

## **Higher Education and the Neoliberal Threat Place, Fast Time, and Identity**

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### **Introduction**

Over the past few decades, a new model of the research university has emerged, the Emerging Global Model (EGM). These institutions,

represent the leading edge of higher education's embrace of the forces of globalism. [They] are characterized by an intensity of research that far exceeds past experience. They are engaged in worldwide competition for students, faculty, staff, and funding; they operate in an environment in which traditional political, linguistic, and access boundaries are increasingly porous. These top universities look beyond the boundaries of the countries in which they are located to define their scope as trans-national in nature. Their peers span the globe. (Mohrman, Ma, & Baker, 2008, p. 6)

These few institutions "head virtually every list of leading universities worldwide" (p. 6). Market driven, and profoundly entrepreneurial, EGM universities prize scientific and technological knowledge including within the social sciences. The EGM university functions as a "knowledge conglomerate...that puts primacy on the production of new knowledge and the training of expert personnel to carry on this production into the future" (p. 8). Other traditional aims, teaching and service, find a place "to a large extent in the new [university] via their role in making the university into a knowledge conglomerate" (p. 9).

While mostly celebrated, concern has been expressed that given its priorities, the financially driven free-market EGM has altered the

“fundamental conception of the purpose of the university...transforming a college degree into career investment or individual indulgence rather than a public good” (p. 17). The quest for market survival, except for within the very richest of institutions, mostly private, “can pit international research prestige against mass education demands” (p. 19). “[I]mpossible situations [arise] as nations and universities want it all—to play in the international knowledge game while at the same time providing tertiary education for as many people as want and can benefit from a college degree” (p. 19). Despite these concerns, world-wide the EGM has come to be understood as the model of quality higher education and in whose hands the future of higher education seems to rest.

The purpose of this article is to explore some of the wider social and economic trends of the past few decades that have supported creation of EGMs and to consider these developments from the perspective of their human and social costs. As Mohrman and her colleagues argue, the “EGM fosters winners and losers” (p. 25). At a macro level, knowing who the likely winners and losers are is crucially important for policy makers, but also such knowledge has micro level importance. The actions of those who live and work within the university are not inconsequential. The decisions they make and how they choose to live their lives open or close opportunities for reimagining the givenness of the world and to make this world more rather than less life affirming.

## **Part I**

### **The Middle Class and the Attack on Higher Education**

Behind the rise of EGMs, Christopher Newfield argues that public higher education in the U.S. is in serious trouble. He makes his case in two books, *Ivy and Industry: Business and the Making of the American University, 1880-1980* (2003) and *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class* (2008), both written prior to the economic meltdown of the past few years. The Great Recession exacerbated the severity of the issues and trends discussed, including severe underfunding by state governments of colleges and universities and a dramatic shift in funding toward private and corporate sources. Newfield argues that the “professional middle class,” was created by the university (2003, p. 31); publicly funded higher education and the middle class are inextricably linked. As the university goes, he argues, so goes the middle class, and ultimately democracy.

The argument is jarring, raising fundamental questions about the purposes of higher education in America. The story told is a disturbing tale of how “conservative elites who have been threatened by the postwar

rise of the college-educated economic majority have put that majority back into its place” (2008, p. 5). Newfield writes: “The American middle class is always politically sacrosanct, so downgrading it could not be announced as the goal; nonetheless this goal has been gradually achieved, as in part indexed by stagnating economic fortunes. A roundabout way was found to downsize the new middle class, and that was to discredit its cultural foundations” (2008, p. 268), including the public university but also public education.

One might disagree with Newfield’s centering his argument on the cultural wars rather than the effects of economic globalism in remaking the American public university (see Shrum, 2012, p. 48; Newfield 2008, p. 267) or his failure to consider the role of unions following World War II in the creation of the middle class. However, there is no question that these wars are tightly linked to the economic manifestations of globalism, and not necessarily some of its cultural manifestations such as the spread of human rights (Eriksen, 2007). Moreover, there is no question that these wars have dramatically narrowed the vision, purposes, and function of public higher education. This narrowing has come as many nations have embraced elements of the American model of higher education including its competitiveness and presumed “organizational efficiency” (Majcher, 2008, p. 346).

### **Neoliberalism: Collateral Damage**

Rooted in neo-classical economics and a “thorough-going individualism” (Fredman & Doughney, 2012, p. 44), neoliberalism means many things. Most especially it represents a form of “economic rationalism [that] reduces all human dimensions, social relations, and activities into consumer exchange” (Mullen, Samier, Brindley, English, & Carr, 2013, p. 188). Its educational manifestations are far reaching, resulting in a shift of education from primarily a cultural to an economic concern: “Managerialism, audit cultures, values of commodification, efficiency, and effectiveness from a wholly alien sector—the industrial economy—reduce education to an export-import trade” (ibid, p. 222). Socially, neoliberalism justifies the weakening of the welfare state, radical deregulation and privatization of many traditional government functions, and, generally, the extension of markets into ever wider areas of social life. In consequence we have witnessed aggressive and rapid shifts in wealth and its accumulation and concentration in a very few hands, the wholesale movement of family-sustaining jobs to low-cost labor markets around the world, the intensification of labor (Fedan & Doughney, 2012), and the weakening of all things public, including public education. As events

surrounding the Great Recession reveal, deregulation and privatization have rendered a body blow to the American middle class and to the children of the middle class who, in having internalized the promise of America, attended or aspired to attend college. As corporate profits boomed and executive salaries of even unsuccessful companies soared, the middle class, facing stagnating or falling wages and job loss weakened and hollowed out.

The specter of a hegemonic neoliberalism looms over the land, an uncritical worship of free markets falsely promising universal prosperity coupled with a cultivated and aggressively marketed cynicism about the ability of public institutions to efficiently serve public interests, including schools and universities. “Culture warriors,” as Newfield describes them, helped make the fallout more or less palatable by championing visions of what he calls “meritocracy I,” an ideology at home in social systems characterized by severe scarcity of resources and opportunities and embracing an aggressive individualism. Meritocracy I, Newfield writes, “reinstalled a conservative bedrock beneath the diversity talk, restoring test scores, rank-hierarchy, the scarcity of high-quality resources, and the aura of a small, elite group of talent at the top” (Newfield 2008, p. 105). Lacking robust institutions and social networks, as the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman writes (2011b), people are left alone to devise “solutions to socially generated problems, and to do it individually, using their individual skills and individually possessed assets. Such an expectation sets individuals in mutual competition, and renders communal solidarity...to be perceived as by and large irrelevant, if not downright counterproductive” (p. 17).

As ideology, the power of neoliberalism seems boundless, having crept into virtually every aspect of social life. Benefits are privatized, while negative consequences are socialized, disproportionately placed on the backs of the most vulnerable of citizens and nations. Whatever the outcomes, the consequences are assumed to be *inevitable*, results of the natural movement of the invisible hand of the marketplace and of persons exercising the now most fundamental of human rights, the right to choose. Eviscerated, democracy has come to be understood as nothing more than one of its “doubles” (Woodruff, 2005), voting, the right to choose between two candidates. A vibrant democracy pleads a contrary view: “the consumer is an enemy of the citizen” (Bauman, 2008, p. 190). As Bauman suggests, competitive individualism divides people rather than brings them together around common public interests.

“Inevitability” proves to be a key term, one that justifies selfishness as virtue and sustains the loss of any sense of there being a public, while encouraging feelings of shame and disconnection among the economically dispossessed. Inevitability also sustains a deep and widespread ethical

insensitivity to the plight of others born of presumed self-merit and deserved privilege on the one hand, an effect of Meritocracy I, and the impossibility of things being not as they are on the other. The question, “Am I my brother’s keeper,” is answered with a pause, “not really.” My brother is, after all, also my competitor.

Ironically, when Adam Smith wrote of the wonders of markets, he assumed a marketplace situated within a moral order composed of people who knew something about and were sensitive to the importance of being a brother’s keeper. Believing that markets would produce a “liberal reward of labour” (1759/1937, p. 80), Smith was convinced they would support the well-being of families and the children of the working poor whose hard lives he found so deeply troubling (McCraw, 1992). Unable to imagine how markets destroy virtue, Smith envisioned a future of material abundance shared by all—still a neoliberal promise. The irony is that while free markets have, to a degree, enriched many nations, they have simultaneously impoverished large portions of those very nation’s populations, and have widened the gaps separating the rich from everyone else. There are additional ironies: As it turns out, markets are wasteful. They create needs no one needs fulfilled, and fail to satisfy the genuine needs everyone has. If this isn’t strange enough, market growth depends on fulfilling needs that must remain unfulfilled, for complete satisfaction destroys markets. Ultimately, as markets play out in higher education, they waste a tremendous amount of talent (Brown & Tanneck, 2009).

### **Higher Education Responds**

As state support for higher education dramatically declined and then flattened, competition for scarce resources exploded; year after year tuition was increased and institutional marketization grew (Judson & Taylor, 2014). Middle class parents and college students came to find themselves mired in deepening piles of debt. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, U.S. college student loans now total nearly a trillion dollars, 93% loaned directly by the federal government. Much of the increase in tuition off-set non-instructional university costs, not only of intercollegiate athletics but of growing ambitions. To ameliorate tuition increases, universities raised average class size and hired growing numbers of comparatively cheap itinerant faculty, now numbering 70% of all faculty (Swarns, 2014, p. A11), many former graduate students who failed to obtain regular appointments. As an efficiency and money saving strategy this has its limits. At some point, changing who teaches within the university alters the nature of the educational experience of students and undermines the quality of that experience, which is essential to sustaining product

competitiveness and therefore institutional viability (*The New York Times*, A19, December 4, 2013). Ultimately, only very rich institutions can win in this game.

Representing diverse origins, costs include: ballooning administrative expenses associated with perpetual fund raising, managing and responding to increasingly aggressive and expensive systems of accreditation and accountability, as well as bills accrued from an unexpected source—generous subsidies for the grants deemed essential to institutional status. Seldom realized, research grants only rarely are self-supporting, so humanities and education students, among others, find themselves subsidizing research and researchers (Newfield, 2008, chapter 13) as institutions compete for market share and prestige, and position themselves to achieve ever higher brand recognition and ranking. More significantly, personal and family debt have grown as the economic rewards for college graduation have attenuated and become disproportionate, reflecting an increasingly stratified status system of higher education with growing gaps between elite, well-funded private, and a very few select public, research universities and their return on investment, and all the other institutions. Nevertheless, as consumers, parents and students expect returns on their investments and not only in greater maturity and learning but also in future security and employment certainty.

Despite high start-up and production costs, the university is going and has gone “on-line” in the hopes of containing costs (see Christensen & Eyring, 2013, p. 385), strengthening work-education alignment (Gallagher & LaBrie, 2012, p. 71) and, looking ahead, of making a profit (Christensen & Eyring, 2013, p. 339). MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) have captured the imagination of many educators, although there are signs that enthusiasm is tempering as the difficulties of the task, likelihood of the rewards accruing to a few select universities, and potential negative consequences for student growth and development are recognized. A trend far advanced in the U.K. and following a path opened by for-profit institutions, education is being packaged into self-contained modules that promise high portability and ease of consumption (see Christensen & Eyring, 2013). One trade-off is that once set, modules typically remove instructor control over the curriculum, which undermines much of the joy of teaching, including course aims, even as instructors are often charged with maintaining student motivation for learning (Guerlac, 2001, p. 107). A less obvious result is that the module structure and form as an independent slice of content is more conducive to training than to education. The distinguishing characteristic of training—itsself representing a service or product—is a high degree of predictability that certain actions will lead to pre-specified outcomes in

others and that proof of value is direct, involving a specific demonstration such as passing a test. In contrast, education is inevitably messy, with permeable boundaries and uncertain outcomes dependent on both person and context. Proof of *educational* accomplishment is always indirect and usually long delayed. It is for this reason that Oxenham concludes, “Competencies simply do not have the necessary robustness to uphold the deeper functions of higher education” (2013, p. 149). As measurable, skills and competences are given precedence over understandings, and replicative and applicative uses of knowledge are preferred to associative and interpretative uses (see Broudy, 1989). The former represents the sort of knowledge that dominates MOOCs, a “notion of knowledge... quite close to the notion of information...sets of facts, pieces of data, or concrete bits of a larger process” (Rhoads, Berdan & Toven-Lindsey, 2013, p. 92) and that supports a passive citizenship.

## **Part II**

### **Effects: Place, Cyber-Space, and Identity**

Economic globalism coupled with technological advance not only has expanded markets world-wide but also has had the effect of weakening the power of place while undermining the stability and forms of relationship that sustain identity. For the educational work of universities there are no more significant issues than those associated with loss of grounding.

While the world has become smaller, it has also become more diverse. Globalism “*homogenizes* human lives by imposing a set of common denominators (state organization, labour markets, consumption and so forth), but it also leads to *heterogenization* through new forms of diversity emerging from the intensified contact” (Eriksen, 2007, p. 142). There is no guarantee that contact with strangers will be intense, engaging, or mind expanding, however. Indeed, perhaps the most powerful response to these developments by those unable to book a tour is a growing sense of alienation; feeling threatened and lost, identities are shored up in walled communities and by identity politics and fundamentalism. As the social anthropologist Thomas Eriksen (2007) argues, “*disembedding* is always countered by *re-embedding*. The more abstract the power, the sources of personal identity, the media flows and the commodities available in the market become, the greater will the perceived need to strengthen and sometimes recreate (or even invent) local foundations for political action and personal identity” (p. 143).

Markets, of course, put some consumers, in charge. Thought of and treated as consumers, not scholars or critical thinkers, students, as

Judson and Taylor (2014) suggest, are apt to choose products unwisely. Education requires engagement with otherness, the stretching of self and confrontation with limitation. The technologies of the marketplace offer the opportunity to engage difference as well as to maintain and sustain sameness, but sameness sells. Sameness feels good. It is no surprise, as Eriksen observes, that “globalization does not create global people” (p. 143). As the Boston Marathon bombers illustrate, webs can support insular networks experienced as communities across thousands of miles (Seelye, Schmidt, & Rashbaum, 2013).

Identity politics and the threat of difference sharpened by rapidly growing insecurity and economic uncertainty are among the materials used to construct the conservative elite response to the rise of the middle class detailed by Newfield. The elements of identity politics are well known and easily manipulated: they always entail “competition over scarce resources,” dominance of ascribed within-group similarities over across-group equality, invocation of historical injustices and past suffering, use of cultural myths and images to recall and strengthen shared group experiences, employment of simple contrasts to distinguish in and out group membership, and the unflattering comparisons of “invaders” with “first-comers,” the last element calling for a defense of place, even if a ghetto (see Eriksen, 2007, pp. 144-146). “Identity politics,” Eriksen concludes, “is a trueborn child of globalization” (p. 146). Indeed, globalization triggers group conflict and actualizes differences while providing the opportunity to avoid serious engagement with those differences (p. 145), the sort of engagement that education requires.

### **Time: Hurried and Harried**

“Time is an enacted, material, social practice that organizes the functions of temporality” (Moran, 2013, p. 7). In neoliberal, advanced market and managed economies, the “scarcest resource for people on the supply side is... *the attention of others*” (Eriksen, 2001, p. 21). Incessant ads and sales pitches followed by aggressive requests for feedback on product satisfaction once a purchase has been made, as well as communication technologies from Twitter to Facebook, all push ever growing volumes of information that demand attention. Pressed for quick responses, time speeds up, and managers intensify work. Gaps are filled so there is less and less “down time” and time becomes more “dense” (Eriksen, 2001, p. 21), more hurried but less durable. Losing duration and linearity, belief in progress has weakened (p. 47) leaving behind a nagging feeling of always being behind, of reacting but of never quite being in control of one’s life. Academics resent this feeling, even as they conclude there is nothing

to be done (Fredman & Doughney, 2012). Nothing is better than having a scheduled meeting unexpectedly canceled which opens a moment for solitude. At home, the slow time involved in feeding or helping a child get dressed and engaging in other family activities leads to impatience. It's impossible to speed up a child. Sitting in church, congregants text one another and, addicted to speed and holding an expectation that everyone is always available, get frustrated when a return response from across the chapel or the world is delayed. While waiting reverently, half listening to the speaker, email is checked, a video game is played.

Wired and plugged in student attention spans are fleeting, having adapted to what Eriksen (2001) describes as the "tyranny of the moment" (p. 33). Students expect to be entertained by their teachers, who sense they are in a losing battle. Student minds flit about and defy faculty members' best attempts at netting. Outside of class young people would simply click and change the channel or fast forward.

For university faculty, information overload leads to a narrowing of knowledge as no one seems able to read broadly or deeply, and those who try spend a large portion of their time filtering the flow of materials attempting to sort out the junk. No wonder some "90% of published academic papers are never cited. Indeed, as many as 50% are never read by anyone other than their authors, referees and journal editors" (Meho, 2006). Efficiency encourages reliance on review articles, and not actually having read an article but choosing to cite it produces all sorts of mischief. Yet, as proof of value, publication pressures grow, resulting in creation of a range of clever strategies for increasing productivity that undermine quality. As Bauerlein, et al., (2010) argue:

The pace of publication accelerates, encouraging projects that don't require extensive, time-consuming inquiry and evidence gathering. For example, instead of efficiently combining multiple results into one paper, professors often put all their students' names on multiple papers, each of which contains part of the findings of just one of the students. One famous physicist has some 450 articles using such a strategy. (p. 13)

The number of publications now roughly doubles every twenty years, and journals pile up, or rather DOIs (Digital Object Identifiers) pile up. Paper is expensive. Bauerlein, et al. (2010) offer a straightforward solution: Fewer journals, less publishing.

Accelerated time affects university faculty work in additional ways. In short time, quick and increasingly trivial studies are favored over long-term projects. In reviews, recent publications are privileged over earlier publications, encouraging production of ungrounded and sometimes repetitious works, a problem that few reviewers can recognize.

Lack of memory undermines cultural transmission and weakens the ability to generate explanatory narratives. “Fast-thinking,” as Eriksen (2001, p. 113) suggests, is preferred to slow, reflective, thought, the sort of thinking involved when pondering ideas and wrestling with vexing problems. Reflection, as Dewey (1933) argues, necessitates learning how to “pause” (p. 14). Dangers of a rush to judgment and of confirmation bias arise, suggesting strong connections between slowness and integrity (Cilliers, 2006, p. 109). Oddly, the faster we go, the less likely it is that our actions will result in desired changes in institutional life. Systems change slower than their environment, and to take hold changes require slow time (Cilliers, 2010). The result is that speed and fast thinking actually undermine individual and institutional efficiency; by becoming an “end in itself [simply going faster] is not a means to a better future” (Sutherland, 2013, p. 11).

Finally, fast time and fast thinking are embedded in tenure systems. Tenure may seem to involve a marathon, but given how quickly time passes, how time intensive consequential research is and how long it takes to get a piece into print, a sprint is a more apt analogy—a sprint with often misplaced, missing, or misaligned starting blocks. To support scholarship, young faculty are given reduced teaching loads and excused from most forms of service, decisions that distance them from students and from getting to know other faculty members and their work. Generally, in the area of scholarship, tenure privileges quick accumulation of capital and professional chatter over the pleasures of conversation. The press young faculty face is to speak before they have anything worth saying, but speak they must and they do.

These manifestations of the effects of the speeding up of time forced Eriksen (2001) to conclude that “Slowness needs protection” (p. 156). Traditional forms of academic work are still most valued by faculty: “the image of an ‘individual scholar pursuing his or her interests according to his or her own rhythm’ still remains an ideal, especially in the humanities and social sciences” (Ylijoki, 2013, p. 247). Echoing Dewey, Stein (2012) also argues for the value of pausing, but offers a different reason: “Pauses are valuable in that their inherent discontinuity adds multidimensionality to experience” (p. 336). Pauses refresh as university faculty struggle to live a “temporally balanced academic life” (Ylijoki & Mantyla, 2003, p. 75), a possibility increasingly difficult to realize. Inside and outside of the university, friendship, collegiality, loyalty, and trust in and depth of relationship, including love, are each dependent on the slowness of time. Temporal balance requires some activities that consume academic life must go.

### **Capital Accumulation and Compromised Virtue**

Lacking strong embeddedness in place and in persons and speeding through life and work profoundly shapes identity, including the identities formed by university faculty. Shoppers are fickle and consumers are not easily satisfied. Oxenham (2013) describes the challenge of identity this way: “The cost of using unstable things as our building material is that our identities are just as unstable as the materials we have chosen and not everyone is fit enough to adjust to such a quick ride” (p. 22). Stable identities enable consistent behavior and are a condition for moral courage.

When most everyone we know is a competitor for genuinely scarce or presumably scarce goods, few can be trusted, for trust often proves to be an unwise strategy. As substitute means for achieving confidence, codes and systems are formed to make interaction predictable, but systems are very poor substitutes for trust (Seligman, 1997, pp. 173-174). Role prescription is role play, and within neoliberalism when goods are scarce and “consumer” is role played, revealing one’s market strategy opens the strong possibility of self-diminishment and loss of standing. Within markets, self-worth is strictly comparative, a matter of market share, and everyone and everything is rated and ranked, faculty, departments, universities. In situations of genuine or imagined scarcity, if someone “wins” someone else loses. Hence, your loss, for instance in academic standing, is likely experienced by someone else on faculty as their gain. This certainly is not the way to run a university or a department serious about learning.

In economics, money serves as the means of reducing difference to a common standard of worth. The currencies of higher education are publication and citation counts. Publication quality often is an afterthought. Determining publication quality including in tenure reviews requires slow time to read and to ponder and it requires insider knowledge that itself is often rare. Counting substitutes for careful consideration and, when counted, articles are dropped into catchments, journal tiers, proxies for quality. As the Australian Research Council found after trying to rank on international prestige some 30,000 journals and unleashing a storm of protest, arising, in part, from how such rankings drive researchers away from topics and issues of national and local concern, the exercise is mostly a matter of smoke and mirrors, politics and marketing. Besides, junk shows up everywhere; and so do quality publications.

On-line “hits” are counted and reported by journals for marketing purposes but they are easily doped. Since citations are scarce, surely they must have real value. And more is better. The moral problems associated with citation counting are subtle and complex, going well beyond the

obvious issue that beginning scholars face delayed citation but immanent tenure evaluation. Some articles are cited for terrible reasons and works that enjoy massive citation often have rather more to do with scholarly production than scholarship itself—the multiple editions of Robert Yin’s book on case study methodology, for example, have been cited well over 80,000 times. As currency, citations and citation indexes are the subjects of market manipulation and, reflecting the Matthew effect, the rich get richer. In her discussion of complexity theory, Mitchell offers the following example of how, in the quest to increase market value, academic riches accumulate:

Suppose you and Joe Scientist have independently written excellent articles about the same topic. If I happen to cite your article but not Joe’s in my latest opus, then others who read only my paper will be more likely to cite yours (usually without reading it). Other people will read their papers, and also be more likely to cite you than to cite Joe. The situation of Joe gets worse and worse as your situation gets better and better, even though your paper and Joe’s were both of the same quality. Preferential attachment is one mechanism for getting to what... Gladwell called tipping points—points at which some process, such as citation, spread of fads, and so on, starts increasing dramatically in a positive-feedback cycle. (p. 253)

Friends cite friends, graduate students cite mentors; and universities with lots of friends and big grant-supported graduate programs and successful branding strategies enjoy prominent place within citation indexes. Poor Joe. He’s a loser. What is he to do, especially if he is part-time faculty, an untenured “freeway professor”?

First Joe ought to get better at self-marketing, which may be distasteful, but is not necessarily immoral. Yet self-marketing certainly can lead to serious ethical issues. Like the exemplary famous physicist and his students noted above, Joe might cut a deal with other young faculty, perhaps former classmates, to collaborate, meaning, “I’ll put your name on my work if you’ll put my name on your work.” Joe borrows capital and cooks the books. Within his tenure file, Joe portrays his involvement with these articles as greater than it was. He might even believe what he writes. Joe might publish what one colleague some years ago described as LPUs—least publishable units, an inflationary strategy. By splitting large studies into several very small publishable bits Joe appears wealthier than he is. A good person facing a difficult situation, Joe might also tweak what essentially is one study, change the title, and, since so few articles are read, publish it twice. As Niebuhr (1945) reminds us, in desperate situations good people often engage in morally marginal behavior.

Like many beginners, Joe undoubtedly will be encouraged to mine his dissertation for publications. Should he, or how should he, involve his chair in publication? In the academic marketplace, senior faculty, like junior faculty, are concerned about capital accumulation and academic standing. Capital indicates worth. The press to accumulation has encouraged some chairs to take credit for student work. I recall, for example, a young colleague worrying over her chair's insistence on being first author on a major piece even though she merely supported the work and did some editing. Revealing strong beliefs in trickle down academic economics, the chair urged that being listed first was not an act of arrogation but of generosity, a matter of increasing market value. More citations would follow, the chair argued, and these would benefit her former student. Graduation often changes mentor and protégé roles and relationships, heightening and exposing latent feelings of competition and perhaps revealing feelings of mentor envy of the young. In any case, mentoring, including of junior faculty by senior faculty, requires largeness of spirit that is difficult to sustain since, like one's protégés, mentors live in fast time and everyone is in competition with everyone else.

As noted, fast time leads to short cuts, including abrogation of essential ethical roles and professional responsibilities. Traditionally, education faculty have made decisions about which students should be recommended for licensure to teach. These decisions have been based on professional knowledge of faculty, experience with the students over an extended period of time and in multiple settings, and understanding of program aims. Seeking what some believe to be better warrants of teacher education student quality, 23 states joined with Stanford University to develop a common portfolio-based assessment system, the edTPA, for beginning teachers. Once developed, Stanford sold the rights to Pearson Education, a massive corporation located in London that employs over 40,000 people world-wide. Pearson, which offers a range of supporting services and products for sale, including its own ePortfolio System, will charge teacher candidates for assessment of their portfolios. In addition, Pearson also administers the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards assessment, despite development with public funding from the US Department of Education. NBPT candidates pay an assessment fee of \$2500, including a non-refundable initial fee of \$500. Owning these licenses, good academic capitalist that it is, Stanford is positioned to receive tens of millions of dollars in fees. More to the point, faculty across the United States will no longer make determinative assessments of their students' ability to teach. Pearson employees will make these decisions. Obviously, the effects of these actions, presumably undertaken to guarantee product

quality and raise program efficiency, are far reaching and ethically troubling (Cochran-Smith, Piazza, & Power, 2013).

Markets and consumer values also affect teaching when scores on student satisfaction surveys substitute for slow time faculty observations and discussions about teaching and teaching quality with peers. Students are decent judges of teacher fairness, but often they struggle to make reasonable assessments of content quality or even of the preparation of their teachers. Ethical issues may arise when feeling pressed for time to engage in other valued activities, not the least being scholarship. Time is saved by avoiding the giving of student assignments that require significant discussion and feedback even though most university faculty place high value on teaching. In fact, the value of teaching to faculty has grown dramatically on U.S. campuses over the past two decades (Cummings and Shin, 2013), perhaps underscoring the centrality of quality teaching to student recruitment, but most certainly to work satisfaction.

### **Part III**

#### **The Micro Level: Virtue and the Critique of Neoliberalism**

There is much right about higher education in America but also much that is worrisome. Mostly there seems to be a wide-ranging peace with a world where there is one higher education for the elite (or soon to be elite) and another for everyone else (Christensen & Eyring, 2013). There is no doubt that Professor Newfield is correct: democracy requires a robust middle class, a robust middle class requires a healthy system of higher education, and a healthy system of higher education requires more and more steady state funding. “The university needs to be understood as engaged in forms of individual and collective development that cannot be captured in economic terms. Education cannot pay in this way” (Newfield, 2008, p. 273).

As I think about my current institution, Brigham Young University, I see some promising institutional responses to the neoliberal threat and its impact on higher education, beginning with a clear set of aims: A BYU education is to be “spiritually strengthening,” “character building,” “intellectually enlarging,” and lead one to “lifelong learning and service” (BYU, n.d., p. 5). These are aims that speak directly to Newfield’s general concern that universities have lost sight of the responsibility to cultivate student “self development.” Here Woodruff (2001) helpfully reminds us that virtue has its “greatest lasting power in close-knit communities” (p. 24) and universities can and ought to be such communities. To establish and maintain a vibrant sense of place with the relational embeddedness needed to support the development of virtue and to nurture slow time,

BYU sponsors weekly forums or devotionals where much of the campus joins to hear various notable individuals address pressing issues of the day. About half the student body is employed by the university and through this service many students become friends by working together tending the campus and make portions of it their own. Year after year the Museum of Art brings to campus exhibits that transform galleries into sacred spaces, places where one meets Carl Bloch's Christ or the Essene's Isaiah. "Truth be it the ancient truth of Being or the Christian truth of the living God, can reveal itself only in complete human stillness" (Arendt, 1958, p. 15). Students engage in institutionally supported service learning and reside in dorms that require not just conformity to but active support of the university's honor code, a code that includes clear expectations of the faculty beyond academic competence. These expectations communicate an important insight about what makes a teacher effective: "to be a good teacher one must be first of all a good human being" (Giles, McCutchen, & Zechiel, 1942, p. 231). Such people know that the best and perhaps only "remedy for unpredictability, for the chaotic uncertainty of the future, is contained in the [disposition] to make and keep promises" (Arendt, 1958, p. 237). And it is for this reason that Bauman (2008) argues that our times desperately call for "reliable orientation points and trustworthy guides" (p. 24).

Memory, which necessitates familiarity with the great orienting narratives of humankind, and moral sense are cultivated in many ways, not the least of which is maintenance of a vibrant general education program on campus and consistent teaching of moral narratives. Moral matters find place in the very large student mentoring program BYU sponsors that brings faculty and students together in ways that strengthen relationships, encourage craft learning, and generate opportunities to grapple with the ethics of research. Collaboration with peers and with students is strongly encouraged. For many, this experience becomes an occasion for strengthening and enriching moral sense. Drawing on Levinas (1969), the face-to-face relationships of mentoring, the embeddedness of two persons in a shared relationship, offers a space within which morality matters.

But, even with these and other positive responses to neoliberalism, danger is ever lurking. Although BYU is a private institution, like other universities it operates within a national and international higher education marketplace and political context that press the values of neoliberalism as commonsense and invite us to compare ourselves to other institutions to determine institutional worth. The glory of EGMs lurks brightly in the background. At times those associated with the university are too easily flattered by praise that gushes from some

well-placed persons who have found the institution not just like but a bit better than other institutions. Rather than feeling pride during such moments, embarrassment might be more appropriate. The danger of emulation is mission creep, of the institution losing its way. A comment and a warning offered by the late John Goodlad (1994) comes to mind: “In the early stages of redesigning settings or creating new ones, it is not wise to go forth seeking models elsewhere” (p. 100). Generally, it is best to turn inward and to an institution’s “unique strengths” (Christensen & Eyring, 2013, p. 401).

A few additional words about tenure are needed. Tenure documents and tacit traditions let faculty members know what really matters. Despite so few faculty enjoying the privilege of tenure, such systems are rooted in the wider higher education marketplace. On the surface, tenure seems to promise an opportunity to resist neoliberal seductions, but as currently constituted, tenure embraces fast time while encouraging forms of self-marketing and shameless self-promotion that weaken sense of place, undermine institutional loyalty, and hollow-out ethical commitments. Clarity and consistency of institutional vision is the first and best line of defense against neoliberalism. Accordingly, tenure systems might need reconstituting so that they clearly and directly support different and contrary masters. Getting tenure right is far from simple. I came to BYU from many years of service within a research institution where tenure included on-going and systematic performance evaluation and formal tenure review by colleagues across one’s career. Tenure was conditional. In that aspiring EGM, the game was clear: publish or perish. Many faculty perished. There tenure did not involve a one-sided institutional commitment to support a faculty member forever. Rather, the intent was to create a relationship of mutual expectation and accountability albeit with minimal support and in very fast time. In contrast, retention decisions might be driven by slow-time values and the virtues of supporting and building place and strengthening community. Rather than publish or perish, evidence of the quality and institutional consequentiality of scholarship, strength of the connections between teaching and research, and honoring faculty members’ service in behalf of programs and specific communities of inquiry might be elevated in value. To do this requires clarity of institutional purpose; as suggested, neoliberalism thrives in confusion and insists on rabid competition.

Often it is said that the “price of liberty is eternal vigilance.” So it is. Some years ago the philosopher Maxine Greene (1977) made the parallel point that a morally meaningful life requires “wide-awakeness,” which sets for educators the terrible task of actually making “things harder for people [by] awakening them to their freedom” (p. 120). Disembeddedness,

lack of place and memory, produces then sustains disorientation; lack of conviction and an inability to make strong evaluations are dressed up as an urbane and principled open-mindedness. The frenzy of fast time invites indifference, blindness to moral blindness. Disconnected and rushing about, it is easy for university faculty to miss that the commons that make the university are emptying out and are in danger of enclosure from the outside (Kamola & Meyerhoff, 2009). When serious about education, universities function as sacred spaces where democracy can thrive because conversation and civility are understood to be valued ways of living. As Dewey wisely remarked, democracy begins in conversation (Lamont, 1959, p. 58).

University faculty have the responsibility to care for the commons and this means becoming more wide-awake, more vigilant and responsive to the threats of enclosure, and less self-consumed. It is here where the humanities have a special institutional role and educational responsibility as offering spaces for criticism (Nickel, 2012, p. 203). Vigorous criticism of neoliberalism in its many faces and forms must hold central place within these spaces. Through immanent critique, seductive, demeaning, humanly contorting, and soul crushing manifestations of that form of economic rationalism need identification and explication through study and story as they play out in consciousness, in the wider society and within the university (Agger in Nichel, 2012, p. 142). Immanent critique is a means for restoring “actuality to false appearance” by “first expressing what a social totality holds itself to be, and then confronting it with what it is in fact becoming” (Schroyer, 1975, pp. 30-31). The fact is, higher education is less and less about education or, for that matter, about things that are higher.

Critique begins with a destructive moment of interrogation followed by a constructive moment of loving action, a call to repentance, to sacrifice, and to service, and a reminder of our deepest human longings for connectedness and for mercy. Critics ask: What sort of people are we and what sort of people ought we to become? We are not fated; despite the apologists, neoliberalism is not natural. A question like this invites moral deliberation (Johnson, 1993) and points to matters of conscience and its cultivation. As Green (1999) argues, conscience speaks with many voices, each requiring support of the university community and experience to flourish: the voice of craft, memory or tradition, membership, and of duty and service. Universities are in the business of helping make people and the people we help make and the people we must be are people of robust conscience who know themselves and their neighbors well. Marching to a different moral drummer, especially given the power of academic capitalism and of neoliberalism’s obsession with ratings

and rankings and of the sameness valued by accreditation standards for higher education is no mean task, but it is possible.

### Note

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