

Universities, Paradigms, and Ontological Choices

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Abstract: Higher education in Ethiopia, like it is the case elsewhere, is expected to seek, explain, and disseminate knowledge. Beyond this, it is expected to play an active role in the socio-economic and cultural transformation of the society. More specifically, higher education institutions are expected to produce graduates capable of bringing about change and improvement in the society. There has been serious concern about the quality of teaching and learning that takes place in these institutions. The gap between societal expectations and actual performance of higher education institutions in Ethiopia became a serious concern among many people. The management and teachers of higher education institutions in the country carried out a series of observations and deliberations on the quality of teaching and learning at this level. This paper attempts to examine and explain the reaction of the Ethiopian Higher education Institutions to this situation. In particular, the paper examines the way teaching and learning experiences are organized; the approaches that are adopted; the institutional support made available for the teachers and learners and related issues in higher education in Ethiopia. Observations and reflections of teachers in selected higher education institutions, statistical reports and related documents are used as the source of data. Observations and reflections of the higher education teachers depict the overall situation of quality of teaching and learning in higher education particularly in government higher education institutions. The participants of pedagogical training programs organized by the National Pedagogical Training for the higher education teachers were requested to write their observations concerning quality of teaching and learning in their respective institutions. The higher education teachers identified several problems that affect quality of teaching and learning in higher education institutions. Dominance of the lecture method, poor guidance and counseling services, lack of pedagogical training, lack of experience and qualification of teachers, attitude towards education course and teaching, evaluation mechanisms and limitations in the area of research as well as shortage of facilities were identified as problems across most higher education institutions. The paper suggests some actionable alternatives to the problems.

In a paper I presented during the 7th annual conference of the

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International Society for African Philosophy and Studies (ISAPS), 3 years ago, here at Addis Ababa University, I examined some of the implications for knowledge -`human development of the World Bank's reform policies concerning the finance and management of higher education. I showed how the Bank's policies presupposed the 'scientific', thus 'objective', authority of the neoliberal paradigm of economics, and therefore, I suggested, an Individual Utility Maximization (IUM) model of human rationality.

In this paper I want to focus more explicitly and urgently on the ontological and epistemological implications of such policies within the political, economic, and cultural world order as it is evolving under the dominant forces currently driving the processes of globalization.¹ In terms of epistemology, it seems quite obvious to me that, today, knowledge is being produced through a global *matrix* of institutionalized power relations within which the majority of humankind are almost wholly absent or at best extremely marginalized as creative subjects. Even within higher education, lecturers, professors and students alike - especially in universities of the 'developing' world (though it is also true in the so-called 'developed' world), are pressured into adaptive strategies of disciplinary capacitation within determinant *paradigms* in relation to which the majority of intellectuals and academics are relatively powerless. In order to understand the relation between epistemology and ontology that I will try to develop in this paper, the concept of 'paradigms' in relation to scientific progress and/or fundamental change is essential.²

Under conditions of epistemological hegemony and marginalization, it takes an extraordinary effort to mount an effective challenge even to

¹ I know that the concept of globalization carries many divergent denotative and connotative meanings for different people. I will clarify my own view further along in this paper. At this point let me just say I think 'globalization' is not just some kind of rhetorical fad or 'sexy' literary ploy; it is a crucial attempt to conceptualize a radically new era of human development; it is highly contested precisely because of its importance. So, at this point I ask that the reader to allow your understanding of my usage of the concept to emerge as I use it in the course of this paper.

² Concerning the concept of a 'paradigm' I would ask that the reader accept it in the same way as I suggested we treat 'globalization' in the first footnote.

some small aspect of the received truths of our various fields, let alone suggest, as Thomas Kuhn (*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* 1962/1970), puts it, that the rules and methods of a dominant paradigm: "no longer define a playable game and to conceive another set that can replace them (Kuhn 1962)." So, in this paper, I will try as hard as I can to bring into focus, in some cursory way, what I think is at stake in terms of human development and the future of life on our planet in relation to the current matrixes of power/knowledge flows within which the question of the 'university' appears (Foucault 1972).

Many years ago when I first entered the system of higher education at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC), I wanted to become a high school teacher. UCSC was established in the 1960s as a progressive and somewhat experimental campus within the UC system. Grades were optional: students received written evaluations of their work. Even though they hired many top-notch, and thus expensive, world famous scholars, class sizes were kept low, at least in relation to undergraduate studies in Berkeley, Los Angeles, or San Diego.

The Department of Education was particularly progressive with people like Paulo Freire (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*) paying regular visits which would attract thousands of students into a central auditorium and adjoining lecture halls connected through closed-circuit TV. As a young student preparing to teach, I was introduced into three basic paradigms of education: 'Reconstructive', 'Humanistic', and the 'Human Capital' paradigm. As one might expect, at UCSC, the preferred, or one might say hegemonic, paradigm within the department was the 'reconstructive' model that focused on the dialectical or perhaps 'multilectical' role of education in the transformation of society.³ The 'humanist' model was judged to be perhaps well intentioned but ultimately idealist - both in the popular and the strict philosophical sense of the term. Humanist educators focused

³ 'Multilectical' is a term I am developing in an attempt at a neo-Marxist conceptualization of how it is that societies achieve qualitative transformations that do not reduce the dynamics of history into dogmatic binary oppositions.

on the individual and the realization of her or his full human potential. Then there was, what to us, was the incredibly dogmatic, materialistic - again in both senses of the term, paradigm of 'human capital'.

As I remember it, from my perspective as an undergraduate during the 1980's in the US, outside of Santa Cruz - with our socialist city council - the dominant discourse on education was based in a conflict between the humanist and human capitalist paradigms. It is interesting to note that though the humanists were rapidly losing ground with the rise of Reagan and Thatcher, the term 'human capital' was rarely used in public. Obviously, you can't go to the local school board and start talking about children as 'human capital'. But the proponents of this paradigm were even a little hesitant to use it in policy debates. To us 'reconstructivists',⁴ to say the least, the 'human capitalists' were an anathema.

It was in this intellectual context and the larger rapidly globalizing social, cultural, economic, and political context of the 1980s that I moved from the Department of Education to the Department of Philosophy at UCSC. In fact, in retrospect, it seems to me that it was in the 1980s, as the final battles of the so-called 'Cold War' were being fought, that the material foundations of globalization - in terms of sheer economic and military power as we know it today - were being consolidated along with the intellectual paradigms necessary to legitimize and stabilize it.⁵ From the perspective of a young, somewhat

⁴ I should mention that I think this was the first and last time I have found myself in conformity with a dominant paradigm - at least as long as I stayed in Santa Cruz.

⁵ As an example of the profound importance of 'paradigmatic' hegemony and choice I might digress for a moment to reflect on the unquestioned story that we tell ourselves about the history of the 20th century. In the so-called 'Cold War', an ideologically diverse group of leaders, including such names as Oginga Odinga, Patrice Lumumba, Nelson Mandela, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Ho Chi Minh, Mossadegh of Iran, Arbenz of Guatemala, Allende of Chile, the followers of Emiliano Zapata, Faribundo Marti, and Emiliano Sandino in Central America and Mexico . . . [I will leave it to the reader to fill in the list of student, peasant, union, religious, and political figures] . . . from every corner of the planet, along with domestic leaders within the US, such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, and leaders of the sovereign nations of various Native American peoples such as Leonard Peltier, were specifically identified by Washington as communist, or communist sympathizers, and therefore, enemies of the United States of America. It is also true that

radical, student struggling to free himself from a platonic cave deep within what has become 'the world's only super-power', the historical essence of the 1980s could be briefly indicated in just a few sentences: It was a time in which American gun-ships and helicopters - as in Vietnam - were once again razing villages in Central America to the ground in order to save them, and Nelson Mandela was a 'communist terrorist'. The main difference being that the idea of 'Vietnamization' of Nixon and Kissinger had been taken to heart. So, rather than poor and working class US troops, disproportionately African American and Latino, doing the fighting, the US was now training Salvadoran, Guatemalan, Honduran, Nicaraguan, and also Mozambiquan, Angolan, white racist Afrikaners, etc. - not to mention Saudi Arabians like Osama bin Ladin in Afghanistan - to *be* 'freedom fighters'. However, domestically, rather than President Johnson's 'War on Poverty', social spending was being slashed as fast as was politically feasible. Under the banner of 'Reaganomics', the American 'welfare state' which had been based on Keynesian economics and painstakingly constructed by the Roosevelt administrations of the 1930s, was being systematically dismantled.

between the years of 1948 and 1989, millions of men, women, and children were killed, and tens of millions were injured and/or displaced in what was arguably a more globalized conflict than the two preceding World Wars. Genocidal strategies legitimized by the supposed struggle of 'freedom and democracy' vs. 'communism' were developed and ruthlessly pursued in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Thus, while we can certainly be grateful that the supposedly central protagonists of the 'Cold War' never unleashed their nuclear arsenals, it would seem dangerously Eurocentric to refer to this era of human history as 'cold'. Rather, this period of history should be conceptualized as World War III and as a struggle between the defenders of a global oligarchy versus a historically emergent trend towards political and economic democracy. This is not such a 'far out' paradigm. Exactly one year before his assassination Martin Luther King, in denouncing the war in Vietnam, conceptualized the so-called 'Cold' War in these terms, declaring that, "Vietnam is but a symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit, . . . If we are to get on the right side of this **world revolution**, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values (King 1986/1967: p. 240)." I also might mention that in a recent speech in Los Angeles, a leading 'neo-conservative' of the Bush Administration, Paul Wolfowitz, referred to the 'War on Terrorism' as "WWIV (Los Angeles Times)." In my opinion we can not understand 'globalization' without understanding that the political, economic, and military foundation of 'globalization' in its current form was established through the systematic terrorization of the Third World by the so-called 'developed' world in the second half of the 20th century.

Now, I am sorry for what might sound like a blatantly political digression to some, but what I want to suggest is that it was during the 1980s that neoliberalism - i.e. 'Reaganomics', was transformed from being a rightwing ideology into a set of scientific principles, thus able to function as a 'non-ideological' foundation for World Bank policies in the 1990s.⁶ These rather idiosyncratic personal reflections on the past also seem like an expeditious way to bring into our focus the profoundly fundamental epistemological and ontological questions that I think are at stake when we try to understand what a university is in relation to the knowledge, and perhaps more importantly, the young intellectuals, it 'produces'.

In 1984, I moved from the Department of Education to the Department of Philosophy because there seemed to me to be too many really basic questions that were almost impossible to address within Education as an academic discipline. In the context of this paper, and as an introductory articulation of my current understanding of these questions, let me introduce a couple of basic philosophical claims:

- 'Knowledge' is not primarily concerned with what is objectively 'true' independent of any particular human consciousness. In other words, the traditional 'correspondence theory of truth' on which traditional theories of knowledge (epistemologies) and the traditional model of a 'university' is based (to be further elaborated below), is a mythical construct.
- Rather, 'knowledge', especially in the era of globalization, has to do with establishing particular *ways of being* in the world, i.e. while 'truth' - in one way or another, is obviously important, the real

⁶ I am self-consciously going to make claims for which many, probably most, professional scholars would demand a citation of multiple sources pro and con before it could be published within a scholarly journal. It will be a central thesis of this paper that such absolute principles, if not conditioned in relation to their actual functions within the current matrixes of power/knowledge, function to reinforce the hegemony of a particular way of being human which I intellectually and passionately reject - e.g. the one that lets millions suffer horrible pain and death because the precedent of allowing others to produce and distribute 'their' drugs would undermine future research - i.e. the way of *being* that is based in the IUM model of human rationality. If we restrict ourselves to playing by their rules, we will always lose

question is one concerning the ontological assumptions implicit in our epistemological paradigms. In other words, implicit, and sometimes explicit, projections of who we are and who we want to become.

Philosophy is what we call a 'second order discourse'. We try to think about thinking, in order to think better. So, specifically, one useful tool for such second order reflection that I would like to introduce, in an admittedly sketchy manner, is based on Kuhn's revolutionary insight into the nature of scientific paradigms. There is a fundamental epistemological distinction which I believe we need to make between paradigms and theories which have extremely radical, root oriented, ontological implications. When *theories* conflict with each other within the practice of 'normal' science (Kuhn 1962), the expectation is that further research and professional criticism will be able to reconcile the discrepancies (see the discussion of Karl Popper below). However, when we find ourselves in the midst of conflicting paradigms, we enter into a realm of profound ontological consequence for the evolution and development of human life and, given the increasing global impacts of human behavior, the earth itself.

Ontology and [R] Evolution

I know that 'ontological' is a word that many might hear as merely a philosophical pretension. But, I really do think that we need to rigorously and systematically reflect on and examine the logic of our being as sons and daughters of mother earth and father sky. Yes, given that the objective of this paper is to examine how it is that knowledge and intellectuals are produced through educational systems that have universities as their systemic apex, the language that I use will at times intentionally jostle and/or challenge the dominant paradigms within which we tend to work as 21st century intellectuals. In my opinion, the being, or existence, or life - if you will, of earth has entered a new era of development and evolution. I realize some biologist might caution me with the observation that it took millions of years to become who we are today; but such an observation does not

negate the fact that evolution is an ever present process. It's always happening. And, in my opinion, it is also true, that despite wait No!

I know, as a professional philosopher and scholar - even though I can't cite all the pros and cons of the arguments (I don't have time for it),⁷ that despite the 'ignore-ant', self-denying, suicidal, and/or apocalyptic denials by some who seek to be the masters of globalization, human behavior is rapidly creating any number of radical imbalances in our planetary ecosystem. Such imbalances will inevitably effect the successes and failures of plants, animals, insects, viruses, etc. in their ongoing mutations. We have already witnessed quite rapid, in evolutionary terms, mutations and adaptations of insects and bacteria in relation to insecticides and antibiotics produced by human beings.

Human nature is part of these evolutionary dynamics. Human potentialities and capacities are constantly being evolutionarily selected while others are disappearing. Though it is a gross simplification and exaggeration of the point, I might metaphorically bring it into sharper focus by suggesting that we will be seeing fewer and fewer 'Hercules'es, except on American football and English rugby fields, and more and more 'Bill Gates'es. Perhaps Arnold Schwarzenegger is an exception to this general trend. True, given the cloudy and at times dangerously abused hypotheses concerning a genetic bases for human behavioral characteristics,⁸ I should perhaps qualify the claim I am making concerning the evolution of human nature and potentialities as a metaphorical trope, as I did the previous claim concerning 'Hercules'es and 'Gates'es. However, despite the abuses of the past, from a rational perspective it would seem to be an unfounded theoretical exclusion. So, I would respectfully ask the reader to keep the literal interpretation open as one paradigmatic

⁷ In a speech he gave on July 4th, 1858, Frederic Douglas scathingly condemned the hypocrisy of the American celebration of their freedom and independence. In the course of his address, he reflected on those who might urge him to argue more and passionately condemn less.

⁸ Eugenics, Social Biology, and similar theories have been notoriously abused to defend explicitly racist and sexist beliefs, and justify gross inequalities within and between human societies, at least since the time of Aristotle.

vehicle of ontological reflection along with the various other competing and/or commensurate metaphysical paradigms.⁹

As an initial articulation of where I'm trying to take us in this paper, in relation to higher education and the three paradigms of education discussed earlier, along with my hypothesis concerning the difference between contradictory paradigms and conflicting theories, rather than arguing about which paradigm is a better fit with our understanding of human nature and history, perhaps we should be asking more [r]evolutionary questions. In choosing and/or either supporting or resisting a particular paradigm, are we not, in effect, making an existential choice - not as Sartrean individuals, but as a people or being?

We can become 'self interested rational animals' as presupposed in the human capital paradigm of education, or

Granted, objectively we must admit that, today, the hegemony of the 'human capital' model of education appears to be insurmountable, at least for the time being. But, the very hegemony of this one paradigm can be used as an example of what we are trying to understand in terms of universities and globalization.

- Never before in history has the youth of the entire world been subjected to one overarching paradigm of education. 'Human capital', 'human resource development', and 'capacity building' are the dominant themes of education throughout the world. Think about it.

As an illustration of this point, I could tell a story about when I was teaching in the Educational Foundations Department at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana. In the year that I was there, 1999, we spent many hours of departmental meetings discussing whether we should change our name to the 'Department of Human Resource

⁹ Yes, 'we' are here. Another implication of the theses or hypotheses of this paper, is that any paradigm that seeks to eliminate subjectivity from objective scholarship is either misguided or concealing a particular subjective ideological agenda.

Development' or some other similar alternatives. Eventually the defenders of 'Educational Foundations', including myself, lost. In retrospect, given the postmodern critique of the Cartesian search for 'foundations' I suppose we should have suggested our own alternatives. How about: 'Department of Education for a more Healthy, Sustainable, Just, Diverse and Happy Future'. . . . Nah, probably not.

At any rate, in relation to our current concern for education here in Ethiopia, and higher education as the apex or Aristotelian final end of the whole educational system (see below), the next time you hear the term 'capacity building', . . . think about it. Capacity building for what? Ask yourself the question: what direction or final end is determining the logic of our universities' development. I have argued before, and I would like to expand on these arguments here, that *the neoliberal paradigm posits an extremely limited range of possible responses to questions such as these.*

The World Bank and the Neoliberal Paradigm

As I mentioned in the opening paragraph of this paper, in my paper for the ISAPs conference from three years ago, I examined the distinction between 'public' and 'private' goods, the neoliberal paradigm in economics, and the 'Individual Utility Maximization (IUM)' theory of human rationality. I would like to briefly review that problematic here.

In a series of World Bank documents concerning higher education, dating from February 1995 through October 1999, an agenda for the reform of universities throughout the world is developed and assessed. In these documents, it is argued that higher education should be treated as a 'private' rather than a 'purely public' good. In addition, the analysis purports to be based on a paradigm grounded in "neoliberal principles of economics [D.B. Johnstone et.al, *The Financing and Management of Higher Education: A Status Report on Worldwide Reforms* (FMHE), 1998, section 2.3]." In the documents, the Bank experts disparage the "ideological" nature of those opposed to such reforms, such as students and some faculty. They don't, at least in the

documents I was able to obtain, explicitly refer to how their analyses might conflict with those who believe that education, including higher education, is a social entitlement or right as established in Article 26 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. However, Amartya Sen, in his book published in 1999, *Development as Freedom*, in discussing how the provision of free or below cost health care and education in developing countries might have some negative impacts on development by undermining individual incentive to refrain from unnecessary services or to work hard and find the money necessary to pay for it themselves, admits the following:

Those who see entitlements to these basic social provisions (medical attention, education, and so on) as an inalienable right of citizens would tend to see this kind of questioning as wrongheaded and even perhaps as a distressing denial of the normative principles of a contemporary “society” (Sen 1999: pp.130-131).

Thus, the Nobel Laureate is honest enough to explicitly, almost, acknowledge a conflict between the neoliberal paradigm and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.¹⁰ Now, given Dr. Sen’s popularity, and as an illustration of the depth of the paradigmatic crises within which I think we are struggling, I would like to expand on this point.

¹⁰ He doesn't explicitly refer to the *Universal Declaration*.

A Brief Digression on Human Rights

On the back cover of Sen's book, *Development as Freedom*, we find endorsements from the Independent - a relatively liberal, even progressive, British newspaper, Kofi Annan, the *Economist*, the *New York Times*, and the *Toronto Globe and Mail*. Inside the front cover, we find endorsements from the *Financial Times*, *Business Week*, *Foreign Affairs*, and *The Nation*, for better or worse, one of the leading magazines of the American 'left'. This is a truly amazing range of endorsements. And, certainly Sen has contributed a great deal to our understanding of human development and global economics from his extremely well elaborated perspective. However, it is a perspective, in fact, it is a paradigmatic example of a perspective elaborated within a particular paradigm, if you'll excuse the apparent redundancy. Further along in this paper I will argue that Sen and other economists such as Joseph Stiglitz, despite their critiques of the more dogmatic forms of neoliberalism - such as the form embodied in the so-called 'Washington Consensus' - are still functioning within a paradigm that, in effect, assumes the Individual Utility Maximization (IUM) of rationality, and thus they represent the 'left wing' of one-and-the-same neoliberal paradigm.

Concerning the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Sen has the following to say:

That position [the position that is distressed by arguments that question our declared commitment to social and economic human rights] is certainly defensible up to a point, but given the limitation of economic resources, there are serious choices involved here, which cannot be altogether neglected on grounds of some pre-economic "social" principle (ibid., p. 131).

Among other things, one concern I have is the way that Dr. Sen puts "social" in quotes. One of the paradigmatic conflicts that cuts across the social sciences, or used to, at any rate, is whether 'societies' are merely secondary aggregations of individuals or ontologically primary

entities. I will return to this problematic below; for now I just want to focus attention on the clear contradiction between the dominant paradigm of economics in the world today on which those who would be the masters of globalization base their analyses, and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Returning to Higher Education and the Neoliberal Paradigm

So, returning to my earlier paper, I first showed that: *even working within the neoliberal paradigm*, the 'public'/'private' distinction was being misused to argue for the introduction and gradual increasing of student fees. The Bank argues that ultimately students ought to be paying the full costs of their education as determined by the market. In brief, it is not higher education that is 'nonrival' and 'nonexcludable' and, therefore, a 'public good' (See Stiglitz's definition of 'public goods' in *Global Public Goods*, I. Kaul, I. Grunberg, M. Stern (eds.), Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford, 1999). There obviously is, and has been, rivalry, sometimes vicious rivalry, for the limited number of places in higher education. And, certainly many talented young people have been, and can be increasingly, excluded from higher education, based on social and economic factors that have nothing to do with individual merit and potential. The whole point about 'public goods' is that it is simply impossible, or extremely costly, to privatize them and make a profit through their production and distribution (Stiglitz 1999).

'Public goods' is meant to be used as a descriptive not a prescriptive concept. Such things as traffic lights, clean air, or a malaria free environment are paradigmatic examples of 'public goods'. Thus, rather than higher education being conceptualized as a 'public good', it is knowledge and higher levels of general development resulting from increases in the quantity and quality of higher education that are 'public goods'. And therefore, concerning the introduction and increasing of student fees, the arguments used by the Bank experts in the documents I was able to find are totally irrelevant to the conclusions they were seeking to support.

Leaving that point aside, but still working within the neoliberal paradigm, I then suggested that transnational corporations and ruling elites could be seen as the real 'free riders' rather than students.¹¹ In the documents, Bank experts refer to the tendency for university students to use their political power as young elites to avoid paying for their own education under the cloak of ideology. And, perhaps more significantly, African leaders use the same arguments as the World Bank researchers.

In 1998, I was working as a journalist and I had the opportunity to ask Thabo Mbeki, Fredrick Chiluba, and Robert Mugabe, in separate press conferences, about the problems that were arising with the introduction of the Bank's policies in Africa, at a regional meeting of the World Economic Forum held in Windhoek, Namibia. Amazingly, given their ideological differences, they all had basically the same response. Robert Mugabe:

Perhaps sometimes [student] demands are justified because the prices have gone up, but at other times it is just the students' way of life (Mugabe in reply to Smith, World Economic Forum, press conference, Windhoek, 1998).

Thabo Mbeki:

We recognize that there are indeed poor students who have the qualifications and ought to be allowed access into higher education... But, we also have quite a serious problem of an unwillingness to pay [Mbeki in reply to Smith, World Economic Forum, press conference, Windhoek, 1998).

The following year, when I was teaching in Ghana, I found that the Minister of Education in Ghana also held similar opinions (*Daily Graphic* 1999). Thus, not only were the arguments for introducing and raising student fees fallacious,¹² but anybody who opposed such

¹¹ Given the IUM model of rationality, the 'free rider' problem refers to the neoliberal 'fact' that individuals have a rational interest in enjoying the benefits of 'public goods' but not in contributing to their production, if at all possible - e.g. it is rational to cheat on your taxes, if you can do it and not get caught.

¹² I should qualify this claim by admitting that there were and are some more sound

policies were accused of using 'ideology' to promote their own rational self interests, a behavior that is wholly predictable according to neoliberal 'principles' of economics. It was a classic 'Catch 22'. You either accept the policies, in which case all is well, or if you oppose the policies you are actually confirming the premises which supposedly support the policies.

In the final section of my previous paper I challenged the hegemony of the so-called neoliberal principles of economics on which the Bank's analysis was based. As I have stated above, neoliberal paradigms of economics, and, in effect, even the critiques of dogmatic neoliberalism articulated by such Nobel laureates as Joseph Stiglitz and Amartya Sen, all ontologically presuppose the Individual Utility Maximization (IUM) model of human rationality. To express the point in a somewhat poetic fashion, according to this model when we look in the mirror, when we really reflect on what each and everyone of us has in common as human beings, when we search for the essence of our existence, what we find is 'a self-interested rational animal'.

Before elaborating this point, in relation to our question concerning the nature of a 'university', I think it would be good to review how the Western idea of a 'university' has developed since the time of Aristotle to the present by reflecting on the history of the philosophy of science. In the final section of this paper, I will specifically address the profound implications the hegemony of the neoliberal paradigm and the IUM model of rationality has for our understanding of ourselves and the universities in which we work. For the time being, let me just express the point I made three years ago by saying that:

If we assume the IUM model of human rationality, *Agape* (in Greek), *Ren* (in Chinese), *Ubuntu* (as developed in African philosophy), *Tawhid* (the Islamic principle of unity), 'One Love' (in the words of Bob Marley), etc. are simply not part, let alone essential capacities, of human beings, not to mention the teachings of Jesus Christ as man, prophet, or

arguments concerning this issue. However, the core arguments of the Bank experts in the documents that I was able to find were and are fallacious.

Son of God.

The Philosophy of Science and the University: from Aristotle to Popper

So, as stated above, at this point, it might be a good idea to review some of the alternative models of what a university, and the intellectuals and scientific knowledge it produces, ought to be.

Aristotle in describing the most 'divine science' pretty much established the basic Western paradigm. The knowledge gained through the most divine science is: "that which is desirable on its own account and for the sake of knowing it . . . [and not for] any utilitarian end (Aristotle *Metaphysics*)." It became possible only "when almost all the necessities of life and the things that make for comfort and recreation were present (ibid.)." In modern terms this is what we call 'pure' science. Technology and the other applications of scientifically produced knowledge are only indirectly related to the traditional Western paradigm of 'science', and thus the nature of a 'university'.

In fact, utilitarian or technological concerns were seen as a threat to the objectivity of the knowledge produced. Objectivity, according to this paradigm, is achieved by the scientist's rational and methodological ability to eliminate from his or her scientific practice all subjective prejudices or concerns except the pure motivation to know the truth about the object of his study. Once again, in modern terms, this standard is expressed by insisting that knowledge ought to be 'value free'.

Thus, science begins when individuals, freed from any distortive physical needs or psychological concerns, can simply observe the world around them. Scientists, driven by their desire for 'pure' knowledge in their particular field of interest, move from their original fascination and wonder to engage in more systematic and controlled observations of the phenomenon with which they were originally enthralled. They proceed inductively in an attempt to discover some more general theoretical explanations and perhaps natural laws. Any

secondary concerns or interruptions are resented as intrusions into the divine Aristotelian pursuit of knowledge for knowledge's sake. Thus, with the development of modern universities, just as Descartes removed himself from the vicissitudes of daily life by retiring to his 'stove' to engage in his meditations, scientists and other scholars retire to the 'university' - preferably with a level of 'academic freedom' guaranteed by tenure.

Today, this paradigm is in rapid decline and even the notion of academic freedom based on tenure is being challenged by the same neoliberal 'principles' referred to earlier in this paper. I will return to these more insidious challenges that universities must confront in the final section of this paper. However, in order to correctly conceptualize the problem we first need to be aware that traditional Aristotelian model of a 'university' has also been challenged by developments in the philosophy of science.

Karl Popper argues that the traditional paradigm of science is based on a number of myths (Popper 1959). First of all, science does not begin with observation and the collection of data; it begins with a problem. Second of all, while observation and inductive generalization are part of scientific methodology, the central structure of scientific progress is based in the falsification of previous theories, the logic of which is based in deductive reasoning (Popper 1959 [1934 in German]).

Scientists don't start with a blank slate; they are the products of a particular educational system culminating in institutions of higher learning and research. Thus, the scientist is always already working within a particular paradigm when a problem arises either from society, for example AIDS, or from within the discipline itself.

So, in terms of scientific progress, which goes beyond the mere application of an established theory to a new problem, some phenomenon arises that the established body of knowledge is not able to explain or at least deal with adequately. Thus, hypotheses are generated and experiments are designed that would explain the inadequacies of the old theory and solve the new problem. To make a

long story short, the falsification theory of theoretical progress is based in Popper's observation that in trying to solve the original problem the previous theory is shown to be false or limited. Thus, roughly, if a theory is true (t), then it ought to be able to explain and/or solve any phenomenon or problem that falls within the theory's domain (e v s). If it can't, then it's false. $t \rightarrow (e \vee s)$

$$\frac{\neg(e \vee s)}{\neg t}$$

Furthermore, argues Popper, objectivity is not based primarily in the elimination of subjective biases or motives of the *individual* scientist, but is rather a *social* result of the open and mutually critical nature of the scientific community (Popper 1959/34, 1945). In other, more familiar words, what guarantees the objectivity of our research is 'peer review'.

Popper's hypotheses regarding the nature of science clearly have many implications for how we should understand science, knowledge, universities, ourselves as intellectuals, and *what we are doing to our students*, if the hypotheses are correct. It should be noted that, according to Popper, his "critical rationalist" theory of scientific practice is equally applicable to the social sciences as to the physical sciences and scholarship in general (Popper 1959/34, 1962, 1963). I will suggest below that Popper's critique of the traditional paradigm is dangerously insufficient, and even mistaken. But first, let's look at the positive contributions his critique has to offer.

- Universities must seek to open themselves up to the world rather than closing themselves off. However, for Popper, this quality of 'openness' is strictly limited to an academic and critically rational form of 'openness' as will be discussed below.
- Yes, a university must seek to establish a diverse faculty within each field of inquiry sensitive to local manifestations of problems that can be conceptualized within the terms of the most advanced theories of one's specific discipline. But, perhaps more importantly, if Popper is right, a faculty must also have the time, resources, and inclination to go beyond the established theories, reveal their inadequacies, and construct new more inclusive and powerful theories. This point, given

the extremely Eurocentric origins of the dominant theories in most of our disciplines, is, in my opinion, an extremely important point for African universities.

- Faculty members must be tough enough to engage in self and mutual criticism. Both the tendency to protect each other's foibles and the opposite tendency to descend into political and personal rivalries must be guarded against with an institutionally reinforced code of professional academic ethics.
- And, each department must be fully integrated into the global web of professional scholarship.

These and other measures are called for by Popper's critique of the traditional paradigm, and clearly these are real areas that present significant challenges to universities, especially universities like AAU.

However, the problem is that Popper still defends a kind of scientific 'purity' as a regulative idea for assessing our scientific practices and thus our idea of what a 'university' ought to be. This idea of scientific 'purity' reinforces the mistaken notion that if these and other measures that follow from Popper's theses were implemented, then the knowledge we produce would be 'free' from any values except those of 'objective truth'.¹³ And, as a corollary to this point, the mistaken idea that the students who graduate from our departments ought to be equipped to function as neutral intellectuals in society without any particular ideological orientations or subjective biases.

¹³ In basing 'objectivity' on the open and critical nature of the scientific community, Popper clearly went beyond the traditional notion of 'truth' as correspondence to a reality independent of consciousness. However, he does retain an *idea* of truth and objectivity independent of subjective biases.

Organic Feces Laden Science and Intellectuals¹⁴

While Popper rejects the classical model of objectivity based in 'value freedom', he defends the notion of 'pure science' by arguing that there are two realms of values. One relates to the 'inner-scientific' relevance and utility of particular claims in either establishing or refuting other relevant claims. The other realm of values might be called 'extra-scientific'. It consists of values based in technological applications or political consequences of the knowledge produced through 'pure' science (Adorno (Popper) *et al* 1976: 97).¹⁵ To the degree possible, according to Popper, scientists must struggle to eliminate extra-scientific values from corrupting the 'pure' inner-scientific values of truth and relevance for truth. Thus, apparently a 'university' must be 'open' but not contaminated by the economic interests and other concerns of the non-scientific and non-scholarly world.

This theory of knowledge, epistemology, has been challenged, and in my opinion falsified, by a number of philosophers from quite different perspectives, and thus, historically constituted value positions. Members of what is called the Frankfurt School including Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, and, today, Jurgen Habermas have argued that the separation of science, and by implication the university, from the social, economic, and political realities is not only impossible, but also not desirable (Adorno *et al* 1976). True knowledge can only be produced if the university is firmly, and self-consciously, embedded in the realities it is trying to understand. This is especially true for the social sciences (Adorno *et al* 1976, Horkheimer 1976). It could be said that we as social scientists and intellectuals working in academia must be willing to immerse ourselves in society and suffer the contradictions and conflicts of history, rather than try to assume some high-minded idealist

¹⁴ I apologize if some are taken aback by this subtitle, but given our global situation, I really want to try to shake us out of what in my opinion is a dangerous and rampant intellectual and moral complacency as much as possible. The subtitle is based in the spirit of a song, Love Is da Shit that Makes Life Bloom, Home, Spearhead, Capitol Records, 1994.

¹⁵ Though the publication dates for much of this material is from the 1970s, it is actually based in what is called the "positivist debate" that developed in the 1950s and 1960s.

position in heavenly academia, in order know what we're talking about. Descartes' cogito is flawed specifically because he tried to artificially isolate himself from what he was trying to understand - his existence within a being infinitely larger than himself. Yet, Descartes and the modernity of which he was an early symptom are precisely the intellectual roots that lead to our current concept of a 'university' and, as a matter of fact, the neoliberal paradigm in economics and the IUM model of human rationality.

From the perspective of the Frankfurt School, the production of knowledge is necessarily a more messy business than Aristotle ever envisioned, at least on paper. But Aristotle did insist that knowledge can only proceed through an intimate familiarity with the material. And ultimately it is only in our minds that we can separate the form of things from their individuated material substantiation. From this perspective, it could be argued that Popper's attempt, or at least commitment to do all he can, to keep 'extra-scientific' values from influencing our research and the 'university', could be seen as a regression to Platonic idealism. I am aware that Popper has radically criticized Plato's flight to the world of the Forms (Popper 1962), so let me qualify the last claim as metaphorical. However, it is the case, as will be argued below, that Popper dangerously idealizes and abstracts his 'scientific community' with the consequence of ideologically concealing the hegemonic and particular material interests and values that are determining both the production and practical applications of science in the 21st century. One indication of this idealization is Popper's regulative idea of science which both for the natural and social sciences, and by implication his idea of a 'university', is based in the elimination of contradictions (Popper 1963).

In response to such implicit, and sometimes explicit idealizations of 'purity', as articulated in Popper's "critical rationalism," critical theorists such as Horkheimer argued that we need to distinguish between traditional sciences and critical sciences. Critical scientists need to rigorously examine, in a reflective and reflexive manner, all of the messy social, cultural, economic, and political conditions that

traditional scientists attempt to bracket; we need to try to understand "the social genesis of problems, the real situations in which science is put to use, and the purposes it is made to serve (Horkheimer 1976: 222)." Rather than trying to run away from the extra-scientific world, scientists, especially social scientists, must reflexively seek to understand their being as 'scientists' within this world.

We are institutional products. Institutions are social-historical products. As such, we are manifestations of the very historical forces and social realities we are trying to understand. I know, many of us at this point might object to my overly deterministic claims. But think about it. We have many models that are capable of making some admittedly gross predictions regarding the behavior of the human objects of our research. Is it not sheer arrogance to ignore the objective determinations operant in our own scientific subjectivities. Michel Foucault offers a powerful pathway for beginning to understand such problematics.

In terms of this paper, the point can be summarized by simply observing that if we ignore such determinations then we are determined, and freedom, especially academic freedom, remains a dangerous illusion.

As Horkheimer and Adorno argued, rather than trying to eliminate contradictions and conflicting perspectives and values in the production of knowledge through rational criticism, as Popper would have it (Popper 1963), from the dialectical perspective of the Frankfurt School the ultimate intellectual challenge lies in "grasping the contradiction as necessary and 'extending rationality to it' (Adorno *et al.*: 109)."

Reflexive Contradictions and the Neoliberal 'Left'

A section of Sen's book, *Development and Freedom*, entitled "Concluding Remarks," in a chapter, **Markets, State and Social Opportunity**, begins with the sentence: "*Individuals* live and operate in

a world of institutions. Our opportunities and prospects depend crucially on what institutions exist and how they function (Sen 1999: 145)." This is the modern paradox. We, the students, lecturers, professors, researchers, administrators, secretaries, janitors, gardeners, etc. are independent of our various titles, individuals. Our opportunities depend crucially on the institutionalized existence of students, lecturers, professors, researchers, administrators, secretaries, janitors, gardeners, etc. Not only is the existence of these institutional roles historically contingent, there have been and might be in the future societies in which such ways of being simply don't exist, but more specifically, the variety of ways there are of being students, lecturers, professors, is also clearly contingent.

What it means to be a student, for example, has changed dramatically throughout the history of the institution we call a university. It has meant being the respectful receptacle of the wisdom of Aristotle, or Confucius for that matter, passed on through a lineage of professors and lecturers. It has meant being at the forefront of social transformation and revolution. It has meant being part of the privileged few who have the opportunity to compete to see who will rise to the top of society and enjoy a life material wealth and power while the majority remains impoverished.

Returning to what I want to refer to as Sen's paradox, it goes without saying that the institutional opportunities on which our freedom as individuals "crucially depend" are not determined by the university alone but a matrix of institutions within which the university takes shape and functions.

The point I want to make about the paradoxical nature of our existential situation as human beings in the 21st century might be best expressed in the form of a metaphor. The institutionalized matrix of power/knowledge relations to which I referred at the beginning of this paper, especially in relation to education, can be understood as kind of nest within which we develop as individuals.¹⁶ However, birds, as far

¹⁶ I am concerned with the rather undialectical nature of this metaphor, but I hope it will be

as we know, don't think about what kind of a nest they are going to build. They behave in accordance with the marketing propaganda of Nike: "Just Do It!" Human beings, however, with the evolution of consciousness, increasingly find themselves thinking about how they will live their lives: what kind of houses will we be build, what kind of clothes will we wear - if any, etc. The point is that when we begin to think about what kinds of institutions we will create, that will in turn crucially determine the choices we have as individuals. We, as individuals, functioning in pre-established institutionalized roles, or ways of being, are forced to recognize the reflexive nature of our being. Sen is 'Sen' because of the choices he was given as constituted by the institutionalized opportunities he had as an individual in Calcutta, Delhi, Cambridge, the London School of Economics, and Harvard - not to mention the institutionalized existence of something we call Nobel Laureates.

In reflecting on such realities, as Sen is doing in *Development and Freedom*, what we come to recognize is that we are indeed social beings. With the evolution of consciousness, with the growing awareness of the reflexive, socially embedded, nature of our existence as individuals, our real freedom, and thus the locus of human rationality, ought to move beyond ourselves as isolated individuals to a more inclusive 'self' consciousness. The locus of this self moves through the individual to find it's 'self' far beyond Decartes' isolated cogito.

The illusion of modernity was that subjectivity freed from individual biases could construct institutions that would bring about a utopic society, or at least the best of all possible worlds. Fukayama, in his infamous, End of History thesis claimed that the so-called 'developed' nations had succeeded in accomplishing precisely this. But one of the valuable contributions of the postmodern and postcolonial critiques of modernity is the revelation that the attempt of subjectivity, especially Western colonial and imperialist subjectivity, to escape from the

responsibility of the ontological choices they were making by claiming objective universality has led to our current crisis. With all of the productive power that human beings now possess, the fact that poverty and suffering from treatable diseases are increasing, while we produce more weapons, totally useless consumer goods, and decadent - in the face of children's suffering - luxury items, are signs of profound crisis. The fact that many of us don't recognize it is that it is a paradigmatic indication of the problems I'm trying to bring into focus in this paper. This crisis can only be seen as 'normal' if one refuses to move beyond the IUM model of rationality and the neoliberal paradigm which places the market in the center of our institutionalized matrix of power/knowledge.

The Neoliberal 'Social Mind' and Human Capital

Within the neoliberal paradigm of economics, the market is, and ought to be, the dominant institution in relation to which all other institutions should adapt. It is *the* source of social rationality. Only *it* is capable of rationalizing the self interested rational choices of billions of individuals in such a way as to bring about optimal effects in terms of human development as a whole. The debate, among those who would be the masters of globalization, is to what degree market mechanisms must be supplemented by government interventions and regulations.

In an article entitled, **Classical Political Economy and the Role of Universities in the New Knowledge Economy**, Michael Peter, of the University of Glasgow, outlines how Friedrich Hayek (1899–1992), who he sees as the single most important contributor to what would become neoliberal economics, poses one of the central problems of economic theory within a neoliberal paradigm:

How can the combination of fragments of knowledge existing in different minds bring about results which, if they were to be brought about deliberately, would require a knowledge on the part of the directing mind which no single person can possess?' And he proceeds to offer a solution in terms of the now celebrated notion of spontaneous order:

'the spontaneous actions of individuals will, *under certain conditions which we can define*, bring about a distribution of resources which can be understood as if it were made according to a single plan, although nobody has planned it'. This is also an answer, he surmises, to the problem of the 'social mind' (Peters 2003: p.161, emphasis mine).

So, the debate, as stated above, concerns the definition of the conditions under which the market can spontaneously bring about such a benevolent order. One of the central insights that takes us beyond the 'invisible hand', and the classical economics of Adam Smith, is the focus on knowledge and information. Obviously, this means that for the market to achieve its optimal effects, education and universities are very important.

Now, there is a long and intricate intellectual history concerning the interpenetration of economics and education that goes beyond the scope of this paper, or at least my academic capacities at present. Suffice it to say that it was in this general context that the human capital paradigm of education emerges as a corollary of the neoliberal paradigm of economics. And, it is important to recognize that even among what I have referred to as the 'leftist' within the neoliberal paradigm, all alternative understandings of education are rejected in favor of the human capital paradigm.

Referring back to Sen's, *Development and Freedom*, in the final pages of his book he addresses the relation between the 'human capital' perspective of human development, in general, and his own focus on 'human capability'. He argues that the human capital perspective is indeed limited. Economic growth must be understood as a means in the larger context of ends directly related to human "well-being" and "freedom (Sen 1999: p.296)." However, he also unreservedly defends the human capital perspective:

We must go beyond the notion of human capital, after acknowledging its relevance and reach. The broadening that is needed is *additional* and *inclusive*, rather than, *in any sense*, an alternative to the "human capital" perspective (Ibid., emphasis mine).

Thus, while admitting the limited nature of "human capital" in terms of development, and therefore, presumably, as an educational model, Sen rejects any alternative models. Education is primarily about the enhancement of human capital; but, the increased production that results from this investment is not an end in itself, but rather a means for a better life for each, and thus a better life for all.

Realistic Individuals and Paradigmatic Ontological Choices

There is a large body of literature which takes up the pros and cons of the human capital paradigm of education. For the purposes of this paper, I would like to cite just one critique that I think crystallizes the problem in relation to our concern for the ontological consequences of choosing one paradigm over any alternative paradigms, and the current hegemonic situation within which intellectuals and universities are struggling, especially in 'developing' countries.

Michael Peters, who I referred to above, in the same article, cites an observation concerning the human capital paradigm of education that I would like to use in order to expeditiously bring into focus the issues I am trying to address in this paper:

Human capital must be made to fit into predetermined regimes and processes. It is in this manner that knowledge, as a commodity, becomes, as it were, exteriorised from the knower; 'treated' separately from the knower. Knowledge becomes the benchmark or the skill to which the learner/worker must step forward, and not without a degree of respect, or even unquestioning reverence (Dummond, J. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, Vol. 35, No. 1, 2003).

Given the centrality of the market as the most important institution on which our individual choices 'crucially depend', according to Sen, what is the nature of the choices we have, especially in the 'developing' world. In relation to the above quotation, we should notice that 'human capital' in the first sentence is referring to Sen's 'individual'. We could thus rewrite Sen's statement concerning individual choice and the importance of institutions in the following way:

"Human capital lives and operates in a world of institutions. Our opportunities and prospects depend crucially on what institutions exist and how they function (Sen 1999: 145)."

In this context, if we are realistic, which certainly we ought to be, in terms of our moral responsibilities to our students, as intellectuals working within public universities, we must make sure that we are capacitating our students to fit into pre-established positions in a market increasingly controlled by transnational interests in relation to which our students have virtually no power. Even in seeking local, governmental or non-governmental employment such opportunities are in turn dependent on the larger transnational market forces. It should be noted that their powerlessness is obviously increased by the fact that, given the introduction of fees, they now graduate with tens-of-thousands of birr of personal debt.

We also need to understand the academic realities within which we do our research. In 1980, a landmark piece of legislation passed through the United States legislature and was signed into law by President Jimmy Carter. The Bayh-Dole Act established that universities can own and license patents on discoveries resulting from publicly funded research (Lohmann 2004). This legislation is a manifestation of general shift in our idea of a university as an institutionalized center for engaging in the Aristotelian divine science in which knowledge is valued for its own sake, to what some call a corporate university geared towards profits and the globalized market (Lohmann 2004). All of this conforms to the trends identified by the Bank: "tuition, fees, and the sale of research and instruction via grants, contracts, and

entrepreneurial training (Johnson op. cit. 1998)."

For Lohmann, these trends have both positive and negative effects. In relation to the positive effects, after discussing how, "the commercialization and privatization" of research is undermining a core strength of the university, namely the requirement for research to be posted publicly so it can be vetted, pooled, and cumulate (Lohmann 2004)," she makes the following observations:

But money also does Good. Money grounds the university in the outside world. Indeed, the reasoning behind the Bayh-Dole Act was the well-meaning idea that research results shouldn't get stuck in the university but move into industry where they can be developed into useful applications and make a difference in the world. Money counteracts the natural tendency of the university to ossify intellectually and structurally. Departments and disciplines that are not linked to constituencies outside of the university can keep right on trucking in self-referential circles, and money disturbs these circles.

Lohmann goes on to argue that the dichotomy between the traditional 'Research University' and a 'Corporate University' is false:

What is needed is a mechanism allowing ideas and methods to spill over from one subject to another and across disciplinary boundaries. There is also the need for a mechanism to disseminate the newly found knowledge to the outside world. The research university contributes such mechanisms through its organizational form (Kant I., *Der Streit der Fakultäten* (The Conflict of the Faculties), 1797 [1798]). But a university that takes on a simple form – the faculty 'R' the university, at one extreme; the corporate university, at the other – is dysfunctional or dead (Lohmann 2004).

Lohmann provides a powerful reminder that while intellectuals and universities might resent the intrusion of the market and the profit

motive into their work, denial is not an option. Rather, if we choose to resist the hegemony of neoliberalism and the IUM model of rationality, we should seek ways to defend one's own values within the changing realities of our workplace, i.e. - universities.

Reviewing the Literature of the Neoliberal 'Library'

A question, might arise at this point as to whether it is possible or wise to challenge such a paradigm given that it is shared by such distinguished Nobel Laureates as Joseph Stiglitz and Amartya Sen - not to mention most ruling elites throughout the world. The other day a colleague of mine was discussing his understanding of how we ought to conduct our research. A rough paraphrase of my colleagues concerns goes as follows:

We must review all of the literature relevant to our theses. My PhD advisor always warned me of how often divergent and perhaps conflictive positions regarding some important question are misrepresented by a researcher concerned with establishing her or his own position without having fully understood the position one is criticizing.

In this paper I have dared to criticize Karl Popper, Joseph Stiglitz, and Amartya Sen. So, let's consider what this might mean if I am to use Sen as an example in reference to questions concerning universities and paradigms which is the subject of this paper. In *Development and Freedom*, there are 366 pages divided into 11 chapters, with 475 footnotes. In *Rationality and Freedom*, we find 736 pages divided into 22 chapters with 4 parts. It has approximately 859 footnotes. Most chapters end with a bibliography; the first three sections contain a total 94 pages of bibliographic references. The final section has a bibliography of 345 +/- references, 57 of which are to Amartya Sen himself.

I have only reviewed a tiny fraction of this literature, yet I still insist that Sen is clearly working in a paradigm that presupposes the ontological

primacy of the individual, and thus, the neoliberal paradigm and IUM model of rationality. If I want to challenge this general paradigm and live up to my colleagues paradigm of research, I would never be able to leave what could be called the 'neoliberal' library. In his book, *The Idea of Africa*, V.Y. Mudimbe refers to the 'colonial' library (Mudimbe 1994: pp.118-119), in which resides all of the scientific and scholarly literature, debates, and discussions concerning how best to colonize, civilize, and/or convert Africans. Thus, we ought to recognize that one of the mechanisms of hegemony is the proliferation of texts within the dominant paradigms that effectively squeeze out any alternatives.

In relation to such realities, Antonio Gramsci's concept of 'organic intellectuals' might be helpful. Writing from within Mussolini's fascist prisons, Gramsci argued that intellectual neutrality is a sham which only serves to reinforce the hegemony of the established ruling classes. Thus, in relation to globalization in the 21st century, to either explicitly or implicitly - by ignoring one's real functional effects in society, claim neutrality in the name of 'objectivity' is to be complicit in the gross injustices that characterize the current world order. Assuming, for the moment, a Marxist paradigm, as relatively privileged individuals, intellectuals need to acknowledge our petty bourgeoisie class position and embrace the historical contradictions within our own hearts and minds and souls.¹⁷ Such a move would lead us to self-consciously ground ourselves in the historically emergent and 'organic' interests of the majority which can only be realized through a fundamental and qualitative change in the current direction of human development (Gramsci 1971/1926;1937). With such an intellectually informed praxis we could find ourselves outside of the neocolonial and neoliberal 'libraries', Platonic caves, and paradigms. We might be a bit bewildered at first but after a while we'll get used to it. The real challenge we as intellectuals have to face is descending back down into the depths of the various caves of globalization and set about

¹⁷ While working in China, my students tried to explain to me that it was difficult to understand the English concept of 'mind' in Chinese. Their own concept if translated into English would be more like heart/mind. Likewise in Ethiopia, Tewodros Kiros has argued that reason is better understood as being located in the heart rather than the Western mind.

systematically removing the chains within which the human spirit is currently imprisoned. Universities have an absolutely essential role to play in this historical project.

Love Is Dead!

I would like to conclude this paper by referring to the work of Friedrich Nietzsche and Cornel West. I realize that for many people Nietzsche is a bit controversial, especially here in Ethiopia. However, much of Nietzsche's work is simply a description of the epistemological, ethical, and ontological changes that were taking place with the rise of Western modernity. Thus, he can serve as a guide for understanding the inseparable character of the ontological implications and epistemological challenges that we confront in reflecting on the nature of universities in the 21st century.

The existence or non-existence of God is not really the question Nietzsche was addressing with his infamous declaration of God's death. Rather, Nietzsche was trying to shed light on a fundamental ontological shift taking place in human development, i.e. that secular values and science were replacing God as the central organizing principle of modern society and development; the Western way of being was changing. As such, these changes were both objective and subjective.¹⁸ Industrial technology is undeniably real 'stuff' and the being of 'workers' or 'human capital' necessary for industrial production was an inevitable ontological consequence of modern developments in the modes of production. While Marx and others focused a lot of attention on the objective aspects of the 19th century,¹⁹ Nietzsche was more interested in the subjective aspects of modernity. In reference to our concern for universities in Ethiopia, we should note that with colonialism, imperialism, and the current form of globalization, these

¹⁸ As we further develop some of the emergent paradigms, in my opinion, this basic distinction will have to be radically reconceptualized. But, for the time being, it still seems useful.

¹⁹ It should be noted that in the *Philosophical and Economic Manuscripts*, Marx also dealt with the profound subjective aspect of the changes taking place by elaborating a the concept of 'alienation'.

changes were, and are, being globalized.

The fact is, in Nietzsche's terms, that there was a subjective 'transvaluation of values' taking place within 19th century European societies; and God was being replaced by secular science and an instrumental form of rationality based in individuals and capitalist markets. Thus, one could argue that one important aspect of Nietzsche's work was to simply record these facts. It was in this spirit that three years ago, in evaluating the hegemony of the neoliberal paradigm and the arguments on which the World Bank's policies on higher education are based, I suggested that "love is dead (Smith 2001/2004)."

In my paper from three years ago I did not argue that the IUM model is wrong. I merely questioned its hegemony. How should we, as intellectuals, respond to this hegemonic paradigm?

One possible response is to welcome such dominance because we believe it is based on a relatively correct understanding of human nature. The social-contract theory concerning the origins of human society, the IUM model of rationality, and the ontological paradigm on which it is based are dominant not because of some violently hegemonic historical conspiracy but because they reveal the true nature of our being. Such values as "compassion, solidarity, reciprocity where cooperation, interdependence, and social well-being," as invoked by Kwame Gyekye above, only arise in human life as means to more fundamentally self interested ends or as irrational obstacles to our development as rational animals. "Communities" do not exist, in and of themselves. They only exist as contingent secondary organizations of self-interested individuals. In short, and in reference to the alternative paradigms that still can be found in many places throughout the world, including in the heart of the so-called 'developed' world, for we moderns, "Love is dead!"

In the conclusion of the paper, I then went on to argue that the limits of reason as developed by Kant prevent any kind of ultimate or rational resolution of such questions, but that, in practice, the hegemony of the

neoliberal paradigm irrationally presupposed such a resolution.

Working within the Western philosophical tradition, it seems to me that to either affirm or deny the existence of any thing beyond the empirically observable individual animals we refer to as human beings is to venture into the realm of speculative metaphysics. Positivism, or an implicit neo-positivism, as a methodological principle is just as metaphysical, in practice, and as a foundation or presupposition for public policy, as traditional onto-theological metaphysics (ibid.).

Turning to African philosophy we might challenge the hegemony of the IUM model of rationality by invoking the *ubuntu* principle: “*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (A person depends on persons to be a person/I am because we are.) [Xosa Proverb].” As distinguished from what in philosophy is referred to as the ontological primacy of the individual on which neo-liberal economics is based, for Leopold Senghor it was important to recognize that the ontological 'primacy of the community' in African philosophy acknowledges that a community is “not in a mere collection of individuals, . . . [a community has to do] with people conspiring together, con-spiring in the basic Latin sense, united among themselves even to the very centre of their being, communing through their ancestors with God, who is the Centre of all centres (Senghor, 1963).” Senghor went on to speculate in the following manner: “Try to imagine a world without love: between man and wife, in the family, in the nation, on the whole planet. Without this *Love-in-Union*, which is made real in God, through religion and art, the world would be ice-bound (ibid.).”

Ontological Paradigm Choices

In this paper I want to go beyond the critical agnostic position of my earlier paper and suggest that in our choices of paradigms we are actually making ontological choices that will determine the direction that human being and life on this earth will take in the future. I realize that the level of speculative imagination in such 'arguments' might violate the scholarly limits of some academics, but I beg for your

indulgence. If anything like what I am suggesting is true, then the consequences of ignoring such possibilities, especially in how we understand knowledge, intellectuals and universities are too great to risk.

So, based in what I have outlined above and from the perspective of speculative reason, independent of our various faiths, I believe we have a choice - in fact many choices within the diversity of our academic disciplines and their particular cultural manifestations. I conclude that it is an ontological possibility that we could become 'self-interested rational animals': those who sever any and all organic or spiritual connections with other human beings and nature, but retain their rationality, will dominate. Strong ego-boundaries will become the trait most selected for in our psychic and perhaps biological evolution. In other words, choosing the neoliberal paradigm and therefore the IUM conceptualization of human nature and rationality is a kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

It is important to recognize that it is not just the hegemony of the 'neo-liberal' paradigm in economics or the 'human capital' paradigm in education, but all the dogmatically closed paradigms that I believe are gaining an unjustified - from an open and rational perspective - dominance in every field of human inquiry. Once again, I ask the readers' indulgence to speculate with me concerning the dangerous and impious arrogance that science is developing as it is increasingly subjected to profit-oriented values of a globalized market.

Louis Althusser, in defending a scientific interpretation of socialist theory and practice, warned of the violent nature of dogmatic idealism. Dogmatic idealism, when empowered, forces all life into a frozen conceptual framework that, even if it once had some foundation in a particular realm of reality, in the long term strangles all diversity, growth and development. But, materialism also can be dogmatic if it forgets that "reality is inexhaustible (Althusser 1958)." The knower can never know the total nature of reality within which consciousness produces knowledge.

It is important to note the difference between this epistemological insight and Kant's denial of the possibility of knowledge of the "thing-in-itself." Kant's epistemology can be used to criticize positivist epistemologies, but it also can, and is, used to defend the positivist reduction of knowledge to experiential facts that I referred to above. If you can't see it, you can't know it and, in practice, it doesn't exist.

Althusser's insights lead to what I want to call a 'pious' scientific practice championed by such philosophers as Paul Feyerabend. Feyerabend insists that science is just one way, and not necessarily the best way, of producing knowledge. He also argues that there is no one scientific methodology or set of scientific principles (Feyerabend 1975). He leaves open the possibility that there's more to trees, and lions, and rocks, and streams, and rational animals than current electro-biochemical paradigms enable us to understand. And, importantly, it does not in any way detract from scientific knowledge based in empirical observation, hypotheses, experimentation, and research.

Thus, the challenges facing universities, especially universities in developing countries such as Addis Ababa University, are enormous and the stakes are almost inconceivably high. However, there is a growing consciousness spreading throughout the world of the critical nature of this moment in human history. In a public lecture he gave last May, Cornel West addressed the rather bleak nature intellectual life in the United States since September 11, 2001. Commenting on the fact that "professors are running scared" and unable to speak out on public issues, he posed the question: Do we have what it takes to exercise *phronesis* - practical wisdom rooted in compassion? In reflecting on this moment of human history which juxtaposes such incredible wealth with such devastating poverty and suffering he asks:

Where is the discourse? Where is the outrage? Where is the indignation, or is it that the sleepwalking that is taking place has become so *normative* that we feel as if we can't make a difference?

Fifty years ago Herbert Marcuse in observing the obvious referred to what he called a “new reality principle (Marcuse 1962).” The fact is that the struggle for survival is over. Human beings have reached a level of development that gives them the power to easily satisfy their basic needs. The problem is that if the productive power that we now possess was geared towards such priorities, the market would be flooded with over-supply and prices would collapse. Therefore the only way that capitalism can be sustained is if most of our productive power is oriented towards destruction and unnecessary commodities. Thus, Marcuse argued, the rise and globalization of militarism and fetishized consumerism are not accidental characteristics of our age, but rather constitute necessary conditions for the survival of the particular form of transnational corporate capitalism that today dominates the global economy and is rooted in 500 years of human history, a history based in slave labor, colonialism, imperialism, and now corporate controlled globalization.

While Marcuse referred to the perpetual preparation for war, today we have perpetual war. The ‘war on terror’ is the only way the global capitalist system in its current form can survive. If the US spent 400 billion dollars a year on life rather than death the market would collapse. Thus, Marcuse, in a critical appropriation of Freud, described a global struggle between *Thanatos* and *Eros*.

According to the United Nations, humanity needs to spend approximately 57 billion dollars a year if we are to reach our millennial goals of each country achieving a minimal level of development by the year 2015. Currently we are only spending 7 billion.

It is in this context that I think we need to reexamine our understanding of the role of universities, science, and intellectuals in the developing world. Our universities need to be self-consciously integrated into the societies we serve. They must become intellectual battlegrounds of the various interests and contradictory historical forces at work below the surfaces of stability. They should not be pacified by dogmatic

idealist or materialist paradigms that reinforce the global hegemony of profit-driven greed, and deny the power of love and compassion in human history. As Cornel West says, the Socratic mission of intellectuals and the universities in which we work, must nurture both “the courage to think critically” and “the courage to love.”

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