

Corporatizing University Education

A Philosophical Analysis

By

Marc C. Heller

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Approved: Dr. Shelagh Crooks
Supervisor

Approved: Dr. John MacKinnon
Examiner

Approved: Dr. Sheldon Wein
Reader

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to critically examine the educational consequences of the corporatization of the university. Consideration will be given to the following questions: What is the impact of the corporatized university on the nature and quality of the education that students receive in such institutions? Do universities under the influence of the corporatized model actually educate or do they merely train? I will argue that the corporatized model devalues the nature of university education. First, I will provide a general characterization of what is traditionally described as the ‘liberal model’ for university education and contrast that with what I will call the ‘corporatized model for university education’. Second, I will analyze the concepts of ‘education’ and ‘being educated’ and I will make a distinction between ‘being educated’ and ‘being trained’. The outcome of this analysis is that corporatized universities aim to produce *trained* graduates, while the liberal university model aims to produce *educated* graduates. Third, I will analyze the concept of ‘understanding’ and I will justify its extrinsic value for students. Last, I will argue that the corporatized university’s failure to educate its students is moral failing of significance.

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Introduction

Universities now model themselves after corporations seeking to maximize profit, growth, and marketability. As a result, the democratic mission of the university as a public good has all but vanished.

-Joel Westheimer¹

Increasingly, public institutions of higher learning are moving toward a ‘business’ or ‘corporate’ model of governance and operation. Public universities have begun to see the private sector as a credible, profitable, and thus desirable partner in the educational enterprise. In 2000, Joel Westheimer, an assistant professor of Political Science, was fired from his position at New York University after he testified in favour of graduate students being able to unionize. Westheimer is right to note that his firing was a symptom of a much bigger problem than his university’s fear of unions. He links the firing to the increasing corporatization of the university and worries that this process threatens to turn public universities into institutions that focus more on skills-training and workforce preparation than on fostering the development of literate, informed, critical citizens that is traditionally associated with higher education.

The corporatization of university education is reflected in examples such as the corporate sponsorship of departmental chairs and buildings, and increased partnerships with entities in the private sector. But it does not end there. Under the auspices of this model of university education, students are no longer just hungry learners; they are customers who are to be catered to in order to satisfy their demands, in order to retain their business and attract more customers. ‘The customer is always right’ is the ethos of

¹ Joel Westheimer, “Hire Education or Education for Hire? Corporatization and the Threat to Democratic Thinking,” *Academic Matters*, April 1, 2010, www.academicmatters.ca/2010/04.

the ‘corporatized university’, as I will call it. Further, the corporatized university has begun to re-conceptualize certain departments as revenue centres, while devaluing those that lack any such obvious potential. Departments in the Sciences are valued highly for their potential to bring in revenue, while departments in the Arts are devalued, and in many cases underfunded on the basis that they are not ‘self-sustaining’.

This corporatization of the university is not something new, nor is it something that happened suddenly. It has occurred gradually, almost imperceptibly, over the past forty or fifty years. In the United States, the shift towards a corporatized model for public university education began during the economic turmoil of the 1970s. Enjoying an era of unprecedented growth, enrolment in university was at an all-time high, as were the operating costs of most universities. When federal and state governments began to tighten the purse strings, public universities had to find a way to cover the loss in revenue. Consequently, universities looked to increase their partnerships with the private sector in order to fill the vacuum left by the decrease in government funding.

The trend in Canada followed a similar path, as cuts in government spending during the 1980s hit the healthcare and education sectors particularly hard. Much like the American case, Canadian universities sought to shore up their budget shortfalls by increasingly entering into partnerships with corporate entities that provided them with funds to modernize and continue to grow. Moreover, in the case of both countries, advances in biotechnology, computing science, and micro-technology put universities front and centre for training the workforce of tomorrow, which would require a far more technical set of skills than the workforce of the past several decades. Thus, corporations and for-profit entities had a significant stake in the research being done at these

institutions, given the potentially lucrative results, and sought to increase their influence accordingly. The upshot, on both sides of the border, was a university that was far more involved with the for-profit sector than it had been just forty years prior.

Now, some might argue that this trend towards corporatization was quite natural or even necessary. When it comes to public universities especially, they need to find *some* way to compensate for the loss of government grants that they had relied on so heavily before. It seems natural that they would look to partnerships with certain entities in the for-profit sector that could potentially increase their profits by being granted exclusive access to research being conducted on campuses. Natural though it may be, however, this has had a profound effect on the nature of university education.

The purpose of this thesis is to critically examine the educational consequences of the corporatization of the university. Consideration will be given to the following questions: What is the impact of the corporatized university on the nature and quality of education that students receive in such institutions? Do universities under the influence of the corporatized model actually educate, or merely train? I will argue that the corporatized model devalues the nature of university education. First, I will provide a general characterization of what is traditionally described as the ‘liberal model’ for university education and contrast that with the ‘corporatized model for university education’. Second, I will analyze the concepts of ‘education’ and ‘being educated’ and I will make a distinction between ‘being educated’ and ‘being trained’. The outcome of this analysis is that corporatized universities aim to produce *trained* graduates, while the liberal university model aims to produce *educated* graduates. Third, I will analyze the concept of ‘understanding’, justifying its extrinsic value for students. Finally, I will argue

that the corporatized university's failure to educate its students is a moral failing of significance.

Chapter 1:

Two Conceptions of University Education

The Liberal Model of University Education

Of course, the ‘liberal’ in ‘liberal university model’ does not necessarily refer to any sort of political leaning. As philosopher Martha Nussbaum reminds us, it refers to the “Greek and Roman Stoic notions of an education that is ‘liberal’ in that it liberates the mind from the bondage of habit and custom, producing people who can function with sensitivity and alertness as citizens of the whole world.”¹ Indeed, it is connected to Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave,” in that the chains represent the “bondage of habit and custom,” while the act of being freed and walking out of the cave symbolizes the liberating potential of education. It is connected further with Socrates’ notion of the examined life, in that an education that liberates the mind, enriches one’s life, and makes one somehow better off than she was before. It is no wonder, then, that such education would become so closely connected with the origins of the university as we know it.

Arguably, the modern conception of a liberal university model stems from John Henry Newman’s *The Idea of a University*.² For Newman, the university is the sort of place where the project of a liberal education (read ‘liberating’) could be realized. “This process of training,” he writes, “by which the intellect, instead of being formed or sacrificed to some particular or accidental purpose, some specific trade or profession, or

¹ Martha Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defence of Reform in Liberal Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 8-9.

² John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996). I would argue that Wilhelm von Humboldt’s *On The Limits of State Action* is equally important insofar as it serves as a foundation for the liberal university. However, Humboldt takes a more political approach to university education, while Newman takes a more language-based approach to analyzing the relevant concepts. For that reason I will confine myself to discussing Newman’s works.

study or science, is disciplined for its own sake, is called Liberal Education.”³ Contrast this with what he calls ‘utilitarian education’, which is education that is confined to some narrowly defined end that “should issue in some definite work, which can be weighed and measured.”⁴ Newman is referring to the kind of education that *trains* one in some particular vocation, or to acquire the kinds of skills that might be *useful* in a clear and identifiable set of vocations (e.g., one could train to be a carpenter, or a builder more generally).

Now, Newman believes that liberal education can be useful. In fact, he believes it to be even *more* useful than utilitarian education. Newman argues that a liberal education is a good in itself, and that the good is always useful for it tends to produce more good. The product of a liberal university education, what Newman calls “a cultivated intellect,” tends to enable us to be more useful to others, and to a greater number. Further, compared to the narrowly defined end of a utilitarian education:

...an educated man can learn to do what illiterate men cannot; and the man who has learned to think and to reason and to compare and to discriminate and to analyze, who has refined his taste, and formed his judgment, and sharpened his mental vision, will not indeed at once be a lawyer, or a pleader, or an orator, or a statesman...but he will be placed in that state of intellect in which he can take up any one of the sciences or callings...with an ease, a grace, a versatility and a success, to which another is a stranger.⁵

Although it may not necessarily prepare one for some particular vocation like an education that aims for utility, for Newman, a liberal education is useful nonetheless, only on a broader scale; it disposes those who have such an education to choose whatever vocation they desire and be successful at it. The business of the university, says Newman,

³ Ibid., 109. I believe the sense in which Newman uses ‘training’ here is closer to what we would normally call ‘educating’. I will delve into this further in Chapter 2.

⁴ Ibid., 110.

⁵ Ibid., 118-119.

is to advance an educational programme that is conducive to the kind of learning to which he refers in the passage above. That is, as “a place of *teaching universal knowledge*,” a university must be an institution that fosters the sort of environment that is conducive to teaching in order to liberate (or educate), as opposed to teaching in order to train.⁶

Like Newman, philosopher Michael Oakeshott also associates the university with the liberal educational model.⁷ Moreover, like Newman, Oakeshott sees calls for universities to specify their function as “unfortunate”. According to Oakeshott, “What distinguishes a university is a special manner of engaging in the pursuit of learning,”⁸ that does not regard learning “merely as a means of passing an examination or winning a certificate.”⁹ On the contrary, he sees the university as a community consisting of the scholar, the scholar who teaches, and those who come to be taught (students). What gives the university a special place in the wider enterprise of the pursuit of learning are the activities of, and the relations that prevail among these three ‘classes’ of people.

The scholar is not merely a collector of trifling facts, but someone who knows something about what he is looking for, who can distinguish between what he does and does not know. The scholar is a specialist who cultivates some field of study, and who, though she may specialize in this area or that, is not so narrowly focused that she cannot see the connections between her studies and those of other scholars. “The Scholar,” says Oakeshott, “then is one who knows how to engage in the activity of learning,” and the value of the scholarship that springs from such learning lies not in its utility but in the

⁶ Ibid., 3, 125-126.

⁷ Michael Oakeshott, *The Voice of Liberal Learning: Michael Oakeshott on Education* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1989) To be sure, ‘liberal education’ could refer to education at any level of formal schooling but it is the university level that I am concerned with, so I have chosen two philosophers whose idea of a university refers to one that is consistent with the liberal model.

⁸ Ibid., 96-97

⁹ Ibid., 99.

relics it leaves behind in the minds of the scholars, teachers, and undergraduates that participate in the pursuit of learning *through* the university.¹⁰

Oakeshott goes on to say that we should not be surprised to find teachers amongst such scholars, for even though the voice of the lecturer may not be their natural one, “His power to teach springs from the force and inspiration of his knowledge, from his immersion in the pursuit of learning, which may be felt even by those little touched with the ambitions of a scholar.”¹¹ Of course, not all scholars make good teachers, but his point is that within each scholar lies the potential to usher others towards the sort of learning that surpasses mere memorization of information. The sort of teaching that takes place in such a liberal institution is one in which the teacher is engaged in a conversation with students, teaching that is concerned with what the student is thinking, not with the quantity of information assimilated but with the quality of the student’s mind.

Lastly, the student is the sort of person who “only knows enough of himself and of the world which passes before him to wish to know more.”¹² That is, the student is not a beginner in the learning enterprise, for previous formal schools have already provided a foundation upon which a more substantive education could be built. For the student, the 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.”¹³ It is clear that Oakeshott believes that there will be time later in life to identify with this or that profession, but what a university offers is the time to pursue learning in such a way so as to ensure that one is not swallowed up by the

¹⁰ Ibid., 98.

¹¹ Ibid., 99.

¹² Ibid., 100.

¹³ Ibid., 101.

concerns of professionalism before one's time. For Oakeshott, university education is not a beginning, or an end, but a middle, an interval, "a moment to taste the mystery without the necessity of at once seeking a solution."¹⁴

Again, there is, for Oakeshott as for Newman, an insistence that universities not become institutions devoted to training. I believe that this has to do with the liberal origins of such institutions that stretch back over two millennia. One cannot educate in order to liberate the minds of others by narrowly focusing on honing one set of skills or transmitting one narrowly defined body of knowledge. Such an education constricts more than it liberates, which is why philosophers like Newman and Oakeshott, even though they are separated by almost a century, are so opposed to university education devolving into an institution of vocational training.

So, when I refer to the 'liberal model for university education' I mean 'a university that comprises a community of intellectuals (i.e., scholars, teachers, and students) who pursue knowledge irrespective of any possible extrinsic reward, a university that aims to *educate* and not just *train*, that *liberates* instead of constricts'.

The Corporatized Model for University Education

In an article that tries to get at the core characteristics of the corporatized model, political scientist Henry Steck notes that "the corporatized university is defined as an institution that is characterized by processes, decisional criteria, expectations, organizational culture, and operating practices that are taken from, and have their origins in, the modern business corporation. It is characterized by the entry of the university into

¹⁴ Ibid., 101.

marketplace relationships and by the use of market strategies in university decision making.”¹⁵ The corporatized university, then, is not just an institution whose practices partly resemble those of business corporations, but an institution whose practices are synonymous with those of a business corporation. It is not an institution that dabbles in trying out practices that make for a successful business corporation, but an institution that seeks to emulate what it judges to be the best and most relevant values and practices of successful organizations.

Though helpful, Steck’s definition fails to capture the extent to which the corporatized university model differs from the traditional liberal university model. In what follows, I will use Steck and journalist Jennifer Washburn’s work to highlight the general characteristics of the corporatized university.¹⁶ Although it would be nice to be able to derive necessary and sufficient conditions for the concept of the corporatized university, that will prove to be difficult here. The concept of the corporatized university is far too amorphous to be defined as such, but not so much that it cannot be characterized generally. To this end, I will highlight the salient features of the corporatized model in order to provide a general characterization of the concept.

Although many names have been used to describe this concept, Steck has chosen to call it ‘corporatization’, and I will as well.¹⁷ I do so because one of the more popular terms, the ‘entrepreneurial university’, gives one the impression that the primary goal of such a university is to seek out potential revenue sources wherever it can (e.g., the

¹⁵ Henry Steck, “Corporatization of the University: Seeking Conceptual Clarity,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 585, (Jan., 2003): 74.

¹⁶ Jennifer Washburn, *University, Inc.* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

¹⁷ See, for example, Sheila Slaughter, and Larry L. Leslie *Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies, and the Entrepreneurial University* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), where the authors use multiple terms (as the title suggests) interchangeably.

patenting and licensing of research results, or the selling of the exclusive rights to those licenses). Though this may be one of the considerable differences between the corporatized and traditional liberal model for university education, it is hardly the activity that defines it. “Corporatization” seems a better choice in that all it implies is that the institution in question is at least in some way, or perhaps in many ways, becoming more like a corporate entity. This might include trying to generate revenue in new and innovative ways, but it also may include a more robust public relations department, or the implementation of quality control measures that are more likely to be used in industry than in educational institutions.

To be sure, corporatization is a matter of degree. Some universities are more radically corporatized than others, possessing most of the characteristics that I will outline below. For example, Washburn provides a detailed account of the corporatization of the University of California at Berkeley. According to Washburn, over the past 25 years, U.C. Berkeley has entered into multiple industry partnerships, including a \$25 million agreement with a pharmaceutical company which granted the company (then ‘Novartis’) exclusive rights to negotiate the licensing of patentable research results, delay the publication of any results for up to eight months, and two of five seats on the Department of Plant and Microbial Biology’s research committee.¹⁸ Between 1993 and 2003, industry-sponsored research throughout the U.C. system grew from \$65 million to \$155 million. Moreover, Washburn tells the story of a professor who was denied tenure, due in part to his opposition to both the deal with the pharmaceutical company and to genetically

¹⁸ Washburn, *University, Inc.*, 3-7.

modified crops (the company's specialty).¹⁹ Berkeley has also shifted its focus away from its roots in the liberal arts, towards the idea of a university that puts its biotechnology and microelectronics research front and centre, while striving to establish corporate partnerships wherever possible. As the current Chancellor, Nicholas Dirks, puts it, "...it is vital for us to develop new funding mechanisms that will entail [our creating] innovative partnerships between public universities and the private sector."²⁰ Berkeley is a prime example, therefore, of a university that has made a conscious decision to align itself with for-profit industry regardless of the effect it has on the university's public mission or the freedom of its professors to pursue disinterested research.

On the other hand, there are universities, like Saint Mary's University, that have unwittingly adopted some of the values and practices of the corporate sector. Amongst administrators there is talk of 'learning outcomes', which suggests an attempt to try and quantify the learning process such that it can be graded and tracked to ensure the best 'product' is being offered. In some cases, departments have shifted their central focus towards more applied areas in order to create 'synergies' (to use corporate-speak) with the more popular programs the university offers. And, of course, there is the 'service centre', which one should not mistake for a university-subsidized body shop, but rather a 'one-stop shop' where students can come to sort out all manner of administrative and bureaucratic issues, including academic guidance, which hitherto had been attended to by academic faculty. What distinguishes corporatized universities on this end of the spectrum is that the adoption of these characteristics is perfectly natural in that it is just

¹⁹ Ibid., 14-17.

²⁰ Ellie Bothwell, "Nicholas Dirks: public universities need not choose between access and excellence," *Times Higher Education*, last modified October 1, 2015, www.timeshighereducation.com.

what universities today must do to ‘stay competitive’. There is no explicit acknowledgement that the university is adopting ‘corporate practices’ but, as I will show below, these are hallmarks of the corporatized university nonetheless.

Steck’s outline of the corporatized university covers a great many characteristics, but there is a subset of those characteristics that have to do with the culture of the university more than anything else.²¹ Let’s call these the Cultural Characteristics. These Cultural Characteristics signal that the university has a general regard for the practices of the corporate sector as desirable and positive. For example, these universities have adopted hierarchical organizational patterns, productivity measures, quality control, and cost-cutting measures to increase revenue. As I mentioned earlier, the corporate sector is seen as a credible partner, and as an appropriate source of revenue. Further, corporatized universities make a commitment to change the culture by re-conceptualizing certain departments as revenue-generating centres, re-conceptualizing the university as a business that offers a product (e.g., training, research, information), re-defining the student as a customer, and adopting a customer service orientation. That includes providing the electronic means for students to register for courses more easily, collect course notes, and communicate with faculty, but also adopting the ‘customer is always right’ ethos, giving students the power to evaluate professors, and make changes to the course catalogue in accordance with their demands. Lastly, these characteristics include the imposition of standards of efficiency and cost-effectiveness, as well as a re-defining of the university’s

²¹ Steck, “Corporatization of the University,” 75-76, 79. Steck lays out nine characteristics for corporatization, but, for the sake of ease, I will consolidate Steck’s nine points further by highlighting the salient features that run through his characterization, in order to get a clearer picture of the features that define the corporatized university. This will also allow for ease of reference in the chapters to come. Further, it will allow me to pare off the characteristics that are redundant, and those that are too general to provide a meaningful characterization of the concept of corporatization.

public mission by entering into partnerships in the private sector that benefit those private entities first and foremost. These latter two characteristics create a culture that has a much more corporate feel, as professors become micro-managers who must justify new courses and research projects by reference not to their content, but to their earning potential.

I call these characteristics ‘Cultural’ because they orient the university, over time, towards the adoption of a more corporatized model. They do this imperceptibly by the gradual adoption of corporate practices, which, individually, appear reasonable, efficient, necessary even, but collectively create a corporate environment that appears normal and is generally accepted. Few members of the university community notice these individual developments, but they have a cumulative effect. The mindset is, “This is just what you have to do to stay in the game to attract students.” That is, the adoption of these characteristics signifies a creeping towards a cultural shift.

Take, for example, the public mission that public universities are typically charged with. Public universities that fund scholarly research with government funds have traditionally publicized the results of such research (through academic journals or conferences). The idea, I take it, is that if public monies are used to fund studies, experiments, and research papers, then it follows that the results of such activities belong to the public, at least in the sense that the public must have access to them. However, by re-conceptualizing certain departments as revenue centres, the corporatized university privatizes such research (in some cases) in order to make a profit. As Simon Marginson, a professor of higher education, puts it, “private universities produce private goods.” Private universities may engage commercial markets and pursue their own ends free of state intervention, given that they must finance their operations themselves, whereas

public universities, because they are publicly funded, are beholden to the public.²² In other words, public corporatized universities are acting more like private universities. Even though government funds may not account for as large a portion of their operating costs as they did forty years ago, public universities are still funded by and large by public monies. Therefore, any shift towards the sorts of activities one might sensibly associate with a private university signifies a cultural shift for the public university.

Further, examples like the now infamous case of Nancy Olivieri illustrate that increased ties with the corporate sector have a way of subtly, and insidiously, altering other cultural hallmarks of the liberal university.²³ Part of the reason why the results of scholarly research are made public is to ensure that the research efforts of scholars is not constrained by any outside force, that they are free to pursue any line of inquiry they deem valuable. Departments in the Sciences have the potential to reap great financial rewards by virtue of the nature of their work. But, as cases like Olivieri's suggest, the efforts of scholars can be directed towards lines of inquiry that favour the corporate sponsors of their research. On the other hand, departments in the Arts feel pressured to steer their research towards potentially lucrative subject matters, just as future scholars (e.g., graduate students and undergraduates) choose to specialize in subjects that are *en vogue* (because of their revenue potential) as opposed to those that may need attention. The point is that the characteristics above have a creeping, pervasive effect on the culture of the traditional liberal university. Academic freedom is threatened as research is shaped

²² James E. Côté and Anton L. Allahar, *Lowering Higher Education: The Rise of Corporate Universities and the Fall of Liberal Education* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2011), 17.

²³ Washburn, *University, Inc.*, 123-124. Olivieri was fired from her research position at the University of Toronto after her research suggested that a drug made by the company sponsoring her lab (read 'funding it') was not only ineffective but potentially deadly. Her research was buried until a lawsuit against her former employer went to court. In the meantime, her former partner in the lab published research that hailed the drug as a success.

by the corporatized university's drive for new sources of revenue, while the interests of the private sector threaten the public mission of the university. This is clearly the largest, and most fundamental, of the three conditions, and it seems to me that this is where corporatization begins.

Next, there are also those characteristics of a corporatized university that encourage their participation in activities for the purpose of increasing revenue from non-governmental sources. Let's call these the Revenue Characteristics.²⁴ One upshot of a university's looking to the corporate sector for operational guidelines is that there is increased pressure for departments to become fiscally self-sufficient. For lack of a better way to put it, 'publish or perish' becomes '*profit* or perish.' One example concerns George Mason University (GMU). In the 1990s, then-governor James S. Gilmore, promised to increase state funding of the school by as much as \$25 million a year if the university were to better serve the state's high-tech industry. Soon thereafter, GMU's president began adding new degree programs in computer science and information technology, while eliminating programs in Classics, German, French, and several other less lucrative departments in the humanities.²⁵ Although this may be an example of a university putting an emphasis on certain faculties in order to increase its revenue from the public, it is not a stretch to imagine that the governor at the time saw an opportunity to curry favour with a powerful industry in the region. So, even though public money was at stake, the changes that GMU made ultimately benefited regional corporate interests. As

²⁴ Steck, "Corporatization of the University," 77-78.

²⁵ Washburn, *University, Inc.*, 212-214.

one professor opposing the changes commented, the “concern is that we are turning the university into a subcontractor for local industry.”²⁶

There are a host of other characteristics that should be subsumed under the category of Revenue Characteristics, which would, as Steck says, “crack, if not destroy, the wall between academics and commerce.”²⁷ Examples include universities that provide capital for start-up firms; the patenting and licensing of various intellectual objects that otherwise may have been published without a view to profit; contracted research; distance learning and consulting services; the commercialization of the campus (e.g., corporate sponsors for buildings, labs, departmental chairs, research chairs and councils, and an increase in the presence of franchised restaurants, bars, and coffee shops); and the corporate funding of fellowships and departmental programs. In sum, Revenue Characteristics are a set of characteristics that concern substantive changes a university makes to its revenue-generating activities. These are not simply activities that are meant to shore up financial shortfalls, but those that have the potential to attract a significant amount of additional revenue, and change both the look and feel of the campus itself.

Lastly, the corporatized university brings a lot of changes to the personnel that dot the university landscape. I am thinking here of professors, administrators, and students. Let’s call these the Personnel Characteristics. This aspect of corporatization concerns the kinds of personnel universities hire at the administrative and faculty level, and the changes that are made to the kinds of positions available for faculty members in particular. Examples include: selecting and evaluating top administrators by criteria more appropriate to a CEO than a provost or president; the phasing out of tenured professors

²⁶ Ibid., 214.

²⁷ Steck, “Corporatization of the University,” 77.

and the number of tenure-track positions; an increase in part-time professors (low-cost, disposable workforce); an increase in the administrator-to-faculty ratio; and the now standard requirement for universities to have industry liaison staff to create partnerships with the private sector.²⁸ More significantly, perhaps, is the restriction of the autonomy of faculty members, leaving less leeway for controversial statements and works, placing an increased importance on student and administrative evaluations, and a reduction of autonomy in curriculum development.²⁹

Indeed, the potential impact on curriculum development cannot be overstated. Let us consider the hypothetical case of a new professor in philosophy teaching an introductory critical thinking course. In her syllabus she wishes to include something like ‘course journals’ in which students will reflect on what they have learned and how it has changed how they think. The idea is to get students to think about their thinking. However, this professor knows that this is a ‘soft outcome’. That is, it is not a quantifiable, measurable outcome that can easily be used to gauge the progress of individual students. This professor knows that she will have to justify this curriculum to department heads who are under pressure from administrators to justify the program as a whole by reference to specific, quantifiable, learning outcomes. Accordingly, she decides not to include this as a part of her syllabus. I do not think this example is all that far-fetched, and characteristics like those found above create an environment for university personnel that is quite different from that of the traditional liberal model for universities. The problem here is that this kind of environment forces professors to play it safe. Teaching can often be messy, and not every aspect of a well-designed course can be

²⁸ Steck, “Corporatization of the University,” 77, 78-79.

²⁹ Washburn, *University Inc.*, 204.

quantified. Moreover, part of becoming a better teacher involves taking risks and learning from your mistakes. Under the auspices of the liberal model, professors (even newly minted ones) are typically given the sort of latitude that allows them to take those risks and make the mistakes that good teaching requires without facing serious repercussions. Under the auspices of the Personnel Characteristics of the corporatized model, this is much more difficult to realize.

Together, the characteristics identified under the Culture Characteristics, Revenue Characteristics, and Personnel Characteristics provide a general characterization of the corporatized university. To be sure, a university need not possess all these characteristics to count as an example of a corporatized university. As I said earlier, these are not necessary and sufficient conditions, but a host of characteristics that provide a general sketch of the corporatized university that highlights the differences between the liberal and corporatized models for university education.

The following chapters will address what I take to be some of the more substantive differences between the liberal and corporatized models, but there are a few more differences I would like to highlight. First, regardless of the degree to which the public funds the traditional liberal university, it takes its public mission more seriously. For lack of a better way to put it, this university's ethos is 'public monies, public knowledge'. Under the auspices of this model, knowledge is not for sale and the scholars of such universities serve the public first. Traditionally, universities have been very skeptical about the influence of the private sector, which is why the corporatized university's unabashed embracing of it is such a radical departure.

Second, the traditional liberal model also puts a greater emphasis on the importance of full-time positions and tenure. With that kind of job security, scholars need not worry about who their work might upset (to an extent) and thus have a greater degree of freedom to pursue whatever subject matter their expertise directs them towards. The whole purpose of the academic freedom movement of the early 20th century was to safeguard professors from the wrath of wealthy benefactors and corporate interests who were offended or otherwise perturbed by the works of certain professors. The alternative, says essayist Louis Menand, is a “political free-for-all” where curriculum decisions and scholarly merit “are arrived at through a process of negotiation among competing interests.”³⁰ The traditional liberal model of university education trusts that its professors are in the best position to make such decisions themselves, and seeks to protect their ability to do so.

Third, the traditional liberal model has embraced the importance of the Arts in the role of educating its students, and perhaps even downplayed other faculties to an extent. Faculties like the Sciences are typically associated with more factual assimilation than critical evaluation. This is why many of Newman’s writings on the university are filled with remarks that denigrate the sciences. Now, his view might be extreme, but we can say, at least, that the traditional liberal university embraces the importance of the Arts. The corporate model tends to downplay the importance of the Arts, in part because the Arts are not as lucrative as the Sciences and also because the corporatized universities’ ‘customers’ are looking for vocational *training* in burgeoning, lucrative fields that

³⁰ Ibid., 205.

cannot be found elsewhere, fields that typically require a science, commerce, engineering, or computing science degree.

It is this denigration of the Arts that is especially troubling, precisely because of the potential role that they play in producing *educated* students. More than other faculties in the university, subjects in the Arts have a tendency to foster the sort of critical attitude that one would normally associate with ‘being educated’. Martha Nussbaum notes that some of the abilities associated with the Arts and Humanities include “the ability to think critically” as well as “daring imagination, empathetic understanding of human experiences of many different kinds, and understanding of the complexity of the world we live in.”³¹ The sorts of problems that are addressed in the Arts rarely have easy, objective solutions. Thus, students are invited to think for themselves and provide their own defense or refutation of some theory regardless what the teacher may think. Further, subjects like philosophy investigate the very foundation of all university subjects through fields like argumentation theory, epistemology, metaphysics, and logic. It is not that Science and other faculties cannot nurture such abilities, but, arguably, they can be more readily acquired with the aid of education in the Arts. This is one of the reasons why the liberal model for university education seems more likely to achieve the goal of producing *educated* graduates.

It should suffice to say that the corporatized model for university education, in both its more mild and radical forms, represents a substantive departure from the traditional liberal model. In what follows, I will delve deeper into the more substantive differences between these two models, directing specific attention to whether or not the

³¹ Martha Nussbaum, *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 7.

corporatized model can produce educated students or whether it produces students who are merely trained. My contention is that the corporatized model provides an education experience that is similar to what Newman calls 'Utilitarian education'. I will endeavour to explain why these changes are not in the best interest of the university, its students, and its faculty, and provide a justification of the value of the liberal model for university education. But first, I will provide an analysis of the related concepts of 'education' and 'being educated'.

Chapter 2:

On Education and Being Educated

One of the main goals of a university is to educate its students and it is certainly true that ‘being educated’ is one of the many accomplishments of which a university graduate can be proud. But what does it mean to ‘be educated’ and what is ‘education’? In this chapter I would like to answer these questions and provide a robust analysis of these concepts. My contention is that the corporatized university ignores one of the traditional university’s primary goals: educating its students. And perhaps, if taken to its most radical conclusion, the corporatized university makes such a goal impossible to realize, turning university education into vocational education, or what Newman calls ‘Utilitarian education’. I believe that if we can get a clearer picture of the concepts of ‘education’ and its complementary concept ‘being educated’, then we may further understand why the corporatized university represents a threat to the traditional liberal model for university education, and the successful completion of education in general. To be sure, even if I am able to show that ‘being educated’ is not an end at which the corporatized university aims, it will still leave unanswered the question of whether or not the traditional liberal university model is to be preferred. That is a question I will answer in the next two chapters. For now, I will focus on analyzing the more general concepts of education and being educated.

The Concept of Education

In *The Aims of Education – A Conceptual Inquiry*, R.S. Peters provides an analysis of the concept of ‘education’. The first thing to note, Peters says, is that education is not an activity in the same way ‘running’ or ‘teaching’ might be. As he suggests, “We do not say, ‘Go along, go and get on with your educating’ as we would say, ‘Go along, go and get on with your teaching.’”¹ Indeed, it seems odd to use ‘educating’ in this sense. Moreover, parents may sensibly remark to their children upon returning from school, “How was school today?”, but it would be odd if they were to remark, “How was education today?” Though ordinary usage certainly suggests that many tend to use the term ‘education’ as a synonym for ‘school’ examples like those above seem to suggest that they do not overlap in every context. Further, it seems intuitively plausible that someone could receive an education without having to attend any formal institution that would qualify as a school. It seems like education, then, is something other than an activity, and that ‘education’ is something other than a synonym for ‘schooling’.

Perhaps, then, education does not simply consist in having attended some school, but having attended a *particular* school like a university, let’s say. Though promising, that proposition is wrongheaded in that it seems like education is more than just having attended *one* particular kind of school. Indeed, we sensibly refer to primary and secondary schools as educational institutions, and their governance typically falls to the department of education at some level of government, or perhaps many. Moreover, it seems that both primary and secondary schools make substantive contributions to the

¹ R.S. Peters, “The Aims of Education – A Conceptual Inquiry,” in *The Philosophy of Education*, ed. R.S. Peters (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 15.

educational process by endowing students with certain foundational skills and knowledge. That is, if ‘post-secondary schooling’ is what is meant by ‘education’, then it prompts us to ask what primary, elementary, and secondary schools would be. Are they training facilities? This seems unlikely, for though they may well entail a great deal of rote memorization and training, there must be *some* deeper learning going on, and even if there is not, that does not seem a sufficient reason to discount such schooling as ‘education’.² Moreover, if education is indeed a process, it seems like there is valuable foundational learning that goes on in schools prior to the post-secondary level. They must be a part of the process, rather than apart from it. So, whatever education might be, it is not an activity, it is not synonymous with schooling, nor is it synonymous with having attended one particular kind of school. So, what is it?

John Dewey believed people should stop conceiving of education as a preparation for some later stage in life and instead should “make of it the full meaning of the present life.”³ Elsewhere, Dewey remarks, “When it is said that education is development, everything depends upon how development is conceived. Our net conclusion is that life is development, and that developing, growing, is life.”⁴ Though interesting, his definitions do not seem to serve the explanatory function we are looking for. However, it is helpful that he seems to recognize that education is no more an activity than life is; that is, it seems to suggest that ‘life’, ‘growth’, ‘development’ and ‘education’ share a family resemblance. Though a life lived is certainly filled with many activities, it would be strange to call ‘life’ an activity in the same sense that is strange to call ‘education’ an

² This will be the subject of the last two sections of this chapter.

³ John Dewey, “Self-realization as the Moral Ideal,” *The Philosophical Review*, 2, no.6 (Nov., 1893): 660.

⁴ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (Waiheke Island: Floating Press, 2009), 88.

activity. Further, Peters calls attention to the fact that ‘reform’ is another concept that shares just such a resemblance with ‘education’. So, what is it that these concepts share that ‘education’ and activities like ‘teaching’ do not?

The answer provided by Peters is that concepts like ‘education’ and ‘reform’ are not for picking out a specific activity like ‘running’ does, “but for laying down criteria to which a family of activities must conform.”⁵ His example is that we would not say, “Have you been educating them *or* instructing them in algebra this morning?”, though we might say “Have you been educating them *by* instructing them this morning?” His point, I take it, is that there are innumerable activities that count as ‘education’, just as there are innumerable activities that would count as ‘living’ or ‘reforming’, and so it must be the case that ‘education’ and terms like it are used to identify the general criteria to which certain activities must conform in order to call them ‘education’. For example, playing dodgeball may seem like mere play with no other goal than trying to win, and indeed it could be only that. However, with proper supervision, rule enforcement, the right attitude on the players’ parts, and guidance from some facilitator, it is at least conceivable that such an activity could be educational, provided it conforms to the very general criteria to which ‘education’ refers.

These criteria, says Peters, come in two different forms: (1) those that characterize the successful outcome of education in the form of an educated person; and (2) those that characterize the processes by means of which people gradually become educated. The latter criteria would refer to the activities that we typically associate with education, like those of ‘teaching’, ‘learning’, ‘curricula’, and the like. The former set of criteria would

⁵ Peters, “The Aims of Education,” 15.

include those that define what it means to 'be educated'. So, taking all of these considerations into account, 'education' is 'a process that refers to a host of activities which conform to two types of criteria that (1) characterize the successful outcome of education in the form of an educated person and (2) characterize the means by which people gradually become educated'.

If Peters is right, then it follows that an educated person has had his thinking reformed in some sense. Surely it could be said that someone who is educated has grown in some sense, but it seems that there could conceivably be instances of both that we would not want to call 'education'. Dewey's metaphor of 'education-as-growth, and growth-as-life' does prove suggestive, even if it is uninformative, for as Israel Scheffler reminds us, there is a practical purport to seemingly senseless metaphors and slogans that must be acknowledged in the philosophy of education.⁶ Though it is wrong to conceive of 'education-as-growth' and 'growth-as-life' as an analysis of the sort that Peters offers, when seen as metaphors they remind us that what each of these concepts has in common that they are not activities but processes. Further, the family resemblance that these concepts share also suggests that they refer to a process that is in some way transformative. 'Growth' refers to a process that involves physical transformation specifically and 'life' refers to a process that involves both physical and mental transformation of a certain kind.

There is, however, a problem with Peters' analysis: on his reading it seems that 'education' is synonymous with 'reform' unless we use criteria (1) and (2) to further

⁶ Israel Scheffler, *The Language of Education* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas – Publisher, 1960), 46.

separate those things we would call ‘reform’ from those we would call ‘education’. That is, it seems uninformative without an analysis of what it means to ‘be educated’.

Being Educated

Peters believes that one of the necessary conditions of ‘being educated’ is the ability to delight in the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake, as opposed to some extrinsic end.⁷ Of course, knowledge can be pursued for any extrinsic end, and indeed this is why many people seek to become knowledgeable. But we would hardly call a person educated who would say, “Thank goodness, I have a university degree, and I don’t need to learn any more than I already have.” Such a person may acknowledge that there will be many things he has to learn in order to do a particular job, but once he has learned those things he will slide back into apathy.

When Dewey remarks that ‘education is growth’, he does so because he believes that there is no ‘end’ to education.⁸ Though I agree with Peters that the successful outcome of education is an educated person, I do not think that means that I must reject Dewey’s notion that education is a lifelong process, that the learning never really stops. Indeed, I believe that what Dewey has identified is one of the necessary conditions of ‘being educated’. Perhaps the person who says, “Thank goodness, I have a university degree, and I don’t need to learn any more than I already have,” will find that she will have to learn this or that custom or procedure in order to be a functioning member of society, but even then we would hardly want to call her educated precisely because she

⁷ Peters, “The Aims of Education,” 18.

⁸ I am not using ‘end’ as a synonym for ‘goal’ here (or elsewhere). I am using ‘end’ as Dewey does, which is in reference to there being no terminus to the process of education.

seems to lack the kind of passion for learning and knowing that we ordinarily associate with 'being educated'. If one cannot delight in the acquisition of knowledge irrespective of the extrinsic rewards it may bring, it is unlikely that such a person would be able to see their education through to its successful completion. Indeed, as Dewey suggests, 'being educated' implies lifelong learning, for those who can delight in doing something for its own sake will not be disposed to give it up.

Let us consider the case of two people who decide to take a class on cooking a rack of lamb. One is taking the course in order to be able to make rack of lamb for an upcoming dinner party, while the other is taking it purely for the joy of cooking. The former person is pursuing the knowledge this course offers for purely instrumental reasons (i.e., for the extrinsic rewards it offers) and takes no delight in cooking, while the latter is pursuing it because he delights in cooking for its own sake. Now, suppose a class on baking pastries is being offered the week following the dinner party. It seems to me that the former person is far less likely to participate than the latter. Being able to delight in some activity for its own sake signifies both a passion for that activity and the likelihood that one will continue to engage in that activity irrespective of any extrinsic rewards. As Peters says, we ordinarily associate 'being educated' with a certain kind of passion for learning and acquiring knowledge for its own sake. I would add that, as Dewey suggests, 'being educated' implies a desire to continue learning even after one's formal schooling is over, and it is precisely the ability to delight in learning and the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake that accounts for this.

It is this ability to delight in the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake that leads Peters into his next condition: understanding.⁹ We would not call someone educated who merely knows a lot of facts. Such a person is certainly knowledgeable, intelligent, learned, and perhaps even accomplished. But if a great body of facts is all one has accumulated, without any understanding of the conceptual frameworks under which they are subsumed, then it hardly seems appropriate to call them educated. The educated person does not just *know*, they know *how* they know, and they know the ‘reasons *why*’ what they know is the case (i.e., they know why they are permitted to say, “I know,” in certain circumstances and not others). Quantity of knowledge is certainly a necessary condition of understanding, but it is not synonymous with it. That is, one needs to know many things about the basics of physics and math in order to understand exactly *what* the theory of general relativity is. But there is a difference between knowing what that theory states and *understanding* it, in that the latter entails that one knows its genesis, justification, and significance.¹⁰ We may call those who fail to acquire the understanding that an educated person must possess knowledgeable, but we should not call them educated.

This condition complements the first in that the ability to delight in the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake becomes a very powerful motive to go beyond what must be memorized for some test. It is one thing to be able to memorize a great list of facts and another to be able to understand the concepts under which they are subsumed. If extrinsic rewards are the only motivating factor for a student’s participation in some school, then it seems likely that his inability to acquire knowledge irrespective of extrinsic rewards will

⁹ Ibid., 19.

¹⁰ See Chapter 3 for a more detailed analysis of ‘understanding’.

prevent him from inquiring beyond what the teacher and textbook present. To be sure, tests at all levels of schooling tend to ask questions that require the student to think deeply about the matters discussed in class, and others that merely require to regurgitate some fact. I take it that a student who focuses more on acing the portions of the test that focus on the latter kind of knowledge could still pass and graduate even if he struggled on the questions regarding the former sort of understanding. And if such knowledge were all one had acquired throughout one's educational experiences, then I think it uncontroversial to say that no one would want to call them educated, regardless of the kind of school from which they graduated or the quantity of knowledge they possessed.

So, to sum up so far, it appears as though the educated person is knowledgeable, but also understands the greater conceptual frameworks under which his knowledge is subsumed, and is, furthermore, able to delight in acquiring knowledge for its own sake, not just for some extrinsic reward.

As I mentioned earlier in the context of Dewey's metaphors for education, when we talk about this or that person being educated, there seems to be a connection with transformation. When we talk about the difference between someone who is educated and someone who is not, we imply that there is something more desirable about being educated. We rarely talk about the educated person being worse off than he was before he was educated.¹¹ As Peters notes, we would not call a person educated who knew a lot about history, scoring perfectly on all his exams, but who could not see the connection

¹¹ Ibid., 15, 19-20. Though many people do tend to speak as though the educated are worse off, I believe this to be more of a product of jealousy, and anti-intellectualism, than anything else. All things being equal, we tend to associate 'being educated' with being better off in some sense.

between his knowledge and the events in the world around him.¹² That is, the transformation central to education is such that one's entire outlook on life is changed by it. There is no 'hiving off' of the educated part of one's mind; rather, it permeates many aspects of one's life.

But I'm not sure that Peters' justification goes far enough. In Plato's "Allegory of the Cave," the prisoner who is liberated to discover that the shapes on the cave wall were nothing but shadows cannot go back to being chained. Indeed, many great philosophers, spanning many different eras, have espoused the view that education is a transformative experience. Even modern universities advertise themselves to future students as places where great transformation will take place. But what makes it necessary that an educated person have their outlook on life transformed in just such a way? This takes us back to the family of meaning to which 'education' belongs. As Peters says, "'Education', like 'reform', picks out a family of processes culminating in a person being better."¹³ They are distinguished by the norms at which they aim, but they both *must* imply that the 'reformed' and the 'educated' have achieved a different mental state than they previously had. For example, we would not want to call a criminal reformed even if he mimicked all the behaviours of a reformed person, and went on committing crimes as he did before his so-called 'reform'. For a criminal to be 'reformed' he must be able to see why his criminal behaviour is unacceptable, and if he does so, then it must also be the case that he comes to understand and interact with the world differently than he had before, that he has had his worldview *transformed*. This is where 'education' and 'reform' overlap, and why the two concepts seem so similar.

¹² Ibid., 20.

¹³ Ibid., 16.

We can distinguish the two by pointing out that each process culminates in two similar, but distinct, states: ‘being educated’ and ‘being reformed’. Whereas ‘reform’ implies that some behaviour or outlook on life *must* be changed, ‘education’ does not. Education is intimately connected with teaching and learning. At all levels of schooling we see teachers who aim to get students to learn, hoping that the students *know something* (or many things) they did not know before by the end of the class, semester, unit, or school year. Moreover, students do not just walk away from formal schooling with only knowledge; they also seem to walk away with skills. In light of this, we can fix the problem with Peters’ analysis that I pointed out at the end of the previous section. I would now say that ‘reform’ is ‘a family of processes that aims to *correct* some behaviour or outlook on life’, while ‘education’ is ‘a process that aims to endow students with the knowledge and skills to come to form their own outlook on life’. Education is about empowering students to think for themselves so that they may look at their thinking and behaviour and correct them as they deem necessary, but the impulse and capacity to correct is something *they* are empowered to do by virtue of having been endowed with the necessary knowledge and skills. Such correcting is self-imposed; it is not a part of the process of education as it is with reform because the correcting in education is self-imposed. So, we could say that ‘education’ can *help* one become ‘reformed’, and in such cases we could say that reform and education refer to the same process. But contrary to Peters’ view, while ‘reform’ necessarily aims at correcting some behaviour or thought process, education does not necessarily do so. That is, despite the potential for overlap, the two concepts are not synonymous.

Peters' final condition for 'being educated' is that one cannot be narrowly specialized.¹⁴ But it seems to me that this is more of a by-product, or necessary consequence, of 'being educated' rather than a defining criterion of the concept itself. One of the benefits of the modern university (traditionally construed) is that it has greatly increased the number of subjects one may choose to study. The drawback is that students do not have the time to study every subject in-depth. Even if one took different courses in different subjects for each of a four-year study, though she may acquire a great deal of knowledge, she will most certainly lack the kind of understanding that 'being educated' requires. That is, being educated certainly requires that one study something in-depth. Just because one chooses one major and, accordingly, devotes more time to that subject, it does not follow that one is not educated. Indeed, academics have some of the most narrow, and often obscure specializations, yet we would not want to call them uneducated.

There is a difference between being narrowly specialized, as one is required to be in academia, and being narrowly specialized in the way a carpenter may be, for example. The carpenter need not understand the concepts that underlie his knowledge of cabinet-making in order to qualify as a carpenter.¹⁵ But that does not mean that the carpenter cannot be an educated man. Indeed, if the carpenter can delight in the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake, understand the concepts that underlie his craft, and have his worldview transformed by his craft, then surely we could say of such a man that he is

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁵ Some of the concepts that underlie carpentry might include those of dendrology; those of thermodynamics (insofar as different temperatures affect the nature of the wood); or those of meteorology and geology, insofar as understanding how the properties of the same species of wood differ from location to location is relevant.

educated. All things being equal, what precludes the carpenter from 'being educated' is that mastery of his craft does not *require* him to satisfy the understanding condition of 'being educated', whereas a professor of philosophy's mastery of seventeenth-century rationalism does. Both are narrowly specialized, yet one is necessarily educated and the other is not. This is because coming to have such an understanding of seventeenth-century rationalist thought requires an understanding of how these particular thinkers fit into the greater world of philosophy and what precisely distinguishes them from similar thinkers in other eras; it requires an understanding of the basic concepts of philosophy under which this specialized knowledge is subsumed. Such a highly specialized person is surely still an educated one. Accordingly, 'not being narrowly specialized' could not be a condition of 'being educated' for it would inappropriately discount some of the most highly educated people society has to offer.

From this we can conclude that a person is educated if and only if she can (1) delight in the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake, (2) understand the concepts that underlie what she knows, and (3) have her worldview transformed by what she knows. We also maintain what I believe is a more specific (though still general) definition of 'education' that allows us to distinguish it more easily from related concepts like reform. That is, 'education' is 'a *process* that refers to a host of activities that *aim to endow students with the knowledge and skills to form their own outlook on life* and conform to two types of criteria that (1) characterize the successful outcome of education in the form of an educated person and (2) characterize the means by which people gradually become educated'.

Universities, Corporatization, and *Successful Education*

What characterizes the corporatized university is its insistence on preparing its students for the corporate world by endowing them with the knowledge and skills that will make them hireable entities. As Martha Nussbaum puts it, “Radical changes are occurring in what democratic societies teach the young...If this trend continues, nations all over the world will soon be producing generations of useful machines, rather than complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person’s sufferings and achievements.”¹⁶ To be sure, both Nussbaum and I are criticizing the same corporatizing trend in universities, but her analysis focuses on how universities are in a unique position to create the kinds of citizens that make democracies flourish.¹⁷ Moreover, we both think that the corporatized model aims to produce ‘trained’ graduates, not ‘educated’ ones. Where Nussbaum sees the liberal university as an educational institution in a unique position to foster the development of true ‘citizens of the world’, I see an educational institution in a unique position to foster the development of educated people, people who are likely to become ‘citizens of the world’ (as she puts it), among other things.

Nussbaum, like a number of others, including Steck, Washburn, Anton Allahar and James Côté, make it sound as though corporatized universities are so different from traditional liberal universities that they should not even count as educational institutions.¹⁸

¹⁶ Nussbaum, *Not For Profit*, 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 91-94.

¹⁸ See, Washburn, *University, Inc.*, 226-227. Washburn sees the corporatized university as a commercial enterprise, and professors as ‘businesspeople’. See, Steck, “Corporatization of the University,” 81. Steck talks about the corporatized university as being a university in name only, “a shell of a university.” See, Côté and Allahar, *Ivory Tower Blues* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 183-187. Côté and Allahar want to say that ‘education’ and ‘training’ are opposed, and thus that the corporatized university is not an educational institution but more of a training facility. I will argue below that I do not think this is so.

Indeed, these authors sometimes go so far as to suggest that they are closer in kind to factories than they are to other educational institutions. Though I am inclined to agree, a simple look back on our analysis of ‘education’ shows that this is not exactly so.

Given the definition of ‘education’ provided above, it seems to me that the corporatized university, though it may be a radical departure from the traditional university, is an educational institution nonetheless. If we look at the first part of the definition of ‘education’ it is clear that the corporatized university does seek to ‘endow its students with the skills and knowledge necessary to form their own outlook on life’, despite the fact that the corporatized university has a much more narrow, career-oriented outcome in mind for its students. But surely this is bad news for those who oppose such a university model, for it implies that the corporatized university is simply a different kind of university. It is a university that seeks to produce *trained* graduates for some area of employment, creating graduates for the demands of today’s workforce, as opposed to *educated* citizens of the world. Though it may be a radical departure from the traditional model, it cannot be criticized or rejected on the basis that it is somehow un-educational.

There is, however, another way to criticize the corporatized model. In *The Concept of Mind*, Gilbert Ryle discusses a special set of verbs he calls ‘achievement verbs’ that require a special sort of analysis. Ryle believes that verbs like ‘win’, ‘find’ or ‘cure’ imply “that something has been brought off by the agent going through it. They are verbs of success.”¹⁹ Now, although I think this analysis is useful, it nonetheless poses a problem. Ryle seems to think that words like ‘win’ imply success or imply that something has been ‘brought off’, but that is not quite so.

¹⁹ Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 130-131, and 149-153.

Drawing from Ryle, Israel Scheffler shows that there is a difference between the ‘intentional’ and ‘successful’ uses of achievement verbs, which may be helpful here.²⁰ When I say, “We are going to win tonight,” I do not imply that I have succeeded or achieved something, as Ryle suggests, but I do imply that I *intend* to achieve something. On the other hand, when I say, “We won the game tonight,” I imply that we *did* achieve something; I imply that we were *successful* in our endeavor. Indeed, it would be strange to say, “We won the game tonight, but we were not successful.” Surely, there could be other goals that one may want to achieve when playing a zero-sum game, but the singular achievement is to win. This is why Ryle’s and Scheffler’s ideas on achievement verbs fit well in the context of education, for it allows us to look at complex activities like ‘teaching’ or complex processes like ‘education’ and provide a more robust analysis that does not oversimplify them.

In his discussion of ‘to teach’, another achievement verb, Scheffler suggests that allowing us to distinguish between successful and unsuccessful teaching more accurately captures the reality of this complex matter. Sometimes, teachers will find themselves in a position where their students fail to learn whatever they intended them to learn. On the view that ‘to teach’ implies success, we could not say in such a case, “she *taught* her students,” for that would imply that they did indeed learn what she intended them to learn. However, it would be strange to say that the time spent trying to get them to learn the point in question could not be called ‘teaching’.²¹ This would be like saying that losing a baseball game (i.e., playing unsuccessfully) implies that you were not playing baseball.

²⁰ Scheffler, *The Language of Education*, 42-43.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

All of this suggests that ‘to educate’ is an achievement verb as well. ‘To educate’ implies an intention, above all, to produce someone who is ‘educated’. We would not say, “My education was successful, but I am still not educated.” That is, we call those who have undergone successful education ‘educated’. We would not call such people ‘trained’, even though successful education may include training to some degree. Although training may be involved in the educational process that aims at producing educated graduates, it could not be all that is involved, for that would imply that the successful termination of ‘training’ is to ‘be educated’. Certainly, there are many dogs that have been successfully trained, but we would not want to call them educated, regardless of the quality of their training, or of how well behaved and responsive they become. So, a university based on a model that seeks to produce *trained* graduates still qualifies as an educational institution (as opposed to an assembly-line factory) for the reasons suggested above, but now we can qualify that statement by saying that it is not *successful* education.

The corporatized university, then, is a lot like the baseball team that just wants to have fun. That is the outcome that marks success for them. Now, surely there is value in having fun, but it seems strange for that to be the chief goal of the activity in which the team is engaged. Like the example above, it would be strange if the coach or players were to say, “We lost the game, but we were still successful,” because there is a sense in which they failed. Moreover, if the players could have just as much fun *and* win the game, surely that would be an even better outcome than *just* having fun.

The parallel here is that education refers to a whole host of activities, including the sort of activities associated with the vocational training that colleges (or community

colleges) and corporatized universities offer. But there is a sense in which students are short-changed by such an endeavor, in the same way the team above is short-changed. In both cases, a model is being advanced that aims at an outcome that is not as valuable as the outcome that signifies success in a baseball game (i.e., ‘to have won’) or in education (i.e., to be educated). The corporatized university wants to produce graduates who are valuable commodities in today’s employment market, and the consequence of this model is that it has become very difficult to foster the sort of environment that is conducive to producing educated persons.²² So, the corporatized university is surely still capable of producing graduates who are ‘educated’, but this is not the achievement at which it aims, nor is it the likely outcome of such an educational experience. Winning and having fun are both valuable outcomes of playing baseball, but intending to achieve only the latter outcome is to aim at something that is not ultimately successful, given the activity in question is a zero-sum game. Similarly, advocates of the corporatized university want to call it a university, but if they wish to do so, then they must acknowledge that, like the coach, they are aiming at something that falls shy of ultimate success. They must admit that they are offering their students an educational experience that is not as valuable as it potentially could be. That is, surely it would be more valuable to complete one’s university education as *both* ‘educated’ and a ‘valuable commodity’ in today’s employment market, in the way those who are ‘trained’ are supposed to be.

²² See, Côté and Allahar, *Ivory Tower Blues*, 111-114, and 120-126; and *Lowering Higher Education*, 65-67. Both books discuss how students of today’s more corporatized universities are more disengaged than ever. The authors believe (and I agree) that this has a pernicious effect on the classroom environment. Students simply want to know what is on the test in order to get a good enough mark to move on to the next course, and, ultimately, graduate so they can move on to a job they believe they are entitled to by virtue of having a university degree.

Now, advocates of the corporatized university may grant that I am right to call their model unsuccessful, but wrong to say that ‘being trained’ in the skills and knowledge needed for today’s employment market is not as valuable as ‘being educated’. They may not care that their model is ‘unsuccessful’ in the intended sense, for all they care about is whether or not the value of the outcome at which their university aims is more valuable than the outcome of ‘being educated’. That is, advocates of the corporatized model for university education imply that graduates are either ‘trained’ and ready for employment, or ‘educated’ and, as such, lacking the specific skills necessary for today’s workforce. I have already advanced a linguistic argument in support of why we would not call an attempt ‘to educate’ successful if it did not culminate in ‘being educated’, and in that sense any other outcome would be less valuable. It is important to point this out because it shows that there is something confused about aiming at an outcome that is not indicative of success, as far as the processes and activities that achievement verbs refer to are concerned. Generally, we would say that successful outcomes are more valuable than unsuccessful ones, because that is *intrinsic* to the achievement of something that defines success. What I have offered, then, is a defence of the intrinsic value of ‘being educated’. However, advocates of the corporatized model imply that the outcome of ‘being trained’ for some specific area of the private sector is the most valuable outcome of a university education, that ‘being trained’ has greater *instrumental* value than ‘being educated’. So, what I must offer now is a justification of the value of education on instrumental grounds, which will be the project of the next two chapters.

To conclude the argument so far, there are two possible upshots of the analysis I have provided: Either, (a) the corporatized university should replace the liberal model, or (b) a place can be found in our educational enterprise for both, provided that universities mitigate some of the more negative aspects of corporatization. As much as I wish there were a third option – elimination of the corporatized model – I fear that the corporatized university delivers what today’s students demand and feel entitled to (by virtue of being accepted to attend a post-secondary institution), namely, a well-paying job at the completion of their studies, and that it is in light of such expectations that universities feel pressured to acquiesce to student demands because they cannot afford to alienate them. But I do not believe these two things are opposed. That is, I do not believe that ‘being educated’ somehow makes you a less valuable commodity in today’s employment market than ‘being trained’ for that specific purpose. And if universities can mitigate some of the negative effects of corporatization in order to foster an environment that is conducive to producing educated persons, then the demands of those students can still be satisfied. In the next two chapters I will argue for (b) by justifying the value of ‘being educated’ on instrumental grounds.

Chapter 3:

Understanding and the Value of Being Educated

Now that we have established what we mean by education, and what it means to be educated, we can more thoroughly explore the conditions of ‘being educated’. Specifically, what I want to show is that the traditional liberal model for university education is more conducive to producing educated graduates than the corporatized model, and that such an outcome is of greater value to those graduates and to society at large.

I have already established that we would not call corporatized university education ‘successful’ but this does not necessarily mean that it is not worthwhile education. There are many formal schools that aim to produce something other than educated graduates and take this as their defining feature. A trade school, for example, certainly does not aim to foster the kind of understanding we would associate with an educated person, but rather to ensure that its graduates are proficient at accomplishing the tasks involved in some trade or another. Surely, those graduates would view their time spent learning in such an institution as worthwhile despite not finding themselves educated at the completion of their schooling. That is, the outcome of such schooling clearly has some value.

Advocates of the corporatized university want to encourage students to attend their universities on the grounds that they will become a more valuable commodity in the job marketplace once they graduate, and therefore be *more useful* to potential employers than they would be under the auspices of the traditional liberal model. I, however, believe

that being educated makes one a *more* valuable commodity to potential employers. In what follows, I will discuss the nature of knowledge and how it should be treated in a successful instance of university education. I believe that successful teaching is conducive to helping students develop the understanding they are required to achieve should they wish to ‘be educated’. I will then provide both an analysis of ‘understanding’ and a justification of its value. The point of this chapter and the next is to try and establish that the extrinsic value of being educated (the outcome of a traditional liberal university education) is greater than that of being trained (the outcome of a corporatized university education), contrary to the views of those who advocate for a more corporatized university.

Knowledge, Teaching, and Indoctrination

Whatever business universities are in, and regardless of the kinds of programs they offer, knowledge is an indispensable part of the enterprise. Professors expand on existing knowledge and create new ideas by publishing research, while students increase their own stores by learning (mostly) from these professors, as well as the works of others through which professors guide their students. The traditional liberal university, however, seems to aim for something more than just ‘knowing a lot’; it aims at *understanding*.

When we say that so and so is educated, we do not just mean that he knows a great many things, but also that he *understands* the fundamental concepts under which these items of knowledge are subsumed. Whatever we mean by ‘understanding’ it seems to involve some connection with knowing, for we would not say that someone understood something if they did not know what that something was. So, before we provide an

analysis of understanding, we need to examine the nature of knowledge with a view to how it should be treated in a university setting.

To begin, it is important to consider Scheffler's work on the conditions of knowledge in order to get a rough idea of what we might mean by 'knowledge'. Scheffler distinguishes between two senses of knowledge, a 'strong' sense and a 'weak' sense. The weak sense of knowledge refers to just those cases where the putative knower merely has a 'true belief', while the strong sense of knowledge refers to those cases where the putative knower has 'true belief' together with "the ability to back up the belief in a relevant manner."¹ The reason it is important for Scheffler to distinguish between these two senses is that he wants to know whether or not successful teaching (i.e., the kind of teaching we would expect to see in an instance of successful education) entails fostering the acquisition of knowledge in the weak or strong sense.

Remember that the liberal model of education aims to 'liberate' the mind from 'the bondage of habit and custom' and thereby promote intellectual autonomy. One of the advantages of the liberal university model is that it decreases the likelihood of having education devolve into indoctrination. To say the least, an educational model and its outcome would be significantly less valuable if it were more likely than another to devolve into indoctrination, and I believe that teaching for knowledge in the 'weak sense' is problematic in just that sort of way. That is, teaching for knowledge in the weak sense may not always mean that students are being indoctrinated, but it is more conducive to producing indoctrinated graduates than it is to producing educated graduates.

¹ Israel Scheffler, *The Conditions of Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 9.

When it comes to successful teaching we want students to have learned *something*, but as Scheffler argues, we want them to come to know in a certain way. As Scheffler points out, a student cannot be said to have learned that Q if Q is false, and if the student claims to know that Q simply on the basis that such and such a teacher told him, then he may not have the best possible chance to discover for himself whether or not Q . Teaching to foster knowing in the strong sense, says Scheffler, allows us to distinguish education more easily from indoctrination because, “In teaching, the teacher is revealing his reasons for the beliefs he wants to transmit and is thus, in effect, submitting his own beliefs to the critical scrutiny and evaluation of the student; he is fully engaged in the dialogue by which he hopes to teach, and is thus risking his own beliefs, in lesser or greater degree, as he teaches.”² If students are not taught in a way that allows them to form their own conclusions about the matters at hand, irrespective of what the teacher thinks, then it makes it more likely that they may come to believe something that is false, or be in possession of a true belief for which they cannot provide sufficient justification.

But what if it were impossible to teach for knowledge in the strong sense? In such a world, education and indoctrination would be synonymous, for we would not want to call something ‘indoctrination’ if it sowed the seeds of its own demise. By definition, indoctrination seems to imply that the person indoctrinated accepts what is being transmitted as true, irrespective of its epistemic status. As Harvey Siegel puts it, “Our case is a case of indoctrination if Y believes that Z in such a way that Z ’s being held is not a function of evidence for Z , and if evidence contrary to Z is, for Y , irrelevant to the

² Ibid., 11-12.

belief that Z.”³ The way in which Y has come to hold Z is *non-evidential*. Teaching for knowledge in the strong sense requires that students come to form their own justification for why it is that what the teacher says is true, or for why it is that what the teachers says is false. So, in a world where all education is indoctrination, it follows that it must be impossible to teach to foster knowing in the strong sense in such a setting for it furnishes students with the ability to falsify whatever the teacher asserts. Thus, students would come to hold a belief in such a way that its being held is a function of evidence for that belief. Teaching for knowledge in the strong sense, then, is *evidential*.

To teach to foster knowing in the ‘strong sense’ is, as Scheffler says, to teach in a way that puts the teacher’s beliefs on trial. The teacher invites students to criticize and scrutinize the veracity of what he intends to teach, and should they come to be able to justify the proposition in question in the relevant way, then they too may claim to know in the strong sense. This kind of teaching, this kind of education, could not possibly be construed as indoctrination because if it turns out that the proposition the teacher intends to have his students learn is false, it is highly probable that students will come to discover this for themselves. That is, teaching designed to foster knowing in the ‘strong sense’ is to sow the seeds of doubt and skepticism, and invite critical reflection in a way that teaching for knowledge in the weak sense cannot.

As I said, not all teaching designed to foster knowing in the ‘weak sense’ is necessarily indoctrination in the way described above, but it does seem to be more conducive to creating ‘indoctrinated’ as opposed to ‘educated’ students. In cases where students come to believe in such a way that evidence for or against that belief is not a

³ Harvey Siegel, *Educating Reason: Rationality, Critical Thinking, and Education* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 80.

function of their believing it, we can say that such students have been *trained* to do or say or believe in a certain way. We can say this because ‘training’ does not imply that one has come to *know* anything at all. It merely implies that one has come to do, or say, or believe in a certain way for no other reasons than that the trainer said so, and that she is in a position to know what is best. My contention is that successful teaching entails that the teacher has fostered knowing in the ‘strong sense’ because it precludes one from reducing such teaching to mere training, something that is more conducive to producing students who are ‘indoctrinated’ as opposed to ‘educated’.

My point here is to make sure we are clear on three things before proceeding. First, that education can be distinguished from indoctrination (i.e., that we do not live in a world where ‘indoctrination’ and ‘education’ are synonymous) given that is possible to teach in a way that affords students the opportunity to critically analyze that which is being taught, and thus falsify it, or provide their own justification for it. All this takes is for a teacher to be able to foster a discussion in class where students begin to offer their own justifications for why what is claimed by the teacher is true, or why what is claimed is false. In universities, especially those that still cling, at least in part, to the values of the liberal model for university education, this is surely not uncommon.

Second, I want to make it clear that the successful end of teaching is to have students come to know in the ‘strong sense’, for we would not want to call education that leaves open the possibility of indoctrination successful, as it is likely that such an education would lead students to believe many false propositions. If a university aims to produce educated graduates, as the liberal model does, then it must aim to foster an environment that provides teachers with the best possible chance of teaching successfully

in the way described above. Remember that the liberal model aims to liberate. Students could not be said to be liberated, or better still, educated, if they merely accepted what teachers said as true simply because they are supposed to be in a position to know better. That is, students cannot be educated as easily in an institution where teaching in the weak sense and the sort of training with which it is connected are the norm. Successful education, then, can only be realized when institutions do all they can to support an environment that allows teachers the freedom to teach successfully, and it seems to me that the corporatized university does not do this.⁴

If we consider the Personnel Characteristics discussed in the first chapter, constituents like ‘phasing out of tenured positions’, ‘the hiring of more adjunct faculty’, and ‘a more strict reliance on evaluating faculty through external, internal, and student evaluations’, it seems clear that this not an environment that would foster successful teaching as I have described it. In a university where students’ demands are catered to more regularly and regarded as more important than an increasingly disposable professoriate, professors may be more inclined to adjust their curricula when their position is threatened by poor evaluations.⁵ I can imagine many students demanding to engage less with the material in any given discipline so as to be able to assimilate the relevant facts and move on. Professors who try and challenge students (i.e., teach to foster knowing in the strong sense) are likely to be evaluated poorly on the basis that students

⁴ See Chapter 4 for further discussion of this issue.

⁵ Côté and Allahar, *Ivory Tower Blues*, 83-90. Their cursory research at Western University suggests that professors’ favorable student evaluations are typically explained by “(1) how affable or charismatic they are, (2) how easy their courses are, (3) how high their grades are, (4) how many tests or assignments are part of the course, and (5) how little outside reading they require.” (p.86) Thus, given the importance of getting good evaluations in order to advance their careers, professors tend to adjust their courses according to these criteria, rather than those that qualify the likelihood of teaching successfully (e.g., engaging with students, putting one’s own beliefs on trial).

found it too difficult to get a grade to their liking, and, accordingly, professors will begin to adjust their curricula, dumbing it down, lest they put their careers in jeopardy.

The problem with this is that it is not an attitude that is conducive to *understanding*. To fail to engage critically with the material at hand is to systematically avoid coming to know in the strong sense, and coming to know in the strong sense (justified true belief) serves as a bridge to understanding. As I established in the previous chapter, one of the necessary conditions of being educated is that the person not only *knows*, but *understands*.

Third, I want to make it clear that while ‘education’ is not opposed to ‘training’, it is opposed to ‘indoctrination’.⁶ Recalling Chapter 2 and my definition of education, it seems plain that we could still call something education that included more training or teaching for knowledge in the weak sense, but we would not want to call it ‘successful education’. Moreover, for education to be successful it must be committed to teaching more for knowledge in the strong sense than teaching for knowledge in the weak sense. An institution where teaching for knowledge in the weak sense reigns supreme is more conducive to producing those who are ‘trained’ or ‘indoctrinated’ than it is to producing those who are educated. To be sure, I do not want to call corporatized universities institutions of indoctrination, for I have already made it clear that I take them to be educational institutions regardless of how much more training and teaching for knowledge in the weak sense prevail there, compared to universities where teaching for knowledge in the strong sense reigns supreme (i.e., liberal model universities). Nonetheless, the value of the sort of knowledge one possesses as the result of education

⁶ My first point was to *distinguish* ‘education’ and ‘indoctrination’. The point here is that, contrary to popular belief, education and training are not mutually exclusive, but education and indoctrination are.

that fosters an environment where teaching for knowledge in the weak sense and training are the norm is less than that of the knowledge one possesses as a result of education that fosters an environment where teaching for knowledge in the strong sense is the norm. I believe this is because there is a connection that obtains between knowing in the strong sense and understanding that does not obtain between knowing in the weak sense and understanding. So, in order to justify my contention that there is more value in ‘being educated’ than there is in ‘being trained’ (the outcome of a corporatized university education) I must analyze the concept of ‘understanding’, which I turn to now.

The Concept of Understanding

Whatever we may mean by ‘understanding’, it seems intuitively to refer to something other than knowledge. Philosophers typically distinguish between knowing *that* and knowing *how*, so the first question we must answer is whether or not understanding is reducible in some way to one of these kinds of knowledge.⁷ If it *is* reducible to knowing that or knowing how, then the difference between ‘understanding’ and ‘knowing’ would be one of degree and not kind. This would be a problem for my argument that there is more value in ‘being educated’ than there is in ‘being trained’, because it would mean that understanding is just another species of knowledge whose value was no greater or no lesser than that of the species of knowledge associated with ‘being trained’ (i.e., knowing *that* in the weak sense). Furthermore, my argument that there is greater value in ‘being educated’ than there is in ‘being trained’ relies on the truth

⁷ Traditionally, ‘knowledge that’ refers to those instances where you know some fact to be true, like “The Earth is a sphere.” ‘Knowledge how’ refers to those instances where you know how to perform some activity, operation or procedure, like knowing how to ride a bike.

of the belief that one of the differences between the educated and uneducated is that the educated person does not *just know*, but *understands*. The emphasis implies that understanding is in some way more valuable than knowing, which could not be so if it were the case that knowing and understanding were one and the same thing. If they were, then advocates of the corporatized university, a university that fosters an environment that emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge that is more conducive to preparing students for some corporate job than it does life in general, could argue that their university does not offer an educational experience that is less valuable than that of the traditional university, but simply offers a different one.

We could begin by looking at cases like those where the speaker of one language utters something in her native tongue to someone who does not speak that language. In cases like these, the case for reducing ‘understanding’ to knowing *that* seems convincing. In response to the utterer one might remark, “I do not understand.” In such cases it seems like ‘understand’ means something like ‘I do not know what was said’ or ‘I did not know *that* she said such and such a thing’. Scheffler’s analysis of the reducibility of understanding can, however, quickly put our fears to rest. As he says, it is perfectly sensible to say, that “I know the doctrines of the existentialists but I do not understand them,” in which case one seems to use the term ‘understanding’ to refer to something other than ‘knowing *that* Sartre believes that *X* is the case’.⁸

If we look closer, this example seems to indicate that understanding might be reducible to knowing *how*. That is, perhaps in the example in question ‘understanding’ amounts to something like the claim “I do not know *how* the existentialists come to

⁸ Scheffler, *Conditions of Knowledge*, 17.

believe what they believe.” In this case ‘understanding’ would refer to the procedure by which one has arrived at some sort of proposition. But we run into problems again when we look to expressions like “I know what you’re telling me to do, but I don’t understand.” On the one hand, such an expression could be used to ask the person issuing the command for further clarification of exactly *how* one should going about doing it, but it could be interpreted just as sensibly to mean ‘I cannot see the connection between what you’re asking me to do and the outcome of my doing it.’ Perhaps it is Monday and I was told to put out the garbage, although the garbage is only collected on Fridays. In such a case, my expressing the view that I do not understand would seem to reduce to asking for reasons why this should be done now and not Thursday night or Friday before the garbage truck arrives. But that is not all, for it is not only that I am asking for reasons why I should be doing this (which would be reducible to knowledge *that*), but that something additional be pointed out to me so I can make sense of the request.

The point here is that even though understanding may be reducible to knowing *that* or knowing *how* in some cases, there are uses of ‘understanding’ that are not covered by such a global reduction. So, understanding must be something other than knowing *that* or knowing *how*.

Lorraine Code agrees with both Scheffler and me that the traditional dichotomy of knowing *how* and knowing *that* fails to account for ‘understanding’.⁹ Code wants to introduce a third kind of knowing, namely, ‘knowing *about*’. To be sure, this is not the ‘knowing about’ that we are familiar with in sentences like “Didn’t you know about the test?” Rather, as she explains, “To *know about* something, in this special sense, is to

⁹ Lorraine Code, “The Importance of Historicism for a Theory of Knowledge,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 22, no. 2, Issue no. 86 (June 1982) 157-174.

know something and to have an understanding of it at the same time. One can *know how* to paint; one can *know that* a particular painting belongs to a certain period or style. But to *know about* impressionist painting, for example, is quite different from these ways of knowing, though it may include or arise from them.”¹⁰ This seems to mesh well with Scheffler’s analysis in that it suggests that understanding is not globally reducible to knowing *that* or knowing *how*, but is still connected with them. The connection, it seems to me, is similar to that between belief and knowledge. That is, knowledge does not seem to be entirely reducible to belief, even true belief.¹¹ Knowledge is something more than merely believing some proposition to be true; it is something more valuable. It is a cognitive achievement akin to that of ‘being educated’. That is, with respect to value, knowledge stands in the same relation to belief as understanding stands to knowledge. But what is the ‘something more’ that distinguishes knowing *that* and *how* from knowing *about*?

Peters mentions that the educated person does not simply *know* but understands the concepts under which such things are subsumed. This is not all that helpful, given that he seems to be using ‘understanding’ as a stand-in for ‘knowing’, and the particular kind of knowing in question is knowing *that* such and such a thing fits under such and such a concept. That is, he seems to be using ‘understanding’ in a sense that can be reduced to ‘knowing *that*’. Still, it seems to be in the right spirit. First, in keeping with my analysis thus far, Peters seems to suggest that understanding is more valuable than knowing that by virtue of his requiring that the educated person *understand*, and not *just know*. Second,

¹⁰ Ibid., 158.

¹¹ I am aware of some attempts to drop the belief condition in some theories of knowledge but no such attempts have proved any more successful (e.g., in overcoming the Gettier cases) than those that do include the belief condition. See, Colin Radford, “Knowledge – By Examples,” *Analysis* 27 (1966): 1-11.

even though he does not make the connection, it seems to me that the key to knowing about the significance and implications of some proposition lies in establishing a connection between it and the concepts with which it is concerned. It is one thing to know that Donald Trump is running for President of the United States and another to *understand* the American electoral process, that is, to establish a connection between that proposition and the concepts it entails (e.g., democracy, political representation, the branches of government, etc.).

Code also mentions that “To understand the nature of a phenomenon or event in this sense is not simply to understand its causes or origins, but to understand its implications and significance as well.”¹² Jonathan Kvanvig lends credence to this idea, arguing that, “Understanding requires the grasping of explanatory and other coherence-making relationships in a large comprehensive body of information. One can know many unrelated pieces of information, but understanding is achieved only when informational items are pieced together by the subject in question.”¹³ Again, we see that understanding must involve some sort of connection-making activity, that is, *knowing about* why Trump’s running for President is significant and the implications it may have.

Now, if we apply these ideas to the Trump case it becomes clear that a good definition of understanding can be found in the convergence of Scheffler, Kvanvig, and Code’s ideas. If we extend the Donald Trump case a little further, claiming to *know about* Trump’s running for President could involve making a connection between this fact and the concept of representation in a democratic state, thus shedding light on the significance

¹² Ibid., 159.

¹³ Jonathan L. Kvanvig, *The Value of Knowledge and the Pursuit of Understanding* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 192.

and implications of his running for President. In an American context one could look to the infamous declaration that government must be “For the people, of the people, and by the People,” noting that one of the implications of Trump’s running for President in this context is that it signals that there is a growing disconnect between those who hold the office and those who fall under its governance. So profound is the alleged disconnection, that the only people who can apply are either career politicians or multi-billionaires who can raise the funds to do so; in short, people who are anything but ‘average citizens’. The significance here is that the more alienated the office becomes from its constituents, the more apathetic the electorate becomes, for there is nothing they can do to change the status quo by voting, the only choice being between two candidates equally alienated from their constituents with opposing ideologies.

Although I could elaborate, the account as it stands provides a clear sketch of what understanding looks like in practice. Most of the propositions in the example above are such that one could claim to know them, but it hardly seems appropriate to say, “Marc knows that Donald Trump’s running for President has significant implications.” That expression does not seem to capture the value of what I have expressed. There is a sense in which I would feel short-changed if someone were to describe the nature of the knowledge found in that passage to me in that way, for it seems to be worth more than simply reciting something that may I have heard in passing. If I were to say that “Donald Trump’s running for President has significant implications,” surely most would conclude that I have repeated something that I overheard, but did not *understand*. In the passage above, I have made a connection between the fact that Donald Trump is running for President (i.e., something I know) and the concept of democratic representation in an

American context in order to shed light on the significance and implications of the thing that I claim to know. It seems clear, especially in light of my analysis of ‘understanding’, that the expression “Marc understands the American electoral process,” is more appropriate, for it implies that I am in possession of something more valuable than knowledge that Donald Trump is running for President, and that I know *about* its implications and significance.

This example also helps explain why knowing in the strong sense serves as a bridge to understanding. To know in the strong sense is to be able to provide sufficient justification for some true belief. When I come to understand something, that understanding is predicated upon my ability to provide a justification for why I take what I know in the strong sense to have the implications it does, and why it is significant. I am, thus, disposed to do this for all of my beliefs. On the other hand, knowing in the weak sense does not dispose one to search for any further justification of the true beliefs one possess. Further, people who are trained – those who come to possess merely a large body of facts (i.e., knowledge in the weak sense) – become conditioned to think that anything that is known can be known without having to provide further justification. Therefore, searching for the kind of justification that understanding and knowing in the strong sense require is entirely foreign to such a person.

With these ideas in hand, I think it becomes clear why I characterized Peters’ ideas concerning the kind of knowledge an educated person has as having been made in the right spirit. What we can say now is that in order to come to understand something, in order to know *about* its implications and significance in just the way an educated person should, one must be able to establish a connection between the propositions known and

the concepts to which they are related. In doing so, one is able to advance a claim concerning the importance and significance of the known thing. If I want to claim that I understand what is at stake in the upcoming American election, I will not only have to know *that* so and so is a candidate, and *how* a President is elected, but also know *about* the nature of democracy, different types of democratic electoral procedures, the history of American elections, and be able to connect them in way that is relevant to the known proposition. The latter sorts of things are concepts that contain a mixture of propositions that are more or less easily verified than a proposition about Trump's running for President. Coming to know what a particular concept entails (i.e., its implications and significance) is to understand it, and to understand a concept is to be able to establish a relevant connection between it and other related propositions. And it is in establishing those connections between a proposition and the relevant concepts that one can be said to have made the transition from a state of *knowing* to one of *understanding*. Putting all of this together, we arrive at the more formal definition, according to which 'understanding' means 'to be able to connect what is known to a host of significantly related concepts in order to clarify its significance and implications'.

The Value of Being Educated vs. The Value of Being Trained

Now that we are clear on what we mean by 'understanding' we can return to the issue of the corporatized university. Advocates of the corporatized university want to say that there is more value in an educational experience that prepares them for the workforce than there is in a traditional liberal university experience, that 'being trained' is more instrumentally valuable than 'being educated'. Their argument is that 'being educated' is

not as *useful* as being ‘well-trained’, so that those who fail to specialize in a discipline the knowledge of which is in demand do not stand a good chance of getting a well-paying job. My argument is that being educated is more valuable to the marketplace, and to society, than being well trained.

Given that those who support a corporatized university want to argue that preparing students for a role in some narrowly defined job is what is valuable, I think it only fair that I meet their claim head on and argue for the value of understanding and knowledge on the same instrumental grounds. On this view, it would seem that the best possible outcome of a university education is the one that maximizes a student’s usefulness to potential employers. That is, the most useful graduate is the best and most valuable outcome of a university education; it is this achievement that marks success for advocates of the corporatized university. Given my discussion of success in education in the previous chapter, I take it to be inappropriate to call something an instance of successful education if it does not aim at producing educated persons but perhaps the point of the corporatization advocates is to go beyond this achievement. Perhaps they seek an outcome that they deem *more useful* than something like ‘being educated’. If so, then I believe that I can show that view to be false.

Newman spoke of a university (the liberal university) that aimed to endow its students with a more global kind of utility, as opposed to a narrower sort of utility. Newman compares this kind of narrow utility to the kind of utility that a cog in a machine might have. The cog is integral to the function of the machine, and indeed valuable in this sense, but once removed from the machine it is all but useless.¹⁴ The analogy is an apt

¹⁴ Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 119, and 120-126.

one for our purposes because it seems to suggest that the more narrowly defined the utility of a given thing, the less valuable it is. This kind of narrow utility is exactly the kind of utility that being educated precludes. To satisfy the understanding, delighting, and transforming conditions of 'being educated' is to avoid being so narrowly useful in the way described by Newman. Advocates of the corporatized university seem to want to replace the kind of global utility that 'being educated' provides for something narrower. Though this kind of utility may have value in just the way the cog is valuable to the machine (i.e., useful for a very narrow, particular purpose), it seems to me that the global kind of utility is far more valuable.

For example, we could imagine a carpenter who can only make a certain style of cabinet. This is all he makes. His father made colonial-style cabinets, and his father began to train him from a very young age to be able to master the craft of colonial cabinet-making. He can make other sorts of cabinets, to be sure, but not as well he crafts the colonial-styled ones. He knows how to make other objects out of wood, to be sure, but he is barely proficient at making such things. In fact, the layperson could (eventually) do just as good a job by watching Youtube videos, but the cabinets he makes are the best in the world; if it is colonial-style cabinets you want, there is no one better to make them. On the other hand, we could imagine a carpenter who has also just finished his apprenticeship. He is more than proficient (much more so than the layperson) at making all sorts of things. For his apprenticeship, he chose a contractor who builds all sorts of things (e.g., houses, cabinets, furniture.) The apprentice is no master craftsman in any one of these areas like the former sort of carpenter, but he could be if he devoted the time and energy needed to do so. That is, he is just as disposed to becoming a master craftsman in

any one of these areas, not just cabinetry. I believe this is because his schooling and apprenticeship focused on ensuring he was able to do all things that a carpenter may be called upon to do proficiently before he chose to specialize further. Unlike the former carpenter, this carpenter has a more *global* sort of utility.

Although both carpenters are valuable commodities, in terms of utility it seems to me that second carpenter is the more valuable entity. Though he cannot craft colonial-style cabinets like the other carpenter, he is more proficient at crafting any other style. Moreover, he is more proficient at crafting any other kind of thing out of wood than the former carpenter. The latter kind of carpenter is the right person for many more jobs than the former; he is more in-demand. There is far less demand for the former sort of carpenter because his specialty is so obscure, and any other job that requires crafting something else out of wood could be done just as well by the layperson, or done better by someone like the carpenter with global utility. Lastly, and perhaps more importantly, a carpenter who is globally useful in the way described will not take as long to specialize and master some particular area in carpentry. He has more than just a basic grasp of what is involved in making cabinets, or trestles, or canoes by virtue of his apprenticeship. The carpenter who has the more narrow utility may still be able to become a master in something else, but because his grasp of what is involved in other areas of carpentry is so poor it will certainly take him longer; he will have to start from the ground up, whereas the carpenter who trained to have a more than basic understanding of all the areas in carpentry has a head start.

So, the greater value of the global sort of utility seems to lie in the fact that such utility entails a more than basic grasp of all the relevant areas, whereas the narrow sort

does not. Moreover, proficiency in a multitude of tasks disposes one to be useful in a variety of situations, instead of just one. And this is precisely the sort of utility that being educated provides, which is largely due to the sort of understanding that is entailed by such a state. What makes understanding valuable is the ability to synthesize a large number of different sorts of facts into a coherent picture that allows one to see things in a different light, which emphasizes in turn the significance and importance of these facts by making a connection between them and the concepts to which they are related. Returning to the case of our carpenters, I think it fair to say that what disposes the carpenter to be able to specialize more easily in any area he may choose is that he *understands* his craft. We could say of the more narrowly useful carpenter that he *understands* colonial cabinets, but we certainly would not want to say he understands carpentry. This is because the skills and knowledge he possesses that make him a master colonial cabinetmaker are so specific to that area, and his knowledge of other areas of carpentry so poor, that he cannot make the relevant connections that would allow him to put those skills to use in some other area.

This is why advocates of the corporatized university are wrong to claim that there is greater value in an education that produces a graduate who is trained in some specific area and ready to enter that sector of the workforce. Not only does it pigeonhole them into a small range of choices as far as careers go, it also means that they will have to train in some other area should they not be able to find work in the area for which they were trained. For example, someone trained in accounting (as opposed to educated and specialized in accounting) who cannot find work in that field will likely have to undergo additional schooling in order to be a suitable candidate for a job in communications or

human resources. The educated graduate, on the other hand, is much more flexible. She may need some on-the-job training concerning basic procedures but her education has prepared her to be able to make connections between newly discovered things and the already large body of knowledge she possess. Someone who studied philosophy may not know the lingo of the salesperson as well as someone who took community college courses in sales, but she would pick it up very quickly. For lack of a better way to put it, the floor of the educated person may be lower with respect to a job for which the trained person has been trained, but her ceiling is much higher, and she can reach it much more quickly. It seems to me that such a person is a considerably more valuable commodity to any company than someone who was trained for one specific sort of job, and considerably more valuable to the economy as a whole for she could be a more than proficient worker in more than just one specific sector.¹⁵ Thus, any claim that being well trained is more valuable than being educated on grounds of usefulness must be false.

There are certainly other ways to justify the value of traditional education, but if advocates of the corporatized university want to justify the value of their brand of university education on instrumental grounds, then I believe the best way to dissuade them of their view is to provide a justification of the value of an alternative form of education (namely, successful education under the auspices of the liberal model) on the same grounds. It is true that there is value to being trained for a relatively narrow field in the private or public sector (e.g., accounting) but advocates of the corporatized university

¹⁵ Yoni Applebaum, "Why America's Business Majors Are in Desperate Need of a Liberal Arts Education," *The Atlantic*, June 28, 2016, www.theatlantic.com. Applebaum discusses how numerous business school deans, industry leaders, and business associations are starting to realize that Arts majors tend to out-perform their business counterparts academically. Moreover, industry leaders are starting to realize that the sorts of skills that such a specialty offers (the sorts of skills I associate with 'being educated') brings value to the businesses that hire them, value that more narrowly specialized business majors do not possess.

are wrong to try and undermine the mission of the traditional liberal university by asserting that trained graduates are of greater value to the marketplace than educated graduates. If they succeed they will undermine their own cause and quite possibly harm the very economy in which these graduates will work. A university that aims to produce educated graduates is an institution that adds more value to the world than that of a university that aims to produce trained graduates.

This prompts one to wonder why it is that advocates of the corporatized university think that universities are best suited to produce graduates of this sort. Surely, part of the reason has to do with the prestige such institutions claim, but it is a mistake to think that that prestige and the value that prestige carries could be maintained under the auspices of a radically corporatized university. That prestige is partly based upon the quality of research that is being done, and the kinds of professors who do it, and the educated character of its graduates, and so the value of the degree has at least something to do with students having been taught by professors on the cutting edge of their fields. Though a Harvard graduate may get a job because of the institutional name on their diploma, it is hard to imagine an employer keeping such a person if he did not excel in his duties as one would expect from a Harvard educated graduate. This is because the value of such a degree lies in the educated character of the sort of person who holds it.

And so it seems to me that colleges and community colleges are far better candidates to produce graduates of the well-trained sort. I believe the better course of action is to maintain the traditional aim of producing educated graduates to which universities have long been committed in an effort to preserve the sort of value their graduates bring to the marketplace, and expand college programs to accommodate

students who seek to be well trained. As I said earlier, there is value in being trained in the way that the corporatized university seems to want to train its students, but advocates of that model are wrong to claim that such an outcome is more useful to students than being educated. An educated graduate may lack some of the training that the trained graduate has acquired, but the educated graduate can easily and quickly rise to that level. Moreover, the educated graduate is more disposed to being able to excel in any job by virtue of her ability to make connections in the kind of ways that an educated person can. This means that an educated person is more likely to rise higher in any company by virtue of her ability to think outside the box, by being able to make connections that others cannot by virtue of the sort of the understanding and general utility they possess. She can shed light on old problems in a way that leads to novel solutions, and foresee and prepare for problems she may encounter in the future. Such a graduate is surely more valuable to any economy or company than someone who, like the cog in the machine, is only useful for some narrowly defined purpose.

Chapter 4:

The Moral Value of Being Educated and the Liberal University Model

I have argued that there are three conditions of ‘being educated’. In order to be educated a person must be able to delight in the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake (the delight condition); to understand the concepts that underlie what one knows (the understanding condition); and one must have had one’s worldview transformed by what one knows and understands (the transformation condition). In the previous chapter I argued that part of what lends value to being educated is the kind of utility afforded to one who understands. What I want to do now is focus on the other two conditions (i.e., the delight condition and the transformation condition) in order to bolster the argument that there is more value in being educated, and thus in a traditional liberal university education than in a corporatized university education. Specifically, I want to say that there is a moral value to the traditional liberal model of university education that the corporatized model lacks.¹

My argument is two-fold. First, I will establish that the ‘student-as-customer’ metaphor constitutes a category mistake. I will then elaborate some of the characteristics of the corporatized university that I discussed in Chapter 1 in order to show how the ramifications of such a metaphor negatively affect students and even professors. I want to establish that these effects devalue university education by impeding the intellectual

¹ I have said earlier that the purpose of Chapters 3 and 4 is to provide a justification for the extrinsic value of ‘being educated’. Though I will offer a moral argument for the value of ‘being educated’ (the outcome of the liberal model for university education), I believe that the extrinsic value is rooted in the social utility of that which is morally good. That is, those things that are consistent with what is morally permissible are valuable insofar as they foster the flourishing of a given society.

growth of students and fostering an environment that makes it difficult to delight in the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake. Second, I believe that these effects are so pernicious that they constitute a violation of a moral duty that universities owe to their students. So, the second part of my argument will consist in trying to justify that claim by showing that universities have a duty to foster an environment that is conducive to producing educated graduates and that failing to do so constitutes a moral failing on the part of those who administer such a system.

The Student as Customer and Knowledge as Product

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, one of the hallmarks of the corporatized university is that the administration begins to see students not so much as learners but as customers. I believe this has a pervasive effect on students and hinders their intellectual development, but first I want to explain how it amounts to a category mistake to conceive of students as customers and knowledge as a product.²

To begin, customers are individuals, or collections of individuals (e.g., businesses), who are on the receiving end of an exchange of goods or services (or both) to which they are entitled by virtue of having provided something of value in return. The ‘something of value’, however, does not have to be provided immediately, for it could come in the form of a promise to pay (via credit card, cheque). Customers are also entitled to certain protections under the law. When a good or service is purchased from some seller (provided that the sale and possession of the good or service is legally

² Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, 16-17. For Ryle, a category mistake occurs when one takes a concept to be a member of a set to which it does not belong; it involves mistakenly believing two concepts to be of the same logical type. In this case, I believe that ‘students’ do not belong to the category ‘customer’ and that ‘knowledge’ does not belong to the category ‘economic product’.

permissible), the customer and seller enter into a contract and, as such, are subject to legal sanctions should one party not fulfill its obligations. A simple glance at the “Canadian Consumer Handbook” from the Office of Consumer Affairs shows that customers have legal recourse should they fall victim to fraud, unfair business practices, misleading advertising, or identity theft (and more) as a result of a given transaction.³ That is, customers are entitled to protections under the law in ways that two people who exchange items of like value are not. Not every exchange involves a seller and a buyer.

Strong advocates of the corporatized university model suggest that students are customers and that the product they are buying is knowledge.⁴ Of course, students do pay to attend universities, and there is also a sense in which they consume knowledge passed on to them by their professors. So, whether or not students can be seen as customers comes down to two things: whether or not students *are* customers of the university; and whether or not knowledge is a purchasable product. If I can show either one of these propositions to be false, then it follows that at least one part of the justification for the value of corporatized university and its outcome, over and above that of the traditional liberal model, is invalid. I will treat each in turn.

First, even if I grant that knowledge is a product that can be bought and sold, it does not follow that students are customers. The tuition that students pay goes towards

³ “Canadian Consumer Handbook,” *Government of Canada*, accessed on April 26, 2016. <http://www.consumerhandbook.ca/en/>. Now, not all customers are consumers, and not all consumers are customers, but I have selected those protections that are more often associated with the purchase of a product or service, as opposed to those that are more associated with consuming a product (e.g., food and safety regulations, and the recourse that consumers are afforded when they are not followed).

⁴ David H. Turpin, Eric Sager, Lyn Tait, and Ludgard De Decker, “Universities and the Knowledge Economy,” prepared for the *Business Council of British Columbia*, 2009. Throughout the paper the authors speak of increasing ‘knowledge production’, cultivating ‘human capital’, the streamlining of ‘knowledge transfer’, and a host of other business-speak terms. The point is that they see knowledge as a product and students as stores of value before they see those things as a concept and persons respectively.

more than *just* knowledge. A student's tuition pays for administrative services, medical services, library services, professors' salaries, and administrative and support staff salaries, in addition to whatever it is they receive in the classroom. If they are paying for knowledge, they do so only in an exceedingly indirect way.

There is, however, a problem with this approach when we look at a more paradigmatic customer-seller relationship. When a grocery store buys a carton of milk from some wholesaler, it marks up the in-store price in order to cover the cost of its purchase and make a profit. So, when I buy that carton of milk at the grocery store, there is a sense in which I am also contributing to the salaries of those who work at the grocery store, repaying the grocery store for buying the milk, and filling the coffers of the company that owns and operates the store. Even so, we would not want to say that I was *not* buying a product, and thus *not* a customer, despite the fact that things like 'salaries' and 'profits' cannot be construed as products in the same way that the carton of milk can be. Perhaps the case of a student's tuition is analogous. That is, even though the transaction is not as straightforward as buying a carton of milk, it may still be the case that we could sensibly say that students' tuition *does* pay for knowledge, thus making them customers, just like we could sensibly say that I am the customer when I buy the carton of milk regardless of how payment for the product is distributed.

But let's look closer at the relationship between customers and the products or services they are purchasing, as well as that between students and the knowledge they supposedly purchase. When I buy a carton of milk I am entitled to certain standards. For one, I am entitled to buy milk that is fresh and safe to drink. If I buy the milk and return home to find it has already curdled, I am entitled to get my money back from the store or

at least replace it with milk that is not past its prime.⁵ I am also entitled to some form of compensation if the carton I buy turns out to be orange juice, despite saying “milk” on the carton. Similarly, when it comes to a service like cleaning my house, I am not required to pay if the cleaners do not show up on the day I requested their services. Further, if the quality of their cleaning is not up to my standards it would be perfectly appropriate for me to withhold payment until it was done to my satisfaction. The point here is that customers are entitled, either by law or by custom, to recompense should the seller not fulfill their end of the contract.

It seems that the relationship that obtains between customers and sellers is not analogous to that between students and knowledge. First, there seems to be no similar recourse for students should they be dissatisfied with their university experience. If students pay tuition and expect knowledge in return, but find that the knowledge they acquire is old and outdated, they cannot get their money back. If they are dissatisfied with their teachers, in the same way that I may be dissatisfied with how my house cleaner cleaned my house, they will not get their money back, and will be dealt with accordingly should they decide to withhold payment. Second, if students enter university expecting to be taught knowledge in the weak sense, even if that is the impression they were given by university advertising, and find that they are being taught knowledge in the strong sense, with a view to fostering understanding, then they cannot accuse the university of false advertising and get their money back. Neither can they sue the university on similar grounds, like I may be able to if the ‘hormone-free’ beef I purchase turns out to be no

⁵ Of course, store policies differ on the matter of returns, but when it comes to potentially dangerous food store owners can face serious fines or more if they are reported, while the company that produced it may also face serious consequences should someone become ill upon consuming their product.

different than beef that is raised with hormones. And, of course, if students are sold on a particular university because the vast majority of their graduates get job offers within months of graduation, there is no recourse for them should they find themselves unemployed or underemployed upon graduating. Students are responsible for what they get out of their education in a way that customers are not responsible for what they get out of the product they purchase. So, it would be strange to conclude that university students are customers, given that they do not seem to enjoy many of the most fundamental legal protections that customers normally enjoy.

Now, I think that goes a long way to making the case the students are not customers in any traditional sense, but there are two further points to address before the case is made. The first takes us back to the issue of what it is that students are paying for. Though students may be paying for a variety of services with their tuition (in addition to things like salaries) they are not exactly paying for the service of teaching, or the product of knowledge. Rather, they are paying for *access* to a particular kind of education. When I pay for a carton of milk I am given a carton of milk. There is a straightforward exchange between the seller and me. I do not have to pay for access to the store in order to have the milk magically appear in my possession. I simply walk in, retrieve the milk, and pay. For university students, their tuition is not exchanged for knowledge or the service of teaching, but for the *possibility* of coming to know more than they did before attending university.

It seems to me that the relationship between students and universities is more akin to lottery participants than it is to customers in the ordinary sense. We would not want to say that such people are customers of the lottery. They may be customers of the store

where they purchased the ticket, but they are not customers of the lottery. Similarly, students may be customers of the bank from which they secure loans in order to pay tuition, but they are not customers of the university, even if they do not require such a loan. In both cases, though the participant's money may go directly to the lottery corporation and the university, it does not follow that he is then a customer of those entities. This is because there is no guarantee that either participant will get what they want by virtue of having paid for a ticket (i.e., access to the contest in which they could win money) or by virtue of having paid tuition (i.e., access to the sorts of activities that contribute to university education). It is this *unguaranteed* aspect of university participation that precludes students from being identified as customers in any meaningful sense. What qualifies one as a customer in that ordinary, meaningful sense is a straightforward exchange whereby I am *guaranteed* to get what I pay for, such that, if I do not, I have recourse against the party by whom I was wronged. When I pay for a carton of milk I have entered into a contract whereby I promise to pay the listed price of the milk, and the seller promises to give me the milk once payment has been received. It would be strange indeed to call myself a customer if I went to the store for milk and returned with nothing, despite having paid the listed price.

The second point concerns what we took for granted earlier, namely, the categorization of knowledge as a product (in an economic sense) that is sold by the university. It is a category mistake to conceive of university students as customers, and although establishing that this is so makes the case against the corporatized university's adoption of a customer-service orientation (which follows from conceiving of students as

their customers), discussing why knowledge cannot be seen as a product still merits discussion.

Now, by 'product' (in the economic sense) I mean 'a specifically defined, unique object (tangible or intangible) that is offered for sale'. I say specifically defined because when one buys a carton of milk there is no ambiguity about what does and does not count as one carton of milk. That is, where the object begins and ends is defined clearly, such that there is little or no ambiguity about what it is that one is about to take possession of. Moreover, the object in question must be something that one can take possession of. This is what I mean by 'unique'. It is not that the object must be 'one of a kind', but such that I (or whoever else is party to the purchase) can take possession of the object in such a way that no one else can claim ownership of that specific object unless that person were to purchase it from the owner. So, if I buy a carton of milk and someone else goes to the same store later and buys a carton of milk, that person would now own *that* carton and would have no rights whatsoever to my carton.

Now, knowledge is a mental state. Even if it could be purchased, it cannot be placed in my head in the same way my carton of milk can be placed in a bag. Moreover, coming to know something, in the strong sense, involves more than simply having memorized some true proposition. It involves being able to provide sufficient justification for that proposition. But if we allow that someone could be said to know something even if it is only in the weak sense, there is still the problem of where exactly the knowledge is. That is, there is no clearly defined beginning and end of such a state. Surely, knowledge can be expressed in written form, but it is the content, not the representation, of those expressions that counts as knowledge. There may be a physical reality to knowledge in

that some sort of neurochemical state gives rise to the mental state we call ‘knowledge’, but we are far from being able to point to an fMRI and say ‘that is where the knowledge is stored’. Although books surely do contain knowledge, we would not want to say that someone who bought a book and had not yet read it was in possession of the knowledge contained in the book. If he has not read it, then he could not possibly know what kind of knowledge it contains (save for a vague description of the book’s contents), and thus could not know what he might know were he to read it.

Moreover, knowledge is not a unique object in the way an object must be in order to be a product in an economic sense. Knowledge has no owners. To be sure, ideas can be patented, but if one owns a patent on some process, let’s say, then what one owns is not the process itself but the right to produce something in a certain way such that anyone else who wishes to use that process must pay them a fee. The product in this case is not the knowledge or idea (i.e., the mental state itself) but a specifically defined right to *use* that knowledge. If two people buy the same book, read it, and understand it, we could sensibly say that they were both in possession of the same knowledge, but there is no analogous economic case.

There is, however, a sense in which knowledge is a product, which helps explain why advocates and administrators of the corporatized university model make this category mistake. Knowledge is a product in that it is the outcome of one’s intellectual labour, of one’s thought. An example from the classroom may help. Many students enter university under the impression that argumentation is something heated, uncomfortable, nothing more than a fight with words, to be avoided if possible. They believe that arguments are zero-sum games and are unfamiliar with academic argumentation, where

evidence is presented for or against some conclusion in a dispassionate, if vigorous, manner.

Students struggle with this conception at first and it takes some prodding and practice before they are able to engage in an argument without taking criticism of their position personally, or having the argument devolve into a fight.⁶ One way to get there is to conduct discussions in class where students are carefully pushed to proffer evidence for or against some position. It is essential that this is done in a respectful manner (i.e., without yelling or screaming at or demeaning of the student) so that the students can come to see that the criticism of their argument is not about them but about the evidence itself. Though the process may be slow, students eventually come to *know* that the concept of argumentation is a lot broader than they previously thought.

What is key to understand here is that students cannot simply be *told* that they are wrong about what an argument is, for such a method would reinforce the idea that all they need is to memorize this definition and move on. If the object is to get them to know in the strong sense (with a view to fostering understanding), as it should be in a university setting, then they must be *taught* not *told*. To do so is to allow them to come to see how such a narrow conception of argument is wrongheaded, and how a broader conception contributes to a more accurate picture of the concept itself. That is, the students come by this conclusion through their own intellectual labour, not by simply assuming that what the professor says is true and memorizing it accordingly. Put another way, knowledge is the *product* of the students' intellectual labour.

⁶ This is something Anton Allahar and James Côté talk about and I will elaborate on it in the next section.

However, this use of ‘product’ is not the economic use I referred to earlier, since it cannot be owned or exchanged for something as easily as I can exchange money for milk. It is something that is struggled for within one’s own mind, for it is in that struggling that one comes to grips with how certain evidence justifies the claim in question, and it is that justification which allows one to know in the strong sense. But what is known is not unique to that individual. Her *understanding*, or rather, her *knowing about* argumentation may be unique, but the knowledge that a broader conception of argumentation is better than the narrow one she previously held is something many who were in that position are in possession of. Unlike a carton of milk, each knower is in possession of *exactly* the same thing, whereas when I buy a carton of milk and you buy the same size and brand, though our milk cartons may be negligibly different, your buying one carton does not entitle you to ownership of all similar cartons. My milk is my milk and yours is yours, but with knowledge we cannot say that there is my knowledge and yours, for the content of those propositions is identical, regarding what each of us knows, respectively, and not unique in the way it needs to be in order to be owned.⁷

So, we can say that it is a category mistake to cast students as customers given that they do not possess the same legal rights that customers possess by virtue of having entered into a contract, and by virtue of legislation having been passed to protect consumers from things outside of their control. We should say, rather, that university students are *participants* in the educational enterprise. In this sense, they are closer to lottery participants than customers, with the major difference being that it is within the

⁷ To be clear, if we both know that “The cat is on the mat,” then we know the same thing. That is, we are both in possession of *the same thing*. It is not something that is uniquely possessed by either of us in the same way a carton of milk is uniquely possessed by either of us when it is owned.

students' power to get what they want out of the enterprise in which they participate. Further, knowledge cannot be considered a product in an economic sense for it is not a specifically defined, unique object in the way that an object must be in order to be considered a product. Therefore, advocates of the corporatized university cannot justify their claims of a more valuable educational experience on the basis that their university is one that accurately identifies students as customers and knowledge as the product they sell to students. However, there are far more pervasive ramifications of this category mistake, which I will turn to next.

Disengaged Students, Disengaged Professors

The upshot of treating students as customers bears a striking resemblance to Paolo Freire's concept of 'banking education' where "...students memorize mechanically the narrated content," turning them into "'containers', into 'receptacles' to be 'filled' by the teacher."⁸ Similarly, the corporatized model for university education caters to the demands of students in a way that reduces them to merely passive objects who are expected to soak up as much information as they can before they move on with their lives. By casting them as customers, students are catered to by administrators and professors regardless of whether or not this devalues their educational experience. That is, the ethos of the corporatized university is "the customer is always right."

In their two books on corporatization, sociologists James Côté and Anton Allahar describe the effects that corporatization has on students, professors, and the institution

⁸ Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2005), 71-72.

itself.⁹ They have spent decades in the classroom observing the phenomenon they call ‘student disengagement’, providing a sketch of the environment of the modern university (a more corporatized university) that seems eerily similar to the kind of morally troubling environment fostered by the educational systems that Freire opposed.

Côté and Alahar describe today’s students as more materialistic and more interested in the extrinsic rewards of education than previous generations. They cite many reasons for this, including a more materialistic society, a technologically inundated and thus impersonal world, the promises of governments and industry leaders that higher education is the path to a well-paying job, and elementary and high school curricula that have sought to foster the appearance of progress by shielding students from the harsh reality of their less than satisfactory work. Moreover, they describe the university environment as one where the student-teacher relationship is more adversarial than ever.

They also describe a classroom environment where professors have become disillusioned with students’ inability and unwillingness to do the work necessary to get the marks they seek and get more out of their education than a mere collection of facts. Students today have been sold on the promise of getting a good job once they graduate university, so it is even more important that they ‘work smart’ to put in as little effort as possible to get the marks they need to pass their courses, collect their diploma and move on. That is, students are more extrinsically motivated than ever.¹⁰ Lastly, they focus on how students have been exposed to an environment in elementary and secondary school where they have been ‘coddled’ more so than generations past. This has given rise to a

⁹ To be sure, they talk about other contributing causes as well, but, like me, they also see the corporatization process, and the ‘student-as-customer’ model, as having a negative impact on the experiences of students and professors.

¹⁰ Côté and Allahar, *Ivory Tower Blues*, 39.

much larger portion of students who enter university with an inflated sense of self-efficacy. They may have high self-esteem, but it is based on false feedback. This, coupled with an inflated sense of their self-efficacy, conspires to create students that who are more likely to think that their low marks are the result of a professor's failure to recognize their good work, or that their professor is simply too hard on her students.¹¹

So, when students fail to get the mark they think they deserve, they begin to show up in droves to the offices of their professors to demand a better mark, or to demand justification for the marks they were given. When they do not get what they want, they evaluate their professors poorly on official evaluations and in formal complaints. All of this puts a tremendous amount of pressure on professors, for they resent the fact that students are not coming to their office to get a better grasp of the material or discuss it further, but rather to bargain their way to a higher mark. Some professors simply start requiring less for higher marks, and assigning a higher average grade simply to keep such students away, while others stick to their guns and are eventually cowed into teaching to the lowest common denominator by administrators, lest they find their position at the university in jeopardy. This means more professors teaching for knowledge in the weak sense, and less teaching for knowledge in the strong sense; it means that university students increasingly find themselves in an environment where they are unlikely to acquire the kind of knowledge and understanding required to be educated.

This is a direct consequence of the kinds of characteristics that corporatized universities possess. Specifically, I have in mind three features of the Personnel Characteristics: the university's re-conceptualizing itself as a business that offers a

¹¹ Ibid., 69-71, and 160.

product, its adoption of a customer service orientation, and its recognition that students are its customers. The end result of these characteristics is that professors have disengaged from students as students have disengaged from them. This produces a more adversarial environment where exasperated professors and corporate-minded administrators accede to student demands for a more depository-like educational experience, which runs counter to the very ethos that traditional liberal university education espouses.¹²

As Freire puts it, “The *raison d’être* of libertarian education, on the other hand, lies in its drive towards reconciliation. Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously students *and* teachers.”¹³ The adversarial nature of the corporatized university runs counter to that cornerstone of the traditional liberal model for university education. The latter sorts of universities foster an environment where students are encouraged to question the material, wrestling with it in a way that is conducive to their understanding. It is a model according to which students and teachers learn *together*. The adversarial nature of the classroom in the corporatized university, on the other hand, fosters an environment that is more conducive to teaching for knowledge in the weak sense as the analysis above suggests. Of necessity, this is the kind of environment the corporatized university fosters, in light of which students look at their university experience as one that they must slog through in order to start their lives, an obstacle to be overcome as opposed to an experience to be enjoyed, where it becomes difficult to delight in learning in the way an educated person must. This certainly could not be a primarily

¹² Ibid., 58-68.

¹³ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 72.

enjoyable experience, save for those extracurricular activities that many may enjoy.

Moreover, such an environment serves as one in which students are not challenged in the way that teaching for understanding requires. It is in striving to meet that very challenge that the transformational capability of university education can be realized, without which, the university becomes an environment that promotes little more than limited intellectual development.

A Violation of Duty

There are many ways to make the case that the effect that the corporatized university has on its students and professors is an immoral one, but I think the best is to make it on Kantian grounds. What I need is a moral rule, the violation of which would constitute a breach of a duty owed to another, and Kant's second formulation of the categorical imperative, the formula of humanity, seems a good candidate for an educational context. This formulation of the categorical imperative states that we must never treat the humanity of another, or ourselves, only as a means to an end but always as end in itself.¹⁴ The first duty that arises from this categorical imperative to oneself is to develop one's own talents or 'perfect' one's humanity. The second duty is a duty to others that accommodates their ends in one's own plans by helping further those projects and ends whose adoption constitutes their humanity.¹⁵ This is consistent with the line Freire takes, for as he suggests, the banking conception of education, "...resists

¹⁴ I take it that very few deontological moral theories would not espouse the formula of humanity as a moral imperative, but that anti-realists might reject it on grounds that it espouses realism about ethical values. Addressing those meta-ethical issues are beyond the scope of this thesis. This may seem like beginning the question, but it is not, for even if I take this categorical imperative for granted, I still must show that failing to educate successfully is an impediment to the sort of human flourishing that we have a duty to foster.

¹⁵ Robert Johnson, "Kant's Moral Philosophy," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, July 7, 2016. Plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-moral.

dialogue...[,]treats students as objects of assistance[,]...[and] inhibits creativity[,]...thereby denying people their ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human.”¹⁶

There is one problem, however, and that is that students may freely choose as their end not to ‘develop their talent or perfect their humanity’. In such cases, it seems the formula of humanity requires professors and administrators (among others) to let them make such a decision, for any interference would show disrespect to their humanity by implying that they were not rational enough to choose such an end. However, the student’s decision is problematic because by making that decision he has violated the duty he owes to himself under the formula of humanity, while professors and administrators violate the duty they owe to others. So, in the context of education, I believe that the duty that professors and administrators owe to students is to foster an environment that would allow them to choose the best possible ends for themselves, that helps them develop and perfect their own talents and abilities, an environment that helps students fulfill the duty they owe to themselves, and helps administrators and professors fulfill the duty they owe to others. To do otherwise would be to invite disapprobation by violating that duty. But if I am to make the case for the immoral nature of the corporatized model along these lines, I must be able to show that those who implement and administer such a model foster an environment that hinders students’ ability to develop and perfect their own humanity, a task I will take up now.

One of the things that Côté and Allahar point out regarding the classroom environment in a more corporatized university is that students with an over inflated sense

¹⁶ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 83-84.

of self-efficacy are harder to teach and more reluctant to admit they are wrong because they see any sort of criticism as a personal attack.¹⁷ The more professors are forced to accommodate such students by forces outside their control (e.g., the implementation of quality control measures that force professors to accommodate student demands), the more the classroom becomes a place that ‘resists dialogue’, the kind of dialogue that is conducive to understanding, in which professors open themselves up to students and engage with them in a way that says they respect them, that by definition requires two willing subjects in order to happen. Moreover, such an environment stifles creativity by forcing professors to cater to the demands students make for a banking-like educational experience, where the information needed to pass the test is memorized and regurgitated so the students may move on. It is hard to be creative when the classroom atmosphere is such that very little critical thinking is necessary and very little critical dialogue is fostered.

The environment created under the auspices of the corporatized university ultimately stifles the kind of transformation that being educated requires, and thereby denies students the opportunity to become ‘more fully human’ or to ‘perfect their humanity’. If students are reduced to mere customers and the environment they find themselves in is one in which critical dialogue and creative thinking are all but absent, then there is very little chance they will grow beyond whatever intellectual stage they were in when they arrived. Given what I said about the nature of being educated in Chapter 2, I think it safe to say that being educated is another way in which one might become more ‘fully human’, which I take to mean ‘maximizing one’s capabilities and

¹⁷ Côté and Allahar, *Ivory Tower Blues*, 70.

efficacy; becoming a more fully realized person'. To be able to delight in the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake is to be disposed to delight in the pursuit or acquisition of many things for their own sake. The upshot of this is that one need not be drawn to certain activities simply because of the extrinsic rewards associated with them, for participation can be its own reward if and only if one is able to delight in such a thing for its own sake. Being educated, then, is a stepping-stone to greater participation in a wide range of possibilities offered by this world, and, in that sense, extrinsically valuable by virtue of the global sort of utility this entails. To understand things in the way that being educated requires is to be able to appreciate the significance and far-reaching implications of what one knows. It is to be able to see, and to make connections between, radically different subjects. And lastly, to have one's worldview transformed is to see the world in a different light. It is to change in such a way that guards against the kind of cognitive dissonance that can limit a person's prospects. That is, by allowing what one knows to colour the lens through which one views the world is to align one's perceptions with reality and to continually do so to make the picture clearer.

Universities are in a unique position to realize the successful completion of education. It is the last link in the formal schooling chain. Further, there would not be much to differentiate this kind of education from elementary or secondary education if it did not offer something more than those lower schools. That 'something more' is exposure to a wider range of topics of discussion, more in-depth discussion of those topics, and the kind of environment that is conducive to producing educated graduates. We would not ordinarily associate the concept of being educated with university education if that were not the case, and yet we do. Moreover, we could not call university

education successful if it did not aim to produce educated graduates. Given that education is a process that culminates in an achievement (i.e., being educated), it follows that any endeavour of that sort should aim for success, and in the context of university education that means providing an environment that fosters the achievement of that successful outcome. Anything else would amount to an educational experience that culminates in an unsuccessful outcome.

So, if being educated is consistent with being more fully human (more capable, more fully realized), then it follows that any process that impedes such a transformation is one that limits an individual's potential. Moreover, if we take for granted that failing to respect the humanity of another (by treating them as something other than a rational agent) is wrong, then any process that (and anyone integral to its implementation who) transgresses this rule is one deserving of disapprobation. And if one's potential has been limited by a process that shows disrespect to her humanity, her personhood, by treating her as a mere object – a mere depository of knowledge rather than a rational agent – then that system, or more appropriately, those who create and take part in such a system, commit a moral transgression. From this we can conclude that such systems (university education, in this case) have an obligation to foster an environment that is conducive to producing educated graduates, because doing otherwise would be to commit a harm deserving of disapprobation. It would be a violation of the duty we owe to others that arises from Kant's formula of humanity.

In sum, we can conclude that there are not only conceptual problems – in the form of category mistakes – with the corporatized university's recasting of students as customers, but moral problems as well. Specifically, the corporatized university fosters an

environment that violates the duty that all universities have to their students. The imposition of such a system on the traditional liberal university constitutes a moral disservice to those who attend it and to those that take part in it. In fact, we can now say that the corporatized model of university education is both unsuccessful (as per the discussion in Chapter 2) and morally diminishing. Though it certainly still counts as education, it seems to resemble a university far less than it does a community college.

Lastly, I established in the previous chapter that what lends value to being educated is the sort of value we associate with understanding, and if the corporatized university does not create an environment (on campus at large and in individual classrooms) that is conducive to fostering the acquisition of that understanding, then the outcome of such an educational experience is surely less valuable. I can now add that there is moral value in the outcome of a traditional liberal university education. That is, there is a sense in which such an education is morally superior to the kind of education offered by a corporatized university. That moral value comes from creating an environment that is conducive to allowing students to undergo the kind of intellectual transformation that is a necessary condition for being educated, from fostering an environment that allows students to delight in their education in just the ways required in order to be educated. In short, it fosters an environment that allows students to fulfill the duty they owe to themselves and the duty that professors and administrators owe to them to become 'more fully human'. The corporatized university, on the other hand, fosters an environment that, at the very least, impedes such transformation and turns the university experience into one that must be slogged through, in other words, one that is quite un-university like.

Conclusion

An educational institution can aim at no greater achievement than that of educating its students in the specific sense I have articulated here. The corporatized university, on the other hand, subverts the possibility of this achievement in favour of something it takes to be more valuable, namely, 'being trained'. I have, however, shown that there is greater value in 'being educated' than there is in 'being trained'.

The instrumental value of 'being educated' is surely greater than that of 'being trained' but that leaves unanswered the question of how to convince future university students, administrators, industry leaders, and government officials of its value. I have tried to do so by using the same sort of utilitarian justification to justify the value of 'being educated' that they proffer for the outcome of the corporatized university ('being trained'), but I fear that this is not enough. The characteristics of the corporatized university creep so deeply into the cultural fabric of the university that they become very difficult to undo. Moreover, many of the changes the corporatized university introduces to the liberal model are in response to cutbacks in government funding that are unlikely to be reversed, and as universities continue to grow, universities will have to find some way to increase revenue in order to accommodate increasing numbers of students. Thus far, corporatization has been the answer. Indeed, the future of successful post-secondary education looks grim.

Perhaps there is no turning back the tide just yet, but what I have argued here goes a long way to showing university administrators who advocate for increasing corporatization that their model is wrongheaded, and in that sense perhaps there is a glimmer of hope for a return to the liberal educational roots of the university. As Côté and

Allahar suggest, the corporatized university really is “Lowering Higher Education”. My argument that the corporatized model is ultimately unsuccessful, and that the outcome of corporatized university education is less valuable, helps prove their point. The more the media, industry leaders, and members of elected government come to hold this view, the more difficult it will be for administrators to justify the corporatized model as successful and valuable.

Further, professors who teach at the corporatized university can draw from this work to try and mitigate some the more pernicious effects of corporatization at the classroom level. Successful teaching requires a certain kind of dialogue, and even though students today are more disengaged than ever, and administrations have made the complex and messy job of teaching even harder, teachers must find a way to work within the rules of the system. This becomes all the more difficult in a university where the average student is much less prepared for the rigors of university than they were forty years ago, but it is still possible to teach successfully. One suggestion could be to use upper-year and graduate students as ‘second teachers’ in large-enrollment classes in order to be able to engage with students at a deeper level in a way that is difficult when there is only one professor. As Noam Chomsky reminds us, “it is not important what we cover in the class, it’s important what you discover,” about yourself, and about the implications of what is covered in class or in the textbook.¹ The corporatized university has certainly made successful teaching more difficult, but it cannot make it impossible to accomplish, provided teachers maintain their commitment to helping create educated citizens.

¹ Noam Chomsky, “Noam Chomsky – On Being Truly Educated,” filmed (May, 2015), YouTube video, 3:33, posted (May 26, 2015). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYHQcXVp4F4>.

There is one last suggestion that could give us hope. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, public universities have become more private-like, so perhaps, then, private universities could become more public-like. Private liberal arts colleges in the U.S., like Wesleyan University, emphasize the sorts of methods and subjects that are conducive to producing educated graduates. Moreover, universities like Wesleyan are supported by private benefactors who, likewise, support the mission of creating *educated* citizens of tomorrow, and a large endowment that may serve as a solid financial foundation for future expenditures. This financial foundation may, ultimately, help stave off the influence of the private sector on higher education. And, of course, such institutions were founded by individuals who took seriously the value of an educational experience designed to educate and not just prepare its graduates for some narrow vocational purpose. These sorts of private liberal arts colleges seem to be in a better position, then, to serve the public good by eschewing the influence of the private sector, and producing graduates who have the potential to be more than just another ‘cog in the machine’.

So, there is at least glimmer of hope for the future of the liberal model for university education. Arguments like mine can help serve as a reminder that there is great value to being educated and that if universities continue to head down the corporatized path, they threaten to diminish the value of an educational institution that is in a unique position to realize this goal. Perhaps the traditional liberal university model must take a back seat to the corporatized model for now, but hopefully a justification of the content and value of a liberal university education will keep the fires stoked just long enough to ensure that the liberal model may be rekindled when students, administrators, and governments are ready.

Appendix I – A Brief History of Corporatization

As Henry Steck suggests, the origins of the corporatized university can be traced back to the early 20th century. However, going back even further to the Morrill Act, it is easy to see why the Academy in the U.S. has shifted away from the traditional liberal model of higher education and towards a more vocationally-minded one.¹ Section 4 of the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 granted federally owned land to States for their sale in order to use the profits as an endowment for “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 class in the several pursuits and professions in life.”² The Act was a response to the social challenges of the industrial revolution, and an attempt to ensure that universities were not simply providing an educational experience in the liberal tradition, but one that could offer a more *practical* emphasis. The language is instructive. It seems to suggest that the traditional liberal model for higher education was lacking in that it failed to endow its students with the practical skills that the changing world would soon require of them. Regardless of the tone it takes, the Act is a monumental development in the emergence of the modern university, for it gave rise to some of the largest universities on the continent, and, indeed,

¹ Steck, “Corporatization of the University”, 72-74.

² Act of July 2, 1862 (Morrill Act), Public Law 37-108, which established land grant colleges, 07/02/1862; Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, 1789-1996; Record Group 11; General Records of the United States Government; National Archives. www.ourdocuments.gov

some of the most corporatized universities of today (e.g., M.I.T., Michigan State University, Rutgers, and The University of Wisconsin).

The next monumental change came during the years following World War II, when thousands of soldiers were able attend universities thanks to the GI Bill. Hitherto, this option had not been available to certain segments of society, which meant that there were many career opportunities that remained unattainable to them. This helped usher in a period of growth for universities through the 1960s, where the turmoil of the era made universities a focal point for society at large. It is during this time that we begin to see the rise of the large research-based universities, probably the closest relative to the corporatized university. Henry Steck, a critic of the corporatized university model, reminds us that “The cause of this transformation, of course, was the decision by the federal government to center research activities in universities rather than in either industry or free-standing research institutions,” largely based on the success of initiatives like the Manhattan Project.³ Corporate entities followed suit soon thereafter, using universities as incubators of new products, “and as a willing partner in research, patent licensing, and marketing.”⁴

The stage was finally set for the corporate universities of today during the 1970s, when economic turmoil forced the federal government to tighten the purse strings. University enrolment continued to rise but government funding lagged behind. This meant universities, just like corporations, would have to start cutting costs and looking for alternative sources of revenue. Alumni donors could not possibly make up for the budget

³ Steck, “Corporatization of the University,” 73.

⁴ Ibid., 73.

shortfall created by proportionately smaller government grants, so universities en masse began to turn to the corporate sector.⁵

Paul Axelrod tells a similar story concerning the corporatization trend on the Canadian side of the boarder.⁶ Like universities in the U.S., Canadian universities enjoyed financial support from government grants to the tune of 76 per cent of operating costs, with only about 10 percent coming from private donors and the remaining amount covered by student tuition.⁷ Axelrod contends that this began to change during the 1980's as reductions in government spending on healthcare, education, and other social services created a vacuum that was filled (in part) by the private sector (businesses and individuals). Meanwhile, advances in biotechnology and micro-technology ushered in the era of the 'knowledge economy'. In this new economy, more 'educated' people would be required to fill the positions that required the creation and implementation of these technologies. As Axelrod says, "...the policies flowing from these changes included a growing dependence on market mechanisms for the production and distribution of goods and services in the public realm."⁸ In short, private industry had a greater stake in ensuring that university graduates had the technical skills necessary to staff these new industries, thus devaluing the kind of education that one is typically afforded under the traditional liberal arts model. By 2013, the government block grants that previously

⁵ Washburn, *University Inc.*, 46-48.

⁶ Paul Axelrod, *Values in Conflict: The University, the Marketplace, and the Trials of Liberal Education* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

accounted for 76 per cent of operating costs had shrunk to about 53 per cent, and private funding, tuition, and other fees, accounted for about 47 per cent.⁹

In her study of university policy in Canada, the U.S., Britain, and Australia, Sheila Slaughter found that many had filled the void left by decreased government funding with increased private funding and a greater reliance on loans. Her research shows that all four countries had shifted away from basic research and towards more entrepreneurial and applied research. Most importantly, her research shows that all four countries have instituted policies that encourage an increase in university-private sector agreements for the purposes of more commercialized research, ensuring a greater emphasis on the development of vocational-centric curricula.¹⁰ That is, the more well-rounded kind of educational experience provided by the traditional liberal university education is giving way to a more vocationally oriented educational experience.

Private industry partnerships (e.g., the sponsoring of buildings, academic chairs, research labs, etc.) helped shore up some of the shortfalls resulting from decreased government funding, but Jennifer Washburn also reminds us of the passage of the Bayh-Dole Bill in 1980. Hitherto, American federal patent laws hindered universities from partnering with private industry because the federal government retained the rights to anything patentable that arose out publicly funded research. Under the auspices of the new act, universities would receive the exclusive right to patent discoveries made through publicly funded research.¹¹ In 2000 there were more than 3,200 patents granted to

⁹ "Funding for Post-Secondary Education," *Canadian Federation of Students*, last modified Fall, 2013. Cfs-fcee.info.

¹⁰ Sheila Slaughter, "National Higher Education Policies in a Global Economy," in *Universities and Globalization: Critical Perspectives*, eds. Jan Currie and Janice Newson (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998), 46-48.

¹¹ Washburn, *University Inc.*, 61.

academic institutions, compared to just 264 in 1979.¹² This meant that large research institutions had far greater an incentive than before to focus their research efforts in areas that could yield that largest possible profit (e.g., biotechnology, pharmacology, or mechanical engineering). The result is that universities in the last 20 years (on both sides of the border) have begun to privilege research in the Sciences and Engineering over research in the Arts and Social Sciences, simply because it is cheaper. That is, those faculties and the research they conduct have the potential to provide a return that research studies in the Arts and Social Sciences cannot match.

Lastly, Washburn draws our attention to the state of the professoriate in the past decade or so. Much like a large corporation, one of the ways that universities have been able to increase their ‘bottom line’ is by cutting costs, and one of the more effective ways to cut costs is to downsize the professoriate. By 2001, 44.5 per cent of all faculty members in higher education were part-time employees.¹³ Save for those ‘superstar’ professors who have the potential to attract students to the university, tenure-track positions are slowly being phased out. In 1969, only 3.3 percent of all full-time faculty members were non-tenure-track, whereas by 2001, over 60 percent of full-time faculty were non-tenure-track employees.¹⁴

This historical context suggests that the drift towards a more corporatized model for university education is not something new. But the more recent trends seem to suggest a more radical departure from the university of old. For decades, universities have sought to find alternative sources of revenue, in an effort to keep up with the demands that the

¹² Ibid., 71.

¹³ Ibid., 203.

¹⁴ Ibid., 204. These figures are from universities in the U.S.

corporate world will place upon its graduates. However, by and large, the Academy throughout the 20th century was able to maintain its independence as a unique institution that was both a part of, and apart from, the world in which it existed. The aims of a liberal education were still coextensive with the aims of the institutions themselves. But this is precisely where the corporatized university distances itself from the Academy of old, to the point where it represents a completely new model for universities, a model that could potentially stray much farther away from the liberal model that has guided it for so many years.

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