

**THE ROLE OF THE HUMANITIES IN  
CONTEMPORARY HIGHER  
EDUCATION: A PHILOSOPHICAL  
DEFENCE**

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## DECLARATION

This thesis is my own work, written under the supervision of Dr. Mike Kissack. I submit it to the University of the Witwatersrand for the degree of Doctor of Education. It has not been previously submitted, either in part or in whole, for any degree or examination at any other university.

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This.....day of.....2013

## DEDICATION

To my husband Phil, daughter Likhabetso, son Motloang and the two families of Mafeka and Phamotse.

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Working with ideas rather than demonstrable objects is not an easy task, and this method of research is diminishing in this globally techno-scientific era. I am greatly indebted to my main supervisor Dr. Michael Kissack. My thanks also go to the following people who have supervised some stages of my work: Dr Kai Horsthemke, Dr Roger Deacon, Prof. Penny Enslin and Prof. Shirley Pendlebury. My great thanks go to Mellon Foundation for their financial support, which made a huge contribution to the completion of this research.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the status and prospects of the general field of the Humanities in the contemporary university. It begins with an acknowledgement that the Humanities have experienced an intellectual and cultural demotion within modern societies over the past few centuries, as a result of the momentous impact that the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions have had on contemporary life, particularly within modern universities, whose curricula have been dominated by subjects located within the fields of the natural and social sciences, which have a crucial instrumental and functional contribution to make towards the perpetuation and improvement of modern technological society.

The thesis provides an historical perspective on the emergence of the humanities, which, in general, enjoyed an intellectual and cultural status from the inception of the European universities in the 12<sup>th</sup> century through to the advent of the Industrial Revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It examines their relative decline as the natural and social sciences gained their ascendancy in university curricula over the centuries since the inception of the Industrial Revolution, and considers justifications for the presence of the humanities in university curricula today.

In presenting a vindication of the place of the humanities in the contemporary university, the thesis focuses on their indispensability for a liberal education, which is itself necessitated by the interminable and irreducible epistemological and ethical disputes that characterize the pursuit of knowledge itself. It also claims that since the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions have produced a proliferation of professionals, who constitute the social and economic core of modern society, the universities have a responsibility to complement these professionals' education in the natural and social sciences with an education in the humanities to ensure that their epistemological and ethical understandings meet the stringent demands of the modern world.

## INTRODUCTION

This research into the role and status of the broad disciplinary field known as 'the humanities' in the curriculum of the contemporary university is motivated by questions arising from my own educational experiences as a high school student in Lesotho, my tertiary experience at the National University of Lesotho (NUL), and the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS) (in Johannesburg, South Africa), and my teaching experience in both a high school and university in Lesotho.

Where I attended school in Lesotho (and my experience certainly seems to have been representative of that of other students in the country), students who excelled in the humanities subjects (Religious Studies, Development Studies, History, English etc.) were not recognized as being as intelligent as their counterparts in the Sciences and Mathematics (Integrated Science, Mathematics, Accounting, Computer Science, Physics, Chemistry etc.). This really surprised and concerned me, as I was not good in the latter subjects. I could not at that time make sense of this attitude. When I got to the National University of Lesotho, I became one of the humanities students (studying a degree in Education and taking History and Theology as my majors) who, once again, were looked down upon by their fellow students in the other vocational areas as inferior as far as their education and ability was concerned. This time around, I learned that the reason behind this attitude was that subjects in mathematics and the natural sciences were considered to be more intellectually demanding, and ultimately more marketable, than subjects in the humanities.

Upon completion of my first degree, I worked as a qualified humanities teacher at a high school in Lesotho, teaching History and Religious Studies. I once again experienced the same condescending treatment from my co-teachers presenting the so-called superior subjects. I remember one incident in which my Religious Studies students obtained first class passes for the first time in the history of that school in that

subject. I was looking forward to receiving a positive response from my colleagues, as that was a normal practice after the review of examination results. Instead, my colleagues dismissed it, saying that it would be unfair if I were commended as I was teaching a simple and inferior subject. They said that they teach difficult and superior subjects, which are more worthy of study and commendation.

I taught for four years in that school and then moved on to further my studies at the WITS, where I thought the context would be different because the country and the people were different. I did my postgraduate degrees, Bachelor of Education Honours Degree (B.Ed. Hons.) and Master of Education Degree (M.Ed) at WITS. Once again, I experienced the same disdainful treatment from my colleagues in the other disciplines. On completion of my studies at Wits, I went back to Lesotho and taught at the Lesotho College of Education (LCE) and subsequently at NUL. The attitude of my colleagues was still the same. However, I was then in a country where I had completed my undergraduate degree. Regardless of the fact that I was not a student, the attitude was (and still is) the same, but at a different level of work.

There is evidence in Lesotho that the humanities as an area of study are becoming even less valued today than one would hope, and that the role of the humanities in higher education might soon fade from the educational sphere. For example, the Minister of Finance in his speech (Budget Speech 2003/2004) made it clear that in that and subsequent years, government would limit the financing of loan bursaries, and that priority would be given to students who study in disciplines identified by the government as critical for achieving Lesotho's National Vision 2020: "reducing poverty, creating jobs, and improving the quality of life of the people". These fields of study are listed as follows: information and communication technologies and computer sciences, economics and business sciences, education, particularly the teaching of mathematics and science, agriculture and environmental science, health sciences,



engineering and legal studies. The budget has since concentrated on these areas, which are clearly natural and social science oriented. To date, the situation has worsened, in that the cuts on student financial support have increased and have resulted in a reduced student intake by the university for the academic year 2011/12. The humanities faculty is experiencing even more pressure in that regard.

In pursuing this interest in, and concern about, the status of the humanities in Lesotho (and in neighboring South Africa), my research revealed to me that, in general, the status of the humanities in universities internationally is significantly lower than that of mathematics and the natural sciences. In general, it seems that the mathematical and natural scientific disciplines enjoy a fundamentally superior status to the humanities because of their instrumental value in the economic and technological spheres of our collective lives. My doctoral work has been inspired by a desire to explore the humanities' relatively inferior status, and to seek a cogent defence of the humanities in the contemporary universities' curricula.

The central purpose, then, of this thesis is to vindicate the humanities by demonstrating that the value of the humanities extends beyond utility and instrumentalism. I am in this thesis arguing that the humanities' value includes, but also surpasses, the imperatives of utility and instrumentalism largely associated with the natural and social sciences, which have become so prominent in the modern world, particularly since the advent of the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries respectively. This vindication focuses primarily on the role that the humanities play in exploring and sustaining debates about epistemology and ethics in the contemporary university, an institutional site that is, in part, constituted by such controversies, and acknowledges, both implicitly and explicitly, the interminability of these controversies. The thesis demonstrates that such issues are an integral part of a broad concept of liberal education, which embraces not only the epistemological and ethical but also the political dimensions of our social life, central to which is an

understanding of democracy's theory and practice in our collective life. This entails a sustained focus on the development of the individual's intellect and upon his/her understanding of civic and personal virtue. This is an indispensable task for which the humanities are historically and singularly well equipped. As they perform it, they also sustain reflection upon the nature and value of their own disciplinary status. In addition to this, the vindication of the role of the humanities in the contemporary university is pursued through a focus on one of the social consequences of our evolving modernization – the proliferation and complexity of society's professional strata. The claim is made (and defended) that although an individual's professional identity is based upon his/her mastery of elements within the natural and social sciences, this has to be complemented by a broader understanding of the historical and ethical dimensions of his/her professionalism. It is this task that the humanities perform, providing a crucial component of the professional's education, and thereby justifying their presence within any university curriculum.

In considering my approach to this task, I realized that an historical perspective would add both depth and credibility to my study. Having provided a detailed profile in Chapter One of some of the empirical evidence for the diminished status of the humanities in the contemporary university (subject to some qualifications), I proceed in Chapter Two with a review of the centrality of the humanities to university curricula at the inception of the European universities in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and during their evolution through to the early 1600s, when the phenomenon known as the Scientific Revolution began to gain momentum. In Chapter Three, I explore the long process of the humanities' declining status, as they were effectively challenged by the emergent disciplines of mathematics, the natural and (later) social sciences, which assumed much greater prominence in university curricula, particularly during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Having provided this detailed contextualization, I offer two chapters in which I develop a vindication/defense of the role of the humanities in contemporary university curricula, focusing, as indicated

above, on their crucial role in the development of liberal and civic education (rooted in interminable disputes about epistemology, ethics, and indeed the value of the humanities themselves) (Chapter Four), as well as on their contribution towards the education of modern professionals, who are themselves an integral part of the successful functioning of modern society (Chapter Five).

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE HUMANITIES IN CONTEMPORARY HIGHER EDUCATION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

There is a well-documented series of challenges that faced the humanities in the past, most of which still exist in higher education today. These challenges have a negative impact on the humanities, the impact of which is reflected in the voices that are raised in their defence. Berube and Nelson (1998) have edited *Higher Education Under Fire*, with most of the articles focusing on the crisis of the humanities. Readings (1996) too speaks of the *University in Ruins*; Nussbaum (1997) in her *Cultivating Humanity* defends liberal education and the humanities. Aloni (2002) in his *Enhancing Humanity* expresses concern about the contradictory position in which humanistic education finds itself. Donoghue (2008) in his *Last Professors* is also concerned about the moral and intellectual status of the professors in faculties of the humanities. These are but a few indications of phrases that capture the current state of the humanities. The challenge to the humanities can be described from two perspectives: it can be viewed from the perspective of features that are primary to the humanities, i.e., the development of the intellect and the inculcation of morality; it can also be viewed from a social perspective. However, some factors, though they indicate a decline in the status and role of the humanities, are to a large extent, external. The factors I regard as definitive for the humanities have remained intact and are not a cause for concern. Challenges that emanate from external factors include those related to: a loss of students' interest; a loss of identity; a lack of funding; political issues; economic challenges; the rhetoric of irrelevancy; a general shift in preferences towards other branches of knowledge such as the natural and social sciences.

It is important to mention that core aspects of the humanities remain the same, and run through all the chapters that follow, namely the development of intellect and morality by a distinct method of enquiry which involves also a model by which to learn. However, some additions which were gradually made to the humanities marked a significant turn. These additions were initiated by global changes such as industrialization and urbanization. The changes were intertwined with radical academic changes that started with the Renaissance into the Enlightenment. Core to these changes was the idea that dominated the universities that knowledge of the content has to be coupled with the ability to apply this knowledge in real situations, as opposed to the idea of knowledge for its own sake. It is worth noting, however, that the challenges to the humanities that were a result of the additions affect the external not internal features of the humanities. The internal features that were used to realise the idea of knowledge for its own sake can also be used in the development of professionals. These challenges have a huge impact on the existence of, and teaching within, the humanities faculties within the universities. The challenges also result in a perpetual focus of education on the natural and social sciences. As a result production of technicians and experts more aligned towards the social and natural sciences dominates the university and eclipse the humanities.

## **1.2 PERSPECTIVES ON THE NATURE OF THE CRISIS IN THE HUMANITIES**

Most of the articles in Berube and Nelson's edited collection of essays (1998), although they focus on the state of higher education in American universities, concentrate on the place of the humanities in the universities. This means the articles relate directly to the state of the humanities within higher education today. In this volume, Berube and Nelson (1998) begin by providing an update of the crisis in higher education. From their point of view, this volume reflects signs of the 'university under fire' when one considers signs from the American universities and colleges' context. In

essence, most of the issues covered in almost all the chapters, which define the nature of the crisis in higher education, fall within the humanities because the scholars who have contributed to this volume are drawn from “English, education, history, sociology and philosophy” (Berube and Nelson, 1998: 9). Of these, history, English and philosophy are subjects in the humanities. The first two articles by Pratt (1998) in her ‘Going Public: Political Discourse and the Faculty Voice’, and Benjamin (1998) in his ‘A Faculty Response to the Fiscal Crisis: From Defence to Offence’, provide us with a picture of what higher education experiences in terms of funding, in which higher education has come to rely mostly on state funding. Pratt blames ignorance and a reluctance to acknowledge the existence of some historically side-lined social groups as a cause for the crisis in higher education. Benjamin, on the other hand, puts the blame on the governmental fiscal policies that govern the distribution of funds, as well as the general economic recession experienced in all the sectors of society. In his view, state funding requires the universities to account for the public funds allocated to them; the universities also need to continually struggle to obtain these funds, for the allocation of funds depends on the power of the university to meet the expectations of the governments in question.

According to Pratt (1998: 49), the politics of higher education “is power, (and) it involves the use of information, not knowledge; it rewards speaking effectively, not truthfully”. He goes on to say that “few of us are willing to forego wisdom, knowledge and truth, and for us a dilemma is finding a middle ground that is both true to our beliefs and capable of communicating to a broader public” (ibid). As a consequence, the university is forced to adopt a techno-scientific form of knowledge as the only relevant form, which undermines the humanistic approach to knowledge. This happens as the university tries to devise innovative measures to combine the integrity of its beliefs about education with ways to address the university’s fiscal future.

Similarly, the crisis in higher education is well summed up by Lauter (1998: 85) when he argues that:

Current fiscal policies in higher education... are decisively eroding precisely those features of academic life that foster humane values alternative to those of acquisitiveness and materialism, and that the erosion of contemporary academic cultural authority is no accidental by-product of financial cutbacks and culture wars but one of their objectives. And further, that such a shift is a mark not of rational economic progress but of social ill-health.

Apple (1998) regards the situation within higher education as constitutive of what he refers to as cultural capital which has to be understood with its complex relation to economic capital. His arguments rest on the issue that unless people acknowledge this complex relationship of the two capitals they are unlikely to comprehend the crisis. According to Apple (1998: 106), there emerge “trends towards the commodification and privatization of knowledge”. Since this is one of education’s challenges, Apple advises that there should be an attempt to intensify debates that relate to issues of political economy and class relations. If these issues are addressed, they instil a sense of diversity of identities and an acknowledgement of a need for co-existence and acceptance.

In an attempt to approach the crisis from what she argues is a different direction from that of others (like Pratt, Apple, and Lauter), Stabile (1998) argues that the crisis within higher education is reflected in the image that the university has currently assumed. She sees the university as “an armed fortress, or as an island of privilege surrounded by the most desperate ratshit slums in the civilized world” (Stabile, 1998: 109). This means that universities are fenced and highly guarded to avoid trespassing by members of the society who are seen as intruders who threaten the university order. Consequently, even the knowledge and programmes (constructed within the university) which are intended to benefit the society remain contained and protected from the same society for which they are designed. One can argue that such a tendency is in contradiction

of the current humanities' project of promoting democracy, the recognition of identity and the acceptance of differences, which I discuss later in Chapter Four. In Stabile's (1998) conception, this situation is tantamount to the creation of '*Another Brick in the Wall*', a state that defines containment and the isolation of intellectuals' arguments.

According to Gross (1998: 126), academic freedom and free speech are endangered by the "politicization of the campus". The cultural politics of the university have resulted in a tendency of academics to defend academic irregularities and condone them in the name of differences in race, class, sex, religion and others. Gross provides an example of an incident in 1993 in which Martin Luther King's plagiarism in his PhD thesis was defended on the ground that he was brought up in an African heritage which is oral by nature and its people do not take written words seriously.

### **1.3 CHARACTERIZING CHALLENGES TO THE HUMANITIES**

The humanities are in such a state that today a younger generation can scarcely imagine how it was possible that anyone took such fields seriously in the past. Problems, which are indicators of the decline, include, among other things, low student enrolment, a sense of irrelevancy, faculty loss of identity, lack of funding, political and economic pressures, low salaries of the faculty professors and dramatic techno-scientific demands.

#### **1.3.1 Loss of Students' Interest**

The interest of students in the humanities' programmes is declining. The humanities fail to solve students' basic concern with employment. According to Donoghue (2008), the behaviour of students who seek jobs is influenced by the "uncertainty and arbitrary brutality of the job market right from the moment they enter graduate school" (p32). If then the



interest is on the job market, the humanities are not the right field to choose. The observation is that most students who enrol in the humanities do so because they either did not pass well their high school leaving examinations to allow them a wider choice of study programmes, or they are students who transferred from other faculties after having failed to successfully complete their first choice programmes. Other students within the humanities are those who could not be admitted to other programmes of their choice, such as Law and the Social Sciences. In his *'What's Happened to the Humanities'* Kernan (1997), although he criticizes Kimball for his claims that the humanities are declining, eventually agrees that "the inescapable point would still seem to be that as demoriversity has taken shape, the humanities in plain words, have become a less and less significant part of higher education" (1997: 5). 'Demoriversity' according to Kernan means a focus on the education of individuals and considering their differences with the aim to discover and nature their individual talents (interests) rather than educating a collective of individuals as if all individuals are the same. The figures Kernan (1997) presents in his book indicate a sharp drop in humanities degrees between 1969 and 1986 and an uneven but slow trend in the increase of the degrees conferred in humanities subjects in all the institutions between 1993 and 1996. However, he quickly notes that in cases where the institutions have become more service-oriented, the humanities are suffering an even slower pace of revival. This is one indication that the humanities, which were once the most valued and sought after field, are in a different state. Donoghue (2008) and Hanson, Heath and Thornton (2001) all agree with Kernan and Kimball that "we in the humanities have been losing students to other, occupation oriented, disciplines for a long time" (Donoghue, 2008: 87). Perhaps the question might be: what do the humanities really have to offer to a generation which largely defines itself only, as it were, in functional terms? This questions the current focus and concentration on programmes that are associated with security of jobs in the market and misses the idea that over and above their initial project of knowledge for its

sake, the humanities make a huge contribution to professional development.

In every educational system, students are one of the major driving forces behind changes pertaining to either curricular patterns or policy. As Eurich puts it, “students register with their feet - where they go in course selection has a great influence on the curriculum... choice of field or major for study, students in systems everywhere reflect the major currents in society...” (1981: 110). The major currents are also explained in functional terms - what kind of jobs in the market are associated with the humanities? The humanities are not seen by students as reflecting the major currents driven (lucrative job opportunities) by technology. As a result, the humanities are slowly losing their ability to raise interest in students in large numbers because more and more institutions of higher learning are defining themselves in these functional terms. The issue is, if the humanities are unable to attract students, they cannot justify their existence within the institution. Curricular justifications are based on the ability of higher education to design programmes that are productive, that promote and raise the market shares of the schools. More students enrolling in a faculty for useful programmes that are relevant to market needs means more chances of students getting jobs immediately after the completion of their studies.

### **1.3.2 The Decline of Some Subjects within the Humanities**

The decline of subjects within the humanities relates to the quality of the content within these subjects. Besides his acknowledgement of the fall of classical studies in particular, Scholes (1998: 2) acknowledges also that the sharp decline of English as both a language and field of study has been evident from the mid- 20<sup>th</sup> century and is now threatening to accelerate. The decline of literature is to some extent in the quality of content, brought about by a preoccupation with professionalism in the study and

writing of literature. Professionalism has resulted in mass scholarship which allows for people to write as much as they can with their own different styles and interpretations (Scholes, 1998). As a result, there is a lot of literature which even the most committed scholars cannot access or read. This inability to read that which relates to literature creates a huge gap between what is supposed to be regarded as “ideal knowledge of the field and the actual knowledge attained by English majors” (Scholes 1998: 81). Based on this change, one hesitates to say English is developing and progressing well because these changes are not positively improving the quality of English, but offering alternative and fashionable trends in English that are influenced by the utilitarian demands of higher education.

Here again, I provide an example of the United States where, when compared to other disciplines, the humanities are said to be representing a declining proportion of all undergraduate degrees, especially through the 1990s. The decline is within and between fields of study. Within the humanities English, foreign languages, history and religion declined more than other fields. As it appears in the *Academic Integrity and Sponsored Research* (2004), between 1970 and 1994,

The number of B.A.s conferred in the United States rose 39 percent. Among all bachelor’s degrees in higher education, three majors increased five-to ten-fold: computer and information sciences, protective services, and transportation and material moving. Two majors, already large, tripled: health professions and public administration. Already popular, business management doubled. In 1971, 78 percent more degrees were granted in business than English. By 1994 business enjoyed a four-fold advantage over English and remained the largest major. English, foreign languages, philosophy, and religion all declined. History fell, too. Some fields plummeted. Library science shrank to near extinction, from 1,013 B.A.s to 97. On the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test, only 9 percent of students now indicate interest in the humanities ([www.academicintegrity.blog.spot.com](http://www.academicintegrity.blog.spot.com), 2004:2).

### **1.3.3 Need for Justification of an Instrumental Nature**

The history of the development of the humanities presented in Chapter Three will show that the humanities have gradually been losing popularity due to the techno-scientific orientation (much focus on, and promotion of programmes related to science and technology) of higher education institutions. Popularity should not be confused with worth, which, it will be argued, the humanities have maintained. Another stumbling block to reviving the humanities is that the humanists are themselves doubting the value and relevance of the humanities and the activities therein. They are engaged in projects to merge courses within and across departments in a process intended to design programmes that are 'attractive' to students, so that the humanities become relevant to the contemporary scientific oriented world. The humanities should not continue to subject themselves to projects that need justification of an instrumental nature, for that is going to destroy the theme and purpose of the humanities. That same kind of justification renders the humanities irrelevant because it has been the project of the natural and social sciences to educate and train students for the skills that are instrumental in nature. The only noble thing for the humanities to do is what Engel and Dangerfield suggest that "humanists willing to stand up for their high relevance have only to assert both 'yes, we too need money - and more than we're getting - to support our activities' and 'No, that doesn't mean we accept wealth as the paramount human and educational value'" (<http://harvardmagazine.com/1998/05/forum.html>).

### **1.3.4 Loss of Identity and New Concept of Excellence**

Readings (in Barnett et al, 2003) characterizes the contemporary university as losing its identity by adopting the idea of excellence that privileges performativity. The idea of excellence captured here is of the university

functioning only as a producer for the knowledge economy. Barnett captures the current era as having:

Homogenized systems of transferability and commensurability that enable the free flow of cultural capital and these are realized through a down grading in importance of content and a weakening of cultural attachments. The modern university is dominated by procedural reasoning – in its emphasis on skills and on management systems, and in an incipient reduction of knowledge to information (accelerated by computerization) – to the detriment of a proper attention to content and to traditions of enquiry (Barnett et al, 2003: 217).

This new identity of the university suggests that academic freedom has rendered the university a site for discussion of even for more diverse ideas (that were not highly regarded before) that deals largely with social practical problems. The idea of researching, teaching and learning or acquiring knowledge for its own sake is currently no longer the only priority for the university. The university as a site of excellence is now open to include even the technical and vocational dimension. Currently, the possession of any knowledge practical and, or theoretical at its highest level renders one an expert in their respective fields. This attitude towards expertise within the university undermines the standards that measure excellence. The standards that measure excellence are, as will be discussed in Chapter Four and Five, core to the humanities. These standards can be comprehended through a process of education (liberal) that is offered in the humanities. Otherwise the concept of excellence will be compromised and the freedom of people to think reflectively (with the use of alternative conceptions/theories) compromised. This approach to knowledge and standards is, according to Readings (1996: 33) “senseless as it renders everyone excellent, in their own way, and everyone has more of a stake in being left alone to be excellent”, without interrogating one’s own beliefs. As a consequence, excellence becomes a meaningless conception because it is not used in the context of competition. In this case every thought becomes ‘just thought’ and one can declare oneself excellent without having competed to beat the best in one’s category. This

approach to knowledge also has encouraged further a production of new knowledge that results from open-ended research, reflection and criticism that have resulted in more instrumental justifications for taking new directions.

The original purpose of knowledge for its own sake in the humanities (to be explored in Chapters Two and Three) has since been replaced with knowledge for immediate benefit, which dominates the period between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries and is a cause for concern. The latter has since mixed business and academe, which marks the corporate penetration of the university. As a result, the dominant theory is instrumentalism, which focuses on the positive contribution of the (less directly useful) arts and humanities, and the standards of excellence are measurable by practical application and immediate financial benefit. For instance, Ann Reynolds, the then Vice Chancellor of City University of New York, reported that “she and other officials wanted to remind state governments about the importance of higher education for economic development, not to mention intellectual and cultural wellbeing” (Scott, 1998: 298). The implication is that Reynolds’ university’s growth would focus on the new and expanded programmes that prepare people for high technology economies as a primary project, and the development of intellectual and cultural wellbeing as a secondary project. These comments have in most cases led to less economically relevant programmes’ elimination, or compression into one system in the name of greater efficiency and the elimination of duplication. These are the kind of justifications that call for knowledge that improves the income rather than the thinking ability and capacity of our people. We cannot therefore be indifferent to the fact that this kind of justification affects the humanities directly and negatively. In response, those in the humanities have for the past three decades struggled to develop arguments about the “usefulness and (that is, critical or aesthetic or esoteric) knowledge for improving the creativity and spirit, if not the income, of our students” (Scott, 1998: 298). Although the reasoning for a ‘learning new knowledge’ ethos emphasizes originality of

thought, critical thinking, new discoveries and difference of opinions, all of which have long been at the heart of the humanities, it does not, however, ally with the humanities. All the emphasis is put on the ability of the individual to use the new knowledge for instrumental purposes and individual benefit, thus knowledge for functional purposes. The justification for the survival of the humanities by the humanists has disadvantaged the identity of the humanities.

This loss of identity entails a decline in the value of knowledge offered in the humanities, in that the humanities are losing their status relative to the classical era and the subsequent period. Kimball (1986) in particular draws a distinction between orators of the classical era and current philosophers – putting the former in a more privileged position in which, he says, they advanced stronger alternative knowledge than the latter; he says current philosophers take virtues of their own as texts, rather than reason. In essence, the thought is that faculties that were influenced by orators used to offer knowledge that was in no way associated with economic gains. On the other hand, the knowledge influenced by current philosophers is based on professionalism and is more instrumental. The humanities are forced to adapt to instrumental measures in all aspects of their teaching due to scarce financial resources and high tuition fees, and also in order to be attractive to the students who are job-oriented. In an attempt to justify the importance of the humanities, these philosophers have, through their defence of critical inquiry, indirectly become allies with those advocating high technology economies. In the end, most justifications, humanist or otherwise, focus on instrumentalism that reduces knowledge to specific outcomes.

### **1.3.5 Funding**

At the level of funding, it is evident that most of the sponsors are interested in those students studying mathematics and science, while the humanities

lack funding relative to the former. Fletcher (1968) and Apple (2000) say that disciplines related to techno-science (related to the market economy) have the highest status and support, not only from the schools' administration, but also from the state and corporations. High or low knowledge status may, according to Bernstein (1986), be determined by, among other things, the classification and framing of educational knowledge, which, in this case, will obviously place the humanities at a lower status level. According to Eurich (1981: 104):

Unlike scientific research and changes in medical education or other scientific fields, research and change in the social sciences and the humanities are expected without an additional commitment of any size. In fact support monies diminish steadily in the order in which fields are mentioned.

The implication is that both public and private funds make grants for innovative programmes, among which the humanities are definitely not included. This problem is a major one. Higher education policies are driven by both the interest of large college populations and the direction of funds. As a result of the financial problems they encounter, students view education as being a key to their occupations, which are in turn aimed at providing more money. The current university policies promote this mentality as well, because they focus on promoting and developing a new idea of the university that is able to accommodate these interests of students. Even the humanities, whose aim has been identified as education for excellence and morality, have been forced by circumstances to adopt the so called 'for-profit' mission of higher education. The 'for-profit universities', so called by Donoghue (2008), refer to the universities that are preoccupied with the acquisition of as much money as possible through education. He calls these universities business model universities. Because of the concentration of universities on gaining more cash, the tuition fees go up, which force students to seek employment and opt for part-time studies that would allow them to pay the fees. The for-profit universities idea poses a problem for the humanities, because the humanities are not directly and immediately instrumental for job



acquisition. Unfortunately for the humanities, the prospective university students now see university education as “investment in their financial future” (Donoghue, 2008: 89). As a result, the current situation is that students choose their majors in the light of how many chances there are for employment.

An example from Lesotho is that it has directed almost all its financial resources towards information technology as a very essential cross-cutting area, which will be critical in supporting all training programmes envisaged under all the four national goals of Poverty Alleviation, Employment Creation, Social Integration and Conservation of the Land Base. These goals have been in place since 2002, despite the fact that they are supposed to be reviewed annually by the government and the stakeholders of education. Both the level and kind of training are determined by these criteria. Funding as well is distributed according to the goals and priority areas. When one reads closely the situation in Lesotho, there is no room for humanities-related areas.

In the USA, the problem of funding surfaces in most symposia. In September 1997, the speakers in the Campaign for Michigan gave a range of views about the “Future of the Humanities” at a symposium in honour of Preston Robert Tisch and family, the generous donors of Tisch Hall and the Tisch Tennis Building. Most speakers were professors in the faculty of the humanities in their respective institutions. The main issue was the emphasis on the need to look into the downward trend in funding that the humanities had suffered in the past thirty years, and to find ways for future funding improvements. Research by one of the speakers revealed that there had been a 50% decline in the humanities funding by the National Endowment for the Humanities since 1975. Major foundations such as Ford and Rockefeller have also retreated, and much of what they do fund targets the visual and performing arts, which are of course more functional comparatively. Worse yet, funding from providers of individual

fellowships, such as the Guggenheim Foundation, have declined by 40 percent (Gilbert, 1997: 2).

The unavailability of financial support for students is a very crucial issue and, to a large extent, determines the way in which students select the disciplines, especially those who cannot afford to finance their studies by themselves. As the United States National Commission on Student Financial Assistance reports, there has been a remarkable decrease in that support. The development of Mellon Foundation grants and National Research Fund, beginning in 1983, have been some of the few genuinely encouraging signs of support for the humanities during this period, when the orientation of education generally has been so distinctly toward the pragmatic. However, they both are currently far from meeting the financial needs of an increasing number of students. If more such grants could be accessed, they would almost certainly lead to increased numbers of high quality doctoral degrees in the humanities, because it is apparent that financial constraints are one of the reasons why some students, who would want to do the humanities, do not go for the humanities. It is even worse in the case of Lesotho, because all the grants go through the government coffers to be reallocated and redistributed in a way that the government finds suitable or appropriate. Given the scarcity of support and the general economic climate in the world, it is therefore not surprising that the cuts in support money are most felt in the faculty of the humanities. High status knowledge is determined by a criterion well captured within the struggle to obtain funding. Knowledge that is financially viable, such as information technology that currently takes priority in most higher education policies formulation, is rated as high in status and the humanities are rated low because they are seen not to fit that instrumental criterion.

In some countries, the problem of financial support goes beyond the students to salaries of the staff members in the humanities departments. In

the United States in particular, *Academic Integrity and Sponsored Research* captures a clear picture of signs of prestige for some fields and the blows the humanities suffer. The report reveals that, on average, humanities teachers receive the lowest faculty salaries by thousands or tens of thousands of dollars; the gap affects the whole teaching population, regardless of rank, within colleges as well as universities. Nationally, in 1976, a newly hired assistant professor teaching literature earned \$3,000 less than a new assistant professor in business. In 1984, that gap had grown to \$10,000. In 1990, it was \$20,000, and by 1996 exceeded \$25,000. Beginning assistant professors in economics, law, engineering, and computer sciences enjoy a hefty advantage, too. In 1990 their salaries averaged \$10,000 a year higher than those in literature, by 1996 more than \$15,000. Nor is English literature the runt of the litter. Fine arts, foreign languages, and education are lower. (<http://harvardmagazine.com/1998/05/forum.html>).

Not only salary figures portray the difference, but consulting fees and second jobs also show that the incomes in many disciplines other than the humanities are boosted. The humanities represent less than one-third the average earned by all disciplines. The point is that professors in other fields, already more highly paid by the educational institution, also have a lot of professional work to do and more time outside on part time projects. This means that these professors' manpower is in demand both in the institution and the market. As a result, because of the income associated with the demand at both the institutions and in the market, these professors tend to spend less time and do not whole heartedly commit to the duties at the institutions themselves (<http://harvardmagazine.com/1998/05/forum.html>).

Of course, the desperation of the professors to access funds for their daily running is a source of market oriented thinking, meaning focus on programmes that ensure security in the market that dominates the academic

world in general across the globe. The struggle to obtain funding for research, for buildings, and for new and better programmes causes the university in the United States and elsewhere to increasingly adapt to the priorities of corporations, foundations, government, and other elite donors. A new union has emerged with business, industry, and the federal government as the principal partners of the university. At the local level, this means that resources, human and material, are poured into programmes that do research and provide services for the corporate elite. Indeed, on most campuses the resources devoted to such programmes would dwarf the resources that go to programmes devoted to grappling with the problems of distressed central city neighbourhoods. This is also a reflection of concern to business and industry which is much greater than the money available for research on local issues of concern to blacks, Hispanics and working class whites (Gates in Apple 1998: 102).

The issue of funds is very important because it explains why states support the production of certain kinds of knowledge that are regarded as high in status, and why such forms of knowledge should get the most resources and power. That is the same distribution that is used in funding for research, fellowships, and scholarships as well as the promotions and salaries of faculty members. However, not underestimating the issue of funds as far as the position of the humanities is concerned, the question is, are the humanities faculties claiming that, if support in terms of funds is equal among disciplines, theirs would flourish and progress in the same or even a better way than do techno-science disciplines? The answer could, on the one hand be affirmative; if the funds are there for the humanities they could flourish; on the other hand the answer could be negative, because the problems of the humanities go beyond the lack of funding. This really needs review because it is a situation that seems to have remained in existence for years now, for as Jarrett (1973) wrote, “much pro-humanities rhetoric has been a combination of nostalgia and hypersensitiveness to recent criticism or – more especially – neglect”. The long existing criticism is that the humanities do not receive as much

financial support as other disciplines. We really need to see that the lack of funding is our immediate and long standing problem and the worst enemy of the humanities. This funding problem can be addressed through more tactical measures such as an academic defence of the humanities: one of my claims is that the humanities have always been a field in which issues that relate to humanity and also professionalism are discussed, debated and reflected upon in order to bring about change for the improvement of humanity wherever such change is necessary. It is now time that the humanities engage with debates and reflect on the question of whether or not utility and instrumentalism should inform higher education in 21<sup>st</sup> century higher education.

### **1.3.6 Political Issues**

This section iterates that the purpose and focus of education in relation to the wider society which have currently been transformed by a new ideology embedded in the current politics of official knowledge and how it operates. My view is that education is no longer seen as part of a social alliance which combines many minority groups, women, teachers, community activists, progressive legislators and government officials and others who acted together to propose (limited) social democratic policies for the schools (for expanding educational opportunities, limited attempts at equalizing outcomes, developing special programmes in bilingual and multicultural education, and so on). This social alliance was such that all the stakeholders in the societies in which the universities existed, that is, parents, teachers, society and the learners participated fully in education and education was a cultural tool that addressed the needs of the societies. Thus the universities used to have a social function of serving the specific societies, as opposed to the current global function the universities have assumed. The universities have reached a state where they have a global purpose of advancing a uniform technological project, which does not have a regard for the basic social and cultural tenets that define humanity. There are several issues that characterize the 21<sup>st</sup> century universities'

transformation as outlined by Jansen (2004). These characteristics apply to most higher education systems internationally. The governments have taken over the autonomy and identity of institutions. Governments are the ones that decide what can be taught, or rather, what institutions might be willing to teach without subsidized income, through skilful manipulation of the funding formula; which institutions will offer which programmes; who can be taught, or rather, how many students are allowed to enter universities and in which specific fields; how students will be taught by placing institutional qualifications on a national framework grid through which qualifications are organized and delivered; which programmes will be funded at what levels – but in ways that appear increasingly arbitrary; on the credibility of qualifications, programmes and even institutions through the mechanism of higher education quality audits; which institutions will exist, and in what combinations; the centralizing of information required for student admissions in a proposed central applications office; and, finally, governments can displace a vice chancellor on the basis of review and install an administrator to run the institution (Jansen 2004).

The situation in which governments control higher education systems is characterized by efforts by governments to control education and direct it to market oriented ends. Some governments control and direct education claiming that they want to ensure that the needs of societies are met. These needs of societies are in most cases only concerned with ensuring financial gains for either individuals or these governments (<http://harvardmagazine.com>; Donoghue, 2008). In Lesotho, for example, the experience is that the government is intervening in education on the grounds that Lesotho education has long been modelled to train for the public sector, the emphasis of which is training for ‘white collar jobs’ in the urban areas and less emphasis has been put on vocational training and on tertiary education which channels the students towards self-employment and survival, particularly in the rural areas, and hard to reach places. The government therefore drafted a policy in 2000 that would help

it to move away from this stereotyped career guidance, which resulted in the overproduction of trained personnel in some disciplines over others. It adopted a method that covers all spheres of training in order to enhance all aspects of people's various capabilities. However, the objectives of the funding policy are clearly emphasizing vocational education, which discourages students from doing the humanities. This results in students losing interest in the humanities and becoming more interested in vocational education (Government of Lesotho, Draft of National Policy on Strategic Development and Retention of Human Resources in Lesotho).

Looking at the above example, it is clear that the Lesotho government is indirectly ensuring that programmes within institutions are fully under its control with more focus on vocational training. This situation has implications for the decisions of students when choosing areas of study. The possession of knowledge denotes the possession of a form of capital in the individual. "Powerful groups within governments and the economy, and within authoritarian-populist social movements, have been able to re-define - often in very retrogressive ways - the terms of debate in education, social welfare, and other areas of the common good" (Apple, 1998: 92). In other words, the purpose of education has been shifted from bringing together all the different sectors of the society into one alliance with an aim to work on social democratic policies for the schools – to providing the educational conditions that are believed to be necessary both for increasing international competitiveness and profit. The existence of this kind of power is evident in many countries' educational policies that tend to favour the status quo.

### **1.3.7 Economic Challenges**

Another challenge the humanities face is implicit in the economic and political circumstances that currently surround the humanities at all levels

of education. The humanities seem not to keep pace with these economic and political demands. Educational goals, in particular, are dominated by economic progress and manpower needs, and so are the curricula (Goodson, 1991). Goodson says that school subjects “are implicated in and reflect the distribution of power and principles of social control. Central to the process is the role of ‘dominant interest groups’” (Goodson, 1991:3). As a result, economic forces, which are in most cases intertwined with political interests, unite to realize higher education goals. In the process, higher education systems are left with no choice but to keep pace with the economic and political changes (Eurich, 1981).

Disciplines are rated in the order of correspondence with the needs of the large market labour sectors, with the humanities last on the list of fields that are market oriented. This may always be a provisional order, but the humanities have retained this last position for many decades now. According to Ben-Joseph (1977), at least in Germany, England, Britain, France and the United States in the 1920s and 1930s higher education was said to be “in balance if the number of graduates corresponded to the demands of all the professions in this order of their ranking” (Ben-Joseph, 1977: 12). This has remained unchanged for decades now as the humanities have proven to be less practical, efficient and profitable. The prospects are, according to Donoghue (2008), that if the humanities’ professors can look backwards “whether to Homeric Greece or to more recent times of stability, they cannot have a place in the university of the future” (Donoghue, 2008: 88). This is because practice, efficiency and profit are deemed to remain strongly influential in higher education, which puts the humanities in a dangerous position of being regarded as unnecessary. This has been anticipated and is, to a large extent, a real threat to the humanities, given the pace of global techno-scientific progress that dominates higher education today.



The questionable idea of money as the most important end result of education has rendered the current age the age of money, in which the royal road to success is to offer at least one of the following:

A promise of Money; the field is popularly linked (even if erroneously) to improved chances of securing an occupation or profession that promises above average lifetime earnings; a knowledge of Money; the field itself studies money, whether practically or more theoretically, i.e. fiscal, business, financial, or economic matters and markets; a source of money. The field receives significant external money, i.e. research contracts, federal grants or funding support, or corporate underwriting. (<http://harvardmagazine.com>)

It, however is, true that, because the humanities are not directly money productive, they are the first to suffer financial cutbacks from the donors and governments whenever the economy suffers. Another issue is that because the humanities do not in any way fit directly into money criteria, they have been penalized accordingly, with a steady loss of respect and students. It is, however, worth noting that fields that study money, receive external money, or are associated—rightly or wrongly – with monetary rewards are precisely those that have fared best not only in American higher education but in higher education around the world in the last 30 years. What is happening in American higher education, as reflected in the Harvard magazine, is that:

Theoretical physics is an interesting anomaly among the sciences: it has met the third criterion to some degree, but produces little of immediate utility and is often now cut from funding and high-paying jobs. Psychology falls in the middle of all fields, sociology and anthropology slightly below. Health and computer sciences, law, business, engineering, and applied sciences: they're all higher. The fine arts, languages, literature, history, religion, and philosophy: all lower. (<http://harvardmagazine.com>)

It is to a large extent true that politics and economics have been and still are significant to the current state of the humanities. Politics, as Ben-Joseph wrote, was and still is a “frightening new comer who now is out of

control ... with the potential of seriously disrupting institutions of higher learning, causing disaffection between institution and society and undermining needed financial support” (Ben-Joseph: 1977: 3). This state is reflected in the decline of autonomy that characterizes the contemporary university. Higher education’s progress and maintenance depend extensively on government policies within which the universities operate.

### **1.3.8 Relevance of the Humanities**

There is also a concern about the relevance of the humanities’ curricula to techno-scientific developments. Levi wrote: “Is it that humanities, once the province of the gentleman and the gentlemanly scholar, are irrelevant in the age of the technician and the professional?” (Levi, 1970: 13) This question is very important and presupposes a need to elaborate on how the relevancy of knowledge is determined and whether or not the humanities meet the criteria that are used in that respect. This question implies two considerations: First, are the humanities still offering what they used to profess, the development of intellect and inculcation of morality? Second, are the humanities meeting the needs of the current techno-scientific society? In essence, the relevance of knowledge shifts with ideologies and conceptualizations of what should be selected as knowledge and how it should be used. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is like other centuries before, marked by two ideologies of what should constitute official knowledge and how this knowledge should be utilized. These ideologies have a huge influence in the state of decline that the humanities find themselves in.

Frank and Gabler, (2000) provide a comprehensive account of these ideologies. One ideology treats the body of knowledge as a closed system, the internal logics of which generate change. These internal logics include: (a) the quest for scientific truth, whereby changes in the body of university knowledge follow from breakthroughs in knowledge of the real world; (b) differentiation, whereby changes arise from career pressures

necessitating specialization and novelty; (c) fractal differentiation, whereby changes in teaching and research emphases occur cyclically through the discarding and rediscovery of old ideas; and (d) much sociology of science, whereby changes are channelled through the social organization of the knowledge production system. In essence, these closed systems provide arguments that are useful in understanding some kinds of phenomena, but do not provide explanations for phenomena on a large scale in the long term. They do not provide observable shifts of knowledge. For instance, differentiation does a good job in solving specific problems but fails to provide generally applicable body of knowledge.

Secondly, there is an ideology that treats the body of knowledge as an open system, in which external forces promote transformation. According to Frank and Gabler (2000), these external forces include: (a) the changing needs of the society, such as economic development; (b) the changing demands of constituents, such as students; and (c) the changing interests of the powerful, such as state officials. These latter arguments are better able than their closed-system counterparts to make sense of the broadly patterned trends in faculty composition we observe, and to some extent we ally ourselves with them. But we treat them as identifying mechanisms of change rather than offering explanations. After all, if students across universities and nation-states demand more attention to a certain field of study, what is the broader force that impels them to do so? The major branches of learning, the disciplines within them, arise on these foundations - that is, on the substance and character and methods appropriate for ascertaining "reality". The process proceeds via such mechanisms as described above – changing societal needs, constituent demands, and powerful interests (Frank and Gabler, 2000).

I believe these changes directly affect the relevance of the different disciplines at different times and they also in this case presuppose that the arguments that discard the relevance of the humanities can be valid in the

case where the humanities do not address the current issues. However, it is still premature to conclude that the humanities are irrelevant, because both in the first and second ideologies, the humanities have incorporated into the curricula current social issues such as democracy (to be discussed in Chapter Four). In this sense, the humanities have in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries changed with societal needs, demands and powerful interests – because these are current global issues that constitute themes in most academic international discussions.

Of course if that is irrelevant, Howard (1991) would have been right to explain the challenge to the humanities in terms of the low quality of undergraduate education in the United States of America in the 1980s. If there is irrelevancy, there would automatically be a lack of coherence and vitality in the undergraduate curriculum generally, and in progress in the humanities in particular. With this being the case, the need for strengthening curricular coherence through some type of common general educational experience would be the best option. My view is that the question still lies with how the long recommended specialized and vocational orientation of many undergraduate curricula that is emphasized by most pro-humanities talks should be achieved. And while none of them made clear the normative ground from which they launched their critique on the status quo, all made recommendations for ‘improving the quality’ of education in the undergraduate colleges of America. More attention has to be devoted to improving the quality of education. All the discussions around this issue should at least be offering a description of the kind of quality that is being referred to.

All the indications of the decline of the humanities are a cause for concern. Of all the indications of the decline in the chapter, one can say that the humanities face the highest possible challenge of having to be understood beyond their traditional ethics and without reference to the question of man, of humanity and freedom. When the humanities are understood

outside their theme it is the job of the same humanities faculties to address the issue of the shifting perceptions of knowledge and redirect them. The neo-liberal and globalized approach to managing public institutions on the basis of profit interferes with the disciplinary boundaries, in which some disciplines, especially those in fervent support of the market-oriented ideology, as explained above, become more privileged than those whose orientation is simply centred on developing the human person.

#### **1.4 SOME POSITIVE INDICATIONS OF THE SUCCESS OF THE HUMANITIES IN THE USA: A POSSIBLE SET-OUT**

The positive indication of success of the humanities in this section may appear as contrary to my argument for demotion in the previous sections. However, my aim is to show that even where the humanities are said to be flourishing they do not match their counterparts in other fields (social and natural science). Given the challenges to the humanities, the progress seems like a start of a very long journey not easy to complete. It is on account of these challenges to the humanities, and despite their some apparent recovery (also worth mentioning) in the fortunes of the humanities (in the case of USA) that I am motivated to make a case for the humanities. In 1988, the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), after realizing that in most academic gatherings the humanities are marginalized in the discussions, brought together a group of approximately twenty people, consisting of several staff members of the faculty of the humanities in different institutions and centre directors, to speak for the humanities. It was these participants and professors that endorsed the report of that particular ACLS meeting. The professors were from different universities in the USA, such as University of California, Stanford University, University of Virginia, Oregon University, University of Massachusetts, University of Utah, Cornell University, Rutgers University, University of Minnesota, Texas A&M University, New York University, University of North Carolina, Wesleyan University and

University of Michigan. Based on the discussions and experiences of the participants, conclusions about the positive and flourishing status and role of the humanities were reached (Levine and Brooks et al. (7):1).

The report shows that all of the participants agreed on the fact that all were in their respective occupations experiencing a revival of the humanities on campuses where until recently the focus of the students was overwhelmingly on business and technological studies. Students, both graduate and undergraduate, evidently feel that exciting things are taking place in the humanities, in the self-consciously innovative sectors as well as in traditional departments. Usual comments that the humanities are abandoned by undergraduates and by graduates need to be revisited, considering the fact that recently there is evidence that students have shown a lot of interest in the humanities. Perhaps this case needs further research far beyond the scope of this thesis, on what in the case of its universities, the USA has done differently, to reverse the declining situation of the humanities. Such research will strengthen the defence of the role and status of the humanities. What I want to highlight is that as much as there are challenges to the humanities, there are also positive changes providing little hope for the humanities in some countries. There is evidence to show that the humanities make a very strong presence in contemporary American higher education, that for the most part enrolments are increasing, and that universities are prepared to invest considerably more in the humanities than they were when the economy was in decline and the demand for economics and business courses skewed enrolments almost everywhere (ibid: 6).

The issue of decline in the enrolments in the humanities which I emphasized earlier in the chapter seems not to affect the USA as it does other countries. However, it is important to note that even in the USA growth in enrolments differs within different disciplines across and within the humanities, with History as a major being the slowest between 1973

and 1984. However, since 1985 History has also improved though very slowly compared to other humanities subjects. English, on the other hand, has been doing overwhelmingly well. The Association of Departments of English in USA gave a very positive projection of growth in English departments: responses from 66 departments showed that 55 of those reported increases, 4 of those reported decreases and 7 reported no change or fluctuation. There are several examples of strong growth in the enrolments in the humanities in recent years. For instance, Texas A & M University reflects that between 1982 and 1987 the number of majors in humanities departments went from 600 to 1, 575, an increase of over 250% (Levine, Brooks, et al., (7): 33).

However, even in those countries where the humanities are flourishing, they do not match the growth in other disciplines such as physical sciences, engineering, life sciences and other professional fields. This inability to match counterparts can be attributed to the same challenges raised in this chapter. Although it is beyond the scope of the present thesis to compare disciplines across faculties, one cannot deny the obvious fact that on the whole students currently seem to be turning to practical disciplines. I have, in this chapter, stated my concern that the humanities are facing challenges that indicate the decline of these fields of knowledge.

## **1.5 CONCLUSION**

With the indications of the decline of the humanities discussed in this chapter, I have so far shown that the humanities are currently heading more, to borrow Becher's words used 22 years back, in the direction of 'immolation rather than innovation' (Becher cited in Eurich, 1981). The humanities have continually been forced by pressures to engage new knowledge and new methods, which today, address needs of students that seek a place in the job market. The universities, within which the humanities are housed, have been, and are transforming disciplines and or splitting them into specialties, or developing new disciplines and even combining them to create an intellectual capacity to solve practical

problems (Ben-Joseph, 1977). As a consequence the humanities are forced to follow suit. Some disciplines have survived by taking initiatives in making basic curricular changes and even through novelties in pedagogic style. But it seems that none of these endeavours eventually help the humanities to face their challenges. Instead, the humanities continue to lose support (subject to the qualifications introduced above). Conceptions of what professionals are required to be, seems to render the humanities unfit to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century requirements.

The current situation of the humanities discussed in this chapter is a cause for concern, which motivates the central claim of this thesis that the humanities, despite the challenges they face, still have a huge role to play. This claim will be defended in the following four chapters, in which I provide an account of the emergence (and status) of the humanities in the early centuries of the establishment of the European universities. I then present an explanation for the declining status of the humanities during the modern period, related to the impact of the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions on contemporary society's educational expectations (with particular reference to the universities' curricula). My concluding two chapters provide a vindication for the place of the humanities in the universities' curricula, focusing on their important contribution towards liberal education, and on their significance in the education of contemporary professionals, whose number and responsibilities have proliferated in the context of modern industrial society.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **AN HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE HUMANITIES AS AN INTELLECTUAL DISCIPLINE: FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MEDIEVAL UNIVERSITIES TO THE RENAISSANCE**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter offers a history of the evolution and development and ethical purpose of the humanities since the beginning of the European universities in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The chapter describes and explains how scholasticism evolved into humanism, humanism into the humanities. The chapter is concerned with the years from the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was during the 17<sup>th</sup> century that the Scientific Revolution occurred. It is this revolution that propelled the natural and the social sciences into the forefront of the university curricula. The chapter describes how, with the establishment of the university, the scholastic tradition emerged as central to the discipline of theology, which together with law and medicine, was a core faculty in these early European universities. It is scholasticism that was at the centre of the pedagogy of the university faculties. It is the same scholasticism that necessitated the development and establishment of the humanities. However, with the later Scientific and Industrial Revolutions, the humanities were displaced from their original status within the university. Despite their later displacement, it is worth noting that it is the same humanities that played an important role by contributing towards both the intellectual project of the university and towards the definition and epistemic respectability of the many disciplines that constitute the conventional configurations of university curricula today.

## 2.2 EVOLUTION OF THE HUMANITIES

The humanities evolved and developed within the university with their history rooted in humanism. The initial focus of the university since its inception was on theology, law and medicine. Of the three, theology was considered the queen of sciences because it was central to Christianity, which defined European culture many centuries prior to the inception of the university (Levi, 1970). Theology informed both the ethical and practical lives of the European society of the time. Scholasticism in particular became central to the theological faculties because it explicated the Christian conception of the relationship between man and God, focusing primarily on the study of the Bible. This focus, however, is the one that made scholars develop a critical attitude toward scholasticism, which led to the development of the humanities (Levi, 1970).

Throughout their history the humanities have always had a permanent project which has always been an engagement with issues of humanity in order to bring about a state of full humanity. This is an intellectual project which brought along changes in knowledge development. The project of the humanities is referred to as an intellectual one because it proceeded from the pursuit of the arts. The arts were themselves referred to as scholastic because they were seen as detached from practical life, which was predominantly Christian by nature. The intellectual precision of the arts was seen as abstract and abstruse as far as Christian morality was concerned (Southern, 1995). Nevertheless, this intellectual project is the one that constitutes a perpetual progression of instability in higher education in the modern university. One can say that the initial reason for this instability was based on conceptualizations of the purpose of knowledge, which later translated into the tension between the pursuit of knowledge for its sake and pursuit of knowledge to find respectable employment in the modern society. This tension marks the progression of humanistic education, which entails the evolution of humanistic education into a liberal one. This tension led to ongoing definitions and redefinitions

of knowledge in the trivium and quadrivium which resulted in some disciplines being considered inferior to others (Southern, 1995).

### **2.3 THE DOMINANCE OF SCHOLASTICISM IN THE EARLY EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES**

Scholasticism became dominant within the university faculties because of its focus on the trivium and the quadrivium, buttressed by a particular understanding of philosophy. In addition to theology, central to the early European universities' focus was law and medicine. However, concentration on the study of the Bible is one of the major factors for which scholars criticized scholasticism. The concentration of teaching and learning was on questions of authoritative truth that was believed to bring about right conduct. The source of this right conduct was the classics of ancient Greece and Rome and of the Bible. It is worth noting that the dominance of Greek and Roman culture and language was obvious. It is the same culture and language, coupled with Biblical culture, that informed the ethical considerations of these European societies. The 12<sup>th</sup> century scholastic thought embraced two main concepts. The first conception is of inherent dignity which was defined in terms of "intelligibility and rational plan – of nature, whether human or cosmic" (Southern, 1995: 25). As a consequence, the structures of knowledge also got their influence from the same conception. Intelligibility and a rational plan supposed human development in which the emphasis was no longer put on divine miracles and supernatural forces as the only influences behind human capability. The emphasis came to be on both understanding and practical life through natural means, not necessarily connected to making use of divine power. Notice, however, that from its inception the university was aimed at practical life which to a large extent renders the university a vehicle of not only ethical but also practical human development. The emphasis on practical life reflects an instrumental purpose of the university, which qualifies my argument that

the humanities have their history within the university serving an instrumental purpose.

The second scholastic conception was, according to Southern (1995: 26), based on the value of human effort in acquiring a systemic view of the universe which is connected with an increasingly serious search for knowledge about the human mind itself. This second conception has a cultural aspect in that anyone who aspired to understand 12<sup>th</sup> century developments had to first understand that the 12<sup>th</sup> century developments, especially scholastic learning, gained their influence from the developments of communities that existed in the immediate preceding 11<sup>th</sup> century developments. The changes that occurred in Europe at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century affected all the structures of European societies and transformed also their cultures. The European rational structures in particular experienced an increase in concentration on, according to Southern (1995: 27) “the resources within the human mind in progressing towards the knowledge of God” and not the knowledge of God progressing towards the human mind. This change in rational structures implied an ethical perspective that rendered the mind of the person and human nature the central focal points of study and exploration. Most importantly, a focus on human capacities and capabilities marked a new move in the recognition of the human mind as an important part which marked an enormous growth in knowledge in general.

There is a very comprehensive publication by de Ridder-Symoens (1992, 1996) and Rugg (2004, 2007) which explains in a constructive manner, the changes that have occurred in European culture and universities since 12<sup>th</sup> century. This is a four-volume history of the university in Europe. It covers the history of the university in Europe in the centuries between 1100 and the present. In his introduction to this series, Rugg (2004) stresses that one of the main purposes of the research has been to identify and explore the modern world and the detailed relationship between the

European universities and the societies within which they operated, both in the past and in the present. One important aspect that runs through the four volumes is an exploration of how the political, economic and social structures of European societies shaped European universities.

The universities that emerged during the 12<sup>th</sup> century set the pattern for the development of all subsequent university institutions. As mentioned earlier in the introduction, the academic structure of these universities comprised the four typical faculties of the arts, medicine, law and theology (although not all four were present at each institution). Ruegg argues that in any survey of the growing European university system, one can see that the primary objective of the university was the ‘acquisition and teaching of scientific and scholarly knowledge, while the acquisition of a professional or official qualification for an occupational activity within the framework of the hierarchical society was only a secondary objective or by-product’ (1992b: 30). The 12<sup>th</sup> century scholars regarded knowledge that was largely in poetic and historic forms as scientific facts which, according to Southern (1995: 31) provided a basis for thinking that “rational investigation could find an answer to all the problems of nature”. Dominant in the 12<sup>th</sup> century thinking was the idea that patient study of all the great works of the past can provide insight into the knowledge of all things. This was an intellectual revolution that provided for new hopes that the knowledge of mankind that had been lost in the period before the emergence of the university could be recovered through the use of new scientific methods of discovery. It is worth noting that the recovery of knowledge was largely for the sake of knowledge itself.

However, despite the optimistic attitude of the scholars as far as knowledge discovery and scientific methods were concerned, it is evident from many of the articles that make up the volume on the medieval universities that the priorities of the universities experienced instability because there was uncertainty and anxiety as students struggled to

comprehend the link between the two necessary purposes of university education: the need for a traditional pursuit of knowledge for its sake (Levi, 1970) and the crucial need to find respectable employment in society after the completion of their formal studies (<http://harvardmagazine.com>). The uncertainty and anxiety is seen in the way in which the university faculties are positioned together within the university. The faculties were in such a way that necessitates the interdependence of a need for knowledge for its sake and also a need for knowledge for employment. All the four main faculties themselves were in a position to serve both purposes of knowledge for its own sake and knowledge for development. For instance, there existed such a relationship from within the arts faculty itself and between the arts disciplines: the arts included the trivium, quadrivium and philosophy, and the faculties of medicine, law and theology. The subjects of all these arts disciplines had also a practical dimension which ensured preparation for professional purposes, status, and or affluence immediately or later after one's successful completion of a related programme.

Despite the above mentioned tension that was experienced by students, the arts occupied an inferior position, classified as a 'propaedeutic' or preparatory course for the study of law, medicine and theology. However, it is very important to note that the alleged inferior position does not change the fact that it is within the faculty of arts that the debates were engaged, from which the disciplines of the humanities were generated and developed. It was in the faculty of arts that two extreme views existed. At one level there existed an extremely pessimistic view of human capacities with a belief that the capacities of man have been impaired by sin. At another level, another view was a belief that "almost everything short of direct vision of God could once more be known by patient study of the great works of the past" (Southern, 1995: 31). Both of the views existed in the faculty of arts which comprised the trivium, which consisted of logic, grammar and rhetoric, and the quadrivium, which consisted of geometry, arithmetic, astronomy and music. The trivium and the

quadrivium were part of the ancient world's legacy for European civilization. The trivium and quadrivium had originated as the main curriculum for young Greek boys during the classical era. Within the Greek system of education, the trivium and the quadrivium were themselves preparing the young boys for the study of philosophy. This study of philosophy was mainly based on wisdom, which was considered as the most valuable of all knowledge. It is worth mentioning that the medieval European universities' arts faculty was such that philosophy (sub-divided into physics, moral philosophy and metaphysics) nonetheless occupied a lower status, deployed in effect to assist with the explication of Christianity's divine revelations, as can be found in the Bible itself. The exponents of philosophy, however, could not accept this relegation uncritically, meaning that there was some resistance to these developments. So, the conflict that broke out between philosophers and theologians resulted in the eventual emergence of the humanities as a specific field of inquiry.

### **2.3.1 Scholastic Humanist Content and its Setbacks**

The nature of the trivium, quadrivium and philosophy as the component courses of the preparatory arts faculty is best illustrated in the context of the standard pedagogy that was employed at the medieval universities. This is referred to as the scholastic method. The scholastic method was essentially a form of deductive reasoning, in which logical inferences were made from a set of general premises. This is the method which, within the medieval faculty of theology, rested on premises set out by the key tenets of the Christian faith. These key tenets of Christian faith were themselves drawn from the Bible. The Bible was studied carefully and a body of systematic theology was developed which covered the whole field of Christian doctrine and practice. Systematic theology was associated with a legal system that regulated Christian behavior (Southern, 1995: 34). Between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries there existed a dominant idea that

God's nature and plan for the world, as supposed by systematic theology, extends beyond Christians to the whole world.

Nevertheless, the Bible as the main text experienced some setbacks. One setback was that as a collection of historical texts, whose compilation occurred over many centuries and as part of the programme in schools, the Bible lacks a clear 'doctrinal coherence' (Asztalos, 1992: 409). This lack of doctrinal coherence is the one that led to changes that brought about the demotion of theology. Intellectuals started attacking the truths that had been established by theological means. This attack resulted in increasing intellectual disputes (Southern, 1995: 53). A new kind of approach to knowledge emerged in which the emphasis moved from an exploration of theologically established truths to the perfecting of individual capacities by intellectual means. As a result, the Bible was supplemented by a standard textbook, Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. These sentences consisted of questions that were related to the main themes of the Bible. Central to the Bible, according to Asztalos (1992), are topics that relate to God and the Trinity, creation, the incarnation and the virtues, the sacraments and the Last Judgment (p412).

There was also a change that occurred as far as the method of teaching was concerned. A theology class assumed a 'lecture and dispute' method. In this method, all the elements and debates that constitute issues that informed rationality and intellectual effort, from both the Bible and Lombard's *Sentences*, would be explored by both the lecturer and the students. This method includes all the three parts of the trivium: First, exploration of elements supposes engagement with concepts that inform one with logical procedure, which is meant to equip one with a capacity to participate in a process of syllogistic reasoning. Second, in the process of engagement with concepts and participation in reasoning, both the teacher and the student recognize, learn and apply the rules of grammar appropriately. Third, both the process of reasoning, and respect and



application of grammatical rules were to be complemented by a rhetorical style that will convince one's intellectual counterparts of the validity of one's reasoning and the truth of one's propositions. Any knowledge that engaged this lecture and dispute method and all its procedures was referred to as 'scientia', a Latin term that suggests 'knowledge', but which has been translated into English as 'science'. Thus, theology came to be considered as the 'queen of the sciences', because its pursuits as an intellectual discipline complied with these logical, grammatical and rhetorical precepts.

However, the nature of theology, which made it to seem like containing truths that can only be derived from the Bible, was problematic. Philosophers, who initially supported it, no longer regarded theology as given truths but as an object to challenge. These philosophers frequently challenged the fundamental premises upon which theological claims were based. The conflict between the theologians and philosophers was accelerated by rediscovered knowledge that got into the hands of the philosophers. Inadvertently, around the 13<sup>th</sup> century, European scholars began to rediscover many of the works of the classical period. They received these works in the form of translations and commentaries (from Greek to Arabic) from Arab scholars who had secured access to them in the libraries located in territories during the momentous expansion of the Islamic empire after the death of Mohamed in 632 C.E. The European scholars then translated these texts into Latin. Until the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the only Aristotelian texts available to European scholars were the ones concerned with logic. The Islamic world introduced Christian Europe to Aristotle's works on politics, ethics and metaphysics (Leff, 1992: 314-5). The translation of these works into Latin deepened many philosophers' uncertainty about the system of beliefs of theological inquiry, leading some philosophers to express radical doubt about many of these, such as the eternal nature of the world and the immortality of the soul (Asztalos, 1992: 423-4).

The disintegration of scholasticism that occurred towards the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century was due to philosophy's epistemological challenge to some of the basic tenets or presuppositions upon which the discipline of theology was erected. This challenge raised concerns that brought about very tough debates that were based on Biblical teachings. Issues around Biblical concepts of orthodoxy, heterodoxy and heresy which used to be regarded as given and unquestionable truths served as a basis for philosophical debates. Since its inception, philosophy's important project has been to reflect upon the existing concepts and deliberate, define and re-define the origin, nature and status of knowledge as composed within disciplines. This same project of philosophy is responsible for the delineation of not only other modern disciplines but also of philosophy itself. It is the pressures and intellectual initiatives of philosophers that motivated the emergence of almost all other fields of inquiry. The natural and social sciences, as well as the humanities, are all a result of this philosophical project.

#### **2.4 CHALLENGES TO SCHOLASTICISM**

Scholasticism had many challenges that brought about its disintegration that seemed evident in the early years of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The challenges ranged from natural disasters to human initiated intellectual adjustments. Humanism is the most important of all these challenges for it is the intellectual dimension of the challenges of the humanities that this chapter emphasizes. According to Southern (1995: 52) "by 1320 Europe had entered a period in which the growth which had buoyed up the scholastic efforts of the previous two centuries was abruptly reversed". The calamities that took place as a chain of events in the 14<sup>th</sup> century comprised outbursts of plague, catastrophic decline in the rural population and devastating wars. These occurrences were all going against the logic of scholastic thought, which attributed the perfect order of the universe and all its components to divine revelation. As a result, the idea of divine order came under scrutiny and was challenged and contested by

philosophers, thereby weakening scholasticism. Before the disintegration of scholasticism there prevailed a belief that the

increasing knowledge about the universe, both in its supernatural and natural aspects, could be fitted into one grand universal plan, that the papal system of universal authority would in time bring universal peace to Christendom, that the Greek church would come into line with the Latin, that the tide of Islam would definitely be rolled back, that the pagan world beyond the furthest limits of Islam would be as accessible to Christianity as the Germanic Peoples had been in the fifth and sixth centuries (Southern, 1995: 52-53).

The inconsistencies in the 14<sup>th</sup> century gave philosophy a good ground from which to contest, define and re-define the vision of systematic knowledge and the perfecting of an extension of an organized Christian society. Although theologians, priests and members of the laity declared in their professions of belief that this empirical world is a fallen, transient and mutable prelude to a possible life in eternal perfection, they were always confronted by the exigencies of survival and ethical conduct in this terrestrial domain, and challenged by the task of translating the abstractions of logic and theological postulation into an ordinary practice. Christianity's focus on the centrality of individual salvation intensified this sense of discrepancy between the mysterious reflections of theologians and scholars, and the yearning of individuals to lead a demonstrably 'good' life and to feel the assurance that they were saved. The profoundly personal question, derived from the Gospels, 'Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' became more insistent and immediate in the deliberations of many scholars. This generated a major challenge to the abstruse traditions of formal theology, which contributed towards an opposition to the perceived sterility of much scholastic deliberation that in turn helped foster the intellectual and spiritual climate that culminated in the Reformation at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Brockliss, 1996: 594)

### **2.4.1 Renaissance Humanism as a Major Challenge to Scholasticism**

The scholastic practical and intellectual order that had prevailed until the early 14<sup>th</sup> century was proving hard to maintain. The hopes of the past were buried and there emerged a new form of thinking that is referred to as humanism. Humanism comprised complex but organized reaction against scholasticism, the reaction to which had a huge impact on the medieval universities in particular, and European society in general. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, humanism gained support and became very influential, contributing extensively towards the nature of the European Renaissance. According to Ruegg (1992a: 445), the development of humanism in the 15<sup>th</sup> century must not be seen as an attempt to liberate people from the bonds of religiosity, but rather as a move to secure knowledge and sources of learning through an attempt to find new 'symbols of security' in the reconciliation of the reality of mundane activities with formal religious commitments. Humanism sought to rectify the scholastic process of argument, the system which was proving deceptive and unreliable. It sought to transform the inconsistencies and incomprehensibility of scholasticism into a recognizable and meaningful activity that was linked to a guarantee of personal salvation.

Scholasticism failed to engage in its teaching the real virtues of ancient literature. The failure came to be realized only in the 14<sup>th</sup> century with the fall of scholasticism. Again, the ancient sources of learning, which had been highly recognized as true, had been discovered to be of no expected value to large areas of knowledge such as geography, cosmology, politics and even systematic theology (Southern, 1995: 55). As a consequence, pure scholastic thought could not be applied in the new humanistic thought to answer urgent questions about individual identity, responsibility and personal salvation. The Bible had lost its position as the main text, which was, according to Erasmus, the only source upon which a Christian should rely in order for the individual to fully understand the extent of his responsibilities and the prospects for his salvation. It was the

book against which the responsibilities and prospects of the individual were to be judged. In essence, the Bible was regarded as the source by which to discover true individual identity.

However, the Bible, as the source of spiritual truth, personal guidance and individual salvation, was faced with challenges. The main challenge was its linguistic interpretation. The language that was used to convey the Bible messages that contained the truth and the way in which individuals interpreted these messages became problematic. Some scholars such as Erasmus, who sought more personal truth from the scriptures, personalized the arguments and focused on logical coherence that is totally divorced from scholastic thought. This project of seeking the truth led such scholars to emphasize the validity of the origin of the historical transmission of spiritual insight through the successive translations of the scriptures from Hebrew and Greek into Latin. In the process there emerged debates about historical sources, alleged divine truths and the so-called ways of interpreting the Bible.

The same humanists' concern with texts, their interpretation and the logistics of language that are used in their transmission, show that the project of the trivium continued with humanism as well. This continuity of the project of the arts clearly shows that the arts faculty is not only an important but a necessary component of the universities. Erasmus' concern with language denotes his compliance with the trivium project of grammar and rhetoric which was particularly important. The aspects of grammar and rhetoric determine the structure of oral and written communication. It is through communication that people convey meaning and profess their ability to persuade and convince the audience with the substance of the argument. According to Phamotse and Kissack (2008) within the humanists' perspective, the present and the particular, as well as the specificities of culture, were elevated to a superior status over the abstractions of logic, thereby attributing more privileges and

superiority to discourse (oratio) over reason (ratio). Humanism's preference for oratory is the one that gave many orators such as Cicero their reputation. Cicero's composition and rhetoric, persuasive strategies and diction, were studied and emulated by many a subsequent generation of students in the humanist tradition. Schmidt-Biggemann (1996) regards Cicero as one of the most influential orators. He comments that Ciceronianism "established the philology and historical studies of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and became the starting point for all the historical and philological sciences taught in the universities between 1500 and 1800" (p500).

Aristotle is one philosopher who complemented Cicero's rhetorical style. Aristotle initiated political and ethical debates that emphasized what was referred to as 'phronesis'. Phronesis was understood and applied by the Romans as 'prudentia' or prudence. Prudence is the indispensable disposition that guides and regulates virtues such as temperance, courage and justice, since it directs the application of these virtues. Comte-Sponville (2003) defines prudence as a "disposition that makes it possible to deliberate correctly on what is good or bad for man and through such deliberation, to act appropriately" (p32). Goodness and badness were to be judged in relation to the world and its different contexts. The remarkable aspect of prudence as conceptualized here is that it considered highly an attachment of acts to their particular and present situations, the aspect that scholasticism neglected. This aspect shows how the Renaissance humanists used the ancients' understanding of the world to inform the former's own conceptualizations of the same world.

Christian humanism emerged to oppose the scholastic method of theological enquiry, which had proven to misdirect the focus of the believers from scriptures to impersonal, abstract and objective interpretations of the Bible. This attitude had permeated the medieval university and influenced the pedagogy therein. Christian humanism, therefore, was aimed at refining the message of personal salvation, which

has been the theme and object of Christian religion. The main objective of Christian humanism was to re-direct the focus of the believers, remind them of the purpose of the Scripture. The Scripture was supposed to serve as a basis upon which believers explore the truth about God's revelations and plans in the languages of origin of the Bible, which are Hebrew and Greek. Language was a big issue, for it was believed to determine access to Biblical truth. The language in which the truth is communicated had to keep intact the original message without any alterations. Usage of a language different from that of origin threatened the originality of the message and hence the interpretation of the message. Fear of the use of a different language to interpret the scripture lies on the premise that a different language may pass the desired message, not the original truth of the scripture. The controversies of language and the concern for originality of the message of the scripture was a concern for not only Christian humanists but was also picked up by classical humanists. These humanists mainly focused on the particularities of the relationship between the self and society, thought and action, for these are communicated through the culturally formulated processes of language. The languages of Greek and Latin serve as examples of such carefully formulated languages.

However, all the attempts that were made by both Christian and classical humanists to find a new way of discovering and understanding the truth so as to secure that truth produced unexpected results. People could not accept the new method without controversy and anxiety. Ruegg suggests that, instead of providing new symbols of security, the efforts and initiatives of Christian and Classical humanism only intensified the uneasiness and skepticism. According to Phamotse and Kissack (2008), the truth about God's revelations and purposes eluded all those that sought consensus about them, and the classicists' increasingly sophisticated understanding of the nature of language, social cohesion, rhetoric and style reinforced the impression that rhetorical contest and the

exercise of prudence in a multitude of specific circumstances would, and probably only could, foster intractable dispute and division.

It is the same skepticism and controversy that relate to the truth which gave way to Renaissance humanism. Renaissance humanism, as a phenomenon, has its roots in both Christian and Classical humanism. Renaissance humanism is predominantly based on Renaissance culture (Ruegg, 1992a: 443-4) which is found in the teachings and writings of the Renaissance. The inherent changes that occurred throughout all the processes and development of humanism since scholasticism are crucial, for they mark the historical development of the debates that led to the emergence of the humanities. The controversies and the anxieties that were around the issue of the discovery of the real truth fueled curiosity in people to know more and discover new truths, hence the emergence of 'the humanities' as a field of enquiry. In essence, though Renaissance humanism played a crucial role in the definition and understanding of identities, the lack of consensus evident in the humanistic studies of the Renaissance perpetuated controversy about ethical truth and appropriate behaviour.

## **2.5 CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN RENAISSANCE HUMANISTIC EDUCATION**

Despite the high regard and recognition that Renaissance humanistic education got from the affluent and the elites in Europe, there were some of its aspects that unconsciously and gradually led to its demotion. This humanistic education, according to Rothblatt (1993) and Grafton and Jardine (1986) displayed a huge contradiction between its objectives and expectations, and the reality of its practice. What transpired on the one hand was that in the context of Italy, the Renaissance period marked a prosperous development of humanist education, for it was introduced in many of the new colleges of grammar and rhetoric. On the other hand,



the insistence of the Renaissance humanist upon some of the ancient values of education resulted in a gradual transition 'from humanism to the humanities'. This transition contributed to the development of the disciplines of philosophy, literature and art which are regarded as the core of the humanist curriculum.

The most significant and influential aspects that humanist education inherited from the classical humanist scholars, are those that informed the curriculum. The Humanist curriculum, like the ancient curriculum, had Latin and Greek subjects comprising much of its content. In addition, a large content of Roman and Greek history was included by which the students were taught about the development of European society and its literature and art. The humanist curriculum, which focused on the Latin and Greek languages, as well as, on Roman and Greek history, "was not to extract systematic doctrine from ancient literature, but to develop sensibility and linguistic skill" (Southern, 1995: 18). From the 16<sup>th</sup> century in particular, the study of ancient literature served as a process that ensured cultivation and refinement of 'speech and sentiment' both of which were viewed as humane when compared to the medieval systematic content. The study of the subjects contained in the humanistic curriculum was composed of different parts of long existing content ranging from scholastic humanism to Renaissance humanism (Grafton and Jardine, 1986). The humanistic curriculum was such that students studied Latin grammar and syntax in particular. They also were to adopt and model literary elegance expressed in the style of orators such as Cicero. In essence, the humanists wanted to differ from scholastic humanism, for the former claimed that the latter focused on "minute metaphysical and logical distinctions which demonstrated an indifference to matters of practical human importance" (Southern, 1995: 18). From this criticism by the humanists of scholastic humanism, one notes one important point - that at every level of its development humanist education emphasized the practical aspect of human experience.

Although the humanists wanted to do things differently in order to promote their new humanistic values, they overlooked some of the necessary conditions in the promotion of their new perspective. These humanists became pre-occupied with modeling literary elegance at the expense of attending also to the complexities of specific cultural environments that influenced their humanistic curriculum. The emphasis on modeling ignored the relevant practical contexts that were of importance to the communities (Phamotse and Kissack, 2008). As a consequence, these humanists found themselves in a situation where they ignored the complexities of specific cultural environments and ethical evaluation. Though they valued modeling literary elegance, these humanist educators of the Renaissance gave no attention to the actual credibility of the arguments presented by orators like Cicero. They mostly focused on form and technique, rather than on cultural evaluation and moral conduct, the latter being considered intellectually more challenging issues. A good example of focus on form and techniques is expressed in the manner in which the Renaissance-type literary humanism was accredited to John of Salisbury, because he had extensive knowledge of classical texts. His extensive knowledge was judged by his ability to:

Stride through the classics, heaping his pages with schematically arranged quotations from a dozen authors, with a total concentration on their use as illustrations of the doctrine he is discussing, and with a sovereign indifference to the aims of authors themselves or the differences of personality depicted in their creations (Southern, 1995: 19)

From the quotation and other sources above, it is evident the emphasis of the Renaissance humanist educators was on reading the ancient texts in order to get as much contribution of these texts as possible to the doctrine of truth. These humanists cared less, if not at all, about the contextual literary aims of the bits and pieces of content that comprised the doctrine. The pedagogy of Renaissance humanist education was along the same lines of concentration on the content which was divorced from its literary aims. Phamotse and Kissack (2008) review the claim that pedagogical

practice revolved around rote learning, memorization and uninspired emulation, which are very distant from the formal ideals of character formation and transformation, and the appreciation of the complexities and cogency of arguments in particular contexts. The point I am making is that although the humanists professed respect for the particular nature of any social and cultural context (contrasting with the abstractions of the scholastics), in practice they did not teach their students to assess the arguments of writers like Cicero, and focused too much on encouraging the students' rote learning and imitation of great authors, rather than on careful and critical deliberation of those authors' arguments.

The pedagogy of Renaissance humanist education implied contradictions between what the professions required and what the humanist education curriculum consisted of for its daily practice. Its daily practice strengthened the already privileged position of those members of the new elite who were already superior in status. For those members of the society who were underprivileged, Renaissance humanist pedagogy provided fluency and a cultivated disposition to read and emulate texts. For every member of the society, the pedagogy served as a model of true culture to be followed without any question. It is this same model that perpetuated, in all people that were initiated into it, an attitude and culture of subordination and passive obedience towards laws and authority (Rothblatt (1993) and Grafton and Jardine, 1986: xiv). One important outcome of this Renaissance type education was that it unintentionally produced people who were humanists but who, though knowledgeable about the general key features of humanism, could not contextually comprehend and practise humanist philosophy. As a result, Renaissance humanism contributed largely to the enhancement of the already high social status (more than the intellectual status) of the elite, the ruling group and the rich. On the basis of its characterization above, Renaissance humanistic education marked the development of a certain form of liberal education, in which freedom implied adherence to authoritative texts and their precepts. According to Phamotse and Kissack (2008) the privileged

groups who benefited from liberal education were distinguished by particular social skills and practices, insignia of difference from the majority, central to which was literacy and eloquence and what is described now as cultural capital.

Renaissance liberal education, though claiming to be humanistic, was by nature less concerned with the tenets of humanism, and more inclined towards the humanities subjects. The humanistic subjects around which Renaissance liberal education was organized were the classical languages, the literature of vernaculars like Italian itself, history and a semblance of philosophy, which, as I said earlier focused on extensive knowledge of texts and their authors, historical dates and places and the doctrines rather than on literary appreciation and sensitivity to the literature. Clearly, Renaissance education provided an educational context in which the humanist ideals developed in an unexpected manner, for its practice was unconsciously and ironically divorced from its implementation. This same state of irony is the one that brought about the evolution and development of the humanities. The humanist critique and re-evaluation of the role of history, literature and particularly philosophy continued to have a great impact on the development of these disciplines (Phamotse and Kissack, 2008). Below, I give an indication of how the humanist debates came to secure a significant place for the humanities within the university.

## **2.6 THE DECLINE OF RENAISSANCE HUMANISM**

For most of the elite in Europe, Renaissance humanistic education provided them with a rich content in languages, history and literature, which enhanced the knowledge capacity of these elites. These elite were, with their continued research on the original purpose and understanding of the usage and contribution of language, history and literature on the lives of people, able to gain more interest in the study of human life.

Extensive studies of the ancient texts built up the stock of knowledge that helped these reflective Europeans to gain more content upon which to reflect. As Phamotse and Kissack (2008) note, the present and the particular are rich in complexity and diversity, and history's heterogeneity, accentuated by the social, cultural and religious diversity disclosed by the European discovery of the 'New World' in 1492, confounded traditional beliefs that the world was a manifestation of a unified and uniform Divine mind and plan.

For the reflective individuals in Europe, Renaissance humanistic education was not a given and unquestionable phenomenon but a subject for change. It served as a platform of change for both the reflective and the Christian humanists. Even the Christians did anticipate change, though a different one from that of the European elite. "More traditional Christians insisted upon characterizing the nature of history and human experience" (Phamotse and Kissack, 2008). In essence, Renaissance humanistic education engendered in all groups of people anxiety, as well as curiosity to investigate more about issues that relate to human life, and the opportunities that await new discoveries from such issues. Christian humanists had become aware that their hopes to revive the use of original languages of Scriptures (Hebrew and Greek) and the solidifying of Christian truth were shattered by the new intellectual developments.

This intellectual unrest resulted in instability in some dimensions of European social life. There emerged conflicts for people that came to question even the long standing established truths of the Scriptures, and questioned the validity of the status of both the political and religious leaders. In essence, the disputes brought about a phenomenon of secularism as an indication that people were aware of the shortcomings of the doctrine and method of inquiry that dominated Renaissance humanistic education. In theory the method of inquiry of the Renaissance

reflected a pedagogical project that supposed a correspondence between the content and practice but practically this project revealed the opposite.

The above intellectual development, in which individuals' established beliefs were challenged, necessitated a change in the type and status of the content to be used. These developments necessitated also an adoption of a different method of inquiry. Philosophy in particular, with its critical nature was, as viewed by the reflective Europeans, one humanistic subject that served the purpose of an objective inquiry into the established doctrines of truth. Phamotse and Kissack (2008) state that such epistemological and ethical reorientations in the conclusions of thoughtful individuals denoted philosophy's steady ascent from the status of a subordinate contributor to the development of theology's deliberations to an independent discipline. As a result of the promotion of Philosophy to a higher status, Theology was automatically demoted from the position of the 'queen of sciences'. However, the demotion did not occur without resistance. Theology fought for its position: it retained its method of investigation, which was inclined more to medieval scholasticism and retained its tenets and their interpretation as they originally existed. This means Theology protected itself from the new pressures and requirements of change of method by creating its own territory of doctrinal truth and pedagogy.

However, theology's isolated position created more problems for it, because it now became a clear target for intellectual challenge from all other subjects. Its key tenets and method of investigation were openly challenged. The new philosophical thinking and interpretation necessitated new approaches to the discovery of knowledge. People no longer found an extensive knowledge of classical texts as an end in itself, but as a basis upon which to reflect and make new discoveries that relate to both the contexts and diversity of societies. More attention was to be put on matters of practical human importance and the examination of

knowledge itself. The questions of how knowledge originated and which knowledge is appropriate and which one is not also became the subject of enquiry. Thus the nature of knowledge itself was investigated.

Philosophical thinking dominated the intellectual debates between 1300 and 1600. Its dominance was made easy by the support and priority that it enjoyed from the Renaissance humanistic liberal education. The European elite gave philosophy much attention, for it seemed to meet their educational interest. With philosophy's project of investigating the epistemic nature of knowledge, the conception of true established knowledge changed. Knowledge came to be regarded as ever changing and contextual. This conceptualization of knowledge resulted in the emergence of the humanities subjects of history, art and literature. The supernatural ceased to be a necessary complement of the natural world. Instead the natural world, according to Phamotse and Kissack (2008) became a standard reference point for European intellectuals, replacing the abstractions of Christian metaphysics with considerations about Nature's characteristics and their implications for humankind itself. As a point of reference, nature was regarded as something that people could investigate, manipulate and change as much as human beings could afford. Most of the changes depended upon, and were inclined towards, what human beings understood and interpreted as their needs and wants. Thus, nature ceased to be above the human being but an object of human life fulfillment. As this intelligent human intervention project intensified, more intellectual developments occurred within European higher education.

Due to these intellectual reflections on human needs and wants, new institutions had to emerge to complement the traditional university and the new colleges. The new colleges were offering liberal and humanistic kinds of education to the elite's sons, while the traditional universities retained their scholastic curriculum that consisted of theology, law and

medicine. This new type of institution was to cater for the provision of technical skills that would enable people to ensure their extensive control over nature with the use of more accurate measures. Pedersen (1996: 446) states that, “it became increasingly clear that the scientific skills of people in the practical world had to be acquired in specialized institutions from the many private ‘mathematical practitioners’ of the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, who contributed so much to non-university education”. Portugal and Spain serve as good examples of countries that answered to the needs and wants necessitated by the intelligent human intervention project. These two countries established navigation schools as institutions to provide scientific skills. Pederson (1996) adds that another area that increased in importance between the 1600s and 1800s was civil and military engineering. As a consequence of the developments above, it is the period between 1600 and 1800 that experienced huge scientific developments.

However, despite its attachment to the old methods of enquiry, philosophy still retained its highly recognized status and it enjoyed its limited and more specific project of questioning the nature of knowledge itself. This project included the questioning of existing knowledge (reflexivity) and exploring into that which does not yet exist. Investigation into the different methods of enquiry into knowledge also was a major focus of philosophy. This very specific project of philosophy created a condition that made it possible for philosophy to influence strong changes among other academic disciplines. Other disciplines, which the humanities included, were forced by circumstances to redefine and affirm their identities so as to gain new self-understanding. As Phamotse and Kissack (2008) state, in performing this role, philosophy contributed towards a consolidation of academic identities generally, including that of the humanities, with which philosophy itself was inextricably associated. At the end of the Renaissance, the humanities subjects were Art and Art History, Classics, Drama, Languages, Cultures, History, Linguistics, Music, Philosophy, Religious Studies and Literatures. These subjects were dominant, despite the kinds of reservations and evident



disappointments about the pedagogy attending their presentation to students as outlined by Grafton and Jardine in 2.5 above. Most of these subjects are the ones that contributed in the emergence of many professions.

## **2.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has offered a history of the evolution and development of the humanities, which offers an account of the emergence of the humanities. This description of the evolution and development of the humanities has indicated that with the establishment of the universities, the scholastic tradition became central to the then existing disciplines of theology, law and medicine. The chapter has also shown that the central position of scholasticism was discredited by its abstraction: scholastic deliberations were seen as too detached from the concrete and immediate concerns of the daily lives of Christians. It is this alleged detachment that formed part of humanism's major criticisms of scholasticism. The chapter has emphasized that in an attempt to ensure an applied kind of study for Christian society, humanism adopted new ways of defining the current content. This attempt paved the way for the humanities, which approached the study of the Bible in a different way: revisiting the languages that were used and meanings that were attached to the Scriptures. The chapter has also indicated that revising the languages and meanings of the Bible led to a consideration of the relationship between language and culture, which necessitated the development of a course of study suitable for professions. The chapter has shown that humanistic education contributed largely towards both the redefinition of the university and of all the disciplines that currently form the university curricula. The main focus of this chapter therefore has been how the humanities emerged as a valued field of enquiry in society. Chapter Three will explain the reasons for the declining status of the humanities during the era of the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions, before proceeding with

the last two chapters, which constitute an attempt to vindicate the continuing importance of the humanities in university curricula.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE CHANGING STATUS OF THE HUMANITIES: FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO THE MODERN WORLD**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

From 1600 to the present the humanities have experienced a change in status. These changes were a result of the impact of the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. This chapter explores the reasons why the humanities experienced a demotion when challenged by the instrumental emphasis of the natural sciences and technology. It discusses how the developments of the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions came to depend largely on the natural and social sciences. It looks at developments from the Renaissance to the modern era. During the 1700s, the broad movement of the Enlightenment emerged, and, during the latter part of the 1700s, the Industrial Revolution began in England. In this chapter, I offer an explanation of how, as a result of industrialization and urbanization, the humanities came to be eclipsed by the social and natural sciences. I emphasize that it is the effects of these events that resulted in a demotion in the status of the humanities. The chapter also offers a description of how the professions during this time of scientific and industrial change came to be dependent on these natural and social sciences, resulting in a gradual change in their dependence on the humanities.

#### **3.2 WHAT WAS THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION?**

Eric Hobsbawm (in Wyatt III, 2009) believes that the Industrial Revolution represents the seminal event in the history of modern man. The Industrial Revolution is regarded by other historians as having characteristics similar to the Neolithic Revolution due to the dramatic

effect that they both have had on all aspects of human life. An illustration of the Neolithic Revolution is provided by Wyatt III (2009) in his *The Industrial Revolution*. He says that in Neolithic times,

man made the transition from being a hunter and gatherer and adopted agriculture as the means to sustain life and organize his world. Neolithic man settled down and formed agricultural communities and then early cities and survived on the agrarian surplus provided by the new economic realities” (Wyatt III, 2009: 2)

In the same manner it has taken approximately seventy years (equivalent to three generations) for the Industrial Revolution to make a huge historical change (Snooks, 1994: 1).

The Industrial Revolution carried along with it new technological developments, enterprises and their related business organizations, the restructuring of labour and massive demographic shifts. All these necessitated and marked the first major transformation of lifestyle in thousands of years. There was a creation of a modern urban society no longer solely and largely dependent on agriculture, but relying mostly on the industrial production, exchange, and consumption of a continual and progressively varied range of consumer goods. In essence, the Industrial Revolution opened unthought-of territories – this is why Snooks (1994) refers to it as a phenomenon that involved a technological paradigm shift. Its magnitude is reflected in Wyatt III’s description of the Industrial Revolution as “a phenomenal growth of national and personal wealth and, like the Neolithic Revolution, stimulated responses that fundamentally changed existing political, economic, and social institutions” (Wyatt III, 2009: 2). Another important aspect of the Industrial Revolution was that its scope, scale and impact were huge on all aspects of human life.

It is however not easy to tell the exact date of commencement of the Industrial Revolution - some say it started in the 1780s while others say the early 1820s is more favourable (Jackson, 1994). What is important is

that the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions made their impact when “economic and technological developments supported by political establishments coalesced to alter fundamentally the landscape of Western civilization, and then by a process of diffusion spread to other societies across the globe” (Wyatt III, 2009: 2). It is worth noting that the industrial changes that occurred ranged from increased agricultural ability to support a rapidly growing population and mobile society to the specialization of economic pursuits and the creation of more obvious class distinctions. It is these changes, among others, that altered the status of the humanities, for they required more of a contribution from the natural and social sciences for their maintenance and growth.

### **3.2.1 What was the Scientific Revolution?**

The Scientific Revolution started in Europe and it refers to the period of great advances in the sciences, roughly from the 1500s to the 1700s. It emerged with the cosmological discoveries of Nicolas Copernicus (1473-1543) and then followed others who were inspired by the developments in physics, astronomy, biology, medicine and chemistry. Knowledge in these fields transformed views of society and nature. The Scientific Revolution established a base for modern science. Religion, superstition and fear were replaced by reason and knowledge as there was a rapid accumulation of knowledge. The Scientific Revolution resulted in the mutual support of scientific inquiry and technical innovations, and their application to commerce and industry (Wyatt III, 2009: 2).

Several publications that surfaced around the 1500s attest to the spirit of new scientific enquiry that grew rapidly: Nicolas Copernicus’s *De Revolutionibus Orbium Celestium* (On Revolution of the Heavenly Spheres); Andreas Versalius’ *De Human Corporis Fabrica* (On the Fabric of the Human body). Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) discovered planetary orbits in the shape of ellipses and the varying speed of planets as they orbited the sun; Galileo, Newton and Descartes also made several

discoveries. It was a period of rapid accumulation of knowledge. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Scientific Revolution gave way to an age of reflection.

One can say that the Industrial and Scientific Revolutions happened concurrently, whether one can see the developments in industrialization as having necessitated developments in science, or vice versa, is a controversial debate. What is important is that one could not happen without the other. It could be that new ways of enquiry led to new discoveries that in turn led to industrial innovations. It is this conception of the two revolutions' interdependence that the reader should bear in mind. In essence, the Scientific Revolution underpins the Industrial Revolution, but the transformative effect of both had an impact on the universities' understanding of appropriate curricula for study, with important implications for the role, status and future of the humanities.

### **3.3 HOW DID THE SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTIONS HAVE AN IMPACT ON ENGLISH, EUROPEAN AND OTHER SOCIETIES?**

After 1815, the Industrial Revolution started spreading unavoidably from Britain to parts of Europe, Italy, the United States, Russia, Japan, as well as to other parts of the world such as India, the Middle East, and Latin America. Some authors, such as Snooks (1994: 15), strongly argue that the start of the "Industrial Revolution depended upon an interactive involvement of all Western European kingdoms in a long run process of economic change". As has been mentioned earlier, the Revolution left its marks of dramatic changes on the political, economic, and social life of Western civilization. The most significant changes of the Revolution included a major increase in production and mass consumption. As production and demand in resources increased, ancient sources of production in terms of power (human, draught animal, wind, and water) came to be replaced by modern ones (coal and steam and eventually gas

and electricity) in order to enable the construction and operation of more sophisticated machinery, stimulating new inventions and increasingly higher levels of productivity. These changes needed to be assisted with improved and developed forms of labour and labour organizations that would bring about sustained profits and ensure growth in factory enterprises and new business arrangements in place of the former widely dispersed domestic workshops and cottage industries (Wyatt III, 2009: 2). As a result, knowledge in the natural and social sciences came to be of the utmost importance and convenience as far as these new changes were concerned. It is the natural and social sciences that provided for the professional and technical training of modern forms of labour for increasingly higher levels of productivity.

The Industrial Revolution increased in momentum in Europe and beyond, resulting in a huge transition of most parts of the world from dependence on agriculture to dependence on factories and machines operated by more specialized labour (requiring knowledge in the natural and social sciences). As a result, factory owners and industrial financiers employed any tactics convenient and suitable to ensure industrial progress without much concern about the impact of the whole industrial process on human beings and their environment (requiring knowledge in the humanities). Little regard for human beings and the environment in favour of productivity of machines and accumulation of profit marked low regard for the humanities whose main project is based on regard for humanity and the environment. As a result, working conditions in the factories became unbearable (dirty, unsafe, low waged). Despite this, people continually left their homes in the rural areas and flocked in large numbers into the growing industrial cities which experienced increased population growth. High population growth resulted in more and more human challenges, such as problems related to shortage in housing, poor sanitation, recurrent epidemic disease, and unpleasant social issues such as abandonment of children, crime, alcohol abuse, and prostitution (indicative of a state of moral degeneration which the humanities address). It took some decades

until late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when governments were forced by circumstances to look into issues relating to these social problems and others of the same nature.

Other important changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, according to Wyatt III (2009: 3), were “the rise of a wealthy and politically influential middle class and the massive growth of an urban proletariat whose initially faint voice slowly became loud as the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed, a clamour that...transformed the nature of Western politics”. Moreover, the Industrial Revolution resulted in power struggles among Western nations in that, in their attempt to accumulate more profit and labour they developed an unquenchable thirst for raw materials and new resources to increase their economic growth levels. In the process of the scramble for resources, relations between countries were threatened, and relationships deteriorated among Western states and between these states and other countries of the world. Colonialism was one of the results of the Industrial Revolution as the powerful countries assumed industrial power and made it a tool by which to colonise other countries strategically for resources. The world’s countries came to compete for economic, territorial, and strategic advantages. Wyatt III summarises it well when he says,

The Industrial Revolution was the culmination of complex changes churning in Europe beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The marriage of invention and entrepreneurship, a shifting labour supply, the growth of international trade, new and enterprising business ventures, and eventual government involvement and direction contributed to the explosion of economic growth known as the Industrial Revolution and, despite fits and starts, a heretofore unknown level of progress and prosperity. (Wyatt III, 2009: 3)

It is in the context explained above that the humanities came to be regarded as less contributory to the requirements of the revolution. The humanities’ counterparts (the social and natural sciences) seemed to meet the requirements of the Industrial Revolution as far as new developments



were concerned. The status of the humanities was affected not as a result of some formalized agreed standard of what knowledge should be useful and when, but as a result of factors, related to the Industrial Revolution, that put pressure for changes on the kind of knowledge required by modern developments.

It is necessary for the purposes of this thesis to analyse the cumulative demotion of the humanities within this larger picture of economic and political events. I have, in 3.2 above, mentioned that major technological developments took place around the globe, which had a major impact on the status of the humanities. These developments started in Britain, first with improvements in agriculture followed by factory manufacturing and others. This is an initiative that led the world to become more dependent on the social and natural sciences, and less so on the humanities. It is in this context that in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Britain employed new strategies of farming (including the most popular one called enclosures), which became a milestone for its development. The enclosure system entailed applying a series of interrelated measures on any enclosed farm. Among others, enclosed farming included the “use of sandy soils of marl and clay to aerate the land and improve drainage, a four-crop rotation: turnips, barley, clover, and wheat, a shift from sheep production to grain and cattle, and the employment of tenants under long leases on the larger scale holdings” (Wyatt III, 2009: 34).

The introduction of enclosures resulted in the rapid diminishing of ancient pattern of small land holdings. In their place, large pieces of land came to be owned by larger landowners. A larger number of landowners according to Wyatt III (2009: 30) “comprised a successful and confident class of individuals who had become wealthy through trade or political office and desired the social status that came from the ownership of land and the old landed aristocracy, which had begun to reassert itself by the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century”. The landowners had managed to combine agrarian and urban techniques that enabled them to produce for both consumption and

selling. They were able to gain more profits as they took advantage of the growing market for agricultural products and produced more. They used these profits to buy more new machinery and skilled labour (produced in the natural and social sciences) so that high demand for agricultural produce could be met.

The new methods of farming necessitated regional specialization, which in turn ensured an increase in agricultural production in Britain in the 18th and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, with enclosures one worker in Britain produced more food, reducing the number of workers focusing on agriculture, so much so that by the 18<sup>th</sup> century there was increased production per person engaged in agriculture in Britain.

There were approximately 19 million acres under cultivation in Great Britain in 1820. Just ten years prior, figures point to about 1.2 million horses in the nation of which 0.8 million were used in agriculture. By the turn of the 20th century those numbers had increased to roughly 3.21 million and 1.51 million, respectively. In 1801 British population stood at 9 million, increased to 21 million in 1851, and stood at 37 million at the turn of the 20th century. The age of the city and the factory had arrived (Wyatt III, 2009: 34, 59)

It is the above developments that had begun in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century: agricultural reform, population increase, and the emergence of machines powered by steam which resulted in, and created, a conducive environment and context for rapid industrialization in Britain into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In America as well, there was more potential for growth. America had colonies with resources that were awaiting exploitation and development; plenty of land which was rich and full of natural resources. America had also connected to Britain physically in terms of travel, which, according to Wyatt III (2009: 80) “stimulated change, new opportunity, the spirit of adventure, and expansion and abhorred apathy” and hence better relationships between the two. America took full advantage of these

relationships to fulfil her desire to enhance enterprise in the colonies. America also had a ready supply of capital and could help out her colonies whenever need arose. America made use of British investors, entrepreneurs, equipment (tools, machines, and supplies), and shipping to her benefit and that of her colonies. The Industrialization process in America was at the beginning not smooth but the pace accelerated in the early 1800s so much that projections indicated a dramatic growth in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, whereby America would grow to rival Britain as the most powerful industrial nation in the world (2009: 86).

Although French industrial growth was not as rapid as that of Britain and America, success stories were mostly in the same industries where progress could be noticed. Production in coal increased thirteen times from 1820 to 1870, and iron production grew six times during the same period. “In the area of technical development, the key invention of the Jacquard Loom used for fine cloth gave a real impetus to the textile industry and laid the foundation for future technological improvements” (Wyatt III 2009: 127). Another remarkable development in the early 1840s was a move by the French government to establish a huge railroad system (implying the need for engineers and contractors more inclined to the natural and social sciences). The French government invested huge amounts of money in these railway systems’ construction and then leased the railway lines to private companies for longer periods of time, which injected capital into France. French railroad construction proceeded at a steady pace from roughly 300 miles in 1842 to more than 23,000 miles in 1900 (Wyatt III2009: 127).

Germany also became part of the competition: her industrial progress shows that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Germany experienced a long but steady success that allowed her to join the competition. Her population increased, and surpassed that of France. For instance, it rose from 23.5 million in 1810 to 33.5 million in 1850 (Wyatt III2009: 128). This rapid growth in population rendered Germany a reliable source of factory

workers, especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when more Germans moved into urban areas, surpassing the numbers on farms. In addition, in the 1830s, German coal mining produce more than doubled. The natural and social sciences here also had to play a key role, because Germany had to rely on professional labour of a techno-scientific nature to source out new technology to dig deeper mine shafts. Germany had developed such a high scientific spirit, which was reflected in the new University of Berlin. This is the same spirit that transformed universities, beginning in the 1830s, in Germany (Ruegg, 2004: 13). Access to professional engineers helped German coal production to increase another seven times from the 1840s to 1870. The increased coal production in turn initiated new possibilities for German manufacturing.

The demoted status of, and reduced need for, the humanities is evident, too, in the social, political and economic effects of the Industrial Revolution in the countries of East and Latin America, Asia (China and Japan) and Russia. With these countries unable to follow smoothly and successfully in the footsteps of Western industrialization, the process of competition for modern industrialization in India, the Middle East, and elsewhere resulted in a chain of conflicts in these areas throughout most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These conflicts resulted in political instability, as governments in these countries failed to strategically persuade their peoples to change their primitive living standards. People still felt strongly about their reliance on traditional cash crops for export in exchange for European goods and commodities, primitive education systems, cultural differences. They still heavily relied on European entrepreneurs, investment, and technology, which precluded them from rapid industrialization. That is not to say that industrialization had no impact on the non-Western regions. On the contrary, the rapid trends in industrialization in Western nations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century led to their intrusion into other parts of the world for both economic and strategic reasons.

Only by 1870 had major parts of the Western world achieved, or were on the road to, a sophisticated level of industrialization with few exceptions. Western entrepreneurs built factory enterprises and introduced technology into these areas and sought resources and markets, while some Western workers sought opportunity in the newly emerging enterprises. Consequently “significant interaction with Western nations occurred and in many instances left these regions with no easy path to industrialization and an increased dependence on the West for economic viability” (Wyatt III, 2009: 159). Until the 1860s, some countries such as East Asia, including China and Japan, as well as sub-Saharan Africa, had not yet experienced Western industrial intrusion. By contrast, the Middle East, Latin America, and India had already experienced this intrusion. Russia and Japan however, are countries that had to a larger extent experienced major economic changes within their societies, enabled by a national view to industrialize.

Russia, in particular, industrialised rapidly and strategically utilised technology gained from Western civilisation for economic, political, and military purposes. Her overall industrial growth gains rose from 6% in the 1880s to 8% in the 1890s, but slowed a bit after 1900 (Wyatt III, 2009: 148). During that period, Russia’s growth rate was approximately matching that of the United States, doubled that of Germany, three fold that of France, and quadrupled that of Great Britain despite the fact that Russia started from a lower position comparatively. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, despite retaining a heavy reliance on an agrarian economy and the existence of a very conservative political regime opposed to significant change, Russia had climbed its way to the position of the fourth largest industrial nation in most identifiable categories (Wyatt III, 2009: 148).

However, the industrial developments in Russia provide a clear picture of how on the ground the developments reflected less regard and concern for human welfare, and, negatively affected human beings. Most Russian workers worked in huge industrial factories. Russia became one of the

most successful industrialised societies. In 1900, she experienced a boom, with about one-third of the Russian factory labour force working in factories of which each accommodated not less than 500 people. This figure more than doubled that of Germany. In addition, a sizable number of the factories employed not less than 1,000 persons. Russian workers experienced the same conditions of work as those endured by industrial workers in Britain earlier (1870s) in her booming stages. Women and children were employed as labourers and were subjected to abuse at the workplace. They would work for very long hours (14) each day for low wages. They were punished by less pay in case of tardiness, low quality work, or disobedience to authority. Families were separated as many men left their families in the rural areas to go and find factory jobs in towns. Family separation is one the factors that added to the depression and tension that led to a decline in morality, heavy drinking, and frequent job changes. Living conditions were very bad with poorly constructed housing, overcrowding, poor or almost unavailable sanitation, and very high prices in the factory outlet stores (Wyatt III, 2009: 148).

### **3.4 HOW DID THE REVOLUTIONS HAVE AN IMPACT ON 'THE IDEA OF THE UNIVERSITY' AND ON WHAT SHOULD BE TAUGHT THERE?**

The universities have to be located within the context of the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions, because the status of the humanities within the university changed dramatically with these revolutions. The Industrial Revolution brought about changes in perceptions about the purpose of a university. This revolution is a phenomenon which occurred first in Britain and came to be regarded as a major turning point in world history. Wittrock (1994: 305) attests to this view, for he says that far from being detached from the basic societal and political transformations of the modern era, universities form part and parcel of the very same process which manifests itself in the emergence of an industrial economic order

and the nation-state as the most typical and most important form of political organization. Most historians therefore attribute almost all changes of a political, economic, social and cultural nature to the Revolution.

One important aspect is the connection of the modern era to the demoted position of the humanities. This is an aspect I want to articulate, based on an analysis by Wittrock of the close relationship between the state and the university. The state's expectations of the university create irresolvable dilemmas for the proponents of university autonomy. These expectations have increased the universities' demands for resources, which have often been granted, except that in the contemporary world, these resources have frequently diminished. It is evident that with new developments the university is a site that identifies itself with research, putting the issue of 'pure' and 'applied' research at the core. In addition, the emergence of many institutions has resulted in many sites at which the quest for knowledge is pursued, and these in turn attract resources from important contributors, both state and business. As a result competition for resources forces the University of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to accept specialism and the ordering of the disciplines that comes with the intellectual division of labour. This status quo no longer allows for the university to combine advanced research with the model of teaching and personality formation thus an implication of the undermining of the humanities project (Wittrock, 1994: 346).

In essence, the original idea of the university has been transformed, leaving the university with an apparent choice to either admit that important segments of the cognitive universe are outside its historical purview, or to renounce important aspects of its heritage, notably the belief in the university as an open community of peers, of scholars freely sharing with one another their thoughts and findings. As implied by Clark Kerr (in Rothblatt, 1993: 30), American universities could no longer be said to be animated by a single idea, that is, by an inherited referent

...serving as a touchstone or guide, a reminder of the university's true purposes and historical destiny, and as a means of sorting out and deciding between competing missions and rival claims. In place of an idea, there was in time a multiversity containing many ideas and very little unity.

The professions, to be discussed in Chapter Five, are a direct consequence of the Industrial Revolution and urbanization. The revolution and urbanization are the ones that indirectly brought about changes in the relationship between the branches of knowledge. Shifts that occur in different branches of knowledge contribute directly to the way knowledge is perceived and applied and influence changes within different fields of knowledge. One can say that these shifts are in line with the shift from an aristocratic ideal to the professional ideal. In essence these changes correspond with changes in perceptions about the idea of a university. Just going a little backwards, the pre-history of the idea of an idea of a university properly begins in the English-speaking world with the writings of the philosopher Edmund Burke. The idea of an institution having an idea, according to Rothblatt, (1997: 5) "came into being, as a means of stabilising establishments at a revolutionary moment in European history, defending them against arguments that all existing institutions served narrow vested interests". The enemies were the advocates of revolutionary institutional change: Unitarian radicals, Paineites and Philosophical Radicals who were regarded as followers of the Utilitarian philosopher, Bentham (Rothblatt, 1997).

The idea of a university is clearly analysed by Newman who wrote his *Idea of a University* in the 1850s. He incorporated what he considered to be the finest features of the Oxford and English ideas of a university of the time (Rothblatt, 1997: 12). His well-known definition of the *Idea* as stated in Newman's Preface is that a university is a place for teaching universal knowledge - he views this kind of a university as a 'University in its essence' (p13). According to Newman, this was a real conception of a university, contrary to a conception of the 1820s that views a university as



a place for professional education or for research. He was more concerned with character formation through teaching than with investigation (research). Newman saw the intellectual life of a university as one kind of life led in universities, and valued also the human dimension of the life of a university in which personal relationships matter, friendships count, and success is measured not by examination, but by growth and maturation. He believed that the pursuit of knowledge begets egotism which renders people asocial, divorces scholars from the real world, and channels people towards concentration on specialization (Rothblatt, 1997: 18). Newman's conception of the university influenced largely the English idea of a university which took some time before broadening.

Wittrock (1994) also focuses on the crisis of the university that was brought about by developments in science and industry, and this compelled the university to rethink its role. His focus concentrates on the difference between the French and Prussian approaches to universities, providing us with a picture of different ideas of a university. He says that during the French Revolution in France, the universities were superseded as the primary vehicles for technical, administrative and educational training by special institutions known as the *Grandes Ecoles*. In Germany, the universities were to be centres of learning and teaching with wide, but also clearly circumscribed, limits of autonomy and self-government (Wittrock, 1994). Wittrock also shows how the new University of Berlin emerged with an emphasis on an organic or holistic conception of knowledge, formulated by Humboldt. This conception, however, was superseded by a subsequent fragmentation, as the dichotomy between the cultural and natural sciences occurred, and the latter were, themselves divided into pure and applied science. This division of intellectual labour itself produced new forms of institutional organization. It is worth noting that the concept of 'Bildung' emerged at this time, but its emphasis on personal formation had to contend with the tensions between individual development and cultural identity, as well as between a notion of integration and unity on the one hand, and the

divisive influence of scientific specialization and research on the other. Humboldt saw the appointment of university professors by the state as an important procedure that would safeguard the intellectual freedom of teaching and learning from the petty internal controversies of the 'narrow guild-like interests within academia itself' (Wittrock, 1994: 318).

Despite the differences in perceptions about the idea of a university, processes of reform and reconstitution of intellectual institutions took a toll. The German universities, and in particular that of Berlin, served as the undisputed international model for university reformers. Universities came to be key institutions both for knowledge production and for strengthening a sense of national and cultural identity (Wittrock, 1994: 321). One can say that universities progressed within perpetual and diverse shifts of the perception of a university. The diversity created a deep tension between a universal development and scientific specialization. The universities were beginning to shift their emphasis towards 'scientific specialization' to meet techno-scientific demands on the one hand, and an increasing emphasis on the particular role of universities in constituting key institutions in particular national contexts on the other. These shifts are not in the nature of knowledge but in the perception of the nature of knowledge. They occur between and among different fields of knowledge to mark the transition from the initial purpose of the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake (scholastic ideal of knowledge for its sake) down to the purpose of knowledge for job acquisition and financial gains (professional ideal for application).

### **3.5 HOW DID THE CHANGE IN THE IDEA OF THE UNIVERSITY CONTRIBUTE TO THE EMERGENCE OF THE NATURAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AS DISCIPLINES AT THE UNIVERSITY?**

The transition mentioned in the previous sections partly explains why the social sciences emerged from within the humanities to team up with the natural sciences to challenge the former dominance of the humanities in higher education curricula. It is worth emphasising that social science was a direct product of the Scientific Revolution, the Industrial Revolution and urbanization. The social sciences are believed to have formally emerged in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and came to dominate the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century university. 'Social science' as a term was first used in 1824, and refers more generally to all disciplines that analyse society and culture. Significant figures to the literature that made a huge contribution to the evolution of social science are philosophers such as Augustine Comte (1797-1857), who added a third stage to the then already existing rising two stages through which ideas pass. According to him, ideas pass through theological, philosophical and scientific stages respectively ([publicbookshelf.com/public-html/outline](http://publicbookshelf.com/public-html/outline)). He associates the basis of the theological stage with assumptions, the philosophical stage with critical thinking and the scientific stage with positive observations. Note that the last stage emphasises application and practice, which implies that the first and second stages are associated with theorising pertinent to the humanities. Despite many attacks on his framework, Comte provided a basis upon which many social scientific disciplines and subjects came to be founded.

The Social Sciences are a systematized study of human patterns of organization and behavior. Disciplines that we find in this broad category include Psychology, Sociology, Economics, Political Science, Geography, Anthropology and Sociology (Backhouse and Fontaine, 2010). Social

Science also is commonly used as an umbrella term that refers to a plurality of fields outside of the natural sciences. The list also includes archeology, criminology, education, history, linguistics, communication studies, international relations and law. The term may, however be used in the specific context of referring to the original *science of society* established in 19<sup>th</sup> century sociology. Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx and Max Weber, are typically cited as the principal architects of modern social science by this definition. The Scientific and Industrial Revolutions stimulated the emergence of these social scientific disciplines because these disciplines' method of research were said to be scientific and contributory towards modern developments befitting the scientific and industrial society.

Backhouse and Fontaine (2010) in their *History of Social Sciences since 1945* cover the development of this discipline since the Second World War. The fields within the social sciences, to a larger extent, address the social pressures that influence both knowledge production and the relationships between different theoretical perspectives. For instance, urbanization, which is one of the consequences of industrialization, had a major impact on the economy leading to more concentration on solving problems of production and market goods and services. This development necessitated the development of Economics as a discipline and its dominance in the university curriculum.

The emphasis on the commonality of all social scientific fields, as they all respond to social problems through the usage of overlapping methods and cross disciplinary activities, marks a move from Mode 1 to Mode 2 knowledge use (Backhouse and Fontaine, 2010). The professions emerging from both social and natural science are largely dependent on knowledge produced in what is referred to as Mode 2. The difference between the Mode 1 and Mode 2 forms of knowledge production was influentially made by Gibbons and Nowotny (Gibbons et al, 1994). Mode 1 knowledge is basic science and discipline-based research. Mode 2 knowledge production is transdisciplinary, oriented to problems not

hypotheses, and attempts to close the gap between 'theory' and 'practice'. Mode 2 is applied in different contexts, and heterogeneous collaborators are meaningfully involved. Mode 2 knowledge realizes new demands of research and data management practices. What influenced its application are the rapidly emerging, highly complex problems that constitute critical contexts.

It is worth noting that the humanities seem to lack the respectable application of Mode 2 knowledge. The ideas of Gibbons and Nowotny are similar to what humanities proponents and others regarded as reflections of opposition to and ignorance of 'real' science, but this is not necessarily true except in the case where flawed approaches to science and humanities are applied. Mode 2 knowledge produces what is proving to be a single, complex and dynamic field. A recent policy document by Houghton (2003 in, <http://ccr.uws.edu.au/chaotichumanities/know>) addresses changing research practices across academia. He quotes Ziman on 'real' science as "post-academic research...marked by an increasing degree of collectivization as a response to the growing complex research problems". Most humanities researchers produced Mode 1 knowledge until 1970s. Measuring by the Gibbons and Nowotny criteria, the humanities have to date not yet fully incorporated Mode 2 knowledge. The criteria render the humanities interdisciplinary limited, and rarely extending to the sciences. As a result the humanities lack of Mode 2 knowledge demotes their disciplines. Mode 2 knowledge is required by both industrialization and urbanization, for inherent in Mode 2 is emphasis on more access to knowledge and expertise for specialised functions befitting industrialization and urbanization. Menand (2010) sums up the progression of these changing research criteria and approaches to knowledge accurately when he says,

Most of the shocks to the philosophical foundations of teaching and scholarship in the humanities, from the interpretative turn in the sixties and seventies to the diversity turn in the eighties and nineties, arose from the challenges to prevailing understandings of what counts. Legitimacy- is this

really knowledge or is it something else? – was precisely what was at stake in that revolution. (p92)

As a consequence, the modern era is characterised by the high value accorded to the specialised and useful knowledge of the social and natural sciences that is suited to address social problems. At the same time, the humanities are one field of study that has since experienced shifts within themselves and between themselves and other main branches of knowledge which account for the decline of the humanities over time. The shifts within the humanities themselves, the social sciences and natural sciences are best presented by Frank and Gabler (2000) under the auspices of an ‘ontological shift’. This change has created an unfavourable context for the state of the humanities as the section below indicates.

### **3.5.1 How does the need for Mode 2 Knowledge Advantage the Natural and Social Sciences?**

“The dramatic relative decline of the humanities is accompanied by a flatter trend in the natural sciences and the social sciences and the striking relative rise of the social sciences” (Frank and Gabler, 2000). This decline can be explained in terms of the new paradigms that appear to bear directly on industrialization and urbanization resulting in the need for knowledge produced in Mode 2. What transpires is that the humanities, which are at the core of university teaching and research, have always been regarded as the source of knowledge produced in Mode 1, and hence are primary endorsers of this form of knowledge production. According to Gibbons (1998), Mode 1 applies to a

form of knowledge production... a complex of ideas, methods, values, norms... that has grown up to control the diffusion of the structure of specialisation to more and more fields of enquiry and ensure their compliance with what is considered sound scientific practice. (p5)

However, with industrialization went “rising factor costs and intensifying competition... exemplified in the growth of the number of active partners in world trade... promote cost risk sharing schemes among firms (Gibbons,1998: 22). This development implies that it is no longer a sole responsibility of the universities but also of the firms and other international stakeholders, to produce knowledge. With everyone having interest and taking part in the production of knowledge, competition for production of relevant knowledge becomes a necessity. The social and natural sciences therefore come in as producers of more relevant knowledge that befits both industrialization and urbanization’s specialised requirements.

In Europe in particular, the university welcomed the idea of the university structure which is informed by an urban, technological, professional civilization and viewed it as an intellectual attempt at finding the correct ‘idea’ of a university (Rothblatt,1997: 33). In order to make room for knowledge and for the process of specialization and sub-specialization and professionalism characteristic of urban societies, there was a need for the existence of a high degree of curricular flexibility to accommodate new knowledge, hence the dominance of the social and natural sciences with their new disciplines and research methods. The Social Sciences managed to prove to be more relevant, for they allowed for a new perception of different fields within themselves. These fields were perceived as interdependent and overlapping in methods despite the existence of variety, tensions and dynamics in disciplines, such as psychology, which used methods drawn from the physical and biological sciences and the ‘subject matter extending into the social and human sciences’ (Backhouse and Fontaine, 2010). Other fields such as economics aligned themselves towards the natural sciences. Mathematicians, statisticians, engineers and other natural scientists grouped themselves and assumed a common identity ‘based on their image as the practitioners of a rigorous, dispassionate and apolitical discipline’ (Backhouse and Fontaine, 2010). This means that the professionalization of the social scientific and natural

scientific disciplines, with their common identities, intensified. This nature of the relationship of fields within disciplines extended also to the forging of close relationships across these disciplines.

It is worth noting that the changes mentioned above were brought about by a shift in the evaluation of knowledge, in which production of knowledge that befits problem-solving in particular contexts was prioritised. Such knowledge, according to Gibbons (1998), is intended to be useful to all people in all contexts, either in industry, government or society. This is the knowledge that is produced in Mode 2, which is regarded as having attributes of: knowledge produced in the context of application; transdisciplinarity; heterogeneity and organisational diversity; enhanced social accountability; and more broadly based systems of quality control (Gibbons, 1998: 6).

It is this knowledge production that favoured the social and natural sciences, and which forged a relationship which informed also the social structures. Each of the social scientific fields of Psychology, Sociology, Economics, and Political Science proved to be of the utmost importance. Sociology in particular had to solve the crisis of social identity, for urbanization resulted in human society being viewed as interrelated, posing a huge crisis of social identity. Again as a result of urbanization, thinkers were concerned about the problem of 'mass society' and the role that the 'people' might play in the government of society, generating the need for Psychology. The problem of governance, and what governments should consist of, influenced the university curriculum, hence the focus on the subjects of democracy and its forms. This focus in particular led to the emergence of disciplines like Political Science as a practical subject that directly and practically defines democratic governance and its forms and procedures.



Frank and Gabler also state that “Across multiple domains, static hierarchies have been supplanted by dynamic systems. That which was fixed in vertical (often sacred) orders - families, nations, the animal and plant “kingdoms”, etc. has been reconstituted into interactive and interdependent (largely mundane) assemblies” (Frank and Gabler, 2000). The shift is evident and salient in all the domains of society. It is seen in the rise of democratic polities (indicative of the need for Political Science), free market economies (the need for Economics implied) and mass education cultures. These domains seem to be very dynamic and are referred to as developmental or progressive and preferred as entailing equality as compared to the other forms before them. Each of these social scientific fields responds to some of the demands of contemporary society, which is itself the product of the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions.

### **3.5.2 How do Perceptions about Knowledge and its Usage Advantage the Status of the Natural and Social Sciences?**

The changes implied by these shifts outlined above include changes in people’s perceptions of reality in the structures of society and culture. Taking the changes that occurred within the social sciences since 1945 for instance, as affirmed by Backhouse and Fontaine (2010), changes in terminology used in this and other fields are contextual. These contextual changes are associated with “different perceptions of what this group of disciplines covered”. Disputes about the usage of words and the contexts within which they are used in turn influence the perception about the status of the social sciences. World War II, according to Backhouse and Fontaine (2010) generally strengthened fields such as psychology because psychologists were needed to,

conduct assessment on and allocation, to treat and reduce casualties of war, and understand how best to undermine enemy morale; sociologists, political scientists and social anthropologists were needed to understand societies within which the Allied powers were fighting, geographers were needed for cartography and for the knowledge of remote parts of the world; and

economists were needed to plan the war effort, helping to allocate resources efficiently, and as generalised, technical disciplines. (Backhouse and Fontaine 2010: 8)

This quotation certainly indicates how the exigencies of war stimulated the need for the social sciences, but this is one of the subsidiary aspects of the role of the social sciences in modern, industrial society – the value of the social sciences was of course evident even before the traumas of the First and Second World Wars. Backhouse and Fontaine indirectly attest that the social and natural sciences are in part an outcome of a process in which supply and demand factors can be said to operate. In this sense, the social and natural sciences acted as supplies that met the demand for differentiated forms of specialist knowledge. In reality, the same approach to perceiving the fields of knowledge informed the social structures. The social structures of industrial society were influenced by, according to Perkins (1989), class divisions: the rich and the poor, and or the middle from the working class, and or wage earners from outcast poor. The point is that knowledge changes along with methods of knowing and acquiring knowledge and utilisation of that knowledge in different contexts within society. In the process of industrialization and urbanization, there is a need for a “diverse range of specialists to work in teams on solving problems in a complex applications oriented environment for the determinants of a potential solution involve the integration of different skills in a framework of action” (Gibbons, 1998: 7).

These changes in turn necessitate the establishment of standards that are used to measure and qualify the main branches of learning as either having or not having met these standards. It is worth noting that the standards differ with the conceptions of ideal life. Again if branches have met the standards the question of which ones performed better than others (competition) comes into play which then influences the ratings of knowledge. It is the kind of a situation that Frank and Gabler (2000) see as a shift that accords weight to the main branches of learning and shifts teaching and ‘research emphases from the humanities to the social

sciences'. In essence these changes had negative effects on the status of the humanities.

### **3.5.3 Shift in Method**

The methods employed by the social sciences are the ones that allegedly gave them their status, as these methods are alleged to have a scientific quality, which provides them with epistemic status. The humanities disciplines on the other hand are alleged to be unscientific in their approach to their subjects. This issue of epistemic status affects the respectability of the humanities negatively when they are compared with allegedly scientific disciplines in the social sciences, whose reputation is also enhanced by their allegedly useful/instrumental nature. For example, the method of enquiry in theology was contemplation, intuition, and revelation. This and other methods of this nature diminish in importance as knowledge in the natural and social sciences is now regarded as high in status and its methods are also regarded as such. The methods in the natural and social sciences are empirical, cognitive demonstrative and applicable in nature. The methods are believed to be cross-disciplinary, multidisciplinary and even interdisciplinary, so that they allow a much needed cross fertilisation among disciplines (Backhouse and Fontaine, 2010). For instance, problem-solving as a method of research applied from within the humanities involves following the codes of practice relevant to a particular discipline, but not necessarily dependent on some practical goal. Problem-solving from within the social and natural sciences requires a broad range of considerations, such as the interest of various stakeholders and contexts of application. Thus “processes or markets specify what we mean by the context of application” (Gibbons, 1998: 6).

On the same issue of methods, other social scientists combine the theories and tools of research to make a coherent whole. These methods are very

different from the ones in the humanities, in that these ones are accessible, and their truths are easily verified because they are demonstrable truths. With the emergence of modernism, as Himmelfarb (1997) points out, 'philosophical credibility and legitimacy' was accorded to the new social scientific theories of feminism and multiculturalism, whose methods of enquiry differ considerably from those of the humanities. Salient to these changes are claims that the new perceptual and methodological shifts are meeting the needs, demands, functions and interests of the societies within which they exist (Himmelfarb, 1997). This condition explains the current cognitive shift, which is leading to the formation of a university based on social interconnectivity (Delanty, 2001). The differences in shifts are obvious when one looks at the disciplinary fields within each branch of learning. One observes that the institutional framework causes changes in social practices that make up the economic and political structures of society as well as the social institutions of the life world.

### **3.6 HOW DID THE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE INDUSTRIAL AND SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTIONS CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE DEMOTION OF THE HUMANITIES?**

It is equally important to mention that the events of the Industrial Revolution in almost all the countries in which they occurred, though double edged in purpose (emphasising extrinsically the need for knowledge in the social and natural sciences, but also intrinsically displaying the need for the humanities despite their demoted status), had huge implications for higher education. The revolutions became the transforming events that impacted on the university. The impact was particularly reflected in changes of the university curricula and in the status and role of the humanities. According to Charle (2004: 62) the British "curriculum, which around the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century had been mainly limited to classics and mathematics, now expanded to admit the natural sciences, history, law and foreign languages". Another example is of the Scottish and Scots-Irish influence in American higher education, which in the 18<sup>th</sup> century led to two new developments: medical and

professional education were regarded as appropriate university responsibilities; the teaching of the classical languages, maths and theology, the backbone of the English curriculum, was broadened into a Scottish humanistic curriculum that included social science, the new Enlightenment Philosophy of Man, and modern subjects, such as non-classical languages and natural sciences (Rothblatt, 1979: 28).

According to Wittrock (1994: 332), for a broad spectrum of academics in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the university was a 'place for genuine discourse and non-manipulative interaction'. However, the demands of industrialization and urbanization saw either an emergence or revival of a number of research institutes, like the Max Planck Institute in Germany. Indeed, the 200 universities existing in the 1930s were surrounded by some 300 institutions of higher education in the military, technical, polytechnic, commercial, medical, veterinary, agricultural, educational, political and musical fields. It is worth noting however that the new institutions had not replaced the universities and were attended by a relatively small minority of students (Ruegg, 2004: 3). These institutions were connected to, but independent from, the universities. The Scottish had influenced and reinforced the democratic conceptions spreading throughout the colonies, stressing the notion that education was a national responsibility to be undertaken in the interests and well-being of the many (Rothblatt, 1997: 28). The OECD was established in Paris in 1960, and has served as an important forum for discussions on the crucial relation of research to economic growth and innovation (Wittrock, 1994: 334). These higher education developments strengthened the focus of the curriculum on the natural and social sciences, the development of which contributed towards the demotion of the humanities.

This emergence and revival of institutions resulted in what was seen by most scholars as an increasing diversification within higher education as a whole. Within the concept of 'higher education' fell all kinds of different establishments with each one of them fulfilling important societal

functions that are complementary and dependent, resulting in the interdependence of all institutions. It is worth noting, however, that the diversity of institutions happened differently in different contexts (countries). In Britain, for instance, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the most important changes in the British university landscape took place. Outside Oxbridge, the civic universities in the large provincial cities multiplied in order to provide an education for the new leaders of an industrial urban society. The University of London in particular underwent a rapid expansion through a formal merger of numerous special institutions, such as the medical schools of the various hospitals, the Royal School of Mines, the Royal College of Science, and the Central Technical College, which came together in 1907 to form the Imperial College of Science and Technology, the London School of Economics, founded in 1898, and a number of women's colleges. In 1898 the mammoth university received its own statutes (Charle, 2004: 62). The increase in the techno-scientific orientation of higher institutions threatened and demoted the status of the humanities.

However, not all academics accepted the changes without a fight. Some denounced this diversification, claiming that it detracted from the 'idea' of the university (Rothblatt on Newman). This denunciation was directly provoked by the transformations effected by the Industrial Revolution as these were indirectly threatening the fate of the humanities. The 'idea' of a true university as a view, particularly in Britain, began to look fallible. After World War II, developments in science strove to value the autonomy of science while also recognizing its practical potential (Wittrock, 1994: 336). American understanding of the idea of a true university was articulated through the medium of functionalism, which challenged the status of the humanities. It is, among others, this functionalism which is an aspect of instrumentalism. The Industrial Revolution enhanced the importance of this functionalism, which had a negative impact on the status of the humanities. To European universities, instrumentalism (knowledge for utility and profit) seemed to be associated

with diversity which was understood to mean variations in educational standards and differential funding for different educational missions and individuals (specialisation). However, this is an understanding I have addressed in Chapter One as having bred one of the factors that render the humanities' status low. This understanding has, wherever it appears, been regarded as unsatisfactory, whether we speak of Britain, France, Sweden or Germany (Wittrock, 1994: 337). Diversity became a significant phenomenon in Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, thus advantaging the natural and social sciences and exerting more pressure on the humanities.

In order for Europe to realise her determination on diversity, European higher education underwent reforms that were undertaken in large scale in the 1960s and 1970s (Wittrock, 1994: 338). One of these reforms, which became significant, was mass higher education from the 1960s to date. This project of mass higher education became significant, particularly in the post-World War II years, when the demand for 'mass education' at the tertiary level increased. This demand itself is the product of the requirements of modern industrialized society, dominated by high specialisation. The demand for the expansion of the availability of tertiary education contributes hugely towards the demotion in the status of the humanities. Currently higher education is viewed as a key arena for policy intervention both in principle and for the reason that higher education is used to promote specific social and political objectives.

The 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries' higher education is directly and indirectly used to help to stimulate economic growth, not least by being geared to policy-perceived labour market needs. This higher education is also used to support such general governmental social aims as furthering national conceptions of social equality, hence more focus on democratic forms of government. The main vehicle for the achievements of these higher educational changes is two basic traditional parameters namely, governance arrangements, and curricula which are supposed to be revisited for redesigning to meet the intended achievements. The changes

resulting from the redesigning of curricula resulted in the 21<sup>st</sup> century changes that include a dramatic increase in the efforts to build up real research strength in broad areas of strategic importance for long-term technological health. An example of a change in curricula is that of the British universities, which underwent their most significant technoscientific oriented reforms.

Such efforts are seen in the emergence of what is referred to as “maga-buck-deals, concluded between large companies, not least in the pharmaceutical industry, and selected university environments, and also in the growing bulge of ‘science parks’ and ‘silicon valleys’ surrounding the more prominent university centres in Western Europe and North America” (Wittrock, 1994: 341). This approach to higher education has sparked the attention of scholars, who have in their writings emphasised the existence of descriptions and prescriptions within higher education institutions, as well as the existence of an anonymously, and vaguely bureaucratic nature of the modern university. Ruegg (2004) states that during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, public universities were transformed into lay institutions everywhere. At the same time, the universities became increasingly subjected to state bureaucracy, which managed university affairs as part of a national education policy. Another aspect of the descriptions and prescriptions was the distance between rhetorical statements invoking the reality of a community of scholars, of teachers and students on the one hand, and the very absence of a living, intellectual sense of cohesion and community on the other (Wittrock, 1994: 342).

Understood from the above perspective this approach to higher education presents a view of the university of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries which implies the adequacy of only a functionalist explanation for the university’s contemporary character. It is a misleading view, and hence there is a need for us to carefully rethink the role of universities and institutions of higher education in the modern world. It is crucial to view the university as still maintains a crucial role at the centre of major societal transformations



other than the functional ones. Areas of these major societal dimensions that require more than a functional approach, for instance, include the economic and technological processes of establishing new modes of production and utilizing resources, including natural resources, in new ways. Another area is that of social processes that influence meaning and cultural identity in societies where conventional bonds of obligation, obedience, and loyalty can no longer be taken for granted. There is also an area of the process of searching for a new political order to address the social and cultural questions. The point I am emphasising here is that the current society's expectations (functional) in modern industrial societies of its tertiary sector have contributed towards the demotion of the humanities.

The continuous engagement of the university with these issues in the past resulted in the notion of a modern nation-state which benefitted higher education institutions generally. Benefits include, among others, institutions gaining access to much greater resources than had previously been the case, for as Charle (2004: 62) states "the second innovation which broke with medieval tradition was the increasing level of state funding of even those universities such as Oxford and Cambridge, which had been able to sustain themselves through income from their investments". Another benefit was that knowledge and occupational specialization came to be viewed as complementary in the realisation of modernization. In essence, the most important aspect in all these processes was the professionalization of university careers. On the European Continent, the professor became a civil servant of the lay and bureaucratic state (Ruegg, 2004: 7).

These articulated events of the Industrial Revolution are the ones that led to the demoted status of the humanities. It is a continual progress of the same events that have resulted in a state of higher education of the 21<sup>st</sup> century within which disciplines related to techno-science, particularly those that have a direct relevance to the market economy, tend to be given

the highest status and support, while the humanities are relegated to an inferior position and stigmatized. The number of faculty and graduate students, increasingly working with industry on government-sponsored techno-science initiatives is increasing for students have to secure study funding within the industry. This is aggravated by the fact that in many universities state support has diminished, thereby pushing tuition costs up and encouraging industry sponsored loans. The high regard for techno-science promoted by the social and natural sciences has shaped the professional of the modern world, who has come to define him/herself in purely instrumental terms, hence the reason for the demotion of the humanities.

However, the most important aspect of both the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions is that they entail a qualitative revolution, which is an understanding of the way in which the natural world works, which has been translated into technological application. These features of these revolutions require that our understanding of theory within the humanities be translated into practice. This focus on practical application privileges instrumental modes of reasoning, which in principle are necessary, but detrimental for the humanities. For instance, our understanding of biology should translate into medical application to attend to health problems caused by modern lifestyles that include even types of food and eating habits; our understanding of physics should translate into mechanical engineering to as to allow for production of new and quicker modes of transport and communication. In essence, the university has to be in line with the new developments, hence the need for careful articulation of the relevant curricula. This has a huge impact on the humanities as far as how the changes should be effected within higher education to meet the challenges. The many professions that emerged from within the social and the natural sciences, therefore, came to dominate the university and other related institutions' curricula in order for education to meet techno-scientific needs. This move saw the demotion of the humanities.

### 3.7 CONCLUSION

One can conclude that the events of the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries' Industrial and Scientific Revolutions marked a gradual demotion of the status of the humanities, promoting high regard for the social and natural sciences. The revolutions had a variety of both positive and negative effects on human life, both in the Western and non-Western worlds. Different effects, depending on approach and experience, by different countries, ranged from the achievement of high techno-scientific developments to political difficulties and cultural differences (Wyatt III, 2009: 154). By 1900, each country experienced technological and organizational changes related to the new economic realities that altered the nature of work and society in their respective countries. What I have emphasised is that by the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the revolutions had extended their impact beyond Western societies. As a result, the nature of the world's economies and the course of world history had been changed forever.

This chapter has focused on changes experienced by higher education (Wyatt III, 2009: 155). I have offered a description of changes within the university curricula as processes by which the humanities have been demoted. Implicated in these curricula changes are conceptualisations of an 'idea' of the university. I have shown that the social sciences emerged and together with the natural sciences eclipsed the humanities, which resulted in a cultural shift in the knowledge fields within the university. It is this continuous shift that has resulted in the development of a modern society that conceptualises itself largely in instrumental terms. These developments have given rise to countless professions, all of which claim to be of value to modern 'techno-scientific' life. I would like to indicate that this is my transitional moment in which, having conducted a detailed review of the era when the humanities were significant (Chapter Two), and having provided an explanation for the demotion of the humanities as a result the impact of the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions (Chapter Three), in the next chapters I address the question of whether the status of the humanities can be revived, and their presence in university curricula

vindicated. The main question is, is there any way to defend the role and importance of the humanities in university curricula in the modern university?

## CHAPTER FOUR

### VINDICATING THE HUMANITIES I

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers a critical analysis of the value of the humanities. The issues discussed in the chapter attest to the idea of a university in perpetual controversy, whose substance is explored within the faculties of the humanities. This means that the humanities have maintained this role despite drastic techno-scientific developments brought about by industrialization and urbanization. A number of issues that necessitate high regard for the humanities discussed in the chapter include:

- The lack of consensus which emphasises the importance of the promotion of democracy and citizenship (continuing participation in the deliberations and debates, which, despite their lack of certain conclusions, have to provide the basis for action);
- The significance of the notion of freedom inherent in the humanities;
- The impact of modernity which directly necessitates the humanities;
- The development of the individual – intellect, emotion, and will, which is the project of the humanities;
- The need for the education of a citizen (The development of the individual – meaning, regard for the broader society and an understanding of democracy);
- The lack of consensus calling for perpetual discussions within the humanities.

With these points the chapter emphasizes the importance of the universities as the main institutions in contemporary life with the humanities at the core. More importantly, the chapter shows that the modern universities are a result of the Scientific and Industrial

Revolutions- hence the site in which the natural and social sciences have developed and joined the humanities.

Despite the dominance of, and high regard for the natural and social sciences, the humanities continued to be taught in the universities. This chapter is intended to emphasize that the state of the world transformations caused by the impact of the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions (modernity), has generated among others, controversy about culture, ethics, politics and identity, and how these issues should be addressed in the modern world. Such transformations, which have been both constructive and disruptive, invite reflection on this momentous process, which has, among other issues, been discussed in Chapter Three, resulted in the demotion of the status of the humanities. The emphasis in this chapter is that departments of humanities, in addition to other activities, reflect upon the experience of modernity. Questions answered here are: what is the nature of modernity? What are its political, economic, social and ethical implications? These reflections include considerations about the future and value of the humanities themselves. This kind of reflection is inevitable and valuable, and the importance of this constitutes part of my vindication of the humanities in the chapter. Debates about these issues are formalized and conducted only in universities and in particular in the faculties of the humanities through the medium of instruction named liberal education.

#### **4.2 WHAT IS CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AND WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT IN MODERN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES?**

The concept of freedom, which is the theme of liberal education, inherent in the concepts of democracy and citizenship, is an aspect that has always been at the core of the humanities. This concept of freedom is a bone of contention in industrializing societies as they are characterized by democratic political systems. The sustenance of democratic systems requires different countries to provide an education in democracy for their

citizens. All issues of that relate to democracy and citizenship such as among others, “economic opportunities, political freedoms, social facilities, transparency guarantees” (Sen, 1999: xii) are presently housed as new appraisals in the faculties of the humanities. My submission is that the humanities are a perpetuation of liberal education and therefore the only field within which the content, relating to the structures and activities in a democratic society, can be taught effectively.

The legacy that connects the humanities and liberal education iterates why the humanities are an appropriate form of education in contemporary higher education. Common to liberal education and the humanities is the aspect of virtue in the form of intellect and morality, which derives its expression from human relationships and conduct, both of which ensure individual autonomy and understanding of individual as well as collective identity. We are collectively affected by the momentum of modernity, and the university’s humanities departments are one site in which people deliberate about this phenomenon. More importantly, it is teaching and learning in the humanities that enhance intellectual freedom that helps us to reflect upon our actions and motives for those actions in order for us to understand our relationships within a democratic society, as motivated by the contemporary techno-scientific developments within democratic societies. In essence, the humanities provide for democratic citizenship education.

Citizenship education is embedded in the notion of education in democracy for citizens, which has to be located within universities. This kind of education considers seriously the value of individualism, which includes the crucial concern with the existence and value of freedom. The modern university evolved with a distinctive characteristic: commitment to freedom and autonomy linked to the modern focus on high regard for democracy in political communities. On the other hand, modernity forced the university to struggle with defining, forging as well as understanding its own identity. This characterisation of the university is reflected in the

changes in demand, focus and purpose of education, which directly influenced the purpose of the university. For instance, one significant aspect of modernity which reflects its insistence upon democracy has been a high demand for mass education. Mass education was in turn a direct result of a call for democracy in the societies of the West. This call for democracy itself was a result of the American and French Revolutions that took place at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. If these two revolutions embrace the concept of freedom central to the humanities, only in the humanities faculties will the university be able to teach the concepts of democracy with all its components.

Due to its democratic character, mass education involved concepts of freedom and social equality in all their aspects of culture, gender, race, sex, religion and others. Mass education involves education that has to be provided to as many people as possible at all levels of the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. This is the education that is expected to reflect the relevant concepts of equity and equality. It is worth noting that the process of mass education is a direct product of the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions. The structure of the tertiary level in particular, because it includes in its teaching the concepts of democracy and citizenship, is the one that has a significant history of shaping society and influencing social change. This is the level that has enjoyed a privilege as a level that directly feeds into the society. In essence, in Western countries, the demand for mass education at the level of primary and secondary education necessitated consideration of ways that ensured greater access to tertiary education. As a result, the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw an increased influx of students enrolling into tertiary programmes. The implication is that the 19<sup>th</sup> century is considered as a century that fostered democratic ideas and political agitation and the 20<sup>th</sup> century engendered the evolution of mass education really. The idea of democratic education spread and was accessed by many to meet the demands of concepts of just societies, fair distribution of resources and other aspects of equality.



Nussbaum (1997: 7) in her *Cultivating Humanity*, states that the contemporary university should help to

build an academy in which women, and members of religious and ethnic minorities, and lesbian and gay people, and people living in non-western cultures can be seen and heard with respect and love, both as knowers and as objects of study ... an academy in which the world can be seen to have many types of citizens and in which we can function as citizens of that world.

In her view, modernity has created a situation in which all people from all walks of life should be seen as complementary, for they, each in their capacities as persons and as professionals, all have a contribution to make to society. She sees the society of today as diverse: multicultural and multinational, the characteristic of which affects social problems of a diverse nature. She points towards the same direction as others, that we are a complex and diverse society, which is bound to perpetually conflict on issues that relate to social development. As a result, our current pressing issues within the university require some form of liberal education in the humanities, which allows for a broad understanding of cross-cultural phenomena and their differences. Negligence or exclusions of some characteristics of our society in the intellectual deliberations lead to ill formed assumptions about what the purpose of the university, and the latter's relationship with society, should be. One sees a need for engagement with the humanities, for the recognition of social diversity calls for the focus of development to go beyond the rich and the elite (also male dominated) minority groups, to include all groups such as women, children, and others.

The ideal individual, or rather society, of the contemporary era, which Nussbaum refers to as a contemporary citizen is a result of scientific and industrial developments. It is a result of a struggle to attain a state of social equality of opportunities and equality of economic outcome. In a sense, the notion of democracy emanates directly from the professional

ideal and is a perpetuation of disagreements about an idea of how society should be and how governments should carry out their responsibilities. All these attempts at understanding and defining the ideal society have their roots in the art, history and languages of societies. For example, when we speak of equality of opportunities in education, we are addressing questions of what language should serve as a medium of instruction; what culture should serve as a basis for the content and critical reflection; what needs are implied by different cultures? In essence, we cannot begin to speak of a democratic society of modernity without an understanding of the humanities subjects of culture and language.

With its focus on the promotion of equal opportunities, professionalism paved the way for recognition of all: sexes, generations, cultures, languages, races, abilities, the recognition of which is translated into democracy, characterized by democratically elected governments. The main purpose of such governments rests on their ability to provide for all citizens: the retired population, children (their education), and physically and mentally disabled communities, the homeless and marginalized communities (gays and lesbians, women). The governments are not only expected to provide material support but also to ensure freedom for all their citizens by recognizing their human rights and ensuring that these rights are not violated. These expectations from the governments pose confusion and perplexity, as well as uncertainties, as these governments are not in most cases able to fulfill these expectations due to diverse social demands. It is only in the humanities that democracy, which involves confusion, uncertainties and diversity, is best taught. Democracy therefore, requires for its pursuit, the study of the content that relates comprehensively to humanity and human relationships (the subject of the humanities).

#### 4.2.1 What is a Modern Democratic Citizen?

A democratic citizen is one envisaged as a model citizen. Nussbaum emphasises the role played by language in the creation of contemporary citizens. This model citizen is one for whom world citizenship is infused into the curriculum in general, having in place multinational, minority, and gender perspectives that can illuminate the teaching of many standard parts of the curriculum, from American history to economics to art history to ancient Greek literature (Nussbaum, 1997). The teaching of many parts of the curriculum requires for its effectiveness socially shared conceptual schemes that allow for a socially constructed language through which knowledge and understanding can produce reasoned judgements. The model citizen is best represented by the current model of education that is in the transformation plans of most institutions of higher learning. In most institutions society itself is seen as a collection of freely associating individuals who are capable of organising themselves in ways they reasonably choose to realise their goal of good and harmonious living. This means in these institutions freedom in the form of democracy is a central theme. It is through language that organisations and reasonable judgements are constructed and communicated. For example, the pursuit of democratic arrangements lies in a socially shared understanding that democracy is good and can benefit society. The pursuit of individual freedom, though highly successful, is not without confrontation with the old model and stereotypes that permeate our academic spectrum. What I want to highlight is that the study of humanities subjects - non-western cultures, African-American studies, women studies and the study of human sexuality - make a huge contribution to the development of and preparation for citizenship.

Nussbaum's (1997) model of education emphasizes the importance of languages, culture, history and philosophy. She draws from Seneca's idea of the cultivation of humanity, which, in the context of liberal education,

matches directly the role of the humanities subjects mentioned in this section. She suggests that liberal education,

is not only Socratic, emphasizing critical thought and respectful argument, but also pluralistic, imparting an understanding of the histories and contributions of groups with whom we interact, both within our nation and in the increasingly international sphere of business and politics. If we cannot teach our students everything they will need to know to be good citizens, we may at least teach them what they do not know and how they may inquire. We can acquaint them with some rudiments about the major non-Western cultures and minority groups within our own. We can show them how to inquire into the history and variety of gender and sexuality. Above all we can teach them how to argue, rigorously and critically, so that they can call their minds their own (Nussbaum, 1997: 295).

This perspective strongly asserts the importance of a shared humanistic education, which is supposed to raise an awareness of, and emphasise the existence of, difference and conflict, but at the same time stressing the importance of equality. This understanding could bring about an understanding of the necessity for a shared culture of life. Because the world in which we live is complex, in addition to our own specific professions or occupations, learning about racial, ethnic, and religious difference, environment, history and the experience of women, human sexuality, how to situate one's own tradition within a highly plural and interdependent world, is highly necessary. These things are difficult to achieve; a person cannot properly learn them by his/her practical experience only. Faculties of the humanities house these subjects and are offered in higher education as contemporary issues that expose an academic to knowledge required in complex moral and practical settings.

In diverse democratic settings, a shared kind of humanistic education offered by the subjects of the humanities through liberal education enables people to have a common understanding of human differences and to be tolerant to these differences rather than focusing on the moral correctness of certain cultures, politics, ethics etc. at the expense of others. A focus on

moral correctness in itself undermines diversity and conflict as well as freedom of individuals. It deprives individuals of a wider choice from which to choose in order to differentiate between good and bad. Again, a shared understanding of humanistic education will help individuals to recognize and respect “the traditions that the older liberal education prizes: for they know that in tradition lies much that has stood the test of time that should command people’s respect” (Nussbaum, 1997: 293).

It is through the shared humanistic education that traditions and cultures can serve as a basis upon which to reflect on the current trends of knowledge and practices from which to make choices about what is good and bad. People can start from tradition and culture to analyze contemporary issues. However, it is important to note that tradition is not supposed to be taken for granted as given. As Nussbaum (1997: 294) rightly points out, people “need to use tradition to invigorate their own thought—but this involves willingness to criticize it when criticism is due”. For if tradition remains a taken for granted phenomenon, it ends up being confused with the truth of what is supposed to be done. For instance, the contemporary techno-scientific education and its developments are a tradition that should be tested and critically reflected upon. People need to interrogate techno-scientific developments and how these developments relate to different people in general, as well as in different cultures; how the developments affect communication and conduct in the lives of people in general.

Drawing from Nussbaum’s model of liberal education, education in its broadest and least controversial sense is to be thought of as facilitating the development of people, usually the young, in some worthwhile way that liberates and does not trap people. Education should be directed towards helping people to make their responses always to the general and the universalizable rather than to the present and the particular. Notice that the former is aligned to the humanities and the latter to the natural and the

social sciences. This means that the humanities, which are a continuation of liberal education in particular, advance and fulfil this broader aim of education as the humanities are not merely “the exercise of letting pupils see what is known and to believe what they are told and shown (observable truths), (but) is the exercise, as far as is possible, in getting pupils to actually know, and that is to get pupils to steadily expand their own stock of justifiable beliefs” (Bailey, 1984: 17).

The beliefs must be entertained and assented to on the basis of understood justification in order for them to achieve their aim of being ‘liberating by being educative’. My view is that all techno-scientific projects are in themselves moral issues that affect humanity. Thus, every set of values has a human dimension attached to it because it involves human beings either as passive or participative agents. Whether or not one favours a certain set of values does not rule out the danger of such a set of values to the lives of other people. In essence, no society enjoys pain inflicted upon it by either internal or external force. The emphasis on techno-scientific labour is good for the benefit of the economic growth of countries on a short term basis. However, less focus on the humanities is going to disrupt the continuity and development of critical reflection of established beliefs and perceptions. Rather it will promote techno-scientific thinking skills which will have long term negative effects not only on the people but also on the same economy that the governments are out to build.

Delanty (2001) also emphasizes a process in the evolution of the modern university that can be described and understood within the context of ‘liberal modernity’. The phrase ‘liberal modernity’ is literally referring to democracy and citizenship with all their inherent aspects that relate to equality. Liberal modernity is used by Delanty to refer to the period in the 19<sup>th</sup> century which is characterized by high expectations of the university by the state. Central to Delanty’s analysis of the modern period is his use of the phrase ‘organized modernity’, which is a phase that coincides with

Wittrock's (1994) analysis of developments in mass education, increased access to higher education and the democratization mentioned above. Delanty's organized modernity reflects the dominance of Mode 2 knowledge (specialised and useful knowledge) which however, in order for such knowledge to meet the modern challenges, should eclipse knowledge produced in Mode 1 (basic science and theory based). Delanty concurs with Gibbons (1998) that the production of knowledge in the humanities is as important as that in the natural and social sciences. Like others, Delanty's analysis of modernity is founded on the concepts of freedom and democracy. An important aspect of this model is its emphasis on political and social democratic developments. According to him, all citizens should benefit in all the opportunities that are created within democratic contexts under the auspices of the notion of equality. The purpose of the university is therefore to teach democracy and citizenship - hence to ensure the realization of democratic governance. In this sense, he regards the humanities in which these concepts are housed and taught as the backbone of university teaching. Developments that are academic, economic, political, industrial and otherwise have been informed by this liberating kind of education.

Delanty regards his concept of a democratic 'cultural model' as a vehicle of change that has helped societies and universities to engage in new ways of ensuring a democratic educational process that produces what he calls 'technological and cultural citizenship' in people. Emphasis is put on the appropriate traits that are needed in a citizen who is culturally and technologically free and reasonable. In essence, the notion of liberal education that has been emphasized in this thesis now exists as an essential feature of the humanities - the most appropriate form of education is to promote an understanding that conflict and diversity in knowledge co-exist. The relationship that exists between the fields of knowledge implies that there should be utilization of all knowledge and research methods. This renders the university a place where all knowledge, both cultural and techno-scientific, is merged to bring about a

‘technological and cultural citizen’. The identity of the university, if forged through the use of Delanty’s analysis of a technological citizen, reflects the purpose of a university as a site for advancement of both applied and pure research. In essence, both traditional knowledge (in the humanities) and techno-scientific knowledge (in the social and natural sciences) is needed for the cultural and social enhancement of a modern citizen. It is important also to mention that the humanities deliberate upon the political, social, economic and, in general, ethical dimensions of the developments within the natural and social sciences. This deliberation may not generate consensus, but we have to consider the issues and act upon our conclusions despite this lack of consensus.

Over and above the contribution of the university to the definition and redefinition of democratic societies, is a realization of the demands of industrial society for skilled and professional people needed to meet the requirements of the Western economy that is rapidly expanding. As a result, research methods in the social and natural sciences become more relevant to meet the demands in education for specialization. In principle, one important aspect of the mass democratic education process is a focus on increased natural and social scientific research that complements developments in techno-scientific application.

#### **4.2.2 What is the Importance of the Promotion of Individual Freedom and Autonomy in the Realisation of Democratic Citizenship?**

The promotion of individual freedom and autonomy are necessary conditions for the practice of democratic citizenship. The practice of democratic citizenship is a process which includes considerations of virtue, presupposes the existence of freedom and autonomy, and seeks to preserve them. It also strives to promote intellectual independence. It is within the humanities that such capabilities are fostered. The concept of individual freedom promoted here is different from the one in the context of the



humanistic education of the Renaissance. The Renaissance had a form of liberal education in which learning was based on uncritical modelling and imitation of one's predecessors. In all occupations that existed especially in the military, political and economic leadership and others, concentration was basically on respect for the authorities. It is significant to note that the formation and development of character in Renaissance humanism was based on the conception of freedom different from the concept of freedom in the contemporary humanities. The Renaissance conception of freedom proceeded from the ancient world's understanding of the value of philosophy itself. Philosophy was situated at the centre and was the core of any search for wisdom and personal transformation (Phamotse and Kissack, 2008). Philosophy served as a key tenet of humanistic education for its purpose was to educate the youth in this freedom.

It is worth noting that Renaissance humanistic education was viewed as liberal for it attracted the elite and the rich who were regarded as free men and who were anticipating the same freedom for their sons. Freedom within Renaissance humanistic education was understood to express itself in wealth, which in turn reflected power in the form of high degrees of political autonomy. Possession of political autonomy was a necessary condition for the attainment of self-control and self-determination which were regarded as determinants of a good personality and character. In typical philosophical discourse, the concepts of 'freedom' and 'autonomy' do not necessarily refer to one and the same thing as will be shown later in the chapter.

#### **4.2.3 What are the Humanities' Standards of Freedom?**

In the current higher institutions of learning, the concepts of freedom and autonomy are taught and regarded differently. It should be noted that, in the modern world, freedom includes an aspect which surfaces in

contemporary studies within the humanities, which includes an ability to be original and to conduct oneself independently. In this conception of freedom, the conditions that are set by others, be it rules by custom or authority, are dictates of conformity which can be subjected to rational reflection. One of the characteristics of autonomy is that it involves criticism and assessment of strongly held beliefs and sometimes necessitates change or even replacement of these beliefs. The criticism and assessment is, as Peters (1998) states, based on the individual's awareness of all the rules and conventions that regulate his life and his ability to subject all these rules and conventions to reflection and criticism in the light of principles. The reflection and criticism help one to gradually emerge with one's own code of conduct wherever necessary. It is important, therefore to mention that formation of character is one of those things at the core of the humanities. This character formation is based on moral and intellectual development because a good character is one that has a cultivated morality and well developed intellect.

I am aware that it may be argued that the exercise of autonomy becomes successful on condition that an individual is strongly willing to conform to and stand by his/her code of conduct at all times. This is why I have shown through Nussbaum's account that cultivation of morality and development of intellect is the core of good character. Morality and intellect are in part taught by a method that supposes a model of a life that is to be learnt. The success of the method rests on one's ability to stick to what s/he teaches and to practice what s/he teaches. Peters (1998: 17) asserts that "...when people speak of a person being autonomous, they mean that the person not only has thought out one's own code but that one is also capable of sticking to it in the face of counter inclinations". This is one of the aspects so far that run through the discourse of the humanities in the university, attesting that there has been a preoccupation with educating the individual to attain clear thinking. The main reason for this preoccupation has been to equip students with thinking skills that will help them attain the required character and personality. The balancing of

a character has its origin in the ancient world and continues with Renaissance humanism into the humanities.

The assumption behind the long standing maintenance and preference of character and personality education for the humanist was that any preparation for leadership in the political, military and commercial domains would require this kind of self-mastery, and in this sense the educational foci of the humanists was both appropriate and practical (Phamotse and Kissack, 2008). The self-mastery was believed to be contained in the studies of the Classical world's modes of speech that fostered acquisition of virtues, which in turn contributed to clear and orderly thinking that determined good behaviour. Good behaviour and disciplined thought was what the elite thought as desired behaviour for their sons and for the society in general.

#### **4.2.4 The Theme of Freedom and Autonomy in Contemporary Higher Education**

Within the humanities today, a concept of freedom is understood and explained in a more practical way. It refers to an ability to achieve those intellectual and moral capacities that enable a person to lead life that is thoughtful, reflective, inquisitive, and satisfying (Freedman 1996: 56). Leading lives that are thoughtful, reflective, inquisitive and satisfying will be discussed in Chapter Five, but in the context of professions, professional development and service delivery. The emphasis on autonomy and authority as pre-requisites for independent and reflective thinking relates also to freedom as a social concept still envisaged by the humanities. I here use 'freedom' to refer to a state in which one is able to choose, although such choice is exercised from limited options. Freedom is here synonymous with the concept of democracy, which is a social principle.

Peters (1998) considers freedom as a social principle which renders a person a chooser. It is important, however, to note that the choices are made from among limited options that depend on the owners of, and the principles guiding, those options. The issue is that the owners have a right to dictate those options to us. The options from which to choose also are determined by the acts of other people in the society. Thus, the choice of one person is limited by the choices and preferences of other people in the same society and one is restricted by these choices and preferences from which to choose. Freedom here denotes the autonomy of a person to conduct oneself in relationships with other members of society with the aim to harmonise social conduct.

The understanding of the interplay between notions of freedom and the humanities relates directly to the interplay between freedom and liberal education. My emphasis is that the university has the humanities as the most appropriate location of ethical education, because its aspiration is to help students “appreciate that the work of life is to grapple with the ambiguity of the moral universe and to ask searching questions addressed at defining the dilemma of being human, especially those questions that will unsettle their most routinely held beliefs” (Freedman, 1996: 56). All the dilemmas of life are contained and dealt with in our cognitive, emotive and moral domains of our thinking. The humanities aim at helping “students develop the intellectual, emotional, and moral resources to cope effectively” with all these dilemmas (Freedman: 1996: 56). This understanding resonates with a definition of liberal education that I give in Chapter Three in which I defend the project of the humanities, which is to promote a liberal education that is constitutive of a unified kind of education (a system of virtues that develop intellect and morality).

#### **4.2.5 The Interplay of Individual Freedom and Autonomy in the Perpetuation of Diversity**

The development of the individual's will, emotions and intellect is a very important aspect that is concerned with the way in which the humanities promote individuality, thereby sustaining the value of individualism. It is in the value of individualism that respect for diversity is maintained, to keep an open democratic forum which sustains that diversity. The promotion of diversity in turn facilitates the realisation of equality. What I want to emphasise is that the 20<sup>th</sup> century techno-scientific developments, which are largely instrumental by nature, need to be complemented by activities of an analytical nature. Humanities subjects such as Philosophy, with its emphasis on analytical skills, befit the century. An idea of what is supposed to be an ideal person or society as well has come to be explained and understood through a number of more comprehensive philosophical doctrines (Hirst, 1993). An ideal person is one with diverse capacities: the cognitive, affective and conative. Of these three human capacities, the cognitive is believed to be the most important, for it forms the conceptual schemes that inform judgements about beliefs, actions and emotions included in the affective and conative schemes.

A closer look at the cognitive capacities reveals that they denote developed intellect, which renders the humanities a necessary condition for all other disciplines. The cognitive capacities include the ability of a person to perceive, form concepts, judge truth and validity, choose, reason (all included in philosophy), memorise and imagine (included in art, literature and history). The affective capacities, according to Hirst, (1993) include experiences of sensation, emotion, liking and desiring which denote the development of morality. These latter capacities are learned within the subjects of art, literature and language. The conative capacities which include action, disposition and will are directly informed by the method of teaching and learning in the humanities that is the modelling of virtue. One is aware that knowledge and understanding still deserve high priority,

for it is the possession of knowledge and understanding that gives an individual autonomy to come up with rational beliefs, engage in rational actions and develop rational emotions. It is essential to realize that this way of analysing an ideal individual suggests that autonomy in contemporary society implies that the individual has an ability to defend possibilities in an open-ended fashion that recognises the diversity of cultures and contexts. In essence, defending possibilities is clearly a theme of the humanities with its philosophical project of reflective reasoning.

All the subjects within the humanities embody freedom to allow for equal opportunities for individuals to reflect on modern developments and their effects on societies, to which they are meant to contribute. The subject of history, for example, exists within the humanities to enhance our understanding of the development of different, diverse and conflicting societies in terms of culture, space and time. The art discipline in the humanities consists of diverse and complex social symbols of different societies with which to discover the meanings embedded in human experiences and expectations about nature and society. The languages are a means by which we define and understand our identities as human beings. Literature consists of contextual complexities of language forms and expressions that interpret human experiences and identities. One can say that the concept of the autonomy of the individual is embedded in the contemporary modern discourse about freedom, which is synonymous with the phenomenon of democracy (Phamotse and Kissack, 2008).

#### **4.3 WHY ARE THE HUMANITIES AN INDISPENSABLE PART OF THE EDUCATION OF INDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES?**

The humanities as they exist now were consolidated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a discipline that attempted to review and redefine humanity in its relation to the natural world in the context of modernity. This means that the

value of the humanities was reassessed, given the challenge that emerged for them with the advent of modernity as per the historical descriptions and explanations in the previous chapters. The concept of freedom central to the humanities has always been the one on which questions about the identities of academic disciplines, coupled with new scientific developments, have been continually asked and debated. All techno-scientific developments that started with industrialization and urbanization progressed in the context of academic debates about these developments and the implications the former have for societies. The humanities maintain that role within the university.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century in particular marked a period of rapid university reforms. The changes within the universities were largely based on the universities' faculties' redefinition and re-examination of the nature and purpose of university education in relation to new developments. This process was in response to the philosophical project of questioning the identity of academic disciplines. The question of the purpose of knowledge is directly related to the issues of the relationship between knowledge and societal needs, hence the enquiry into the interdependent relationship between European societies and their universities (Phamotse and Kissack, 2008). To a large extent, one can say it is freedom that is central to discussions about the self as located within the modern world and the impact of the modern world on human life and identity.

The humanities themes have recently attracted public interest and concern, thereby drawing more attention to how and to what extent the related developments of science and technology address social issues. With growing public concern and interest also goes an increase in the number of researchers and social groups who wish to influence research processes as well as their outcomes. With this state of affairs, research teams need to be autonomous within diverse specialities. The implication is that the techno-scientific developments cannot be dealt with only in scientific and

technical terms. Techno-scientific problems require a thorough exploration of ways in which the implementation of the solutions needs to take place. In the process of exploration, the issue of interests and concerns (based on preferences, values, norms, practices, beliefs etc.) of all sectors of the society is a priority that makes them part of the research team in terms of defining and suggesting solutions to research problems, as well as providing contexts for evaluation of the techno-scientific developments. Reflection on interests and concerns based on values, norms, beliefs and practices is embedded in the concept of freedom, a direct project of the humanities since the inception of the university. Gibbons attests to my view argued above, for he says “as reflexivity within the research process spreads, the humanities too are experiencing an increase in demand for the sorts of knowledge they have to offer” (p9).

Generally, one can say that the humanities act as a platform on which to challenge and reflect on, among others, issues about culture, politics, economics, and all other natural and social science related issues. I argue that the humanities with their current state within the university perform a role that cannot be performed by any other discipline in the same way that the humanities do. Because of their liberal nature, the humanities have always challenged the taken-for-granted established beliefs about the nature of knowledge from within itself and in other disciplines in order to re-evaluate the relationship between the university and society. In the context of modernity, techno-scientific developments need the humanities to free people from the bondage of viewing life only in instrumental terms.

#### **4.4 WHY IS DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION ALWAYS LIKELY TO PRODUCE CONTROVERSY AND DISSENSUS?**

The fact is that the university is required by current techno-scientific developments to continually redefine and locate itself within a democratic society. This requirement of the university perpetually involves conflict



and diversity as to what culture and identity the university and society should adapt. The complexity and conflict is articulated by several scholars, who in the process see the humanities as having a crucial role in attending to this conflict and diversity. I draw from Wittrock's (1994) provision of comparative and historical understanding of individuals within a society. He sees individuals within a society as agents that exist in a certain context and are forced by circumstances to map ways in which they understand the nature and value of knowledge as well as how this knowledge is related to, and relevant for, the societies in which it is located. The humanities host among others, as indicated earlier, philosophy, which equips people with the ability to reflect, judge and conclude on conflicting and diverse issues.

The humanities, therefore, help agents not only to construct ways of understanding particular contexts but also to appreciate the circumstances that impinge on the usage of knowledge and its transmission. In essence, the university through its faculty of the humanities is a context in which agents reflect and deliberate on their values and assumptions about the nature of knowledge. Some of these reflections, assumptions and deliberations are later adapted as conditions that comprise change (comprise knowledge). From this perspective, it is evident that it is the faculty of the humanities that produces people who are not just recipients of knowledge that is to be reproduced but are social agents who have a history and a directed purpose of deliberating, initiating and implementing ideas in particular situations. The nature of social agents reflects also that there are within societies people, especially from within the university, who often encounter the tensions and dilemmas of dealing with problems brought about by their own discoveries and innovations. This dilemma implies that the humanities are there to provide a context in which to debate and discuss these discoveries and innovations.

Uncertainty and conflict also surface at the level of the methods of research. The forged link between society and university necessitates new scientific methods of enquiry, which, like other methods before them, are still confronted by tensions and uncertainties. In essence, modernity saw the advancement of knowledge that generated controversies about the methods appropriate to the acquisition of knowledge. As has been mentioned in Chapter Three, the emergence of the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions brought about new research methods that resulted in innovations. These methods are not to be accepted as given and applied without critical consideration of their appropriateness in defining and explaining human phenomena. The emphasis of the humanities has always rested on the fact that all developments and their processes (methods included) have to be made to meet human needs, not vice versa. As a result, the humanities project of reflectivity ensures this critical dimension for the benefit of societies. Some disciplines such as hermeneutics (in its traditional meaning as the study of the interpretation of written texts, especially texts in the areas of literature, religion and law) were even against the application of these new techno-scientific methods to the study of human beings. These methods, according to hermeneutics, could not appropriately help in the study of the complex relationship between culture and language. Because of its complexity, the study of human beings needed a more consolidated approach that considers history, purpose and the particular contexts of social agents. This is another dimension of confusion and conflict, which requires the humanities to emphasise that consensus will never be reached.

It is crucial for the humanities to emphasise the diversity and complexity of methods, for the methods keep on conflicting and being uncertain. One country that provides us with a situation in which new research methods proved complex and conflicting is Germany. The research culture of Germany during the modern era gave the world the impression that knowledge can be discovered and proven through controversy and systematic (primarily empirical) investigation. As a consequence, the

German model of research clearly emphasised the difference between the natural sciences and the humanities, as well as the difference between pure and applied research. The emphasis on the difference between natural sciences and the humanities, and between pure and applied research, opened more opportunities for researchers to research broadly about phenomena (as they appear or seem to be). An important aspect of this emphasis is that it involves an attempt to formulate accurate descriptions of things, and to provide convincing explanations for the way they appear and behave as they do. The difference between pure and applied research considers the fact that more attempts and accomplishments of understanding of our natural and human environments influence ways in which we approach, change and utilize knowledge. The emphasis is on the issue that whatever knowledge we acquire, regardless of how we acquire it, will always affect ways in which we act upon our social contexts. This is a different but an inevitable dichotomy between pure and applied research, which the humanities continue to emphasise.

The contemporary university also reflects disputes about the nature of knowledge, the relationship between teaching and research, and the type of research that should be conducted, the obligations of the university towards society, and the imperative for society to respect the autonomy of its tertiary institutions (Phamotse and Kissack, 2008). All these aspects constitute the intellectual discussion about freedom of thought in relation to all aspects of life which is basically the project of the humanities, hence why the humanities are of high value to higher education. The intellectual discussions are ever intensifying because the university itself is a product of the intellectual debates around its nature, purpose and relevance. It is the same debates that make the current university a source of the many newly formulated, controversial and ever changing conceptualizations of the truth. The debates also reflect the university as a site in which the professionals with their different but strong conceptualizations of the nature and merits of knowledge are produced. If then we have differing strong conceptualisations within the university, we need the humanities,

not in order to help us reach a consensus but to agree to disagree, which is one important aspect of freedom.

Several 20<sup>th</sup> century scholars see the university in the light of this current nature and purpose. All these scholars at least agree on one aspect - that the university is a site of conflict and diversity (the core teaching in the humanities) about ideas that are generated by modernity. Also common to these scholars is an assumption that the recognition of the value of freedom, which is the subject of the humanities, is a necessary condition for university teaching. Readings (1996) is one person who in his *University in Ruins* agrees with scholars before him that it is highly impossible to forge a common idea of the university, meaning that we have to allow for all views upon which we can debate and deliberate modern developments. According to him, the understandings of people that related to the origin and development of knowledge are diverse and different, which makes it very difficult to come up with a common intellectual consensus. Our task or obligation is to accept the modern uncertainty that is characterized by the contemporary short term nature of problems and their solutions. We are confronted with a situation in which we commit ourselves and act in a provisional manner. Readings (1996) sees the university as a site where ideas are formulated and reformulated by all the participants. This formulation and reformulation of ideas denotes the necessity for the humanities. The process is never complete and requires for its implementation a 'shared thinking' that does not have either a definite identity or unity. Readings directly opposes the idea that there can be established general truths. The diversity of cultures permeates society and calls for the humanities' attention. The fact that the university still engages in deliberations that are intended to reach commonly shared conclusions is based on the misconception that there can be one culture. My argument is that the university is still a site in which confusions, misconceptions and uncertainties are explored, and we act despite these uncertainties. It is worth noting that confusions, misconceptions and

uncertainties cannot actually be 'curbed' or rectified, hence the need for philosophy and other humanities subjects to emphasise this.

One other significant factor that necessitates the need for the humanities is the nature of the permanent interrelationship between institutions of higher learning and the societies in which they exist. As presented by Wittrock (1994) there are diverse, complex, and different social factors that contribute towards the way in which the modern university is formed and structured. The most important part in Wittrock's (1994) account of the structure of the modern university, which is relevant to this thesis, is one in which he describes the origin of the modern university. According to him, the modern university emerged as a dynamic, well thought and reflective process that involved interconnected social factors that shape society itself. The structure of the modern university has since been an object of dynamism and reflective processes that permeate the development of the university to date. In this case, as long as we have societies and educational institutions, the dynamism and reflexivity (both requiring the humanities for comprehension) persist as features within higher education.

Wittrock's (1994) comment on Weber further emphasises the need for the humanities. He comments that for precisely the reason that scientific activities themselves are subjected to the very same processes of increasing bureaucratization and fragmentation that characterize modernity at large, the scientific disciplines themselves are becoming less, not more, able to yield any kind of comprehensive understanding of the present age. It means that rational knowledge should give guidance to the modern world. Wittrock's conclusion is also important for it states that we have to consider the particular configurations and mutations of the nation-state, the university and the large-scale corporation. However, 'the particular does not necessarily have the last word. The problem of the universality will not go away. It remains with us because it is a 'real' problem and a

'real' concern. But to deal with it, we shall have to think and act as if we were freely communicating colleagues in the university that the Humboldt brothers and other reformers envisioned, but never saw fully realized.

Not only the analytical dimension of knowledge but the use of techno-scientific applications also requires the humanities. Allen (1999), speaking in the context of Canada, argues that the need for the humanities is affected by "the widespread utilisation of computers and information technology which has revolutionised the organisation of government bureaucracies" (p1). As a result, organisations in Canada need workers who can play three main roles: relate models to real situations; work well with other members of a management team or with clients; speak and write effectively. Workers of this sort are produced from within the humanities. The revolutionised organisations focus much on techno-scientific developments and neglect the compositions and influence of the components of these organisations in the continuity of the techno-scientific developments. According to Allen (1999: 2) "the Productivity Approach accepts the need to respond to changes in labour demand wherever they occur and, therefore, recognises the high value of the skills taught in humanities".

What I emphasise here is that the structure and function of the modern universities have always been influenced and directed as well as restrained by the social, political and economic developments in the societies in which they exist. I find Wittrock, Allen and Readings all very articulate in helping me to advance my defence of the humanities. What surfaces in their accounts reflects that the humanities, with their critical and reflective project, also exist within the universities to explore the nature of the university and to engage in a perpetual debate and discussion about the interdependency of the universities and the societies that they serve.

#### **4.5 WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE HUMANITIES OF OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION ENTAILS PERPETUAL CONTROVERSY AND DISSENSUS?**

Only if we understand that democratic education entails controversy and dissensus will we be able to honestly and effectively deal with the implications (impact and effects) of techno-scientific developments on human beings. Readings (1996) shares Wittrock's concern that the development of the modern university is a diverse and complex process that is influenced by interrelated social factors. Readings (1996) adds that the modern university emerged in western countries in which the universities were to provide these countries with professionals and to help these countries define their national identities clearly. However, Readings (1996) acknowledges the fact that since its emergence, the modern university has gradually changed focus and purpose as a site where cultural identities are forged and enforced. Change in focus and purpose has in turn led to the changes in the structure and character of the university. Focus on cultural identities has diminished and more emphasis has been placed on one forged global culture based on improved and excessive techno-scientific innovations that are uniform in nature. This idea of a forged global culture is, however, a cause for concern because the same idea of the existence of uniformity denies the reality that there is a perpetual uncertainty and diversity in knowledge. The idea that there could be a forged global culture is misleading because it vainly denies the persistence of uncertainty.

The focus on globalisation weakens a critical approach towards the utilisation of knowledge. As a result, the existence of diversity and the complexity of cultural and social contexts within which the university operates are denied. The same universal approach to knowledge encourages a stagnant and indifferent approach to the understanding of cultural contexts and social changes that are brought about by the diversity

and dynamism of modernity. Modernity needs more focus on social freedom than any other period, for it is in modernity that the concepts of the culture and identity of nations are more uncertain as a result of the dehumanized techno-scientific innovations that divorce education from its social and cultural purpose. This means that the humanities are needed now more than ever so as to keep on emphasising the need for the recognition of diversity. It is Readings' (1996) submission that despite the university's repeated attempts to achieve uniformity and certainty, our intellectual and cultural system shows no compromise towards a uniform consensus that can bring about a global identity of monolithic culture. According to him, the task is to see the diversity and dynamism of the university as a context that provides us with a chance to critically engage with the different, complex and dynamic cultural and social systems. This will help us to learn and understand ways of utilising knowledge in different contexts to meet the diverse social and cultural needs. Readings (1996) sees the university as

The place where thought takes place beside thought, where thinking is a shared process without identity or unity. The University's ruins offer us an institution in which the incomplete and interminable nature of the pedagogic relation remind us that 'thinking together' is a dissensual process; it belongs to dialogism rather than dialogue (191-2).

Another person who stands firmly against the possibility of an intellectual consensus, and hence promotes the humanities, is Delanty (2001). He acknowledges the fact that the university is the one institution that has brought many significant and necessary changes in the development of knowledge and scientific methods of enquiry. His concern, however, is that we are adhering to certain cultural values and scientific understandings that bar us from understanding our current cultural values by the use of newly established scientific methods of enquiry. He asserts that it is high time people realized that the contemporary university is required to be reflexive. Reflexivity is a phenomenon that entails the production of new cognitive fields, which include research and its



application and which, according to Delanty (2001: 155), include an understanding that “the role of the university must be to make sense of our situation of endless change, and it must enable us to live more effectively in this chaotic world”. What Delanty implies by ‘situation of endless change’ is in the same direction as Readings and Wittrock, that knowledge and methods of knowing are ever changing. We will never have incontrovertible truths, but all knowledge is necessary as a basis upon which to reflect on our current cultural values and scientific methods. It is its ability to engage with the dynamics of definitions, redefinitions and discoveries of new human identities that renders the university with its faculty of the humanities a site for knowledge production.

#### **4.6 HOW DOES THE HUMANITIES THEME OF INTELLECT CONTRIBUTE TO MODERNITY?**

The intellect which forms the cognitive scheme (reason, knowledge and understanding) is constituted within the humanities and is not detached from the modern developments. Reason, knowledge and understanding are components of intellect which still serve as determinants of means and ends about the good life for individuals or society. The implication is that intellect does have an instrumental function of helping us decide, judge, order and prioritize (reflection in practice) our engagements and actions. Hirst (1993: 188) asserts that cognitive schemes help us “discern, develop, and order coherently those basically given elements of wants and satisfactions from which the good life is to be composed”. The possession of intellect reflects in the ability of an individual to make choices that are informed by knowledge and understanding of others and the self. However, eventually the choice of an individual still rests with the individual’s perception of what is good and then extends to what is socially good.

Intellectual development is a project of the humanities that ensures effective engagement with the complex knowledge of diverse and dynamic social and cultural structures. The undermining of this intellectual project of the humanities results in a causal approach to knowledge, by which knowledge is treated as an instrument to use in meeting market demands that are divorced from their social and cultural contexts. In order to avoid the pure instrumentalization of knowledge, as supported by Furedi (2004), the concept of standards of excellence inherent in the concept of the search for truth should be retained. Retaining the standard of excellence ensures that the pursuit of truth involves both failure and success and that not all possibilities adhere to the set standards. It is effective adherence to the standards of excellence that instills in the intellectuals a sense of pride, prestige and status and recognition that failure and success are both a result of the pursuit of knowledge.

The intellect does not only exist within the humanities as offered in the faculties within the universities but also within the humanities as they are lived and professed by individuals within communities in informal settings. Community leaders as well as national leaders are supposed to be models of behavioural norms and reasoning to the young ones. According to Callan (1997: 198) “psychological patterns that constitute character are rooted in our general commitments to what we see as having value in the world and giving meaning to our lives”. I agree with Callan and I further regard a parent as somebody who has the best interest of his/her child at heart and cannot do anything to hinder the development of the child as he/she has general commitment to the development of the child. In like manner, the positions held by all the community and national leaders are, by their virtue of being democratically established, expected to promote the best interest of their people as well as the values of the people who elected them. These positions are expected to be held by people who share the same aspirations with the communities that elected them. Sen (1999) points out that:

If the measuring line is true, then the wood will be straight, not because one makes a special effort, but because that which it is “ruled” by makes it so. In the same way if the ruler is sincere and upright, then honest officials will serve in his government and scoundrels will go into hiding, but if the ruler is not upright, then evil men will have their way and loyal men retire to seclusion (p278).

#### **4.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has demonstrated that universities were born as sites where diversity and conflict are a basis upon which new knowledge is always founded. It is through the humanities’ concepts of freedom, cultivation of the intellect and the development of morality that the natural and social sciences, with their many professions, were able to emerge and dominate the humanities. However, I have argued that despite the dominance of, and high regard for, the natural and social sciences, the humanities still occupy a central place in the university curriculum. One important reason for this centrality is that the humanities address modernity’s chronic controversy about culture, ethics, politics and identity. The humanities also provide people with an understanding of why conflict and diversity prevail in the modern world. Through the medium of liberal education, all modern issues, because of their nature, embrace the notion of freedom, are formalized and taught in the university in the faculties of the humanities. I have also offered a discussion of the relationship between the humanities and liberal education, in that common to liberal education and the humanities are the tenets of freedom, intellect, autonomy and virtue. I have shown that these tenets relate to democracy and citizenship which are currently salient issues of modernity.

The chapter has also demonstrated that it is teaching and learning in the humanities that ensure intellectual freedom that helps people to shape their modern activities and motives for new developments. On the basis of

arguments put forward in this chapter, I have concluded that the humanities, with their method of liberal education, are the only discipline that can address the problems related to modern social developments of democracy, equality, citizenship, gender, and others of a techno-scientific nature. Having vindicated the humanities in terms of how they contribute to democratic societies, it is as important to view the contribution the humanities make to the development of professionals, which is the project of the chapter that follows.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### VINDICATING THE HUMANITIES II

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I turn to some accounts of professionalism and professionalization through which I strengthen my claim that the humanities make a huge contribution to professional development. I show how the natural and social sciences contribute to the education of professionals as these professionals' identity is directly founded on these sciences. However, the main focus is on how professionalism is exercised, which entails a concern with rights and duties which are tenets of freedom and autonomy (aspects of the humanities), acquired in the development of professionals. The chapter explains how natural science informs technological developments that are meant to benefit society, yet the scientific applications can, if not coupled with the humanities, impact negatively on the same society, and this is a challenge facing the exercise of freedom discussed in Chapter Four. I also explain that social science, with its knowledge that helps to solve most of the modern social problems, is central to the training of professionals as they are awarded their degrees on the basis of mastery of this knowledge. My claim is that for the development of expertise (professionalization) in both scientific application and the solution of modern social problems, exposure of these experts to the concerns of the humanities is necessary. In essence, the natural and social sciences' professionalization should be complemented by education in the humanities. The chapter describes how, despite the fact that some accounts of professionalism and professionalization ignore or underplay the role played by the humanities, all the accounts acknowledge, either directly or indirectly, the centrality of the humanities to any profession.

## **5.2 HOW DID THE SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTIONS CREATE THE DIVERSITY OF PROFESSIONALS IN MODERN SOCIETY?**

It should be noted that professionalism and professionalization, which relate directly to the development of professionals, became more diverse and complex with the Industrial and Scientific Revolutions. The two revolutions created a context in which more expertise was needed in different fields of knowledge to meet techno-scientific developmental changes. As such, the professionalization and professionalism discussed in the chapter are closely related, and overlap to a large extent, because they serve the same purpose of professional development. With the concepts of profession, professionalization and professionalism (already introduced in Chapter Three) in mind, the professions as we know them today were originally engineered by 'Mid-Victorians' (Middle Class group in America) who, according to Bledstein (1976), "sought the highest form in which the middle class could pursue its primary goals of earning a good living, elevating both the moral and intellectual tone of the society, and emulating the status of those above one on the social ladder" (p80). Note that the initial purpose of the professions was to earn a good living, the purpose of which is instrumental by nature and fulfills the requirements of the Industrial and Scientific revolutions. It is also worth noting that though instrumental, such purpose involves both morality and intellect. One is aware that in his definition Bledstein (1976) gives morality, intellect, and a good living the same position, which means that intellect and morality, which are tenets of the humanities, are also elements of a profession in Bledstein's account. This indicates that the humanities are equally important in professional development. Morality and intellect in the development of Bledstein's professional are similar to morality and intellect in terms of the humanities except that the humanities give morality and intellect first priority while Bledstein gives a good living first priority. This means in professions in the natural and social sciences, earning a good living is central.

The fact that professional interest and personal profit are at the core of the professions implies that morality and intellect within the professions do include a monetary aspect. My view is illuminated by Bledstein's conception of a profession, which displays professionals as people who identify themselves with professional associations with standards and ethics that identify them as experts in their fields of, to mention but a few, law, librarianship, social work, forestry, dentistry, architecture, pharmacy, teaching, veterinary medicine and accounting. In every profession the emphasis is on technical competence, superior skill and a high quality of performance; alongside these exists an ethic of service, which stipulates that the client comes before the professional's interests and personal profit (Bledstein, 1976: 87). 'Expertise' suggests that professionals possess knowledge, power and the ability to manipulate and change nature. Knowledge, power and ability denote some form of democracy and autonomy (elements of the humanities) over one's branch of knowledge, vested in the individuals who are regarded as professionals. An emphasis on knowledge, power and skill defines the nature of a profession and implies that professional development depends on education of a certain nature and standard. The description of the momentous development of the social and natural sciences earlier in Chapter Three provides us with a sense that the natural and the social sciences' education created a diversity of professionals. However if considered alone education in the natural and social sciences comprises a large part of the education of professionals.

### **5.2.1 How are the Professions Diverse and Complex?**

The humanities are necessary but also depend on the social and the natural sciences' professions and vice versa. Some scholars draw a distinction between professionalism and professionalization and I use this distinction to emphasise both the necessity and interdependence of all the professions. It is only with a clear understanding of how a profession is conceptualised that one will be able to characterise and realise the interdependency of disciplines and the necessity of the humanities in the

development of the professions. The tenets of the humanities are: freedom (authority and autonomy); intellect (critical thinking, reflective practice, competence); morality (character development), all inherent in the conceptualisations of a profession that follow. According to Englund, *professionalization* is “a manifestation of the historical and social ambition of an occupational group to achieve status and position in society” (Englund, 1996: 76). It is characterized by: a) a reflection of the symbolic strength of the profession and its possible exclusiveness, measured in terms of status and protected by trade unions; b) an emphasis on professionals’ autonomy over their branch of knowledge; c) a need for professional ethics; and d) the presupposition that professionals have clients. Professional autonomy, responsibility to clients and the need for professional ethics go hand-in-hand. On the basis of these premises *professionalization* is greatly concerned with the external quality of a profession. It is important to note that in both professionalization and professionalism, autonomy and authority, status and clients exist. The above conception of professionalization is open to misinterpretation because of its classification of the authority and autonomy of the professional under *professionalization*. In my view authority differs not in nature but only in degrees/levels and these levels need different kinds of knowledge for their achievement. Despite my concern about Englund’s conceptualisation of professionalization, I would like to highlight that it does clearly include the tenets of the humanities but at different levels of presentation.

It is, therefore, important to deal with a profession as implied in both the concepts of professionalization and professionalism for the purpose of reconciling the two and finding a common ground for identifying more of the humanities themes that define a profession. Leading to the debate of professionalism and professionalization there is a very controversial and interesting question that Englund (1996) once asked “is there anything to be gained from calling teachers professionals or advocating a shift towards professionalism and/or professionalization of teaching staff?” (p75). He



says the answer to this question depends on how different people conceptualize not only teaching but all occupations as professions and I agree. He distinguishes between *professionalism* and *professionalization*. His major fear is that a narrow focus on *professionalization* may overshadow *professionalism*. He proposes a focus on informative competence rather than a distinction between *professionalization* and *professionalism*. Although there is such a distinction between the two, they are, however, intertwined. *Professionalization* is concerned with the authority, status and remuneration of the profession and is thus a sociological project, whereas *professionalism* is concerned with the internal quality of a profession (Englund, 1996) and is thus an ethical project. At the heart of the pedagogical project lie virtues, remembering that the initial purpose of the professions was to elevate morality and intellect (virtue within the humanities).

I find the pedagogical project very relevant in describing the role of the humanities in the profession of teaching and all other professions. Though this pedagogical project includes virtue, professionals may not be aware that virtue is at the core of their profession. I am not concerned with the sociological view, but use it to illuminate understanding of the pedagogical view, which I believe is constitutive of the more important themes of the humanities. Let us look at how Englund conceives of professionalization because the two are interdependent. He says,

I thus regard professionalization primarily as a sociological concept that says nothing about the inner qualities of teaching. Professionalization is the reflection of the symbolic strength of the profession and its possible exclusiveness, measured in terms of status etc. and protected by trade-union activities. In the sociological view of professions, the professionals' autonomy over their branch of knowledge is emphasized. Their autonomy also entails a certain responsibility and the need for professional ethics. The theory also emphasizes that professionals have clients (Englund, 1996: 76).

In some definitions, some components of a profession are compromised in an attempt to avoid an emphasis on the utilitarian aspects of a profession. However, the compromise does more harm than good in helping people understand the professions. Below is an example of a definition that implicitly compromises some aspects of a profession. A profession is defined as an

...occupation for which the necessary preliminary is intellectual in character, involving knowledge and to some extent learning, as distinguished from mere skill. Secondly, as an occupation which is pursued largely for others and not merely for oneself, and thirdly, as an occupation in which the amount of financial return is not the accepted measure of success (Randall, 2000: 155).

The first of the three characteristics of Randall's profession is meaningful for he rightly points out the components of a profession that are basic also in England's (1996) account. Englund does recognize the importance of the symbolic strength of professions, which probably includes financial gains, because he mentions status as a measure of this strength. However, both Randall (2000) and Englund (1996) do draw a distinction between knowledge and mere skill, the distinction of which I believe is for the purposes of understanding not of exclusion of either knowledge or skill. The second characteristic as well rightly points out that the professions are meant to benefit both the professional and others, which means other professionals and non-professionals. I, however, do not agree with the third characteristic, because all the professions as they still stand were initiated for among other reasons financial gains (Bledstein, 1976) and that remains their main purpose and therefore their definitive character. Randall (2000) seems to emphasize only the knowledge part of the profession, and ignores the important part played by a reward in money, which is the one that enables an individual to maintain a living. As a result, his definition does not wholly give an analysis of a profession; instead, it leaves a gap between knowledge application and its financial measures of success, the gap between which is, to me, unrealistic. The

meaningful thing to say would rather be that in all the professions money is not the only accepted measure of success.

Englund (1996) expresses a concern that the application and usage of the concept of a profession is very risky, as people tend to use it carelessly and without consideration of the risks it involves if inappropriately used. He raises questions about the risks and advantages of regarding either occupations or practices as professions. According to him, most of the so-called professions do not have the moral aspect, which he regards as the most important. I agree with Englund, and add that while the moral aspect is lacking in some professions, the utilitarian aspect is lacking in others, which is the case in Randall's account. People such as Carr (1995) do also explicitly emphasize the moral aspect of a profession as a very important characteristic. The moral aspect of a profession entails virtues (an aspect of the humanities) which are values that have developed into habits, and they become acquired and cultivated and are passed from one generation to another. These virtues are then preserved, because they are the social and aesthetic values of man in every age (Levi, 1970). Even if knowledge changes and societies change, virtues in the humanities remain a necessary condition for the development and sustenance of harmonious social life.

Davidoff and Van den Berg (1990) too consider the moral aspect of a profession in their advancement of a profession as an art. In this case one should note that art entails creativity, innovation and critical evaluation of the influence that the artistic behaviour, concept or even material will have on the prospective recipients/viewers. It is done for the sole purpose of raising a certain feeling within an individual, be it the artist or the recipient of the art. Note that this comparison of a profession with art is significant. Art is one of the subjects of the humanities which include teaching of the emotions and the acquisition of skills to use the senses to react to situations that human beings come across. If, then, a profession is an art,

it requires careful consideration as it is something that involves more than one person and it can have an effect of either a negative or positive nature on a person. I think the excellence in a human being who is a professional is not only in reference to the skill of art but also to the good conduct and behaviour of the artist towards the art, other artists and those for whom the art is made. The art within the humanities produces in a human being a sense of thinking beyond a belief that, the economic growth and development are the ends of the discoveries. The subject teaches emotions and develops senses that help professionals, especially scientists, to consider first the people for whom the developments are meant. The most important moral sense to professionals is described by Roberts (2007) as 'conscience'. The use of conscience is that if one recognizes it as one's own it "allows one to fulfil the other, critical, function not merely because this is required under the law but because it is necessary... intellectuals of good conscience are those for whom ideas matter and who seek, in some way, to demonstrate these to others in the way they live their lives" (Roberts, 2007:487).

What Roberts (2007) asserts means that the humanities equip the professional with the conscience to view economic growth as dependent on the existence of both producers and consumers, without whose existence, or even well-being, technology is worthless. Thus the assignment of the humanities is to have a human being as both the means and ends of an action. More emphasis is put on the fulfilment of humanity as set in history (space and time). The study of the behaviour of individuals and knowledge of their needs therein depends largely on the explanation and evaluation of human nature studied within the humanities. In essence, the development of techno-scientific projects needs the art within the humanities. I believe that "most of us would probably be clear about what should be done if only we knew all of the relevant facts" (Roberts, 2007: 487) about morality and its applicability in any field of a profession.

Another salient aspect of a profession is didactic competence (Englund, 1996). This didactic competence is important in that it emphasizes the content and need to reflect upon and problematize not only the content, in this case, of a profession, but also the intentions behind the curriculum of the profession (Englund, 1996: 84). According to Englund (1996), *professionalism* is a reflective practice. He seems to regard reflective practice and effective professional service as synonymous. A profession, according to Englund, involves qualifications and acquired capacities, and competence required for the successful exercise of an occupation, which, in the last instance, is assessed by external forces (Englund, 1996: 76). Notice that Englund classifies qualifications under the pedagogical project. Yet, in my view, qualifications fall under the goods external to the pedagogical and the ethical. Despite my approval of Englund's conception of professionals, my major concern is that he does not offer a way of distinguishing between the outer worth and the inner worth of a profession. However, the way he defines professionalism convinces me that we are on the same track in perceiving the inner worth of a profession as constitutive of virtues.

The element of virtue inherent in the professions enhances the professional capacity to act intelligibly in order to avoid negative consequences of professional practices that undermine professions (Englund, 1996). The negative consequences include the professional's pre-occupation with goods external to the practice at the expense of goods internal to it. A concern about the goods internal to a practice is an indication that one possesses a virtue of intellect, for within an intelligent act there are right motives, means and ends. This means that intellect manifests itself in, among other things, the positive behavior of an individual (professional) motivated by the right means and end of the profession at hand. The absence of virtue is manifested in tendencies such as misuse of, or fight over, professional authority and material interests (external goods) rather than focusing on professional service delivery (internal good). A focus on

service delivery serves a humanistic project, for this ensures human welfare.

Callan (1997: 196) also emphasises that virtue can be taught within moral education even though he expresses a concern that moral dialogue entails critical reflection, which is characterised by unpredictable twists and turns that are caused by different reasoning perspectives. Below, I use the conceptions of a profession and its characteristics to display the nature and purpose of the professions. I also provide examples of professions (law, medicine, psychiatry, engineering, banking and others) and their practices to illustrate how their effectiveness depends on, and necessitates, an engagement with the humanities. Based on illustrative arguments in this chapter, my claim is that the humanities subjects (philosophy, history, literature, art, languages) add an element of human value to professional development and all professional practices.

### **5.3 WHAT IS THE ETHICAL CONSIDERATION AT THE CORE OF PROFESSIONALISM?**

The concept of freedom, which has been the theme of the humanities since scholastic humanism, manifests itself in two aspects of power inherent in a profession: authority and autonomy. In the case of the professional, it is this freedom that is inherent in the professional's identity. It is the possession of this freedom that confers moral and intellectual rights and duties upon a professional. Only if the professional participates in humanities courses will he/she be able to possess the freedom which enables her/him to exercise these rights and duties in a commendable way. The emphasis on the concept of democracy and citizenship within the humanities courses is directly a project that entails an explanation and description of the exercise of moral duties and moral rights.

However, it is crucial to understand that freedom as a concept has assumed different meanings throughout its history in education. In the pre-industrial era, freedom meant possession of power, which was physical force transmutable into wealth (land tenure) and status of lordship (Perkins, 1989). Power, status and influence ensured the authority and autonomy of the kings and the church that made laws to realise and continue their interests. In the Industrial era, freedom meant possession of power to persuade and propagate: each professional claims that his/her profession is crucial and makes a great contribution to the development of the society. In this view, the main aim of each professional is to raise his/her standard through, according to Perkins (1989: 6), “income, authority and physical rewards (difference and self-respect)”. This kind of power of the professional of the Industrial era has a high potential of turning his/her acquired human capital into material wealth. This is the same power that is gaining the techno-scientific professions financial support from governments and private sectors to date. The contemporary professional has progressed even further to ensure that the prospects for material gain become a real opportunity. As it currently stands, professions as a whole have come to establish human capital as a form of wealth and are largely pursued for instrumental gains (aspects within the natural sciences). The main question is, are the professions meant only for the pursuit of more status, central to which is the acquisition of material wealth?

The answer is no, because freedom, associated with liberal education in the humanities, extends beyond this to the liberation of the intellect from confusion and prejudice, which entails the development of a broad understanding that contrasts with specialisation. This has been referred to quite succinctly by Bailey (1984). Freedom here is not only concerned with emancipation from prejudice and ignorance, but also with the exercise of choice, which is where my emphasis on morality becomes central. With an emphasis on this kind of freedom, the humanities clearly provide for the intersection of morality and intellect as a basis for all

professions. It is therefore important to note that the professionals that emerge with the advent of the modern world, as I have delineated in Chapter Three, are people whose identity revolves around the two concepts of professionalism and professionalization. I have, in that chapter, also emphasised two important aspects of a profession that are worth recalling. One is the competence embedded in professionalization, which is a sociological concept of a profession - a process of education that testifies to the graduate's competence, which confers a particular status on university graduates. Secondly, over and above competence (rooted in a specialised knowledge such as mathematics and physics that are the foundations of an engineer's knowledge, or psychology that is the foundation of the psychologist's work) there is an aspect of autonomy. Autonomy is derived from the authority that the professional possesses by virtue of having obtained a university degree.

The professionals are considered authorities, whose knowledge and status give them a certain autonomy, which in turn imposes certain responsibility upon them. As such they are regarded as free and are therefore expected not only to act but also to exercise judgment in their respective fields of expertise - hence the importance of the issue of ethics. Action and judgment both necessitate the humanities concepts of morality and ethics. In conventional knowledge, morality refers to prescriptive behaviour (what one should and should not do), a clear example of which is the Ten Commandments. Ethics is reflection on the justification for morality - for instance, if the Ten Commandments include the moral injunction to honour your father and mother, ethics will ask questions (seek justifications for) why this is a good action. Ethical debates reach different conclusions, that is, they offer different justifications for proposing moral action.

An example of this is a civil engineer, who is involved in the construction of a new dam project. The knowledge of such an engineer is of the natural



sciences (mathematics and physics), which enable him to design and build the dam, a reflection of competency which implies high status associated with financial gain. However, this civil engineer also has to think about the ethical aspects of the task (themes within the humanities). He has to address issues such as 'has the tendering process been conducted with integrity? Does the project respect the rights of the communities that will be affected by the project? Is the project ecologically responsible? How do engineers think about these issues? How do they come to a conclusion about what is the right action to take?' Their exposure to the humanities assists them with these deliberations and decisions. These issues are central to liberal education and are deliberations that are currently the core of the humanities. It is the exposure to these deliberations from within the humanities that is necessary for the professionals, whose knowledge is rooted in the natural and social sciences.

All the professions mentioned in this thesis, which have to date increased in number, are all understood and defined within the concept of professionalization that implies both the practical and moral or ethical dimensions of a profession. The humanities, for example, have within their subjects included gender studies, democracy, culture and heritage studies, environmental studies and others. All these new fields emerged as additional components in the humanities field. The most significant of all the professions are those that depend on the natural and social sciences, for these professions have become the most highly regarded within the contemporary university. Professions such as medicine, engineering, surgery and pharmacy depend on the natural scientific subjects of physics, mathematics and chemistry for their research and practice; surveying, banking, accounting, auctioneering, statistics, and others depend on mathematics. The professions of counselling, psychiatry, health care, human services, social work, public administration and others depend on social science. It is worth noting that I have tried, for the purpose of this thesis, to mention just a few professions, but have also mentioned that professions as they exist in higher education today are countless.

What I want to emphasise is that despite their foundation in different disciplines, all professions derive from or depend upon the humanities. The themes of the humanities that are defined in this thesis, such as morality, freedom and intellect are the basis upon which all the professions depend. For instance, professions cannot be defined outside the theme of freedom. Freedom, which involves a notion of power, is a common element of any kind of profession, for it denotes that a professional always relates to his/her service users with unequal terms of power of knowledge, status and material gains. The professional is regarded as the one who has the power to make valid and informed decisions, and the service users are dependent on those judgments for the services provided to them. The idea of the autonomy of the professional over a branch of knowledge remains important, as it presupposes self-government in that professional. This refers to a person having an account of his\her identity. It refers to the ability to have coherence in all aspects of one's identity (Morgan, 1996), which is influenced by power vested in the professional by virtue of possessing knowledge and status. However, over and above the elements of status, material gains and knowledge possession, as they exist within the university today, the professions depend on all the other humanities themes, for these add an element of human value to the professional practices.

My submission is that the humanities focus on ethical and moral issues which are central to liberal education. It is these issues that add to the professionals' knowledge that is rooted in the natural and social sciences. It is the exposure to the humanities that ensures that as they practice, professionals apply independent judgment and take responsibility for their actions. In essence, the humanities themes of freedom, intellect and morality inform the ways in which professionals carry out their practices. For instance, over and above his/her medical knowledge, a doctor needs to be rooted in the kind of ethical and legal considerations that regulate the medical profession. Questions that relate to dealing with pharmaceutical companies, for example - if a company approaches a

doctor to use their latest product, promising him certain benefits if he prescribes their medicine for his patients, the appropriate ethical response will be informed by knowledge from within the humanities. An answer to whether or not he should be completely candid with his patients about their medical condition can only be answered objectively through ethical reasoning gained from within the humanities. In essence, the exposure of a doctor to the humanities is the one that is going to assist him to apply ethical reasoning and to come to a conclusion about what is the right thing to do in such circumstances.

The contemporary humanities faculties' concern has always rested on human value. The humanities build our capacities to make those decisions that respond to the events that confront us in life in ways that maximize human values, making creative use of the resources available (Ashley and O'Rourke, 1996). If we are aspiring to have technological citizens, they require an ethic of response which is rational and responsible. The humanities are necessary for professionals because "in this technological development, means are liberated from their ends and means are created without pre-defined ends" (Goujon and Dubreuil, 2001: 42). Examples are those of the television and computer, which are developed to promote recreation and communication, yet are used for things such as hacking and pornography purposes. The exposure of professionals to the humanities, which are at the heart of a liberal education, assists the professionals with the development of sound reasoning (development of intellect). Sound reasoning is an important focus of ethical questions that have implications for moral conduct.

Within the humanities, the professionals' use of both autonomy and authority goes beyond instrumental benefit to the enhancement of human worth and value. Professional power is regulated by an ability to make right choices on what to deliver, for what purpose, to whom and when (concentration on means and ends). The ability to make the right choices

is reflected in ways in which a professional uses his/her autonomy and authority to reflect on first and second order desires when delivering social services (Morgan, 1996). The first order desires, on the one hand, cannot inform an intelligible act as they derive from emotions which inform tendencies to behave in certain ways and lack the agent's inner view of what is being done - acts that result from first order desires are individualistic and inconsiderate of how professional service may affect the lives of other people. Second order desires, on the other hand, are informed by virtue in that the agent internalizes what he/she is doing in the light of consequences and the effects of the act on other people. The autonomy of a professional, therefore, is ensured by his/her ability to order and control desires, a reflective, or second order desire. Morgan's 'hierarchical theory' provides us with steps that professionals should take in engaging in "critical reflection on and subsequent modification of first order desires"(1996: 240).

The above theory asserts that there should be critical reflection on these desires as to which should come first. In the modern professional world, one can identify two main types of desires: the techno-scientific and the moral. I take the techno-scientific desires as challenges that emanate from achievements of a technology-oriented nature (associated with economic gains and status) Moral desires are challenges that are posed by the achievement of humanistic nature (associated with human value). This classification is based on the fact that professions originated from "the logic of the division and reintegration of labour which inspired the Industrial Revolution and every large scale development that sprang from it" (Perkins, 1989: 25). My definition of moral desires derives from one of the themes of the humanities, which is a concern with the moral codes that regulate the education and practices of professionals in order to emphasise human value. The first order desire is so called because it only satisfies the *interest* or *want* of people with authority to decide (the concerned professional). The second order desire, in most cases, considers the *needs* and *interests* of those without authority in the matter (other

professionals and members of society). What I want to emphasise is that professionals have initial inclinations as first order desires, but may have to curtail or override these because they are contrary to what they have concluded is the right thing to do. The right thing to do in this case constitutes what are referred to as second order desires.

Going back to the example of a civil engineer to clarify the issue of curtailing the first order desires, the engineer may want a large bonus that he will get when he completes the dam project, but he may feel that the project cannot go ahead because it violates the rights (probably legally defined) of the communities that will be affected by the construction of the dam. In this respect, the desire of the engineer for a good bonus conflicts with his desire to comply with ethical and legal procedures. The humanities, with their subject of philosophy, whose project is critical reflection on thought and action, can help professionals to reflect critically on the first order desires, lest they overshadow the second order ones resulting in the compromise of human value. The concept of freedom implied in the critical reflective process renders the professional autonomous and enables him/her to undertake critical reflection on first order and second order desires. In essence, this kind of freedom enhances reasoning power and the confidence of a professional. Critical reflection on desires influences professional analytical strategies in that a reflective professional is more likely to devote time and energy to exploring the dimensions of the task, examining possible alternatives and weighing the likelihood of possible outcomes (Cole and Chan, 1994). The concerns of philosophy seem to be central to an education in the humanities, and therefore central to the education of the professionals.

### **5.3.1 How does Freedom and Autonomy Regulate Techno-scientific Practices?**

The theme of freedom is necessary in professional development and should be the initial aim of the education of professionals in general, since

freedom regulates practices. All the accounts of professionalism presented in this chapter imply directly or indirectly that professionals are human beings who deliver services to other human beings. The aspect of humanity and human value is, therefore, at the core of professions. As a consequence, learning about habits, values, interests, attitudes and emotions of human beings is in my view a compulsory project. Not only learning about these things, but also being able to practice and model whatever virtuous acts have been proven to be worthwhile and have always enhanced full humanity over all ages is required. Because the services are delivered to human beings, professionals are entitled to freedom of choice in matters of personal value and morality, but only as long as the freedom does not violate certain basic standards of professional delivery (Carr, 1993).

Carr assumes a communitarian point of view in addressing the question of professional ethics. He holds that values acquisition is a question of induction into established traditions, conventions, customs, rituals, virtues, skills and so on, which require substantial experience for their full and proper appreciation (Carr, 1993: 203). I agree with Carr that professionals have to be educated in virtue, and go beyond to advocate education in virtue from within the humanities. I am, however, aware that in some cases virtues may not obviously guide actions, but I reserve this awareness for the purposes of this thesis. The aspects that Carr covers herein as values that have to be acquired by professionals are all components of the subjects within the humanities.

Underpinning this view is the idea that values have to be evaluated in terms of the way in which they contribute to the personal, moral, social or aesthetic improvement of the human condition in practical terms. This is shown in the manner in which values are woven into the public and social aspects of human life. My argument is that professionals are, over and above other responsibilities, responsible for personal and moral

development in their delivery of social services which, for me, is undoubtedly the central aim of education. Those likely to be effective are professionals who have themselves strong and definite value commitments on the basis of reasonably mature moral development and who “welcome and honestly address the challenges that others may be prepared to offer to what they hold dear” (Carr, 1993: 205). The professional has to have a moral identity to profess and show commitment to a moral life - in a sense, to model a moral life. Carr’s characteristics of a professional suggest a need for the perpetuation of liberal education as it currently exists within the humanities. His good professional is a model, one who becomes an example of a moral life to the service users, because, in order to understand fully the implications for good or ill of living in this way rather than that, people require evidence of consistency and commitment on the part of those who publicly assert that this way is better (Carr, 1993: 206).

The professional in Carr’s (1995) sense has also a moral (humanities theme) educational role to play. This ethical dimension of professionalism constitutes a significant part of a profession. In the case of medicine, for example, if one is looking for a doctor who can heal a certain disease, one looks for a doctor who has professional skills and who is informed about the disease from a technical point of view and also a doctor who cares. People not only expect technical skills when selecting a doctor, but would generally not approve of one who is in his/her private life morally inconsistent. For instance, a doctor who tells a patient that he/she should stop smoking because it is a health risk, yet the same doctor smokes, indicates that the doctor holds beliefs that are contradicting with his behaviour. If professionals exhibit values or personal characteristics that are held to be at variance with what is desirable for service delivery, it is a cause for general concern (Carr, 1995).

Let us try to look at what happens if a professional does not possess the same moral values as those he/she is expected to possess. For example, an accountant may recognize qualities in terms of which decent life is generally characterized - integrity, truthfulness, care, but not value that life. Should such an accountant pretend to possess these qualities so that he/she can be an effective professional? The answer is obviously no, because an effective accountant is not only able to aspire to defining ethical ideals and standards but can also honestly recognize and address his failures and shortcomings. This idea is interesting in that the aspiration to define ethical standards and honesty is a necessary condition of every profession.

### **5.3.2 How does the Possession of Knowledge of Some of the Humanities Subjects Enhance the Practical Ability of a Professional in Particular Situations?**

The education of the professional not only concerns deliberations upon ethical practice, but also an ability to exercise sound judgment in practicing one's conviction in particular situations. This exercise is synonymous with professional competence. This competence implies what professionals need in order to deliver services effectively. However, this unprejudiced professional competence, like the concept of a profession, is open to different conceptualizations (see for example, Walker, 1996; Mercer, 1995; Carr, 1995; Hager and Beckett, 1995; and Englund, 1996). It presupposes the notion of competence that supersedes theories of action, which are informed by conventional professional content. Even though conceptualizations of competence vary, they nearly all assert that 'theories of action' are necessary in a profession. Hager and Beckett (1995) advocate an integrated conception of competence in which they offer components of their concept of competence to emphasize full commitment to the ethical dimension of a profession. They argue that competence comprises an integration of *a*) key intentional actions with personal attributes, *b*) holism of several kinds and *c*) the encompassing of cultures and contexts. They add that "the whole approach hinges on the



integration of the three essential dimensions of work, place and performance which, taken together, justify the inference of competent practice" (Hager and Beckett, 1995:6). The integrated conception suggests that cultural formation can be the best approach to best professional practices because it treats the social nature of a practice and the complex nature of the relation between the individual and the society in a holistic manner.

Walker says he favours "a form of competency-based professional education that is characterized by input of codified knowledge at relevant times to practically oriented training" (Walker 1992: 10). For him, a competent professional is one who is able to select, understand and apply codified knowledge from a variety of disciplinary and other sources. All professionals need one another: all the professionals need the humanities to be historically, politically, socially and culturally informed, about political institutions and their structures and behaviour. A good example is of a therapist who needs literature, performing art (drawing and music) to assess, diagnose and treat children. In the case where children are not able to speak, a therapist can make them draw pictures or sing songs. The songs and drawings can be interpreted by either a therapist, who has obtained a relative skill from within the humanities discipline, or by a pure professional artist. This can help a therapist to effectively ascertain a real problem in the life of a child, which the therapist could otherwise not have inferred through the use of conventional therapeutic strategies. Music and poetry can also be used as a form of therapy in patients.

Walker (1992) puts more emphasis on professionals' conscious and critical considerations of explicitly formulated theories of practice, as well as scrutiny of one's own practice, through a process of critical dialogue with colleagues to determine the theories embedded in practice, of which practitioners may not be aware. Techno-scientists have to read humanists in order to raise their awareness of how thinking and content in the

humanities shape their scientific discoveries and innovations. There are many relevant empirical details that are in the humanities that relate to science and technology. For instance, knowledge about the history (inclusive of culture and religion) and language of a patient can help a medical doctor know a patient better and relate to the patient's past experiences that might have contributed to or influenced the current illness or bodily disorder. Examples of common diseases that can be influenced by the history of the patient include cancer, sugar diabetes, high blood pressure and others that can be genetically inherited. The knowledge of the patient's history assists in the diagnosis, assessment and treatment that the doctor will decide on. In essence, the knowledge about the service users affects techno-scientific discoveries and debates. Such knowledge provides for all people to know all possible circumstances that relate to changes in people's lives; thus knowledge in the humanities enhances professional practice.

What I am emphasising is that all the professions as we have them today are all meant to develop human beings. The success of this professional mission depends on the professionals' deep understanding of a bigger picture of ways in which people get developed or underdeveloped (history). Knowledge of history serves as an example; the continuation and development of communities depend largely on how these communities have evolved from primitive societies to modern societies. It is history that informs all the professions, for their continuation is informed by their past. In almost all the professions, the current innovations and changes are informed by, and build on, the past developments. Why professionals engage in certain practices and have adopted certain new methods of practice is because they have through time learnt the consequences of the past practices and methods in the history of their professions. In essence, history provides knowledge about the different kinds of institutions and their characteristic features. Even for the humanist, the history of techno-scientific information would help in the evaluation of "individual actions or political or economic

institutions that might cause or prevent impoverishment” (LaFollette, 2005: 7). The main issue is that with knowledge of the human beings and their institutions acquired in the humanities, professionals can contextualise and direct their techno-scientific discoveries to the societies that they are meant to develop and benefit.

#### **5.4 HOW DO ETHICAL DELIBERATIONS ENCOURAGE CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE PROPOSED JUSTIFICATION FOR OUR PRESCRIBED ACTIONS?**

Central to this section is an illumination of my claim and demonstration that an education in the humanities is appropriate for professionals and that it occurs within the context of liberal education. With the humanities as they exist within the modern university today, one can say they progress in the form of liberal education but with a new and changed focus. The humanities have gradually assumed a more critical nature: respect for authority is no longer the end of education in itself but a subject of creative and exploratory criticism. The essence of what goes on in the process of teaching and learning within the humanities is largely informed by critical reflection. This state is based on Freedman’s (1996) strong belief that as students engage more in academic activities they are exposed to learning experiences that enhance their intellectual and moral capacities. He asserts that these students observe faculty members taking risks in engaging the most difficult issues in the intellectual and moral world.

The students observe two main stages of the moral process in practice: (a) they observe faculty members exercise critical judgment by scrupulously weighing the claims of competing arguments; (b) they hear faculty members express their own uncertainty as to where the balance of proof in particular argument lies (Freedman, 1996: 57). Consequently, the

students as well assume the same role of engaging in moral debates. They are introduced to the tentativeness and carefulness of a faculty member's cast of mind and they also learn that a professor may sometimes be puzzled or unsure when confronted with existential questions at the heart of his or her professional life and again they participate in a moral process (Freedman, 1996). This process is even more enriched by the exposure of students to the diversity of the faculty members' practices and arguments, thereby providing enough room for synthesis and critical reflection on the part of the student. For example this process can be more relevant in the practice of medicine whereby medical doctors are in their daily practices facing issues relating to making tough decisions on issues such as euthanasia, abortion, human organ transplants and others. Drawing conclusions and passing judgments on whether or not it is right or wrong (issues of morality) to perform certain medical procedures needs critical reflection and synthesis as is practiced in philosophy within the humanities. Engineers as well need to reflect on puzzling issues such as how to develop techno-scientific machines that benefit, but are very dangerous to, human beings. These two examples imply the need for professionals to engage in moral debates (an aspect of the humanities).

The humanities' central theme of intellect and morality also serves as a theory upon which professional practices can be built. Theory informs practice and practice modifies theory. This process emerges from the exercise of judgment and the experiences of consequences. This is one of my submissions, because one other very important aspect of professionalism is theory. Theory in this case refers to the content that informs ideas relating to the service delivery (Mercer, 1995). Delivery of service is always informed by a form of theory of action, which is in some cases spelt out and in others not. Theory in this sense becomes one of the tools or competences needed in effective service delivery. The humanities can inform the professional's theory of guided construction. Professionalism requires that professionals bring theories of action into the open so that the theories can be challenged. Because these theories are

not often brought out into the open, they are not easy to evaluate or challenge, yet they ought to be. The humanities with their project of critical thinking are best suited for the development of a skill of reflection in action in professionals. Knowledge in the humanities can be used as a conceptual tool or resource, which enables a professional to identify clearly and respond rationally to the practical challenges and problems of his/her occupation. This is more so in a situation where these practical challenges and problems of a professional affect human beings and their wellbeing, but who have different interests.

An example is as follows; let us take a bank manager who is faced with the challenge of clients not being able to pay back their loans to the bank; he is also faced with a problem of a deficit in bank annual income when these loans are not paid. The annual deficit in turn results in the cutting of thirteenth cheques for all the bank employees at the end of that particular year. In this situation the manager is not able to force the clients to pay back the bank loans, for even if he tries that could take a very long period and tedious legal processes which need time. The manager has only two options: to face either the bank employees under his leadership to convince them not to expect the thirteenth cheque or face his own manager to convince him not to cut the thirteenth cheque amid the circumstances. It will take an eloquent employer (use of art, language and literature) to convince either the bank management or the employees. Conventional business banking argument of profit and loss as a means of justifying salary changes will not be able to help the manager to confront the situation.

The conventional banking strategies of justification will have to be substituted with logical argument (use of philosophy) informed by the knowledge of social, cultural, political as well as the historical background of the clients, employees and senior managers of the bank. Knowledge of issues that might have led to clients not paying back their loans will not

need conventional banking content but background to the problem and anticipation of how all these different parties involved would react in such a situation. In essence, the bank manager will have to take theories and strategies of argument beyond his professional scope into a moral consideration of the wellbeing of the employees of the banks as well as the debtors. This example helps to define the broad scope of professional practice and shows how over and above their conventional content and practices, all professions depend on the humanities for pro-active human developments.

#### **5.4.1 How do the Humanities Contribute to Effective Professional Judgment?**

There are three features of Hager and Beckett's (1995) integrated conception of professional competence that illuminate my view that the humanities contribute hugely to effective professional judgment. Unlike the narrow conception that competence is an ability to do something or capacity to carry out tasks, the integrated conception of competence groups key intentional actions with personal attributes. Personal attributes refer to abilities and capacities. Examples of attributes are knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and these, together with the performance of tasks (key intentional actions), are necessary although insufficient components of professional competence. In competent professionalism, "abilities and capacities are applied to the performance of some tasks and notably more generic tasks such as planning, contingency and management" (Hager and Beckett, 1995: 2). But still tasks need to be understood in a broad way "to include performing in accordance with an overall conception of what one's work is about, working ethically" (Hager and Beckett, 1995: 2).

Holism is the second component of integrated competent professionalism in that holism describes professional competency standards. These standards are holistic in four ways: first, they integrate and relate attributes and tasks as discussed in the previous paragraph. The holism is reflected

in the requirement that key intentional actions must be at an appropriate level of generality. For example, when a doctor performs euthanasia on a patient, the intention is generally to kill the person. The act of killing itself requires that other key intentional actions (injecting the patient; disconnecting the life support systems) are done appropriately and in accordance with the related moral and legal codes. In this case, killing is an intentional action, which if well undertaken by the doctor, must involve a variety of more specific intentional actions that will help the doctor to effectively and successfully kill the patient.

Moreover, the tasks are not discrete and independent, thus a single action will involve several other small intentional actions. In addition, intentional actions involve situational understandings. This means that competency standards "include the idea that the professional performers take account of the varying contexts in which they are operating" (Hager and Beckett, 1995: 3). The point highlighted here is that the development of professionals is based on skill and understanding and the application of this skill in related modern social contexts. It is important to note at this point that it is largely through the use of logic that a professional doctor explores rules and regulations to come up with the most appropriate plan of action. This puts philosophy at the core of medicine as a practice. These social contexts serve as challenges to professionals, whereas possession of an ability (knowledge) to effectively overcome the challenges and at the same time benefiting the society is a dream of every professional. It is worth noting that, for a professional, right and wrong depends on the nature of the means and ends that the professional engages in the action. This is where the ethical part of the humanities comes in. The doctor needs to use his autonomy in the form of the knowledge within the humanities to reflect on the relationship between thought and action of euthanasia with all its complexities: a doctor's legal codes, conscience, religion, culture, and economic implications etc. - all issues relating to the patient and relatives and society at large. The humanities

with their legacy of attending to issues of uncertainties and complexities are best suited in this case.

The above example brings us to the third aspect of an integrated conception of competence, which is the encompassing of cultures and contexts. Hager and Beckett (1995) assert that cultural determinants are also necessary for competent professional practices. Examples of such determinants are rules, rituals and conventions. The implication is that what we say and the way we say it, as well as our ability to conceive of our daily beliefs, values and attitudes are very important. The reading of contextual factors and recognition of one's own professional location are necessary for competent service delivery. The reading directly includes the humanities subject of language, history, culture, art and literature, for it is within these subjects that the determinants of competent practices (rules, rituals, conventions) are housed.

Another most interesting point is that Hager and Beckett (1995), like Englund (1996) and Carr (1995) on professionalism, explicitly acknowledge the ethics of a profession as an element of the humanities. I take this as very important because in my view most, if not all, professions are bound to involve either directly or indirectly, a human being as an object of research and practice. As such, almost all professions have to depend largely and directly on the humanities. Examples of professions that directly involve human beings as objects are health care, counselling, psychiatry, medicine, dentistry, nursing, teaching and others. These professions necessarily have to make use of virtue by virtue of their very nature. They all engage a human being as an object of practice with the intention to enhance the wellbeing of the same object. These professions are specifically based on human value, and their main collective aim is to oversee the wellbeing of a person in all aspects of life. Health care as a profession, for example, emphasises its main aspect of empathy. Empathy is a way of understanding another person's problem



from that person's experience so as to be able to apply effective helping strategies. This includes both intellectual and moral knowledge (humanities) as a basis in the caring profession. As such, human value, which is the theme of the humanities, is at the centre of health care. In order for health carers and all the human related professions to understand human experiences, they need knowledge of almost all the subjects of the humanities, for these subjects focus on virtue and human value in a more comprehensive manner that goes beyond specific conventional professional daily practices. The purpose, means and ends of all professions ought to recognise and adhere to the element of human value in the delivery of professional service. In essence, the position of the humanities is such that it is at the core of all professions and therefore a definitive good of every profession.

There is another concept of a profession that entails the notion of integration as key to the conceptualization of a profession. What is fundamental to this concept is that the emphasis is on the content of a profession: the 'ought' of a profession in the sense of what ought to be practiced and how. This perspective meets a central requirement in terms of the traditions and the development of a profession. It considers the history and development of a profession. It is through this concept that we have to focus on the inner meaning of a professional's work. Thus, different professionals have different specific contents within specific practical fields. With the content at hand, the professional then "constantly problematizes and scrutinizes what is to be practiced, opens it to different solutions, and is aware of, and knowledgeable about, the consequences of choices" (Englund, 1996: 83). At this point again philosophy, with its critical aspect, comes as a subject that brings to the content an attitude of critical questioning and constant scrutiny as opposed to an unreflecting and authoritarian one. Constant and permanent scrutiny of the content of a profession though is a very of professional development across professions. The conventional professional content, however, does not directly focus on the moral

education (a project of the humanities) of the professional, as its concern is on the fixed content of set rules and regulations of professional service delivery. It is worth noting, however, that the same fixed content of set rules and regulations is based on logic. In the case of all the professions, this dimension entails adherence to the specific legal codes that need in the process of their application to be scrutinized and reflected upon. In the case of teaching, the fixed content and legal codes are entailed in the curriculum: syllabus, school calendar, time-table, school regulations, school uniform and others; in medicine, law and other professions as well there are conventional tools, regulations and rules to adhere to, but also to reflect on critically. There is a need, therefore, for all the professions to engage the humanities.

The knowledge of these fixed aspects and a consideration of how their knowledge can contribute to practices other than their own rests on the professional's competence. Competence is an ability that helps one to choose between many sets of different values and undertake professional work in a way that considers both short term and long term effects that are either positive or negative for the societies in which the professional work is carried out. The context of moral and intellectual thinking is very complex and cannot happen in a vacuum, thus:

The condition is that one should have learned about moral issues that have historically been debated, mastering conceptual tools useful for analysing these issues, understanding various interests involved (and often in conflict), and being able to undertake a clarification of the implicit values. All of these require the acquisition of knowledge, competence and know-how (Goujon and Dubreul, 2001: 24).

The humanities subjects (as mentioned earlier in 5.2) form part of the content needed for professional competence. It is the subjects of the humanities together with several other disciplines ranging from the so – called pure/hard sciences to the social sciences that provide the

professional with some form of an interdisciplinary knowledge. The interdependent relationship is necessary, for virtue, which is at the core of the humanities, can be of great use to an engineer as well (Goujon and Dubreul, 2001).

Virtue, as applied in engineering for example, can reduce the danger of techno-scientific developments to human life. An engineer confronted with a situation of a technical nature can apply knowledge from the humanities. In a case where there arises a need to collect and store river water many issues of a moral and technical nature have to be considered by the engineer. First, there is a need to look into the lives of all living things that depend on the water for survival and what effect the changes might have on their lives; second, there is a need to look into the benefit the society will have if the water is stored for purposes of electricity and other energy needs. The two aspects are equally important and need a balanced and well thought out plan of action on the part of the professional engineer. From a purely technical, economic and capitalist perspective, building a dam would create many jobs for people; a dam would ensure a continued supply of energy for a long time. From a humanistic point of view and a democratic perspective, building a dam needs a historical survey of how the river has been affecting lives of people in the past; how it affects them now and how it can affect the coming generations in the future. This historical survey in itself calls for the engagement of, among others, philosophy (for critical reflection), archeology, art, and literature (for reflection on the nature of the lives of people in the past) to study both the short and long term effects of the dam building on the society.

In a situation such as that described above, the question of whether or not the dam building project is viable cannot be answered directly by an appeal to facts but also requires a consideration of moral aspects. There are assumptions that are inherent in the case of dam building, which are

purely moral (the lives of human beings even the unborn) and are the theme of the humanities; the lives of animals, trees and plants (law and environmental issues), the well-being of human beings (natural and social science issues). The assumptions imply that everything that is going to be affected is worthy of consideration in the plan of the project. This is because the underlying assumption is that everything that is about to be affected by the new development relates directly to the maintenance of the lives of people for whom the development is intended. The issues of whether or not to harm are moral issues, while the construction of a dam is a technical issue. The two issues, however, are interdependent and need an engagement of both technical and moral considerations.

Although there is a difference between the sociological and pedagogical projects of a profession, the two are inseparable. We have to remember – despite the differences stressed – that the internal aspect of a profession (professionalism) is constantly intertwined with the sociological aspect (professionalization). This interdependence is a result of the different ways embedded in the different definitions of these concepts. The inner qualities of a profession cannot survive without the qualifications and interests of the professional. So the two go together in almost all the professions, but to know the difference between them is important. For example, under normal circumstances one cannot be employed as a doctor if one does not possess a qualifying degree in the form of a document (qualification). I, therefore, strongly believe that the competence, reflexivity and capacity of a professional (professionalism) are intertwined with the sociological view (professionalization). I have in section 5.3 indicated that in a profession creativity in service is one of the very important qualities. I have also shown that the concept of a profession can be misleading if not well understood. Its misconception can lead professionals to focus more on those things that matter most to them as persons at the expense of what matters to the service users.

#### **5.4.2 How do the Humanities Influence Collaboration among Professionals?**

Aspects that describe how the humanities enhance collaboration among professionals are inherent in the definitions of a profession provided in this chapter. 'Profession' as defined by Davidoff and Van den Berg (1990) emphasises three very important characteristics: a profession as artistic; a living activity created by all participants; involving time spent together. The implication of this view is that a profession is not just about delivering professional service to the society. Both the professional and the society are actively involved in making contributions, sharing and taking responsibility and discovering understandings together. This very conception implies that professional work is a collaborative work between many parties that are the deliverer and the recipient of the service. The recipient of a profession, in my view, can be a lay person or another professional in the same profession with, or different from, the deliverer. Involvement of either a lay or other professional (other than one's own) members of society in professional practice is based on the assumptions that all members understand the meaning and importance of professions, their roles in professional projects and the benefit members can get from professions. In my view, a definition of profession based on these assumptions directly necessitates the use of the humanities in all professions.

In almost all the professions, there are conventional aspects and concepts that are comprehensible only to the relevant professionals in their respective professions, and these aspects need to be communicated well to the society within the context in which the services are delivered. If not, this situation in most cases makes it difficult for members of the society outside a certain profession to access or make use of the professional services provided to them. It is through the use of language and communication skills, art, literature and history that aspects and concepts can be communicated to members of society in different ways that suit

both the lay and professional members of society. One example is of the legal profession, whose legal concepts are very difficult to comprehend and understand for both indigenous and modern communities alike. As a consequence, the legal conventional practice can to a large extent fail to serve the communities that it is supposed to serve.

Many people can find the legal concepts very difficult, which makes it difficult for them to access and make use of the legal system at their disposal. Performing arts (drama and music) can be applied, in which the difficult concepts are enacted in a courtroom setting and people observe the legal proceedings in action to relate the concept to the practice. Performing arts and law share some elements of their practice: both feature texts of some sort such as scripts, scores, as well as constitutions, statutes, and regulations of which all these texts must be brought to life by performers before the audience. The use of performing arts in law practice can be a more engaging approach in which the society is empowered to access and use the legal facilities. Performing arts can also help in cases where there is a new law to be passed and members of society are informed about it by use of role play. In a court room set-up, all the difficult and incomprehensible concepts are performed and related to real action. It is worth noting that in this example not only the humanities but also the model method of teaching within the humanities is involved. With the use of the humanities in this way, the law would have been simplified for both the lay and modern communities. This would be a more empowering approach of making law more accessible and useful to communities for which it serves. With this I emphasise that professionals such as lawyers are under an obligation to engage with the humanities to help them find ways to make the complexities of their practice more accessible to their service users.

A component of a professional's ethical obligation is collaboration, which is implied in the concept of democratic citizenship in which people are

obliged to work together to realise human welfare. One should be aware however that professionalism in itself can either be a collaborative or non-collaborative project in different ways. It can be collaborative if a professional decides to work closely with other professionals in his/her own field in order to learn new ways of practice and new ideas pertaining to his/her profession; he/she can also work with professionals in other professions different from his/hers for purposes of reference and deeper understanding of his/her own profession. This in itself helps any professional to acquire methods and ideas and use them in his/her practice. In the example above, law professionals can choose to learn performing arts and be engaged in the plays themselves or use the professionals in the dramatic art to do the plays. It should be noted however that, in both ways, the professional does not teach service users, which in this case are all professionals, how to engage in these new ways and ideas, thus he/she does not teach them how to practice. It is only if the professional's methods and ideas are interesting, stimulating and beneficial to the service user that the user will participate and collaborate with the professional unconsciously. While some professionals might like a collaborative project and benefit from its purpose, others might not. However, it is very useful for professionals to share ideas in an attempt to find new ways and means of effective service delivery.

In democratic society, collaboration among and between professionals relates directly to the exercise of intellect. As such, professionals need to have acquired skills (reflective and analytical) that develop their intellect. These skills enhance their innate capacity to acquire and assimilate new methods and ideas that help to connect different concepts beyond normal expectations and apply them in different contexts appropriately and achieve the expected objective (White, 1998). This intellectual project is at the core of the humanities and can only be learnt from within the humanities. Collaborative skill is significant, for it enables a professional to draw the attention and interest of people other than his/her fellow professionals. This would be an achievement that is beyond the

expectations of the professional in a particular practice. The intelligent thing that all the participants will have acquired in the collaboration process is to connect the relationships of key issues of professional practice. The participants will have, at the same time, comprehended the method that the professional applies and the purpose of the practice, and acquired the skill of collaboration.

In the case in which collaboration is between professionals and society, the professional helps to instil in people a skill of appreciation, develop in people an interest of issues that concern them, develop in them a skill to critically view purposes of any innovations and realise the value of professional services at their disposal. This process involves the skill of collaboration, which goes beyond the scope of practices to the motive of a practice. This way of developing the intellect is only found in the humanities, for the content and method in the humanities allow for accessibility and contextualization of facts through language and literature and investigation of motives through the use of philosophy.

## **5.5 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I have indicated how the Industrial and Scientific Revolutions generated the diversity of professions and professionals, at the centre of whose practice lie the humanities themes of freedom, morality and intellect. I then used professionalism and professionalization to analyze the role the humanities play in professional development. I have argued that the inculcation of morality and the development of intellect enhance professional practice for effective service delivery. To illuminate this argument, the chapter has illustrated how professions, as they exist within the university today, require the humanities in order to add human value to the exercise of all professional developments that are intended to develop societies. The professions of law, medicine, engineering and banking have been used in this chapter to show how professionals



necessarily need the humanities in their daily practices. I have used several definitions of a profession in order to illuminate its characteristics, which are authority, autonomy, collaboration, reflection and competency, and to describe how all these characteristics are informed by the content of the humanities. The chapter has emphasized the significance not only of the integration of both theory and skill, but also of ethical and instrumental purpose for professional development and practice. In essence, the chapter has shown that all professions demand the dispositions of flexibility, creativity and innovation. They require skills and appropriate ways of integrating those skills. They also require reflective thought and insight into the principles that guide the use of skills. Moreover, they require the application of a wide range of principles that demand skills beyond just being reflective about daily professional experiences, becoming reflective about how the daily conventional professional practices affect positively the wellbeing and lives of societies that they are meant to enhance. This integration of knowledge and skills, as emphasized in professionalism today, proceeds directly from Renaissance liberal education to the humanities, which accords the latter a central role in the development of professionals and effective professional practice.

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