capture their evolution and development as part of Liberal Education. The science community complicated that, but because there is a large constituency of Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) programs sponsored by more than one hundred universities nationwide the distinction requires clarification.

Chapters Two and Three of this thesis showed the historical evolution of education leading to Liberal Education as we understand it now. Throughout history scholars categorized groupings of knowledge beginning with the humanitas (humanities) expressed by Cicero, De
liberalibus studii (liberal studies), by Seneca and the artem liberalis (liberal arts), by a number of other thinkers of antiquity whose claim to originality is unknown. All of these terms from antiquity have evolved in use and meaning throughout history, and continue to evolve in the twenty first century.

Liberal Education, the umbrella under which Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies are situated, is defined by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) as:

An approach to college learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. This approach emphasizes broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g., science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth achievement in a specific field of interest. It helps students develop a sense of social responsibility; strong intellectual and practical skills that span all major fields of study, such as communication, analytical, and problem-solving skills; and the demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.56

Liberal Studies lacks a professional organization that disciplinary fields such as philosophy or physics have, but the definition of Liberal Studies takes form from liberal education.

Liberal Studies is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. This approach emphasizes broad knowledge in multiple disciplines as well as providing courses that are the synthetization of specialized disciplinary subject matter. It helps students develop a sense of human values, social responsibility, and strong intellectual and practical skills that span all major fields of study as well as interdisciplinary examination of subjects in the humanities, arts, and sciences.57

As Liberal Studies evolved from Seneca the Younger’s earlier reference (pp. 45-46) as simply a type of knowledge to today’s more specific Liberal Studies Programs, the task of inclusion into the discussion has been largely omitted. I earlier referred to Liberal Studies as a close companion to Interdisciplinary Studies, but there is a difference. The primary difference is that


57 L. Creech definition.
Liberal Studies contain courses synthesized from two or more disciplinary fields of study, as well as courses from the catalog of courses offered in the various disciplines within the university.

There is often confusion when discussing Interdisciplinary Studies (the curriculum) and ‘interdisciplinary studies.’ The first is a curriculum to be defined by the student; the latter is a curricular field of study whose content varies among institutions offering programs in Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS). Interdisciplinary studies encompass the growing body of ‘–arities’ listed in Appendix A, where Interdisciplinary Studies (the curriculum) is a curriculum offering catalog courses from different disciplines. However, once that curriculum is established as a general offering, it then takes on the appearance of a discipline.

There are numerous points of discussion within the subject of interdisciplinarity, but a fundamental difficulty to be resolved is that the borders separating fields or categories of knowledge invoked by disciplines are not natural, but constructed and maintained by groups with vested stakes in preserving the boundaries that sustain their claims to autonomous authority of knowledge within their domain or discipline.

As discussed previously (Chapter 4 section §2) the structure of the university and the curriculum was originally created as an organic separation of knowledge. What it has increasingly evolved to today, as suggested by Clark Kerr over fifty years ago, are universities continually denying their origins in a repressive agenda of “endless subdivisions” of disciplines. Knowledge has been stalemated in support of the status quo of disciplines that are distinct and autonomous. Faculty have become “…less members of the particular university and

more colleagues within their national discipline groups...”59

As Jeffrey Sammons observed, German education was originally focused on Bildung, “...the cultural formation of the self so that it might reach the fullness of its potentialities.”60 American university education was derived from the German model, but disciplines are becoming more like technical training schools training students for job-specific employment rather than educating the whole person with the human values taught in the Liberal Arts and Humanities where they may be adaptable to social and economic change. As disciplines became established, the focus turned from the German model originally embraced, to the training of professionals with the structure of the curriculum producing “...nonresponsive spheres of self-contained complacency.”61

Knowledge used in effective interdisciplinarian research is derived from the knowledge created by disciplinarians. Interdisciplinary scholars bring the specialized knowledge of multiple disciplines and expand the possibilities to develop new knowledge and find the causal links in addressing problems that a less expansive inquiry would not identify. Both disciplinary and interdisciplinary structures are complementary in what they bring to the problem to be solved. An interdisciplinarian by definition does have knowledge of more than one discipline. S/he can evaluate the data to be used without having the narrower specialist-level knowledge. If one accepts the fact that there is an external reality outside of an individual discipline, then the synthesis of the knowledge from multiple disciplines becomes a positive attribute to be pursued.

59 Ibid., 33.


Andrew Abbott observed that there is no distinct border between disciplines and scholars practicing interdisciplinary scholarship.\textsuperscript{62} Both involve the scholar addressing incremental issues. If disciplinary knowledge is derived from within a discipline, it relies on research, prior knowledge, procedures, paradigms, and methodologies from within that discipline, raising the question of the objectivity of knowledge derived from internal review only. Knowledge created within a specific discipline can cross discipline boundaries only to the extent that it is first accepted and published within the disciplines community.\textsuperscript{63}

William Newell wrote that the interdisciplinary process is “...a response to the nature of the reality being studied,” as though the precise nature of reality in a specific moment is known.\textsuperscript{64} Newell further adopts an instrumentalists complexity perspective that “...the proper objects of interdisciplinary study are phenomena that can be modeled by complex systems” and suggests that interdisciplinarians should construct complex systems that represent the phenomena or reality to be studied.\textsuperscript{65}

Cognitive/educational Psychologist Jerome Bruner referred to complexity theory as comprised of cultural tools that may extend perceptual and cognitive ability, but in the process reshape what we actually know.\textsuperscript{66}

If we accept the arguable position that humans cannot know reality, then


\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 5.


\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 5.

interdisciplinarity is not a response to a given set of knowledge, but to the condition of that condition. Stanley Bailis asserts that the ‘condition’ of knowledge is understood as:

1. knowledge is almost always sought by means of specialized inquiry;
2. knowledge produced by specialized inquiry is necessarily partially focused on particular facets of the observable world; and
3. our knowledge, being partial, is dangerous when applied to wholes—when we treat wholes as if they were the same as the parts we know.67

Interdisciplinary theories are responsive to the existence and legitimacy of multiple perspectives and their effects, while synthesizing knowledge generated by disciplinary scholars.

Theories are generalized statements regarding relationships among processes. Scholarly discipline attempts to determine whether the theories employed are adequate, but the efforts to evaluate a theory utilize the same theories’ data and methods in the evaluating process that are used to pursue answers. This circularity can only yield results that are limiting and misleading.

Curricula offering Liberal Studies or Interdisciplinary Studies, as well as combinations of both, exist and are growing in number, as are interdisciplinary projects within universities facilitated within different disciplinary departments. They are usually not formally identified as such, but represent themselves as interdisciplinary. Therein lies the fundamental crux of the pedagogy problem. Relative to pedagogy, there is the confusing attempt at the cross pollination of interdisciplinarity where research is mixed with pedagogy as though the two are synonymous. Pedagogy involves the teaching of students using interdisciplinarity methods, and how to use the training to create and acquire knowledge. The research approach to problem solving, particularly within the sciences, is that a theory, described as an explanation of some aspect of nature with a

body of evidence that may or may not support the assertion of the theory, is accepted based on
the preponderance of knowledge even though there is no replicable proof or “fact” through
experimentation. A “fact” resulting from the theory is an observation, measurement, or other
form of evidence that can be replicated.  

The University of Pennsylvania is an example of a Liberal Studies program using an
interdisciplinary methodology. Students in the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program
“...develop their own concentration in the liberal arts from courses across the University.”  
They design their own curriculum of “...nine graduate-level courses that center on a particular theme
that interests you, culminating in an individual capstone project,” using courses from
disciplines across the university. This would not meet the definition of a Liberal Studies
curriculum because it does not have any courses where knowledge from specific disciplines have
been synthesized to create unique interdisciplinary courses. By virtue of the fact that they create
a new curriculum for each student using catalog courses from across the university, they are in
effect creating new disciplines every time a student enrolls and selects courses for their unique
curriculum. It’s not an issue of correct or incorrect organizational structure, but simply
recognition of University of Pennsylvania’s approach to Liberal Education.

Stanford University’s program, Master of Liberal Arts (MLA), is more specific in their
program structure and courses offered. It offers programs or seminars designed specifically for
the MLA program. The program is articulated with regard to its goals: “....the pursuit of the

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68 The National Academies of Science, Engineering, Medicine, Is Evolution a Theory or Fact?

69 University of Pennsylvania, Master of Liberal Arts – Courses and Curriculum,

70 Ibid.
MLA degree is an end in itself; for some, it is a means of furthering or extending a career; for others, it is the beginning of an academic career.” The Stanford program is Liberal Studies in the strictest sense in that they do not allow students to take catalog courses from the individual discipline departments. Their Liberal Studies catalog creates original courses or synthesizes courses from existing studies in the disciplines.

Georgetown University offers the most complete organizational structure within a Liberal Studies Program. Programs offered include a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies, Masters of Arts in Liberal Studies, and Doctor of Liberal Studies, all of which allow catalog courses from across the various departments within the university as well as a catalog of courses synthesized from extant disciplines/departments specifically for the Liberal Studies program.

The Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) program is distinctly different from other institutions in several areas. First, it offers counseling to students to determine their expected educational outcome; second, it offers core concentrations of study that are not clones of disciplines, but with unique courses designed to synthesize multiple disciplines into an interdisciplinary offering; and third, students are allowed to take courses within any of the disciplinary departments throughout the university as part of the curriculum.

In 2010 Georgetown University had the distinction of graduating its first Doctor from the first Doctoral of Liberal Studies (DLS) degree in the world. The DLS is similar to traditional doctoral degree programs, both disciplinary and interdisciplinary, in that it has requirements similar to those of the other twenty plus doctoral degrees recognized by the U.S. Department of


Education. There are required core seminars, electives taken from the Georgetown graduate catalog, a written and oral thesis proposal, and if successful, a full production oral and written thesis/dissertation and defense. Another unique feature of the Georgetown DLS is that it is not a back door to a doctorate in a discipline. The DLS “... immerses you at the intersection of multiple disciplines.”

The Liberal Studies Program at Georgetown also has a catalog of courses designed by synthesizing existing disciplinary courses similar to Stanford, but it also offers interdisciplinary studies such as University of Pennsylvania from the university’s general course catalog.

There is another attribute to the Georgetown DLS program; it is the training of public intellectuals. Dr. Francis Ambrosio describes the DLS:

The goal of the doctoral degree in liberal studies is not primarily research and the production of new knowledge, though it may well be the case that interdisciplinary research has that result as a secondary effect. ... the proper purpose of the kind of interdisciplinary framing of questions and issues together with reflection upon the significance of those issues for the well-being of persons and societies is best characterized as the education of public intellectuals.

With the modern corporate university, and by extension its disciplinary faculty, responding to government and business entities demands and the money they bring, the social and student needs or Bildung may be neglected.

Founded in 1979, the Association for Interdisciplinary Studies (AIS), the international professional association devoted to the study and advancement of interdisciplinarity, focused on integrating “...the insights of knowledge domains to produce a more comprehensive

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understanding of complex problems, issues, or questions.\footnote{The Association for Interdisciplinary Studies, Preamble http://wwwp.oakland.edu/ais/about/mission/ (accessed July 9, 2017).} Drawing from a broad spectrum of international disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholars, AIS members have engaged in research and discussion on aspects of not only interdisciplinarity, but the variants that have emerged as a result of the global discussion. Other organizations emerged subsequently to AIS, mostly in the sciences, referencing interdisciplinarity or transdisciplinarity as a method or process bringing to the discussion competing theories and practices of research and educational pedagogy.

An internal challenge to interdisciplinarity is the fact that the term interdisciplinary which is used interchangeably, and often incorrectly, with a list of other ‘–arities.’ There is a growing list of ‘–arities,’ such as multidisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity, crossdisciplinarity, reductive disciplinarity, deep disciplinarity, unidisciplinarity and so on.\footnote{See Appendix A for a complete listing.} There is a distinction among these, but the catch-all has become ‘interdisciplinarity’ which has a specific meaning that may not apply in all cases.

The Association for Interdisciplinary Studies (AIS) also faces an identity challenge. With so many universities offering undergraduate and graduate degrees in Interdisciplinary Studies, the parameters of the field have become more confusing. Bob Newell, the first president of the Association of Interdisciplinary Studies (AIS),\footnote{Formerly the Association for Integrated Studies; name changed January 1, 2013 https://oakland.edu/ais/about/constitution/ (accessed April 13, 2017).} defined Interdisciplinary Studies in 1996 as:

A process of answering a question, solving a problem, or addressing a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline or profession. ... Interdisciplinary studies draws on disciplinary perspectives and integrates their insights through construction of a more comprehensive perspective.\footnote{William H. Newell and Julie Thompson Klein, “Advancing interdisciplinary studies,” in Handbook of the Undergraduate Curriculum, eds. Gaff, J. Ratcliff, & Associates (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008).}
The definition has been modified by different entities such as the National Science Foundation, which represents the federal government’s perspective in defining interdisciplinary research, at least for those who wait for tax money to support their various causes:

Interdisciplinary research is a mode of research by teams or individuals that integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice.\(^79\)

While AIS and other private or university-sponsored organizations have made significant advances in defining interdisciplinary issues and advancing pedagogy to teach the evolving research, the consensus of what interdisciplinarity is, does, and can do is far from settled. That is not a bad thing; the history of the evolution and progress of knowledge creation and pedagogy is dynamic. In recent history the term has not only acquired new advocates and adherents, but also an urgency that is partly due to societal attitudes toward education.

There is the additional challenge of differing perspectives between the science disciplines and the Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies community. There are several organizations, public, government, and private, all attempting to install methods using some variety of interdisciplinarity to solve complex, real world problems. AIS includes all aspects of the paradigm shift to interdisciplinarity, including pedagogy research that may guide future students who are not interested in the monolithic disciplinary approach. While there is much

interdisciplinary research occurring, there does appear to be a divide between the hard sciences and the Liberal Arts and Humanities.

As the potential financial benefit is realized by university administrations, there is a growing number of groups or organizations within and outside the university attempting to define what interdisciplinarity is, to calibrate its value, and to figure out how to market it.

An organization doing research in the hard sciences is Integration and Implementation Sciences (I2S) which is not only the organization, but the name of the new discipline they created by the same name. While I2S is a well-organized and funded entity taking a methodical, organized approach to developing inter- or trans-disciplinary research, there is concern for the lack of homogeneity in the global community of scholars addressing the issues.

I2S’s founder, Gabriele Bammer, posits thoughts on the problem; “.... despite its promise and many excellent individual examples, most interdisciplinary research remains at the academic margins, largely because understanding about such investigations is fragmented.” Bammer continued:

Small (mostly) groups of researchers have been building theories of interdisciplinarity or of related approaches that include those variously referred to as multidisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity, post-normal science, systemic intervention, integrated assessment, sustainability science, team science, mode 210 and action research...

She continues to say that there is, “...little interaction among these groups, especially for comparative analyses and sharing of insights.” In her preface she proposes “...a new research style (integrative applied research), a new discipline (Integration and Implementation Sciences or


81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.
I2S) and a Big-Science- type project” as potential solutions.83

While I2S is advancing its ideas, there are four issues that lack clarity. First, I2S has created a new discipline (Integration and Implementation Sciences or I2S) that is contrary to the fundamental concept of any of the ‘–arities’ that work across disciplinary borders, including synthesizing existing disciplines. Second, they have put in place a new style or methodology (integrative applied research), but without clearly articulating how it can integrate into a single new discipline. Third, what appears to be a catch-all project management plan referred as a Big-Science- type project (I2S Development Drive) is also new. Fourth, I2S proposes new positions; it’s unclear whether they are academic degrees, disciplinarians doing ad hoc work on a project or, “I2S Disciplinary Specialists” whose training or specialty is not clearly defined or whether they are disciplinarians from existing disciplines. Bammer refers to colleagues as I2S Team Leaders, I2S Disciplinary Specialists, and other Integrative Applied Research Team Members.84 To better understand what the I2S proposal actually does needs more clarity on who is doing what and a more clearly defined methodology on any discipline border-crossing project. Its web page states that its members tackle social and environmental problems by “synthesis of disciplinary and stakeholder knowledge,”85 yet all of the references to methodology refer to Interdisciplinarity, leaving the open question: are they synthesizing knowledge from multiple disciplines or integrating knowledge, or is there some other goal.

83 Ibid., xv.
84 Ibid., 191.
The fact that I2S created a new discipline suggests the necessity of curricula to teach the knowledge of the new discipline, which has not been addressed. The synthesis of knowledge has and continues to be the purview of Liberal Studies. The distinction is that Liberal Studies incorporates all of the –arities as well as having the distinction of curricula that ‘synthesize’ knowledge in syllabi unique to those curricula, unlike other curricula such as Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS), which pairs syllabi from other disciplines into a program unique to an individual student’s or researcher’s needs.

The Science of Team Science (SciTS) team, not to be confused with the Science of Team Science (SciTS) ‘field, is another group working on research issues with a different and apparently unsystematic approach, at least as far as clearly defined goals are concerned. SciTS is working on an “... amalgam of conceptual and methodologic strategies aimed at understanding and enhancing the outcomes of large-scale collaborative research and training programs.”86 SciTS is even more confusing in that there is no ‘team’ with clearly defined ‘members’ or ‘tasks’ or even goals. It is a field composed of an eclectic group or cohort of individuals in public and private organizations and government agencies who publish their ideas in journals. SciTS is hosted by the U.S Department of Health and Human Services through the National Institutes of Health and National Cancer Institute.

Public and private investments in SciTS initiatives have grown as well as the discussion surrounding their intellectual and societal value.87 With the increase in funds and time invested


87 Ibid.
in the ‘field’ concerns have arisen regarding the need to define and evaluate all the programs under the SciTS umbrella. Concerns have also been expressed as how to calculate the “...value added and the Return on Investment (ROI) accruing from large research initiatives.” While SciTS is a growing entity or field or organization or possibly even a discipline, the boundaries of research, methodology and its goals are “...characterized by a lack of consensus about its defining substantive boundaries and core concerns.”

Part of the confusion in crossing the disciplines in research is voiced by Justin Nash with regard to the SciTS research approach: “The training of transdisciplinary science is distinct in its intention to develop scientists who synthesize the theoretical and methodologic approaches of different disciplines.” Nash’s statement is from his essay in a supplement in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine’s report on the progress of SciTS. His view of the methodology is not unlike those of other reviewers of SciTS in that they view transdisciplinarity as the method being employed, but by definition transdisciplinarity does not ‘synthesize.’ Transdisciplinarity is perhaps one of the most difficult of the ‘–arities’ to clearly articulate, primarily due to its popularity and a general lack of understanding of what is involved in crossing disciplinary boundaries in research.

88 Ibid.


Also writing in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*’s report on the progress of SciTS, Dr. S. Leonard Syme stated, when referencing an earlier report by the Institute of Medicine (renamed the National Academy of Medicine), that “[t]he main message was that we needed somehow to transcend our disciplinary silos and consider a much broader set of determinants in a far more complex way than we have so far been able to do.”\(^\text{91}\) He continued, “Our silo-based work has not served us well.”\(^\text{92}\)

The consensus developing is not that disciplines should be abolished by any means, or even that they have outlived their purpose. To the contrary, in an era where new knowledge is created with growing frequency, disciplines and their derivatives are necessary to categorize the knowledge into areas where they can be readily identified and disseminated. What Syme and Nash appear to be articulating is a frustration at the academy’s inability to adjust for the paradigm changes being attempted by numerous scholars across disciplines. Once again the recognized issue of the questionable accuracy of the terminology used in boundary-crossing scholarship, where there are numerous identified terms that may be applied to cross-boundary research and scholarship without clearly understanding which terms apply to specific projects, contributes to frustration in attempting to establish teams for interdisciplinary research.

An issue directly related to research and pedagogy is funding. Whether philanthropic, corporate, or government tax funding, research is expensive and increasingly so every year. It is also expensive to train scholars in the various paradigms emerging, especially when there is no

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\(^\text{92}\) Ibid.
consensus of what the dominant paradigm is or should be. Even the ‘hard sciences,’ which are late in coming to the interdisciplinary discussion, are not immune from the necessity of crossing disciplinary boundaries in research and pedagogy if they want to remain relevant.

To remain relevant, attract students and continue research, scholars must garner funding to support their efforts. Patricia Rosenfield, former Director of the Scholars Program at the Carnegie Corporation and currently Senior Fellow at the Rockefeller Archives Center is a highly regarded member of the philanthropic community who influences method and controls funding. Rosenfield and her co-author Frank Kessel are referenced in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* supplement as individuals who, “…provide overviews of the science-of-team-science field in terms of its major research, training, and translational concerns, and identify for future investigation several topics that have received little attention in prior studies.”

Rosenfield states,

I argue for a new approach to transcend the disciplinary bounds inherent in multi- and interdisciplinary research. A transdisciplinary approach can provide a systematic, comprehensive theoretical framework for the definition and analysis of the social, economic, political, environmental, and institutional factors influencing human health and well-being. 

...a disciplinary basis must be the natural starting point for each team member, the starting point rapidly becomes the limiting factor in problem definition collection and analysis of data, and interpretation of findings.”

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Rosenfield argued:

Each team member needs to become sufficiently familiar with the concepts and approaches of his and her colleagues as to blur the disciplinary bounds and enable the team to focus on the problem as part of broader phenomena: as this happens, discipline authorization fades in importance, and the problem and its context guide an appropriately broader and deeper analysis.96

Whether this is naiveté to the extreme, or simply misguided arrogance, to assert that each team member in an undefined cohort must “...become sufficiently familiar with the concepts and approaches of his and her colleagues...” is an unrealistic assertion at best and indicates a lack of understanding of what each discipline represents. It also suggests an absence of any concept of transdisciplinarity, or any other potential –arity, that could be relevant in the sort of boundary-crossing and integrative endeavor that Rosenfield advocates.

The significance of Rosenfield’s statements are that she is an example of the many in positions of authority throughout philanthropic organizations, corporations, and government who control and disburse funding to scholars for research. Rosenfield acknowledges that “…research as usual...” has its limitations and succeeds only if disciplinarians have journals in which to publish that enhance their CVs and advance promotion opportunities. She also acknowledges that if cross-boundary research is to be successful, universities must provide career opportunities to attract disciplinarians as well as interdisciplinarians to explore new concepts in knowledge.97

From the preceding discussion it should be clear that the term “chaos” used in the title of this thesis is not too strong to accurately reflect the current and future state of, not only pedagogy, but of how we do research and create new knowledge. To return to the original

96 Ibid.

question of the value of Liberal Studies or Interdisciplinary Studies, students who are questioning whether they should attend a traditional ‘four-year’ university or focus their efforts on acquiring skill sets in a technical school or community college are not getting clear answers.

As discussed in Section §3 on the grand narrative and Postmodernism, young potential students are questioning the relevance and value of an education in a discipline that has questionable value viewed from the perspective of a Millennial or post-Millennial who does not accept the certainty of Modernity and is looking at all the alternatives available to them for a post-secondary education.

In the haste to discover the ‘next big thing’ or publish first, or get the biggest grant based on a nebulous proposal lacking an honest, complete hypothesis, research moves ahead, establishing new disciplines, creating new curricula, with little sound pedagogy accompanying it. In any project there are three foundational elements to be met: scope, schedule, cost. In order for a project to be successful, every aspect or task within the project must be clearly defined along with the expected outcome and the duration of each individual task. This would be the academic equivalent of a hypothesis. From the scope the schedule may be developed that accounts for each task and the time it takes a resource to perform the task, along with the resource, which includes human and material. The third element lurking is a function of the first two; cost. Based on all the tasks to be accomplished, the overall cost of the project may be calculated. There is one more consideration that crosses into each of the other three; risk analysis. A risk analysis must be performed at the beginning of the project as well as throughout the life cycle of the project to determine what, if any, changes have occurred and the impact on the overall project.

Disciplines within the university have time-proven pedagogy that have been peer reviewed and evolved over time. There are a number of methods to measure effective
communication of knowledge of a curriculum or course within a curriculum. However, even the university is not immune from governmental and populist demands for the university to explain its value, value that cannot be measured in money alone.

§5. Value of Liberal Education

This discussion has brought us to the subject of the value of a Liberal Education. To untangle the morass of education in general and address the value of a Liberal Education, it is necessary to define the meaning of value. The concept of what is good or what has value has been contentious throughout history. Aristotle believed that virtues were complex, rational, and emotional, but central to a well-lived life or a life having value. Aristotle’s concept of the good would equate to the contemporary idea of intrinsically good, or nonderivatively good, or good simply for its own sake. The motivation is the action itself, and not necessarily in a reward or outcome, though a desired outcome may be a result of an intrinsic action.

Almost everything in contemporary American society is assigned value or worth and justified on popular terms, and as the charts beginning on page 228 illustrate, education is no exception to justification by a dollar value. For decades, debate has continued over whether college is worth the time and money spent on education in a capitalistic democracy controlled by a dominant Neoliberal Federal government (see Chapter 2 §7. Postmodernity – Enter Neoliberalism p. 114). It is appropriate and understandable that students are asking the questions, since their future is beginning and they are the inheritors of the education system in place along with the tuition debt. While the discussion of the economics of education is important, America must decide whether it is to remain a democracy with education for all, or whether ‘higher

education’ will become a footnote in history supplanted by skills training for the here and now with no thought to the future as well as potentially civilization-ending issues that confront contemporary humans. Skills training and a humanistic education in the Liberal Arts and Humanities should not be an either/or proposition.

The question of whether the investment in education is worth the cost is a bizarre one to pose in a democracy. The question should be: ‘Do we want to have free, creative, independent individuals who appreciate and gain from the past or people who increase GDP?’ There is a difference, but it does not have to be another either/or choice. The technology we use and take for granted is the result of developments made in the universities, not in the garages of Steve Jobs or Bill Gates or other entrepreneurs. Jobs and Gates took the theoretical knowledge, and in some cases the applied knowledge previously discovered, and applied it. That is one way cultural and scientific progress occurs, but the discoveries do not spontaneously occur. If there is no education system to train students there will be no creation of new knowledge, no innovation, and no advances in technology.

Students face the dilemma of choosing a career path requiring skills training to apply for work, or undertaking a course of study that will build on the past and serve humanity for the future. It is only in recent history, since the 1980s during the Ronald Reagan–Margaret Thatcher Neoliberal revolution, that the false dichotomy of a ‘jobs’ education versus a Liberal Arts and Humanities education came into vogue. When Reagan became president he emphasized the corporatization and selling of American education to the highest bidder that he began as governor of California. There he dismantled a democratic model of education equality, in which
in-state undergraduate students paid no tuition.\textsuperscript{99}

Government and industry disseminate ideological propaganda in an attempt to control what American youth is taught. Universities have not only been corporatized, but government attempts at privatization have turned education into a marketplace. The increasing cost of education, the advertised salary potential by disciplinary fields, and the issue of where to go for education are together creating a din of incoherent rhetoric for students to try to understand.

Students are demanding an increasing accounting of the benefit and cost of long-term career decisions in education. Curricula in the Liberal Arts and Humanities have become targets of ill-informed elected officials declaring that Liberal Arts and Humanities are poor choices and a wasteful investment of public money. There is a growing list of governors cutting state education budgets for the Liberal Arts and Humanities. The reasons governors give for cutting budgets range from the incorrect and uniformed to the bizarre. Republican Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin voiced the Neoliberal corporatized university position of running colleges as businesses. His position is that, “The billion dollars of taxpayer money that is being allocated to postsecondary education is going to be allocated based on outcomes, period.”\textsuperscript{100} The closest he could come to defining an outcome was, “There will be more incentives to electrical engineers than French literature majors. There just will...”\textsuperscript{101} Governor Bevin has a degree in East Asian Studies from Washington & Lee University where he attended on a military scholarship, yet he is


\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.
worried about the taxpayers paying for “French lit majors” that he specifically singled out. In this case Bevin read the will of the people incorrectly. In a unilateral move he illegally cut the state’s education budget by 4.5% citing the legislature’s inability to come to an agreement, but the Kentucky Attorney General Andy Beshear, who is also elected by Kentucky citizens, said not only did it not reflect the will of the people, but it was illegal. For the time being, Kentucky students may still major in French Literature if they choose.

U.S. Senator and 2016 Presidential hopeful Marco Rubio (R-FL) joined in the political sport of trashing the Liberal Arts and Humanities by stating that “Welders make more money than philosophers...We need more welders and less philosophers.”102 The senator’s comments are not only misleading, but inaccurate. To compare such disparate career paths is disingenuous and a fact check shows the senator’s statement on salaries is completely inaccurate.103 The Republican Governor of Wisconsin, Scott Walker, wanted to change the objective of education provided by the University of Wisconsin system from the search for truth and improving the human condition and inserting the words into the proposed budget that would change the universities mission “…to meet the state’s workforce needs.”104

Recognition of the challenges and problems has changed very little since Alfred Marshall (p. 103). We are still born into a society where educational opportunity is not equal, and that inequality expands with the increasing necessity of post-secondary education that is growing as


103 Ibid.

well as primary and secondary education, and private versus public schools. As it was in 1873 there is still the financial inequality, but the effect of aptitudes developed as children still exists and is still not being adequately addressed.

Faced with the dazzling flow of metrics from corporations selling products to improve test scores and lobbyist organizations producing charts showing income projections of various work fields, it is not surprising that Millennial students are asking serious questions. Most of the metrics available to students provide the extrinsic value of education. Chart 1 illustrates the earning potential by the level of education attained.

Chart 1: Earnings & Tax Payments by Education Attainment

Source: The College Board, Education Pays, 2010

This chart (Chart 1) shows the difference in earnings potential between a person without a high school education and a person with a Bachelor’s Degree: the difference is more than 100%. From this chart a citizen with less than a high school education is above the federal poverty guidelines, but in a 2017 economy there are few places in America where a person would be able to survive financially on $25 thousand per year. Chart 2 illustrates the poverty level categories by income for Americans.

**Chart 2: Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons in family/household</th>
<th>Poverty guideline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$12,060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>24,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>28,780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>32,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>37,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>41,320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Health and Human Services, “Annual Update of the HHS Poverty Guidelines”

Chart 3 reflects potential salaries by age group by a composite of fields that provide little information for a person considering an education program. The ambiguity of the information

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represented shows Humanities and Social Sciences and Professional and Preprofessional degrees having similar earnings outcomes. The problem with the information provided is not only the broad range of potential incomes, but the sources of the data. Should a person considering a field of study use the professional organization source or the government source, and which years data is accurate?

Chart 3: Median Annual Earnings by Age-Group and Undergraduate Major (2010-11)

![Chart showing median annual earnings by age-group and undergraduate major]

Source: Humphreys, Debra and Patrick Kelly. *How Liberal Arts and Sciences Majors Fare in Employment.* AAC&U. 2013

A person searching for a field of study will likely consider earnings potential, but the broad range and volatility of salary predictions and income forecasts are at best an imaginative guess at financial value. Additionally, the volatility and variability of salary predictions is a function of the demand not only by a capitalist economy, but by government interventions and intrusions in

both national and global affairs. If the goal is simply selecting a field showing the best earnings income forecast, the metrics are available and they change frequently based on capitalistic market performance and the selection is not that difficult; it’s also not that accurate.

What the charts do not reflect is the further breakdown within categories. There are many charts and graphs and so many variants involved that a person trying to understand what the data means may be lost without a primer explaining the meaning of the data. To take a chart of academic disciplines showing future income without the foundational research methods and resources is misleading.

The DoE provides a profusion of charts and graphs showing salaries by geographical locations, school attended, age, race, gender, and so on. Universities have their own metrics showing departments, programs, and curricula within a category, but for a potential student who is not satisfied with the typical curricula offered, there is little information on the value of a curriculum. If one is searching for knowledge that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change and helps them develop a sense of human values, social responsibility, and strong intellectual and practical skills, the charts of income potential are of arguable usefulness. The value of any curriculum in a Neoliberal capitalistic democracy is based on demand and market value, both of which are volatile.

The previous charts illustrate an instrumental or extrinsic justification based on tangible rewards or outcomes. What the charts do not show is the intrinsic value of Liberal Education. At that point the issue is subjective to the individual and his/her desires, but with the collective value to humanity as well as the individual. The questions that must be asked is what is the scope and content of education, to what values is it responsive, and from what values is it derived?

Michael Oakeshott’s position on the intrinsic value of liberal education is that it offers
“...liberation from the here and now of current engagements, from the muddle, the crudity, the sentimentality, the intellectual poverty and the emotional morass of ordinary life.”\textsuperscript{108} This is a seemingly agreeable position for an educator to assume, but there are those who promote their social agenda, accusing Oakeshott of cloaking himself in “…elitist garments...” because he believed personal agendas do not have a place in the pedagogical discussion of liberal education. It is not the responsibility of an instructor to teach a student ‘what to think’ or to inculcate ideology, but to teach students about existing knowledge and how to develop critical thinking skills in order for them to make informed decisions and function in a democratic society.

Oakeshott stated that a university is:

... a place where he has the opportunity of education in conversation with his teachers, his fellows and himself, and where he is not encouraged to confuse education with training for a profession, with learning the tricks of a trade, with preparation for future particular service in society.\textsuperscript{109}

Oakeshott was accused of being an elitist, and of viewing education as an end in itself while the Neoliberal view of education is preparing a student to be market-ready for employment. Only the most cynical would believe that Oakeshott’s theory of education was a literal means to an end, but the dualism or either/or approach exists. To accuse someone of being an elitist because of his/her views while remaining in the comfort provided by the alleged elitism is disingenuous.

While the Neoliberal politicians in America think time, money and resources are being wasted on liberal education, that opinion is not universal. There are countries whose

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{109}Ibid., 101.
\end{quote}
governments and citizens believe education is an investment in the future and make education available to all without the exorbitant cost associated with American education.

In Mexico, the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) has a total student population of 139,544\textsuperscript{110} with no charge for tuition. It is not only free, but has open admissions where anyone can go, and they also have remedial training to help those who want an education, but are not totally prepared.

In 2014 Germany declared tuition “socially unjust” and did away with all tuition at German universities for German students.\textsuperscript{111} Additionally, all health insurance is provided without charge throughout the European Union.

In Greece, a country that is undergoing catastrophic financial problems, tuition to all European Union (EU) students is free. Even to students from outside the EU it is only €1,500 ($1,802 US) per year for under graduates\textsuperscript{112} with all health insurance provided.

In France, tuition at public universities is €184 ($202 US) with all health insurance provided.\textsuperscript{113}

While it may be entertaining to browse through myriad charts and graphs, the determination of the value of education is made by the individual. The ultimate goal of education is not simply to improve the production of goods, but to develop human beings associated with


one another on terms of equality. A decent education should be devoted to creating free, independent, creative human beings. That does not mean ‘producing’ them, but allowing them to follow their natural instincts. There is a natural instinct among children, but the current educational system has beat the instinct out of them and made them obedient and subordinate. A decent educational system would allow these natural instincts and attributes of human nature to flourish and it would be part of a free and democratic system of participation. Thomas Kuhn’s theory of paradigm shift taught us how to think outside the box, and Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies is a recurring paradigm shift. New knowledge is gained and progress attained by the synthesis of disciplines and discipline “boundary crossing.”

There is immense complexity in the administration and communication of knowledge. John Dewey, the American philosopher who ranks high on any list of scholars, academicians, and Public Intellectuals recognized the complexity of evolution of Liberal Education and the necessity of Liberal Education to a democracy. During the twentieth century the phrase ‘progressive education,’ a term attributed to but denied by Dewey, described schools as agencies of a democratic society. Dewey’s objection was not to the idea of education progressing; he was most assuredly a proponent of the growth and advancement of education. He scorned the term “progressive” as a category because whenever a movement or theory was categorized and became an ‘-ism’ it was doomed to oblivion by charlatans who would grab on and wave it as an ideological banner, creating skepticism and distrust among those whom the idea was to help. Dewey’s rejoinder to modernistic categorization was:

I have suggested at the close of this little volume that those who are looking ahead to a new movement in education, adapted to the existing need for a new social order, should

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think in terms of Education itself rather than in terms of some 'ism about education, even such an 'ism as "progressivism" For in spite of itself any movement that thinks and acts in terms of an 'ism becomes so involved in reaction against other 'isms that it is unwittingly controlled by them. For it then forms its principles by reaction against them instead of by a comprehensive, constructive survey of actual needs, problems, and possibilities.115

While there are numerous differences of style and method or pedagogy among educators, Dewey’s view of democracy means active participation by all citizens in social, political and economic decisions that will affect their lives. There are two fundamental theories in line with Dewey’s perspective. There is the development of critical and socially engaged intellect that enables a citizen to understand and engage in a democracy in an effort to recognize and develop human values necessary to achieve a common good. There is also a necessary respect for the diversity of citizens that recognizes the ability, ideas, needs and cultural identity of the individual who contributes to a democracy.

Today scholars, educators, and activists are rediscovering Dewey’s work and exploring its relevance to a ‘Postmodern’ age, an age of global capitalism, Neoliberal politics, breathtaking cultural change, and an age in which the ecological health of the planet itself is seriously threatened. We are finding that although Dewey wrote almost a century ago, his insights into democratic culture and meaningful educational value suggest hopeful alternatives to the regime of standardization, corporatization, and Neoliberal government indoctrination that more than ever dominate our schools.

Financial wherewithal is important in any society, but for a democracy and the individuals in a democracy to survive there must be more. Apple Computer founder, the late Steve Jobs, said in his farewell address as he left his company and public life; “It’s in Apple’s

DNA that technology alone is not enough. It’s technology married with the Liberal Arts...married with the Humanities that yields the result that makes our hearts sing.” In addressing the future of technology in general and the products that technology will produce, he said that the old view of speed and hardware was no longer enough. When asked how he knows the right direction, he said, “It comes down to trying to expose yourself to the best things human beings have done.”

He said that new products are post-PC and must be more intuitive, “...where the software and hardware and applications need to intertwine in an even more seamless way...”

Those words describe the function of contemporary Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies. They bring together the minds and knowledge and resources seamlessly intertwined to manage the chaos that drives the evolution of the creation of knowledge and the communication of that knowledge to future generations.

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Chapter Five – Summary and Conclusion

I teach you the overman. Man is something that is to be overcome. What have you done to overcome him?

_Friedrich Nietzsche – Prologue to Thus Spake Zarathustra_

Chaos is mayhem and confusion, but in the context of the creation and communication of knowledge, it is appropriate and not pejorative. Creating new knowledge is about interaction with, and exploration of, our universe as the intellectuals referenced throughout this thesis have done.

As illustrated in Chapter Two, the creation of new knowledge has continued unabated since the beginning of recorded history. What is to be taught and the pedagogy, or method used to communicate knowledge, has also undergone continuing change since the first students populated Plato’s school, the Academy, and Aristotle’s school, the Lyceum. Pedagogical evolution continued with Isocrates, Petrarch, Kant, Jefferson, Willard, and Dewey to name just a few.

History is replete with bad decisions including poor responses to intrusion upon education and dishonesty bordering on criminal conduct by government in its attempts to control pedagogy. The federal government learned from the student and public protests of the 1960s against the war in Vietnam and the protests demanding civil rights for all Americans, especially those most marginalized; African-Americans. The American government’s politicians, bureaucrats, and military learned the power of citizens in a democracy, especially the power of university students, faculty, and public intellectuals in effecting change. The American government also learned that the voices of dissent from university students, faculty, and public intellectuals must be silenced and educational institutions and pedagogy must be controlled. The
shameful efforts began in earnest in 1981 when President Ronald Reagan, who had been at the center of the protests and killings at UC-Berkeley in 1969 as governor of California, became president of the United States, and despite his vow to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education, embraced it as a political tool for indoctrinating young people. Reagan was followed by a succession of U.S Presidents who embraced the ideology of Neoliberalism, and members of Congress who, regardless of party, have been busy enacting laws that support the Neoliberal ideology agenda of the market valuation of human beings.

Both Democratic and Republican parties embraced Neoliberal ideology leaving students and faculty and by extension, American society, with little if any voice in the education of American youth and control of the future of democracy. While Postmodernism has been an intellectual protest against the ideology of Modernism, Neoliberal political control has thwarted any attempt at public resistance against the corporatization of public education.

The history of education is populated with individuals such as Socrates, Edward Said, Noam Chomsky, Angela Davis, Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux and others who stood against political populist’s politics. These are just a few who championed the benefit of education and the right of autonomy in the pursuit of knowledge. They believed pedagogy included “…lifting complex ideas into the public space…”¹ As contemporary educational theorists have articulated, practical issues such as teaching methods, classroom discipline, the content of teaching texts and even the design of syllabi are directly linked to prior conceptions of the value of the human person.²


If education is, or can be, conditionally related to the kind of society we want to live in, the question to be answered is who decides the kind of society we should live in and what it will be. There is a narrow distinction between the theory of Plato, which was clearly that those in power will make the decisions relegating all others to the subservience of the ruling elite, and Aristotle’s theory, defined as those who are born as slaves will continue to be owned by others. Isocractic theory would have either political doctrine that was defined by politicians mandating what pedagogy was to be, or inversely, pedagogy as determined by educators would define the regime as the one which would protect education from subjection to any political doctrine.

Thomas Jefferson articulated the fundamental tenets of a Liberal Education that resonates in the twenty-first century. Little semblance of equality has been achieved, though it continues to populate political platforms. For all Jefferson did we can no longer fall back on the excuse that we have to accept history contextually. There are issues such as slavery, basic human rights, equality regardless of gender, religion, culture, and so forth that can no longer be placed on the proverbial back burner.

It is from these and other perspectives that chaos prevails. Throughout the chaos, Liberal Education and specifically Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies in the current era have provided humanity with the necessary human values and empirical knowledge not only to nurture the chaos, but to give meaning to it in the form of the pedagogy used to train new scholars. And from these new scholars come educators who will teach the next generations. All those educators will follow a simple tenet:

The aim and the curriculum of education are dependent upon and vary with the ideals and interests of successive ages. The school and the school-master only express the dominant
intellectual and social aim of their time: they follow and obey; they do not lead or control.\(^3\)

Postmodern theory has become prevalent in almost all academic disciplines, forcing the critique of Modern theory and considering alternative practices in education. While there is arguably a Postmodern era that is fundamentally different from the Modern era, only an extremist would call for a complete disconnect with Modern theory. What has occurred is not only the questioning of existing pedagogy within each discipline, but the concept of disciplines as well. Whether codified as Liberal Studies or Interdisciplinary Studies, border crossing among disciplines has become commonplace.

The Postmodern paradigm that continues to emerge in society and culture is a cumulative result of paradigm shifts in specific disciplines, but it is not a complete or finalized paradigm that directs all thought. Postmodern interventions that have taken place in disciplines have challenged basic assumptions and practices, introducing interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity, and a host of other –arities, revealing artificial academic divisions of labor and forcing new discourse on new methods.

As addressed in Chapter Two, Section Six, John Dewey’s pedagogy would not align with contemporary pedagogy, but it does align with an interdisciplinary liberal education that allows for exploration and creativity. As stated earlier, chaos is not always a bad thing. Creativity, exploration, and the creation of new knowledge are forms of chaos, much like Dewey referenced.

While not totally unexpected, the extent to which Neoliberalism ideology has permeated American education illustrated in this thesis has been surprising. The value of education, which has been defined in many different ways throughout history, has taken a demonstrably different turn since the 1980s when President Ronald Reagan began what must be described as an unprecedented, inaccurate attack on education in general, and universities and faculty in particular, for the inaccurate and misplaced accusation of the failure of American students to rise to the educational attainment of prior generation; a total misrepresentation of the facts.

Reagan and subsequent presidents, along with members of both political parties, embraced the Neoliberal mantra of “market value of education” that continues into the twenty-first century. Subsequent presidents and current day Governors and Senators embrace the Neoliberal human ‘market value’ dogma proclaiming the Liberal Arts and Humanities of little value and intervening in what students should study.

As discussed in Chapter 4 §5, Millennial and Gen Z students are looking at the value of education, not simply as ‘market value,’ though the relevance of value is not lost on them. As discussed in Chapter 4 §3, they are observing what is happening in society such as a perceived permanent state of war even though American government no longer legally declares war, but simply invades and occupies. They are observing the seemingly endless reports of corruption in congress and the executive branch, where their elected officials are caught accepting bribes and/or introducing and passing legislation that enriches the wealthy elite. They are observing the sexual assault and abuse by not only wealthy corporate elites, but within the Congress and even the White House as well. They are looking at the inequality and abuse of humans by gender, skin color, religion, and the other things that account for ‘difference. And most recently, in what resembles a beginning of student unrest not unlike what existed in the 1960s for civil rights and
against an illegal war in Vietnam, Millennials and Gen Z young people are beginning to organize and mobilize against the murder in schools, militarized police departments that kill with seeming impunity and no accountability. They are watching government attacks on young people who live, work, go to school, and contribute to America, whose only crime is not having papers saying they are American because they were brought to America as children.

And last but not least, they are questioning why they are having to shoulder enormous debt that could affect them for decades to come for the cost of education in what is arguably the wealthiest country in the world, while many countries have no tuition and provide full health care to students. To the point, they are ‘thinking critically’ and becoming engaged in the democracy using the things they learn from a Liberal Education, a Liberal Education that President Reagan, Senator Rubio, Governor Bevin, and others in government, corporations, and sadly, corporatized university administrations, whose focus is on human ‘market value would deny them.

If there is any doubt about the value of Liberal Education and Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies, Georgetown University would not have created multiple interdisciplinary initiatives.

The evolution of what we call Liberal Education today and its core programs of Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies has been chaotic, and there is little doubt that the chaos will continue, but as long as there are graduates of Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies programs embracing intellectualism and questioning everything, the concept of Liberal Education will continue its evolution as it has for the previous two millennia. These are the programs that will produce the next generation of Public Intellectuals and carry on the traditions
of those who came before. So chaos will continue, but it will be positive and directed by a new generation of Public Intellectuals.

I am reminded of the Persian prophet Zarathustra who implored humanity: “...one must still have chaos within, in order to give birth to a dancing star. I say to you: you still have chaos within you!”⁴ Perhaps the readers of this thesis have come to better understand the chaos of creation of knowledge, and perhaps even have an epiphanal moment of their own and find the chaos within themselves.

Appendix A

Glossary of Terms.

The terms listed below have been collected from various sources. The state of Liberal Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies is such that there is no consensus nor any convening authority to provide consensus on terminology. Where possible the sources of definition are provided. Terminology remains a major obstacle to establishing a cogent interdisciplinary program for students. The exceptions are Liberal Studies programs whose curriculum are clearly a synthesis of knowledge from various established disciplines as well as including course from specific disciplines to complete the established curriculum. This is a work in progress.

1. Antidisciplinary - working in spaces that simply do not fit into any existing academic discipline—a specific field of study with its own particular words, frameworks, and methods. (Joi Ito, https://www.pubpub.org/pub/designandscience?context=jods)

2. Auxiliary interdisciplinarity –
   a. cross-disciplinary use of methods constitutes lots of auxiliary interdisciplinarities. At the one end, auxiliary interdisciplinarities may be occasional and transitional. At the other end, a discipline may have established an enduring relationship to another discipline by being dependent on the methods of that "auxiliary discipline.

3. Composite interdisciplinarity –
   a. The particular propelling forces behind this type are the great issues challenging man's dignity and human survival: prevention of war, hunger, delinquency, pollution, landscape destruction, urban slums, etc. There are interdisciplinarities in the making in peace research or city planning. What brings together quite diverse disciplines is the stern-necessity to apply problem-solving techniques under the changing impact of historical contingencies.

4. Conceptual interdisciplinarity – Critical ID interrogates the dominant structure of knowledge and education with the aim of transforming them.

5. Critical & Instrumental interdisciplinarity – Two loosely defined and articulated concepts of interdisciplinarity relating to different fields of medicine that are not mutually exclusive. They are designed to (1) raise critical questions which pose different understandings of the whole project of medicine and, (2) the application of ways of thinking from the arts and humanities that raise questions about what it is to be a doctor and challenge the social structures in which medical practices are located. [Professor Stephen Rowland, Chair of Higher Education, University College London – Taken from a paper presented at the annual conference of the British Education Research Association, University of Exeter, 12 –14 September 2002. www.ucl.ac.uk/cishe/seminars/interdisciplinarity/contestation_paper.doc]
6. Cross-disciplinary -
   a. a general term used to refer to any activity that involves two or more academic disciplines. These activities can range from those that simply place disciplinary insights side-by-side (Multidisciplinary) to much more integrative or socially inclusive approaches.
   b. a more common description is that of an ‘adjective’ that describes how the term is used, as another catch all when describing crossing boundaries.

7. Deep disciplinarity –
   a. an active defense against interdisciplinarity in defense of a specific discipline; the authority of a discipline is a legal authority by the university to do anything from terminating a professor for lack of or bad publishing, and its based on subjective expertise. It’s a drag on creativity; though there are reasons for boundaries and subjectivity reasons for protecting the university and the department against bad scholarship. If there is no control over who speaks for the department or university and bad scholarship gets out, everyone suffers. But it is subjective and there is a gray area, a balance between ‘discipline’ as a verb and limiting creativity and productivity. There is also the issue of academic freedom where research can be done freely without worry about the political repercussions of the findings. No professor should be inflicting their personal political views. Be wary of using the phrase “I speak the truth of power” or you’ll be viewed as an ideological hack.

8. Disciplinarity –
   a. Scholars of interdisciplinarity have long appreciated the importance of ‘disciplinary perspective.’ Disciplines each have a way of looking at the world that influences how research and teaching within that discipline are pursued. This disciplinary perspective is largely unconscious, and thus scholars will be influenced by it even if they are consciously interdisciplinary in outlook. Only in recent decades have its key elements been identified:
      b. Disciplines identify certain things that they study.
      c. Disciplines favor one or a few theories (in general or for each thing they study).
      d. Disciplines favor one or a few methods (and thus types of data and standards of evidence).
      e. Disciplines define key concepts in particular ways.
      f. Disciplines take their own ontological stance toward the nature of reality.
      g. Disciplines take their own epistemological stance regarding the possibilities of human understanding and the best ways of enhancing (if possible) that understanding.
      h. Disciplines to varying degrees may also be associated with particular ethical, ideological, or aesthetic tendencies. Some disciplines are closely identified with certain major thinkers.
      i. It is important not just to appreciate these individual elements, but also how these operate in practice: These elements are mutually reinforcing. Disciplines choose methods that are good at investigating their theories, and subject matter that their
theories and methods can deal with. A discipline’s epistemological outlook will naturally approve of the methods it employs. Thus one great barrier to interdisciplinarity is that disciplinarians disdain the methods of others, but their own methods tend to be biased in favor of their own theories. Since the elements of disciplinary perspective cohere, interdisciplinary scholars often use the word "worldview" to describe it.

j. Disciplinary perspective is largely subconscious. It is absorbed slowly over time. Scholars that recognize disciplinary perspective may be better placed to appreciate its constraints.

k. Disciplines make decisions about granting degrees, hiring, and publication with recourse to disciplinary perspective (often subconsciously). Scholars who rebel against their discipline’s perspective can see their careers destroyed or constrained.

l. Note: Disciplines are usually further subdivided into subdisciplines. Subdisciplines may differ in important ways in terms of subject matter, theories, methods, and other elements of disciplinary perspective. If, however, decisions regarding granting of degrees, hiring, and/or publication in key journals are made by those representing the discipline rather than the subdisciplines, then we can anticipate that there will be strong pressures for all involved in subdisciplines of a particular discipline to have a similar perspective.

The term ‘interdisciplinary’ refers to some field of inquiry that combines aspects of different disciplines but has not (yet) solidified into a discipline with a unified perspective Fuchman’s 2012 Issues article speaks to this.

9. Horizontal Interdisciplinarity - is additive, linking fields such as history and literature without fundamental change to their disciplinary structures or logics.

10. Interdisciplinarity (ID) - is typically characterized by integration of information, data, methods, tools, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge.

11. Interdisciplinary - Klein and Newell (1998) offer the following widely-quoted definition of interdisciplinary studies:

   a. A process of answering a question, solving a problem, or addressing a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline or profession… [It] draws on disciplinary perspectives and integrates their insights through construction of a more comprehensive perspective. (p. 393-4)

   b. there is an emerging consensus around certain key components:

   c. Interdisciplinarians focus on particular problem or questions that are too complex to be answered satisfactorily by any one discipline [Some Interdisciplinarians may be guided by a search for a particular policy or technology requiring input from different perspectives. Others may search for insights into what a concept means across different realms.]

   d. Interdisciplinarians draw upon the insights of specialized research. Specialized research is performed by communities of scholars who share a set of guiding questions, concepts, theories, and methods.
e. Interdisciplinarians evaluate the results of specialized research.

f. Interdisciplinarians utilize multiple theories and methods. They are conscious that all theories, methods, and disciplines are useful for some purposes but also have weaknesses.

g. Interdisciplinarians appreciate that each discipline is characterized by an (evolving) ‘disciplinary perspective’ or way of looking at the world. We should nevertheless be careful of stereotypes, for members of that discipline will deviate from disciplinary perspective to varying degrees.

h. Interdisciplinarians integrate the best elements of disciplinary insights in order to generate a more comprehensive (and often more nuanced) appreciation of the issue at hand. (This may come in the form of a new understanding, new product, or new meaning.) As we shall see below, interdisciplinarians often stress ‘integration’ as the defining element of interdisciplinarity.

i. Integration, as we have seen, is a critical element of interdisciplinary practice. Indeed it is integration that arguably distinguishes interdisciplinarity from multidisciplinarity. Integration has several key elements:

j. Synthesis or blending of (critically evaluated) insights from multiple disciplines or authors or groups

k. Creation of common ground

l. Creation of a more holistic and comprehensive understanding

m. An ongoing process

n. Focused on a particular question

12. Indiscriminate Interdisciplinarity –

a. To this type belong all kinds of encyclopedic endeavors end up in curricular mix-ups. An example is the vague idea of a studium generale", put forth in Germany during the Fifties as an innovation in university education. The introductory study of diverse "basic" disciplines was thought to counter act the specialization and narrow-mindedness produced by studying a major discipline. As a rule, encyclopedic curricula of the indiscriminate interdisciplinarity type have been constructed for vocational training just below the university lever, as for elementary school teachers or social workers, i.e. for practitioners supposed to handle a broad variety of problems with enlightened common sense. Social workers, for example, are taught a mixture of sociology, social psychology, psychopathology, psychoanalysis, labor economics, and so on.

13. Instrumental ID typically aims at creating a product or meeting a designated pragmatic need. In contrast, Critical ID interrogates the dominant structure of knowledge and education with the aim of transforming them.

14. Interprofessional approaches involve collaboration of members of occupational professions, such as medicine, social work, education, law, and engineering.

15. Methodological ID typically improves the quality of results, by using a method, concept, or tool from another discipline in order to test a hypothesis, to answer a research question, or to help develop a theory.
16. **Multidisciplinarity** - Multidisciplinary activities draw upon insights from two or more disciplines. Unlike interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary activities, though, multidisciplinarity simply juxtaposes these insights and does not attempt to integrate them.

17. **Pluridisciplinary** – the juxtaposition of disciplines

18. **Pseudo interdisciplinarity** – the borrowing of analytical tools, such as mathematical models and computer simulation.

19. **Reductive disciplinarity** – the argument for moving or importing the methods or practices of one discipline into another, which is actually the attempt of one discipline to replace another, to in effect argue against the credibility of one disciplines claim to research university status. Sometimes this happens naturally and no such attack or colonizing is going on. Perhaps linguistics just happens is slowly becoming a subfield of cognitive psychology and it is a result of how we may better study the subject.

20. **Supplementary Interdisciplinarity** – There are disciplines in the same material field which develop a partial overlapping in a supplementary relationship between the respective subject matters. The supplementation is induced from a correspondence between the levels of theoretical integration of two or more disciplinary subject matters. Note that the theoretical integration levels of the involved disciplines are divided by category gaps which are insurmountable and have to be tolerated. But supplementary interdisciplinarity creates a sort of correspondence between the respective theory levels. The correspondence is looked for and tentatively established in order to reconstruct life or social processes more fully.

21. **Theoretical ID** develops a more comprehensive general view, typically in the form of new conceptual frameworks or syntheses.

22. **Transdisciplinary** - The word ‘transdisciplinary’ was once associated with the pursuit of a unified theory of everything. Today, transdisciplinarity (especially as practiced by those associated with td-net, a network of scholars funded by the Swiss Academy of Sciences) has come to mean something very close to the definition of interdisciplinarity plus an emphasis on integrating insights generated outside the academy as well as within it.

   Transdisciplinarians also stress a case study approach whereas interdisciplinarians tend to tackle more general problems. Interdisciplinarians are generally open to engaging non-academic stakeholders – and indeed have often noted that strategies to integrating across disciplines can also be applied when integrating across any sort of social or cultural division – but have stressed interaction beyond the academy to a much lesser degree.

23. **Unifying Interdisciplinarity** – This type results from an increased consistency in the subject matter of the two disciplines, paralleled by an approximation of the respective theoretical integration levels and methods.

   For instance, some parts and perspectives of biology have reached the subject matter level of physics thereby creating biophysics. There appears to be an irresistible trend
towards the unification of physics, chemistry and biology at the theoretical integration level of physics. While such unifying interdisciplinarity already exists in larger research areas, universities still continue to teach separate disciplines with some scattered auxiliary interdisciplinarity.

24. Vertical Interdisciplinarity poses challenges to discursive categories and formal properties of a field. In the context of narrative, for example, verticality forces rethinking conceptions of the narrator, narrative forms, and the fundamental process of thinking, reflecting, critiquing, and expressing. At present, though, Vertical Interdisciplinarity is impeded by the way core materials are understood and implemented. Information from images and audio is still often aligned with creative/and critical thought/writing. In vertically integrated praxis, diverse materials and disciplinary strategies are engaged both within and across media, tools, formats, and philosophical categories.

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For instance, some parts and perspectives of biology have reached the subject matter level of physics thereby creating biophysics. There appears to be an irresistible trend towards the unification of physics, chemistry and biology at the theoretical integration level of physics. While such unifying interdisciplinarity already exists in larger research areas, universities still continue to teach separate disciplines with some scattered auxiliary interdisciplinarity.
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