

The University in the Knowledge Society:
A Neo-Institutionalist Approach to the ‘Idea’ of
the University

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This thesis is an investigation into fundamental questions concerning the aims, purpose and goals of the university within the emerging 21st Century post-industrial, Knowledge Society (KS). Inquiries of this nature are often referred to as the 'idea' of the university and whilst a growing academic literature questions what an 'idea' for the institution may look like in light of the arguably unique context of the Knowledge Society, it has yet to be fully addressed. In order to do so, this thesis is methodologically framed by the sociological school of neo-institutionalism. This is a perspective within institutional theory which views institutions as not passive recipients of social values but able to dictate their own ideals upon society. The university in this view becomes a 'primary institution' capable to imprint its values upon the KS and thus giving it a prominent role in that society.

In order to articulate an 'idea' of the university, the thesis begins with a critical review of the literature, specifically the manner in which university-KS relations are conceived. This concludes with a summative statement about such relations in the form of the 'problem of knowledge' i.e. an attitude which increasingly reduces knowledge in the university to means-end and economic propositions. An alternative conceptualisation is proposed which offers an optimistic approach to the university in the KS, one conceived through presumptions by the neo-institutionalist school and coined 'Knowledge Plasticity'.

As there are no formal methods for creating an 'idea', the second part of the thesis undertakes an extensive review of seminal works in the field revealing three conditions to which such proposals generally conform. Taken together, these conditions serve as the methodological frame for creating an 'idea' for the university. The first of these, contextual clarity, having been achieved through the literature review, moves to the second condition, theoretical development, and entails an exploration of Knowledge Plasticity. This investigation reveals a 'tension of imbalance' within this concept which the 'idea' of the university must resolve, this being the final condition of the 'idea'. In order to do this, the 'University of Imagination' is identified as the 'idea' whose purpose is to bring about dynamic balance within the institution. Finally, the proposed University of Imagination is compared with the classical Liberal university suggesting a more effective means for the liberal 'idea' to become realised in the KS namely, through engaging with the former. As a philosophical contribution to the literature, the University of Imagination encourages us to be optimistic and emboldened by the project of education and offers a path to navigate the challenges and uncertainties facing the university in the 21st Century.

Key Terms: University, Knowledge, Knowledge Society, Neo-Institutionalism, Idea of the University, University of Imagination

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VOCATUS ATQUA NON VOCATUS DEUS ADERIT

Men say they know many things;
But lo! they have taken wings, —
 The arts and sciences,
And a thousand appliances;
 The wind that blows
Is all that any body knows.

- HENRY DAVID THOREAU

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Thesis Introduction

The university remains amongst the most significant and versatile of institutions in modern history (Gumpert, 2007; Riddle, 1989). Often standing outside, yet frequently within, the realms of sacred and secular power, its ability to forge a dynamic space for itself has provided the means for its continued and successful longevity (Rashdall, 1987). Since their historical inception in the middle of the 9th Century (Makdisi, 1981), these medieval institutions have become prominent features of civil society, stretching their influence in increasingly complex ways across the realms of politics and the formal economy (Cobban, 1975; Rüegg, 2004). Commenting on the rise of the medieval western university, Ridder-Symoens (1992) maintains that the institution has been afforded such privileges partly because of its unique knowledge function, namely an ability to create and disseminate ideas often outside and beyond the reach of traditional structures of power¹. Whilst the exact causes of its 'historical success' (Scott, 2006) remain allusive, the place and importance held by the university has only served to increase its visibility as a necessary component of healthy democratic societies.

Recently, an interest in their importance has extended to the hitherto recognised contributions made towards intellectual history. Whilst, the role of universities in the development of medieval scholasticism is little disputed (Marenbon, 2010; Leclercq, 1982), the rise of European Enlightenment, for example, intimates the unique contribution that universities have made towards the facilitation and dissemination of ideas necessary to usher the Scientific Revolution (Anderson, 2004). The popularity of nineteenth century's Romanticism in Europe and the United States has, for example, more recently been shown to have been possible through the cross cultural interactions of scholarly networks in universities (Watson, 2002; Pietsch, 2013). Aiding the promulgation and fomenting of social consciousness, the cultural revolutions of the 20th Century reveal close links to university culture, prompting Parsons and Platt (2013) to argue that the institution has today become a central cultural institution in modern developed societies. Kerr (2001), a prominent educationalist of the 20th Century, described these changes in the following way:

¹ The unambiguity of Ridder-Symoens' views on the university, marking the *bien pensant* position in the academic literature, has more recently shown nuance existing between the university and its connection to social power. This is evident from recent manuscript discoveries from the 12th Century which provide valuable early articulations of those within the medieval university (specifically Paris and Bologna). This *Carmina* literature provides a series of 'secular' reflections on what and where the university stands, in relation to students and scholars and the Church's role in the 'palour of kings'. Helping disrupt ideas of the institutions historical 'ease' with power see Freidman (2012) for a reconceptualising of Ridder-Symoens' thesis.

The university started as a single community - a community of masters and students. It may even be said to have had a soul in the sense of a central animating principle. Today [...] it is] a whole series of communities and activities held together by a common name, a common governing board, and related purposes. This great transformation is regretted by some, accepted by many, glorified in, as yet, by few ... As a new type of institution, it is not really private and it is not really public; it is neither of the world nor entirely apart from it. *It is unique* (p.1, emphasis added).

The 21st Century, witnessing an era of ‘supercomplexity’ (Barnett, 2000a; 2000b) through the rise of post-industrial economics and globalisation (Castells, 2015), reveals Kerr’s ‘uniqueness’ of the university as it is increasingly expected and indeed given confidence to, amongst other things, interact with and ameliorate social and global problems (Barnett, 2018; Barnett, 2015; Trowler, 2008). As universities begin to operate under new and unprecedented circumstances, challenges to traditional ideas of their functions and roles in society have progressively been raised (Barnett, 2013b; Delanty, 2002). This has been precipitated by the growing place the institution occupies in modern society which, whilst being decried by some educationalists over the loss of its independence and capacity to navigate its own institutional life (William, 2006), has led others to argue that it occupies a new social role in the 21st Century (Baker, 2014). Amongst the most pressing of these debates are those raised in light of the emergence of new forms of society, social organisation, and their implications for this ‘unique’ institution.

Since its medieval roots to todays ‘higher education revolution’ (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley, 2010), the significance of the university, its identity and rapprochement with society, continue to be sources of debate and contention. In todays context, these dynamics and social changes have variously been termed the rise of the Knowledge Society, the new Knowledge Economy, Information Society, Internet Society, Network Society, Learning Economy, to name a few with scholars asking what these might mean for the university in the 21st Century (Välimaa and Hoffman, 2008; Marginson, 2016).

Within the complex and evolving spectrum of contexts which these concepts portend, the literature focusses towards the role, significance and overall ‘health’ of the institution in the 21st Century (Bleiklie, 2005). In lieu of the challenges and opportunities offered by this shifting social context, the implications and responses of the university is the overarching preoccupation of this philosophical enquiry.

The University in the 21st Century: An Introduction to the Literature

The literature on the university is both broad and diverse, from concentrations within Higher Education (from here on, HE) and educational studies to the social sciences and humanities more generally (Holmwood, 2011; Collini, 2017). This is partly accounted for by the myriad ways in which the study of the university is conducted by the general tenor of ‘its relations to the social world’ (Werr and Furusten 2016; Tight 2011b). Of the varying shifts in the social division and ordering of society that have occurred in the late 20th and now in the 21st Century, those related to the emergence of post-industrial societies are particularly germane as growing fields of inquiry in educational studies (Ranga, 2014; Ranga and Etzkowitz, 2013). Here the organisation of societies increasingly based around data, information and knowledge create new and dynamic ways for thinking about traditional social theory. As Fuller (2002) argues, for example, we now live in a world that is ‘obsessed with knowledge’ in that knowledge and its management becomes ‘the science of this revolutionary order’.

This study is particularly concerned with the idea of a Knowledge Society (from here on KS) in that it speaks to a wider consideration of the university in the contemporary world than the idea of a knowledge economy. The rise of these knowledge based societies, or Knowledge Societies has also emerged as a key area of interest within academia. Välimaa and Hoffman (2008) capture its enthusiasm as relating to:

The growing importance of knowledge, research, innovation and evolving perspectives on expertise are changing the social role of universities in the globalized world. One of the most popular concepts used to approach these changes is the *Knowledge Society* together with a number of other conceptualizations (like *Knowledge Economy*, *Information Society*, *Learning Society*) aiming to illuminate the nature of societal change (p.255, emphasis added).

The role of the university in this emerging social milieu remains uncertain, Sörlin and Vessuri (2007) argue, as its function as a primary medium for knowledge production becomes threatened by new forms of expertise and knowledge networks which exist outside the university (Cummings, 2013). Whilst the consequences of such developments are uncertain, they represent new possibilities for knowledge production and civic engagement as well as potentially delimiting and truncating the role of the university in the 21st Century (Delanty, 2002; Adolf and Stehr,

2014). In either case, the increasing contemporary reliance on and orientation towards information and knowledge (Gibbons et al, 1994) raises questions about the university's historic relationships to society as well as the nature of the institution's future in the emerging KS (Barnett, 2015).

The Many Literatures of the 'Knowledge Society'

The growth of literature in the area of post-industrial societies suggests recognition of the KS's due importance to the university (Tight, 2012). An ambiguous and greatly debated concept whose relevance to the 21st Century is argued to be invaluable, the KS signifies a macro trend in social history which sees itself in distinction to previous forms of social organisation. Whilst in previous epochs social organisation has been premised on a variety of ideas drawn from theology, philosophy, economics etc., the 21st Century arguably sees the emergence of a new form of social organisation premised on knowledge (Buckland, 2017). The concept of the KS denotes a great many ideas in the academic literature, as it attempts to identify structural changes in society via a move from industrial capitalism to post-capitalistic production based on non-physical objects, such as knowledge, that have particular consequences for the ways in which we comprehend and experience life. It is partly for this reason that the rise of the KS has become an important field of academic inquiry both in its own right as well as how it relates to the university (Tight, 2012). Amongst the pressing questions its appearance raises are questions about the 'historical success' (Baker, 2014) of the university, understood in terms of its significance and versatility in relation to the KS?

The rise of interest in the KS has created a burgeoning literature in which educationalists, as well as others, attempt to understand its social consequences in a variety of ways. This includes, though is not limited to, theorising it as a 'new' social form of organisation (Stehr, 1994, 2002, 2006; Leadbeater, 2000), its function in society, its relationship to intellectual history (Watson, 2010; Mokyr, 2002 and Anderson, 2004), its place in the global economy (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997; Hayes and Wynyard, 2002; Burton-Jones, 1999), its equivalency with globalisation and technological developments (Castells, 1996, 2015; Headrick, 2000; Carayannis and Formica, 2006) amongst other areas (UNESCO, 2016). However, due partly to its ambiguity and the diverse intellectual interest which it receives, the KS remains a

theoretically underdeveloped concept (Böhme and Stehr 2013). The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the constraints and radical possibilities the relationships between the university, the ‘idea’ and the KS afford.

The University and the Knowledge Society

The particular avenue of scholarship which questions the relationship of the KS with the university, my interest in this thesis, has created a lively intellectual discourse in the past twenty years. Amongst the formative contributions made in this field come from theorists such as Nico Stehr (2006), whose work has helped expound the concept of the KS and the complex relations which the university has within it. This he has achieved by distinguishing the KS from other social forms of organisation and subsequently extended the field into the areas of economics, social mobility, ecology and information technology, respectively (1994, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2006).

Another theorist, tackling the question of the university in the KS has been Gerald Delanty. Working in the field of sociology his *Challenging Knowledge: The University in the Knowledge Society* (2001) remains an important contribution in the literature, not least for his work on tracing the trajectory of the institution to the KS as well as through fashioning a role for it through a discourse with citizenship and cosmopolitan politics (2002). These earlier contributions have been met more recently in the literature with broader questions surrounding the university in the KS (see, for example, Marginson, 2016). These include, though are not limited to, the KS and university teaching (Laurillard, 2002, 2012), conceptual challenges for the university to be in a society of ‘knowledge’ (Välimaa and Hoffman, 2008), higher education research, and the future of the institution (Barnett, 2015, 2018; Neubauer, 2013). In light of this intellectual landscape, positive assessments about the university’s future in the KS are also met with critiques of the institution and its place in the emerging KS (Alvesson and Benner, 2016).

The nature of these critiques demonstrates caution for the university in light of the challenges which hitherto may appear for the institution. These include a ‘liberal’ critique of the university as losing its place in society as a vehicle for cultural reproduction (Bloom, 1987, Readings, 1997). A ‘postmodern’ argument calls for the ‘end’ of the university and the possibility

of knowledge itself as universal notions of truth become delimited by cultural appropriations where the university has no single claim for officiating dominate forms of knowledge in the KS (Smith and Webster, 1997; Fogel, 1988). The ‘globalisation thesis’ similarly argues that in living in a post-capitalistic society, the instrumentalisation of knowledge becomes part of the university’s mission (Piereson, 2011). The consequences of such a development are many and in one reading of this approach, the university functions as a corporation, driven by business goals (Ritzer, 2014). Such critiques in the literature are important as a means for framing the macro changes occurring in the world of the university and how they challenge it to adapt, integrate, and discern its presence within the KS. However, whilst no consensus exists about how to ‘define’ as well as ‘frame’ the university’s relationship to the KS, it remains a continuing area of interest both within and outside of educational studies.

The ‘Idea’ of the University

One way theorists have historically thought about the ethos for the university’s institutional life and responded to questions, such as those raised by the emergence of the KS, has been through the ‘idea’ literature on the university (Barnett, 2018; 1990). The ‘idea’ does not constitute a definable literature, though is increasingly subsumed under the rubric of philosophy of education (Noddings, 2011). As with the KS, this literature reveals disciplinary divergence, moving beyond the realm of educational studies. It is an amalgam of philosophical, political and historical reflections about what the university stands for, its aims and purposes, as well as deliberations upon its future (Maskell and Robinson 2002; Bengtsen and Barnett, 2018; Kerr, 1995)². Overarching questions about the ethos, ultimate meaning and purpose for the institution; the ‘idea’ of the university literature is an amorphous collection of works from across the disciplinary spectrum. It is what Peters and Barnett (2018), in a recent exposition and gathering of the vast literature in this area, refer to as an “evolving discipline” which whilst has

² In the face of this intellectual ambiguity there are also important international league tables (e.g. World University Rankings, Times Higher Education) which are increasingly determining what a university ought to aspire to. The indicators of success within such rankings are useful tools to compare with the ‘idea’ literature, as a means to inquire the ends of education and the propose of the university, though this is not presently our interest.

wide ranging disciplinary interests, serves to forge an “integrity of its own” (p.xiv)³. The ‘idea’ of the university is then not a theorisation of what the university necessarily ‘is’ rather what it may possibly ‘be’ through giving meaning and direction to its institutional life (Collini, 2017; Maskell and Robinson, 2002). Barnett (2010) defines the ‘idea’, for example, as ensuring the “highest realisation of the human being” (p.154) and includes philosophising over its purpose/s as well as discerning how it may acclimatise to its social environment. In this sense such work can be seen as a form of commentary over the institutions present and future existence (Bridges, 2000). In this regard, Peters and Barnett (2018), gather the varying discourses on the ‘idea’ literature as being defined by the broad contributions of the German, English, American and French (postmodern) traditions, respectively. Though distinct in terms of the challenges and opportunities which theorists, from these traditions, faced they can nonetheless be embraced by a generous and evolving conception of a literary “canon” within the ‘idea’ literature (p.xv)⁴.

Amongst the most celebrated of these ‘ideas’ for the university remains the ‘liberal’ ideal, framed by educational ideals from antiquity concerning the self realisation of the individual through education (Marginson, 2016; Mulcahy, 2009). As with the ‘idea’ literature more generally, the liberal formulation of the ‘idea’ is itself much debated and lacks precise definition, yet in broad philosophical terms it is concerned with an articulation of the university’s purpose as a site for the intellectual, moral and spiritual development of the student, and by extension society (Chaddock and Cooke, 2014). In this reading, the university is a place where reason is not bound by the fetters of non-rationality and that the project of education is the inculcation of ideals which may best help the student reach his or her potential (Roth, 2015). Whilst important contributions have been made in the liberal discussions of the university through its history, two theorists are considered to have helped shape present-day debates. These are the 19th Century thinkers John Henry Newman and Wilhelm von Humboldt, respectively (Gray, 2012). In the case of the former, the university plays a key role in helping personal development i.e. to

³ Peters and Barnett’s (2018) superlative two volume editions on the ‘idea’ of the university literature; one being an anthology of prominent authors on this subject over the past two hundred years, whose substantive and influential accounts have subsequently framed the discourse on the subject matter. The other volume is a collection of leading contemporary accounts of the university in the 21st Century. Taken together, these volumes will help to substantially contribute to the literature both within and outside of educational studies.

⁴ Peters and Barnett (2018) are aware of the challenges laden in referring to such literature in ‘canonical’ terms i.e. of being ossified and unchanging in nature. Their treatment of the subject matter shows sensitivity to this fact. See in particular Vol. I (pp.xv-xix).

form a moral and ‘whole’ person freeing themselves from personal and moral defections. For Humboldt, the formative idea behind education and the university is “to appoint the best intellectuals available, and to give them the freedom to carry on their research wherever it leads” (Fallon, 1980: 19). The consequences of Humboldt’s ideas are threefold; first, increasing importance to original scholarship; second, the idea of academic freedom and third the ordering of the sciences such that the liberal arts or not marginalised by the sciences or medicine (*ibid.*).

The theorising of these theorists regarding the ‘idea’ has endured and contemporary works on the liberal ideals, argues Scott (1998), are only permutations on their initial contributions. In more recent theoretical contributions of the 20th and 21st century theorists such as Jaspers (1960), Weber (2004), Kerr (2001), Barnett (2015), have all promulgated variations of these formative tenets (Marginson, 2016). However, whilst the perseverance of these discourses remain, their relationship to how universities function is often governed by paradigmatically different sets of concerns. As Verger (1986) maintains, equating the ‘idea’ literature with the university’s functioning misses the point that “...universities have always been defined, fundamentally, not by reference to some abstract ideal type, but by the clientele which they attracted and the functions which they fulfilled in a given society, by the market and social demand” (quoted in Beckwith, 2012: 45). Despite this cautionary point, the use of the ‘idea’ literature remains resilient such that the intellectual justifications in its pursuit require neither “explanation nor defence” (Pelikan, 1992: 6). Conceived both as the *modus operandi* for its functioning and *modus vivendi* in its correspondence with the world at large, the ‘idea’ of the university is a concept which has increasingly drawn academic attention. Today, in light of a 21st century world in which the university must acknowledge, compete and/or reconcile with the forces of globalisation, market economics, bureaucracy, governmental pressures and so on, questions over its ‘idea’ remain particularly relevant (Rider, 2018; Marginson, 2016).

Identifying a ‘Gap’ in the Literature

The literature introduced here highlights the rich and disparate discourses that have come to frame the ways in which the study of the university, the ‘idea’ and KS studies are treated. Comparing how each area of research relates to one another is a difficult task, primarily as they partly overlap and are explored in their own distinct disciplinary ways. For example, the

university and its interaction with society has been a persistent feature within the sociology of education whilst reflections on the ‘idea’ of the university can broadly be defined in terms of philosophical writings, whilst finally KS studies are pursued across the boundaries of sociology, economics, managerial sciences, geography, politics and philosophy, respectively.

Within these disparate fields there exists, however, a comity in their interests as they converge on issues related to the university and how it functions in society as well as defines itself. Whilst offering answers to their respective inquiries, the literature leaves hitherto under-conceptualised areas of study as well. Principal amongst these is the treatment of the ‘idea’ of the university in the 21st Century’s as imagined within the KS (Levine, 2017). In other words, the articulation of an ‘idea’ of the university which highlights, responds and announces itself in light of the emerging circumstances of the KS, remains a pressing and an unexplored area (Amaral, 2018)⁵. This does not mean of course that the ‘idea’ of the university is not discussed in reference to diverse and pressing 21st Century contexts such as neo liberalism, globalisation, knowledge economies, geo-politics etc., (Collini, 2017; Barnett, 2018; Marshall, 2018; Barnett and Peters, 2018), only that the particular treatment of the KS, an in-depth understanding its dynamics and challenges and what this means for the university, remains relatively under explored. In sum, the literature on the university, KS and the ‘idea’ respectively, together reveal a gap in the literature which is the primary interest of this thesis.

Primary Research Question

As demonstrated above, the ‘idea’ literature of the university is a conversation with the social context of the institution in an attempt to help postulate and realise its goals and potential. The question that this thesis proposes to address, based on the superintending ‘gap’ in the literature, is ‘what may an ‘idea’ of the university be in the KS context?’ The question is posed as an open ended philosophical inquiry through the use of the indefinite article ‘an’ i.e. *an* ‘idea’ instead of *the* ‘idea’. In other words, the thesis does not intend a proscription of what the ‘idea’ should be,

⁵ An example of this gap in the literature can be found in the formative review of the literature on the KS and university by Välimaa and Hoffman (2008). They identify six key areas for the future study of the KS however, they do not mention in their findings the ‘idea’ of university within the KS. For a similar and prominent example of this gap in the literature, see Barnett (2015).

or will inevitably become, but rather is framed such that its inquiry shall be the result of a particular research investigation leading to specific conclusions and consequences for the university. The question furthermore draws together three literatures; the study of the university in modern society, KS theorising, and the ‘idea’ of the university to coalesce and offer a way for them to dialogue and express a vision for the 21st Century university.

Ancillary Research Questions

To help give definition and specificity to the primary research question, further questions are required to differentiate the proposed ‘idea’ which I shall propose in this thesis with regards to other extant ‘ideas’ as well as its potential consequences for the educational studies literature more generally. Related to the above, two questions here are follow up inquiries to provide further details of the ‘idea’ to be proposed in this thesis and tackle practical issues related to its application and future. These questions a) ‘how does the proposed ‘idea’ compare with the classical ‘liberal idea’ of the university?’ and b) ‘what are some of the future possibilities for the proposed ‘idea?’

The first question gives prominence to the liberal ‘idea’ of the university because of its importance in the literature. In comparing the proposed ‘idea’ of the university in the KS to that of the liberal idea, the intention is to mark out differences and similarities where they exist, so as to help refine the thesis’ proposal in light of the normative place and importance given to this concept. Secondly, investigations into the future of the proposed ‘idea’ intend to explore its potential advantages and challenges in the KS, and what the university might need to consider in order to apply the concept. Taken together, the primary research and ancillary questions bring together three distinct literatures for critical analysis. Exactly how they shall be approached and answered requires methodological reflection. These concerns form the next part of the Introduction.

Definition and Exposition of Key Terms

As mentioned above, the ‘idea’ of the university encompasses a broad literature which draws upon sociological and philosophical work within and outside of educational studies (Higton, 2012). The following are the key terms employed in the thesis.

University

Despite its social and historical significance, what a university is remains an ongoing debate within higher educational studies (Denman, 2005). For example, Trench (2012) argues that we cannot speak of ‘one’ system governing the university but rather it subsists in a plethora of competing ideas and discourses which constitute the institution⁶. A formal definition of the university infers it to be an institution of “higher education offering tuition in mainly non-vocational subjects and typically having the power to confer degrees” (OED). In the UK, and derived from the *Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy* (2017), this encompasses post-compulsory degrees for varying kinds of institution which include universities, university colleges, as well as higher education colleges. In the present thesis, I am interested in the ‘university’ as a generalisable term which may be applied to a number of contexts and cases (as is often used in the literature on the ‘idea’). Given this, it is important to highlight the shared features of the institution that apply across geographical boundaries i.e. a theoretical study informed by sociological insight. These features include the institution’s teaching, knowledge production and dissemination functions. In sum, the university will be referred to as a post-compulsory educational institution which has advanced teaching, knowledge production and dissemination functions in society.

Knowledge Society (KS)

⁶ The designations given by the literature for ‘university types’ run in conjunction with guidelines and acts mostly derived from governments. In the UK, for example, this is commonly designated to the Education Act (1992), which is arguably a watershed moment in HE policy, helping to firm up a division between ‘new’ and ‘old’ universities (Tight, 2011b) via the recognition of the former ‘polytechnics’ as universities.

Despite the increasing interest in the idea of a KS it remains an “incoherent phenomena” (Scott, 2005). Part of the reason, according to Stehr (2003), for it lacking definitional clarity is that knowledge “is [an] almost invisible component of production ... Knowledge is made of more or less ‘qualitative constituents’ ... which have hardly been specified successfully” (p.4). Another problematic definitional feature of the KS comes into being on account of its sociological status namely, as compounded by reference to similar ideas - most prominently – alternative ideas such as a Knowledge Economy (Ranga and Etzkowitz, 2013), Knowledge Based Economies (Murphy, Peters and Marginson, 2009; OECD, 1996), Information Society (Castells and Himanen, 2002), or Network Society (Castells, 1996; 2015; Sexton, 2010) .

Considering the Knowledge Economy, the literature often refers to knowledge expansion in a limited ‘economic’ and utilitarian sense, whereby it has use-value for national economies (see, Department of Innovation and Skills, 2016; OECD, 1996). The Information Society, and to a lesser degree the Network Society thesis deal with the particular rise of information technologies and its impact on social communication to act as nodes in an increasingly global as well as ‘localised world’ (Castells, 2015; Ritzer and Smart, 2003). Therefore, the idea of the KS is a general encompassing term incorporating such features⁷.

When defining the distinction between previous societal forms and the modern KS, Stehr (2003) argues the KS is a specific apprehension of “the material foundation of social action [wherein it becomes] displaced by a symbolic foundation” (p.4). Due to our social relations and dependency upon knowledge, the KS is not considered a ‘new’ form of sociation (social organisation) but an ‘emerging’ one (UNESCO, 2016; Fuller, 2007b) which organises society around the symbolic and empirical legitimacy of knowledge. In other words, whilst all societies have ‘used’ knowledge in varying ways, the KS’s distinction lays in the relatively new power knowledge takes as it becomes the motivator for, and claims of symbolic significance within the 21st Century⁸. The use

⁷ The various and extensive treatment on the subject distinguishing the Knowledge Economy and KS is not our concern presently. For a particularly perceptive account of the preferencing of the former by international agencies (such as the World Bank) see May (2011) and Robertson (2009).

⁸ For example, in the 19th Century J.S. Mill wrote in favour of increases in knowledge leading to social progress when he writes “an increase in wisdom [to be read as the *use* of knowledge], makes social progress somehow, inevitable” (1996: 49). Where civilizations have always been interested in the creation, growth and dissemination of knowledge (Diamond, 2013) to call modern societies exclusively ‘knowledge based’ may seem platitudinous as well as anachronistic if an

of knowledge to produce wealth, culture and define political discourse as well being a determiner for social distinction are all factors which help shape the concept. The KS will therefore be defined in this thesis as an emerging form of social organisation, distinguished principally by its reliance on the conception, production, dissemination and use particularly of advanced knowledge.

Knowledge

In the context of the KS, knowledge has specific social relevancy as a means for organising labour and capital. Knowledge is differentiated from information which is “data [made] intelligible to the recipient” whilst knowledge is the “cumulative stock of information and skills derived from use of information” (Burton-Jones, 1999: 5). In this thesis, knowledge is used as broadly encompassing a primary means for social organisation in the KS. This refers to its macro function in the KS, whilst it is also the use of information for given (multiple) ends, essential to the university’s functioning, as a producer and disseminator of knowledge.

Academic Literature

For purposes of the research design (see below) the academic literature on the university and the KS is divided into ‘general’ and ‘specialised’.

General Literature. This refers to the educational studies literature as well as sociological and philosophical work dealing with broad social, economic, cultural, governmental, technological changes in the late 20th and early 21st Century and its myriad affects on the university. This literature may therefore not deal with the KS explicitly, though it considers a range of social changes which affect the ways in which the university operates.

essentialist definition of the KS is employed. For example, Platonic Athens, Abbasid Baghdad, Renaissance Florence etc. could all be designated as serving as examples of early ‘knowledge societies’. See Mokyr (2002).

Specialised Literature. This refers to academic work which explicitly investigates KS theory and those who investigate the role of the university within the KS.

The ‘Idea’ of the University

Whilst discussions about the purposes or guiding principles of the university may be garnered from university ordinances, charters and similar documents (Riddle, 1989), the question over its ‘idea’ is, however, a general philosophical discussion referencing the institution’s aims, purposes and goals (Maskell and Robinson, 2012; Mulcahy, 2008). Due to the philosophical literature and speculative nature to which the ‘idea’ belongs, there are no formal definitions of the term (Mill, 2007). Use of the term itself can be traced to 19th Century thinkers Cardinal John Henry Newman and Wilhelm von Humboldt, who discuss, albeit from different intellectual perspectives and educational interests, the growing demands placed upon universities and the place of a classical liberal education in the institution. More recently educationalists, such as Barnett (2012), have claimed that such discussions still remain an important part of the literature within educational studies. Therefore, in attempting to articulate an ‘idea’ of the university in the KS, the thesis shall not focus on a particular university case study but on the institution in general philosophical terms (as does the extant literature). This is to reflect the literature’s treatment of the subject matter and also to present the possibility of recommendations from the thesis to potentially apply to a range of empirical cases. A working definition of the term shall be as a theorisation about not what the university necessarily ‘is’ but rather what it may possibly ‘be’ through giving meaning and direction to its institutional life. It is therefore a proposal about the purpose/s of the university as well as how it may engage with its social environment.

Methodology

The aim of this thesis is to create an ‘idea’ for the university within the emerging KS context. In so doing, this kind of research can be classified by what Noro (2000) terms a “third type” of social analysis namely, that which deals with issues of a new epoch within the social world. In methodological terms this translates as an ‘explorative’ investigation (Tight, 2012) encountering

a new or emerging field and which in this thesis refers to placing the concept of the ‘idea’ of the university into conversation with the emerging KS context. To conduct this research, the thesis is framed by epistemological (social realism) and sociological (neo-institutionalism) perspectives, respectively.

Epistemology: Social Realism

The epistemological position adopted for the research is social realism. This concept, emphasises specifically the socially created nature of phenomena and their meanings in social life (Young, 2007)⁹. Concepts, ideas, and objects, present themselves as reified social forms to us, often masking their ‘constructed’ nature, and within these emergent realities the researcher both decodes as well as contributes to the process of construction (Moore and Young, 2001). This position can be summarised by its commitment to “...(a) the intrinsically social and collective character of knowledge production, (b) the complexity of intellectual fields and the processes of knowledge production and transmission, and (c) the asymmetry between cognitive and other interests that are involved in knowledge acquisition and production” (p.456). The thesis will argue from a similar position namely, that social institutions, such as the university, and ideas about society, are social products¹⁰ yet they nonetheless appropriate an existence which is objective to us, thus being ‘real’. These concepts are therefore points of reference which are in a continual process of being created, reformed and re-appropriated in the social consciousness. This does not mean however, an epistemological collapse into relativism is inevitable wherein no substantive claims can be made about the social world. Rather it encourages us to see the world, and in particular, how actors, institutions, culture help to create it.

⁹ For example, Reed’s (2008) insightful analysis of the theoretical split within realist (sociological discussions) as between *strict* and *reflexive* realism is of particular importance in this regard. Where the former relates to a sociological naturalism that infers a theoretical unity through use of “universal social mechanisms,” reflexive realism, conversely, differentiates between society and nature so that creating a “historicized conception of mechanism” (p.102). For Reed this form of realism ultimately inclines towards *ontological* theory, which places realism in search of discursive pragmatism in *absentia* of scientific certainty (in lieu of post-Kuhnian epistemology). For arguments in ontological necessity of realism within sociology and educational studies see Moore (2013).

¹⁰ For a sociological investigation into social objects and their Durkheimian legacy to ‘social facts’ see Ritzer and Smart (2003).

Sociological Perspective: Neo-Institutionalism

The sociological position taken in this thesis is that of neo-institutionalism. As a perspective focussing on social theories of institutions, neo-institutionalism intellectually orientates itself around questions concerning a) the continuing existence of social institutions, b) the negotiations with their contexts as well as c) how they affect the daily lives of social agents. Originating with the work of Meyer (1977), Meyers and Rowan (1977), Meyer and Scott (1983) respectively, neo-institutionalism focusses on detailing how organisational structures can be seen as not merely reflections of the technical demands that are placed on them by the work that they perform yet are also the products of a wider range of social factors. In this regard, neo-institutionalists question the traditional sociological account of institutions as forming social stability as well as merely reproducing the social order (Meyer, 2007). This school alternatively sees institutions conceived as “deeply embedded” in the social, cultural and political world in which they operate (Powell and Colyvas, 2008). As such, institutions ought to be studied as dynamic agents in the sense of their possibility for directing values upon society (Brinton and Nee, 2002). Baker (2014) summarises this attitude towards institutions as:

building blocks of human society at any time or place. Animated through individuals, a social institution is conceptual and cognitive, not physical (although it has many physical consequences); it is powerful in its control of human behaviour through the production of shared meaning in all realms of human existence (p.11).

This approach arguably creates a “new way to look at the older concept of social institution[s]”, continues Baker, in that neo-institutionalism places “far greater theoretical emphasis on institutions’ production of widely shared cultural meanings instead of as only consisting of highly prescribed and structured social roles and norms, which was the basis of the original institutionalism” (p.12). Hence the ‘neo’ form of this perspective comes via the break with

classical institutional analysis, in that institutions cannot be seen merely as passive nodes in society reflecting social values but rather as potential mediums for social change¹¹.

Neo-institutionalists, focusing on the area of the sociology of education, argue that the role and position of the university is increasingly taking a prominent role in the context of 21st Century global space. Specifically, David Baker (2014) claims further that the university has become a “primary institution” in the KS i.e. an institution which helps shape and transform the culture and experience of that society (rather than merely reflecting or reproducing it). He argues this through the growth of the ‘educational revolution’ which has taken place in the past century whereby increasingly “human value, happiness and self-worth are judged by our success and failure in the educational system” (p.126). This, Baker concludes, is an example of how education, and specifically the university, is becoming a “dominant force” in the 21st Century KS (p.13)¹².

As a sociological account of institutions, its use in this thesis is related specifically to the dynamic view of institutions, specifically to the field of education and the university in particular. Methodologically, neo-institutionalism provides the perspective through which the ‘idea’ of the university shall be created. Whilst this is evident from the thesis title, specifically this means

¹¹ In this regard, it is important to note that the neo-institutionalist account of institutions has been exposed to important critiques related to its treatment of agency and social power (Hasselbladh and Kallinikos, 2000). Relatedly, the question over social change and the role of institutions therein remains a particularly consistent focus of critique. See for example, Hira and Hira (2000).

¹² This does not mean however, that there are no theoretical problems confronting this perspective in lieu of other, and potentially better placed, theories of social institutions. As Zaman (2017) argues, in commenting on Baker’s *The Schooled Society* (2014), a neo-institutionalist “approach seems rather distant from broader sociological inquiry. In other words, having made a number of important observations about 21st Century life, the work [*The Schooled Society*] would have benefited from a stronger theoretical inquiry as to ‘why’ education has become a primary institution in society. For example, reference to Weber, Heidegger, or Simmel would have placed the major arguments within a superordinate context provided by the individualism of modernity, ontic-rationality, bureaucratic modes of life etc., which would have, not least, helped the reader theoretically acclimatize to the sway of change detailed throughout the book. In the arena of sociology of education there is also literature for Baker and the schooled society to contend with, such as the work of Glenn Harlan Reynolds, who claims that higher education has transfigured into an institutional ‘bubble’ that neither has the intellectual fecundity nor the economic flexibility to sustain its present dalliance. In light of such arguments, how a schooled society account may respond has yet to be seen and serves to potentially weaken its overall theoretical lure” (p.309).

using the presumptions of this school to guide the analysis and arguments, ensuring that any ideas and concepts developed are congruent with it. Acting as a heuristic tool, the importance of neo-institutionalism extends to an engagement with the literature on the university and KS and ultimately the proposal for the ‘idea’ of the university in the KS.

Distilling the key assumptions of the school, following the work of Baker and others, can be achieved through subsuming its ideas in relation to ‘institutions’ and ‘knowledge’. Both of these are elements relevant to the university in terms of its significant social position and key function as a prominent producer of knowledge in the KS. In terms of the neo-institutionalist position on institutions, this refers to firstly seeing the university as a primary institution in the KS with influence and dominance. It subsequently holds an essential position in that society due its role to conceive, create and disseminate knowledge. Secondly, the university “socially constructs significant portions of the culture of modern society, rather merely reproducing it” (Baker, 2014: 10). In terms of knowledge and the neo-institutionalist perspective, this can be categorised as firstly being a social product whose cultural influence is of great importance in the KS. In other words, the influence of the university goes beyond the realm of education and into that of culture such that it helps define the KS. Secondly, knowledge is a transformative element in the KS, altering the organisation and function of society and finally, knowledge and culture are intertwined, meaning that the former cannot be reduced to simplistic ideas and remains a dynamic element in the KS. This categorisation of the school’s ideas on institutions and knowledge shall be formative in the first part of the thesis specifically in reference to critically analysing the broad academic literature on the KS and university.

Thesis Summary and Structure of Argument

This thesis shall explore the university’s ‘idea’ in the KS through a postulation of what its goals and purposes may be in the 21st Century. As such, it is not a prescriptive or determinist account of such ideals i.e. claiming what the university should or will inevitably adopt but rather proposals for what it may become. In so doing, the thesis aims to present possibilities which lay ahead for the institution via a thorough exposition of its social, KS, context. As such, the primary research question of the thesis is ‘what may an ‘idea’ of the university be in the KS context?’. Further to

this, two ancillary research questions aim to provide a fuller engagement with the wider literature on the ‘idea’ as well as aim to help define the proposals developed in the thesis. These ancillary questions are a) ‘how does the proposed ‘idea’ compare with the classical ‘liberal idea’ of the university?’ and b) ‘what are some of the future possibilities for the proposed ‘idea?’

To respond to these research questions, social realism and neo-institutionalism are two perspectives providing the methodologically framework for the analysis and shall inform the proposal for the ‘idea’. Firstly, the epistemological position of social realism is employed as an overarching attitude towards knowledge, its production and use in society. Laying between objectivism and relativism, the use of social realism in the thesis acknowledges the socially constructed and discursive nature of knowledge. This specifically means that the university, whilst confronting us an objective, or ‘real’ institution, in social space is itself in a constant state of reconfiguration and change in light of the social world it inhabits. Similarly, the ‘idea’ is in an open and iterative process of meaning construction and the analysis which will lead to its composition, in this thesis, shall likewise be a particular enunciation of ideals which may aid it to exist (and thrive) in the KS. Thus any proposed ‘idea’ in this thesis must realise its constructed, non-objectivist nature, such that we may speak of *an* ‘idea’ of the university and not *the* ‘idea’ of the university. The sociological perspective of neo-institutionalism provides on the other hand, the means to think about institutions, especially the university, in terms of their role and importance in post-industrial societies. This is of significance in lieu of assessing the claims and ideas made in the literature and expecting or rejecting them if they conflict with those of this school. It is in this sense that any proposal for the ‘idea’ university made in this thesis will conform with the general theoretical presumptions of the neo-institutionalist school.

The thesis is divided into three parts i) critical review of the literature ii), methodology in constructing the ‘idea’ and finally iii) proposal and elaboration of an ‘idea’ of the university. To this end, Chapter 1, ‘Critical Background and Context: The University and Knowledge Society’, explores the KS within the ‘general’ (see Definitions above) academic literature. This literature is presented by splitting the review into three parts. The first sections investigate the literatures treatment of the university and its relations with society (internalist relations), and then society’s relations with the university (exogenic relations). There are, of course, many ways to conceptualise the relations of the university with society, and this particular formulation does not intend to simply create didactic relations but incorporate the differing ways the literature

conceives the university in relation to its social context. Thereafter, both internalist and exogenic views from the literature shall be compared with the neo-institutionalist perspective to conclude with summative statements made about the ‘general’ literature. The third, and final section, is a comparison of the claims within the general literature and the neo-institutionalist school. Where there are commonalities between the literature and the neo-institutionalist school, the analysis moves to the next, specialised literature, chapter. However, where discrepancies exist in the literature’s estimation of the university and the neo-institutionalist school (for example, where the literature sees the university as not having an important role in society), it is firstly designated as a ‘problem’ which then needs to be named before progressing to the specialist literature (Chapter 2). Chapter 1 then concludes having made a categorisation of the ‘general’ literature in light of a comparison with the neo-institutionalist school.

Chapter 2, ‘Literature Review: Nico Stehr and the KS’, explores this categorisation through an engagement with a specialist in KS theory, Nico Stehr. Stehr’s ideas shall be compared with the categorisation of the general literature in Chapter 1 as well as with those of the neo-institutionalist school. Where there is a disjuncture between Stehr and the neo-institutionalist perspective there is a call upon broader social theory to help better fit the ideas with the neo-institutionalist school i.e. to resolve this disjuncture. This chapter will conclude the literature review and provide a summative theoretical account defining the KS context.

Having arrived at a theory of the KS context which is consistent with the ideas of the neo-institutionalist school Chapter 3, ‘Methodology and Framework: Towards an ‘Idea’ of the University’, shall elaborate upon a method for creating an ‘idea’ of the university. This it shall do so by identifying key works from the extant literature on the ‘idea’ and assessing whether any similarities can be found which would help in constructing a method for creating an ‘idea’. Having done so, the second part of the chapter further builds upon this pathway towards the ‘idea’ and concludes with questions for the ‘idea’ in light of its KS context.

Chapter 4 identifies an ‘idea’ of the university. Attending to the primary research question therefore, the chapter considers what this ‘idea’ may entail for the university in terms of its three prominent institutional functions in terms of pedagogy, social position and research (see Definitions above). Finally, Chapter 5 is dedicated to the two ancillary questions of the thesis and is divided between a comparison of my proposed ‘idea’ with the classical liberal university (specifically the work of John Henry Newman and Wilhelm von Humboldt) as well as a

rumination upon its possible (both positive and potentially undesirable) futures. In terms of the latter, the discourse shall converse with my proposed ‘idea’ with broader questions in intellectual history such as the role of ideas in the public sphere, factors which affect their longevity as well as the possible unintended consequences of the ‘idea’ in the KS.

Finally, the ‘Thesis Conclusion’ draws together the threads of the arguments developed in the thesis by summarising their findings and points towards the social significance of the ‘idea’ in an increasingly globalised world in which the university has a prominent social presence. Having identified an ‘idea’ in the KS through a substantial engagement with the literature; expounding upon new horizons for the institution in the 21st Century, my proposal intends to be a novel and fecund discourse within the broader literature surrounding universities in the contemporary world.

Contributions of the Thesis

This thesis, in answering its primary and ancillary research questions, attempts to present key contributions to the field of educational studies and beyond. The first of these contributions relates to the general research on the ‘idea’ of the university in the emerging KS context and which has special significance not only for educational studies yet also for the growing importance to the global academic community. In this regard, the primary research question stands as an uncharted domain within educational studies. For example, whilst research in the field of the ‘idea’ of the university in 21st Century receives much attention, there is yet to be an investigation dealing specifically with the KS context. The primary thesis question cannot therefore take for granted that the ‘idea’ will be the same as in previous eras, rather it requires its own tailored and substantive inquiry within the KS milieu. In postulating an ‘idea’, this first contribution of the thesis to knowledge is also important due to the potential questions it opens for educational studies and the extant literature on the ‘idea’. Amongst these being the challenges and opportunities facing the university in the 21st Century.

Another contribution of this thesis refers to methodology and in particular creating a schema (method) for the ‘idea’ of the university. This is explicitly the aim of Chapter 3 wherein the literature on the ‘idea’ shall be used to evaluate the possibility of identifying commonalities to create an ‘idea’. Therefore, having made explicit that which has hitherto been part of the

literature, this exercise aims to lay a conceptual road map allowing for comparisons between ‘ideas’ based on a common methodological framework. Comparisons of this kind may also allow for more analytic precision regarding the progression of the analysis and critical assessments on how other theorists have come to their conclusions with regards their respective ‘ideas’. Developing such a model would be an original and timely contribution to knowledge due to it having not been done before as well as creating a way to compare the often disparate literature on the ‘idea’ which exists across a number of disciplinary fields.

There are also important contributions to be made towards theories of the KS. As an emerging form of societal organisation, a neo-institutionalist perspective shall form the basis from which to evaluate the claims of the academic literature. Using the double-pronged approach of the ‘general’ and ‘specialised’ literatures dealing with KS-university relations (Chapters 1 and 2) is intended to further our understanding of the varying ways by which the university is affected/affects its social contexts, and to contribute to the theorising of the KS more generally. In so doing, I intend to offer a fresh perspective on the growing literature on the university and its role within the KS.

There are moreover, sociological contributions of the thesis which refer specifically to the sociological school of neo-institutionalism. Whist the school shares a desire to understand the development, continuation, and complex life of institutions, the concept of the ‘idea’ of the university remains undeveloped by such theorists. The present thesis intends to generate an important contribution to this literature by using the formative presumptions of the school and converse them with the university’s ‘idea’ as a way of thinking about how it may function in the KS. Through offering an ‘idea’ of the university within a neo-institutionalist framework therefore, I intend to contribute new ways to how the university may be conceptualised by neo-institutionalists as well as to augment and challenge prevailing theoretical accounts within and outside this school. To this end, the sociological underpinnings of the thesis, through neo-institutionalism, shall converse with broader enquiries concerning questions of purpose and place of the university in the 21st Century.

Finally, in light of how institutions operate, the two ancillary research questions shall also provide important comparisons with the classical liberal ‘idea’ and the proposed ‘idea’ in this thesis. In so doing, key questions over what is the future relevance of the liberal university in the 21st Century and what its value are will help to place my proposed ‘idea’ into a broader

philosophical discussion on the liberal ‘idea’. Moreover, the possible futures of the ‘idea’ intends to surface existing debates in intellectual history about how ideas in the social world operate as well as perpetuate; how may they create the inverse of their intended goals etc. Such questions will help place my work into a broader conversation within intellectual history and the philosophy of ideas, more generally.

Chapter 1: Critical Background and Context: The University and Knowledge Society

Chapter Introduction: Reviewing the University and KS's relations

Conceptualising and explicating the role of the university in society is a longstanding and formidable task within educational studies (Marginson, 2016). Part of the difficulty emerges from the often nebulous ideas related to how one might understand ‘society’ as well as the evolving constructs which define the ‘university’ (Denman, 2005). Apart from such nomenclatural obstacles, more recently research into this area has been confronted by what Barnett (2018; 2010) calls the ‘supercomplexity’ of the modern world. This is a situation in which traditional ideas regarding society, and its institutions, become blurred due to macro changes brought about through social, economic and cultural revolutions – and for the purposes of this thesis those that have reshaped societies over the course of the late 20th and early 21st Centuries.

Within the study of the KS this has been exacerbated, as shown by an early and prominent study from Delanty (2001), that in the KS “knowledge ... has ceased to be something standing outside society, a goal to be pursued by a community of scholars dedicated to the truth, but is shaped by many social actors under the conditions of the essential contestability of truth” (p.105). Due in part to these changing circumstances, the study of the university and its relationship to the KS has expanded via broad disciplinary interests (Tight, 2012; Barnett, 2013b; Ranga and Etzkowitz, 2013). To this end, Brennan and Teichler (2008), argue that the “growth of research interest in higher education is also partly a function of higher education’s enormous expansion in recent decades so that today its character and performance have large implications for all members of society, whether or not they engage directly with higher education” (p.259). Highlighting prominent areas of academic research within educational studies, they conclude “higher education and the needs of the knowledge society” presently rank the highest within contemporary research (*ibid.*).

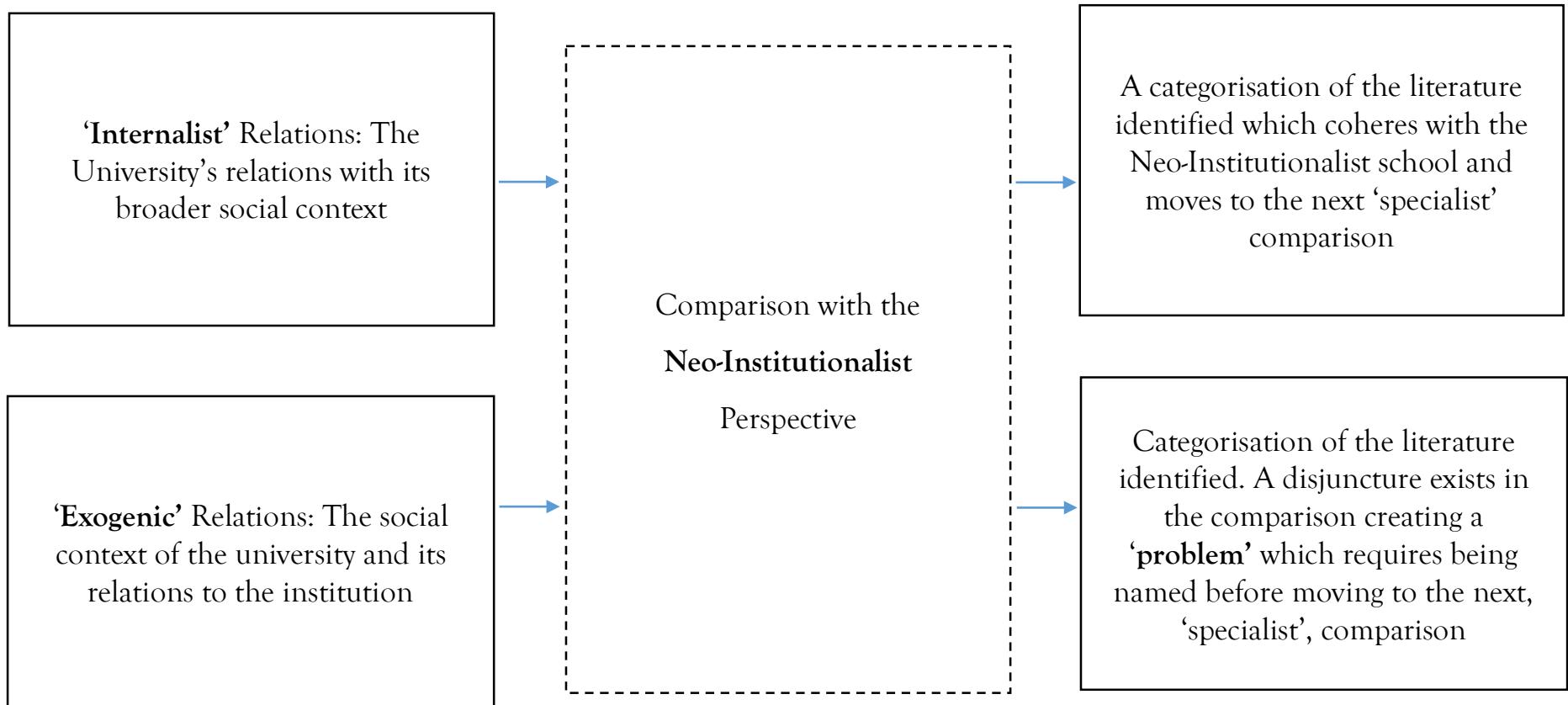
The intention of this chapter is to critically review the ideas and theories that emerge from such research by firstly focusing on the ‘general literature’ on the university and its modern context. This refers to areas of research outside as well as within the field of educational studies, but which may not explicitly identify the KS and references the university’s position in society in lieu of larger macro changes nonetheless. In specific terms, literature to be reviewed here includes, though is not limited to, that which deals with the KS as a Knowledge Economy or Information Society in late modern society and post modern societies etc. This broad articulation of the

context and how it relates to the university are variously investigated through social, economic, political, educational practices.

Specifically, the critical review of the general literature is analysed between that which deals with university-society relations by splitting it into ‘university-KS’ relations and then those of ‘KS-university’. The former is an *internalist* view (university-KS), conceived as the university’s position to the social world, whilst the latter, *exogenic* view (KS-university), is one which is drawn from discourses outside the university (for example, from governments, industry etc.). Moreover, the internalist arguments are divided between the literatures which a) attempt to define the social context of the university and those which address b) how the university has institutionally come to respond to these challenges. The exogenic literature identifies key political and economic cases and how the university’s relationship to them is subsequently conceived. The internalist and exogenic perspectives form only two ways of thinking about the general literature. This is not to place limits on the respective relationships into a strict dichotomy since ‘society is in the university and the university is in society’ (Skolnik, 1989). A demarcation between the two in this manner represents only a methodological decision to study the complex relations whilst at the same time appreciating that there is no false dyadic between the ‘inner and outer’ world of the university.

After this phase, general categorisations of the literature are made and compared with a neo-institutionalist perspective to keep the analysis within the remit of the specific methodological frame. Where there is congruity between the neo-intuitionist view and the literature, the latter shall progress to the next phase of the review i.e. the specialist literature on the KS. However, where there is an incongruity, a categorisation shall be made in terms of a ‘problem’ which is then used as a basis for analysis in the following analysis. The analytic narrative of the chapter can be represented in the following three phases

Diagram 1. Summary of Chapter 1: ‘General Literature’



PART I: 'INTERNALIST' RELATIONS: THE UNIVERSITY AND ITS SOCIAL CONTEXT

Critical Literary Summary of the Internalist Literature: Affects upon the University

An internalist conception is defined by the literature's treatment (from within and outside of educational studies) of the university as it attempts to negotiate its many and varied relations with the social world. It is for this reason that the literature's treatment of such intersections are both vibrant and complex (Nixon, 2013). There are a number of ways through which the literature discusses these relations, and as mentioned in the chapter introduction, not all make direct reference to the KS but rather have an appreciation of how the university is increasingly presented with new challenges in a world of growing and unprecedented change (McGettigan, 2013). The following features of the literature will be the primary areas for our concentration and include the 'economics' of the university; 'critiques' of the University; 'organisation' of university life and 'research' in the university, respectively.

These themes of research converge on the university's relations to broad scale social changes and are reflected in the general literature's discourses. Whilst they do not represent the entirety of the debates extent in the literature, they are themselves derived from, and identified as being, key areas of academic research on the university (Tight, 2012; Tight, 2008; Tiechler, 2002). They therefore represent discussions and discourses in broad academic fields and can help us understand the ways in which they conceptualise and treat these topics.

The 'Economics' of the University

Amongst the most vigorously debated themes in the internalist responses to changes in the broader social world of the university are those of the impeding *economic values* and ideologies the institution faces (Ball, 2017; Williams, 2016; Couldry, 2010, 2011). Variously termed

‘marketization’ (John and Fanghanel, 2015), ‘neoliberalism’ (Olssen and Peters, 2005), ‘academic capitalism’ (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997), ‘economic globalisation’ (Chang, 2011), this subset of the literature explicates the economic discourses framing the functioning of the university. Due to the many areas by which such discourses interact with the institution Franghanel (2012), in a review of the literature, argues that they are better thought of as a general propensity towards a mode of governance which successfully promotes market principles of ‘flexibility’, ‘choice’ and ‘accountability’ into all aspects of academic life (Deeg, 2013). This includes the adoption of principles, such as ‘streamlining’, ‘innovation’, and the ‘professionalisation of practice and performance’ which come to then direct the institutions reasoning towards means-end forms of rationality (Rizter, 2014; Donoghue, 2008).

Whilst there is no consensus on how such economic values gain prominence in the university, Lucas (2006) maintains that they are “no longer simply the concern of nation states but [are] interconnected within a global space” (p.7). Linking these economic discourses to how they in turn affect the university helps to broaden the discussion towards macro trends of which the institution is part (Baker, 2014). It is for this reason that in a study of economic values and their affects on the university, Parsons and Platt (2013) argue that “...the modern university, especially in its American version ... has become the lead competent of an *extensive process of change* permeating modern society at many levels” (p.3, emphasis added)¹³. Whilst these ‘extensive processes’ have been accounted for by dynamics such as communicative technological advances, free market trade, cheapening air travel, the internet, and so on, it is economics which stands as a dominating factor steering such changes (Marshall, 2018; Williams, 2007). It is therefore economic values which frame, for these theorists, the lens by which the university is also seen to operate and interact with the world around it.

The subtle and not so subtle forces of neo liberal ideology and its affects on the university are distinguished in numerous ways within this literature, and include arguments for the decline in the relative autonomy of the university in society with affects on academic life and the organisation of research, respectively (Ball, 2017; Collini, 2008). Commenting on the rise of ‘academic capitalism’, Slaughter and Leslie (1997) argue that one of its consequences has been the appearance of pan-higher educational policies developed by nation states promoting university education, yet also, paradoxically, creating capitalistic approaches to research and

¹³ A good example of this rhetoric can be found in UNESCO’s, Global Mentoring Reports. See especially, *Education for All by 2015: Will we make it?* (2008).

funding. This has led to a favouring of applied sciences due to the profitability of such research for industry (Smith, 2012), and is administratively structured around principles of market competition. Commenting on these trends Smith observes that in recent history:

Tertiary education policies in all countries moved towards science and technology policies that emphasized academic capitalism at the expense of basic or fundamental research, towards curricula policy that concentrated moneys in science and technology and fields close to the market ... towards increased access at lower government cost per student, and toward organizational policies that undercut the autonomy of academic institutions and faculty (p.55).

The consequences of HE policy and its underlying economic proclivities are also attributed to transnational agreements on university academic policy. For example, the Bologna Process, which helps align academic programs towards bureaucratic structures, academic qualifications and timelines provides a basis for resource sharing (Terry, 2010). Such ‘universalising’ policies have been attributed to the rise in neo liberal ideologies and framed by the desire for freely competing academic markets (Altbach and Knight, 2007). This trend relates to a concomitant “university branding” process (Chapleo, 2011) and the profitability of creating ‘franchise’ policies in higher education which has recently seen the rise of international “satellite universities” (Sexton, 2010)¹⁴. The correspondence between state policy and its influence by neo liberal values has arguably influenced the ways the university functions. The need to achieve such competitive advantage creates, what Hall (2016) calls, a ‘Uberification’ process within the university as well as society more generally. This process he defines as the:

...for-profit sharing economy [which] acts on far more than the sphere of labor. It acts even on those elements of life that used to be beyond the control of the corporation—underused assets in those most private of spaces, people’s homes and cars—but also their sociability, their modes of self-presentation, their personalities. It is not just a political and economic system of management and control, then; it is a psychological one. In fact, the sharing economy is a regime of subjectification designed to produce a specific form of self-preoccupied, self-disciplining

¹⁴ In particular, the establishment of NYU (USA), UCL (UK) and Sorbonne (France) campuses in Abu Dhabi, Dhabi, Qatar, Hong Kong amongst others, stands as landmarks in this trend. The phenomena being defined by John Sexton, President of NYU, as the shifting of “idea capitals” so that “the most successful universities will be those that incubate and attract cosmopolitan citizens of global civil society – that is, those who shape and populate the world community, functioning within and among the idea capitals of the world, simultaneously making them and shaping them” (2010).

subjectivity: that of individuals who function as if they are their own freelance microenterprises (p.21).

The ‘economic’ impulse in modern universities has been recognised as a significant factor in how the institution chooses to relate to the world more generally (Gibbs, 2017). For such theorists, the ‘economic’ justification for the university is a superordinate set of arguments which dominate the way the university exists in the 21st Century (Collini, 2017). We may argue this summary of the literature, and the following topics, are inherently linked to such economic debates. In other words, whilst internalist discourses vary in the social, cultural, political etc. factors affecting the university, the economic ‘presence’ is never far (Ball, 2017).

Organisation of the University

Following on from the economic, there has been a parallel growth in research on the particular ways in which university functions are being increasingly modelled on corporate standards of organisation. Knapp and Siegel (2009), explain that the literature’s emphasis in this area is connected to what they argue is an

...entrepreneurism [which] has been a logical extension of the steady corporatization of academe in the past century, a phenomenon that also had its beginnings in the United States. But it also comes with a thirst to be a player in a worldwide marketplace that is driven by the commodification of knowledge. The corporate culture of the university is defined by *knowledge as having largely exchange value, with incentives and management bureaucracies adapted from commercial businesses* (p.3, emphasis added).

Within this area of research, concepts such as ‘entrepreneurism’ or ‘managerialism’ act as a means to explain the changes occurring in the organisational culture of universities brought about by economic and neo liberal ideologies (Couldry, 2011). The significance to the literature of these developments can arguably be measured by the emphasis it is given, as Jongbloed (2008) argues, to act as an umbrella for changes affecting the university and its functions. This can be observed more precisely in the ways that the academic literature conceptualises the often delimiting affects of such developments on the institution (Jongbloed and Salerno, 2008). As management styles and corporatisation become the zeitgeist of the modern university, other perspectives, and

traditionally non-utilitarian discourses, are less readily conceived as offering financial externalities to the institution (Hodgson, 2012).

Again, whilst there is no consensus on this issue within the literature, the growth in economic rhetoric by governments and others can be measured by the criticism levied at such trends from within the academy (Benkler, 2006; Stevens, 2013). The accommodation for ‘management ideas’, though a simplification of the complex processes, nonetheless provides frontiers from which to analyse economic ideologies permeating the university (Akira, 2007)¹⁵. As academic responses remain critical and dubious of such trends (Apple, 2012), this literature would contend that universities themselves increasingly welcome (whether willingly or otherwise) the presuppositions of economic philosophies of corporatism and neoliberal ideas (Ball, 2017).

Related to this area is also the identification of the specific manner in which the organisation of universities is affected by such trends. This includes, though is not limited to, pressures on academics to increase research output and meet publishing goals, the rise of non-academic responsibilities, greater individual accountability of work expenses, spaces (offices) and shortening of work contracts and increased job insecurity (Ball, 2017; Barnett, 2013b; Archer, 2008). Placing these trends together, a sentiment towards academic life emerges which is the increasing ‘trauma’ faced by the profession (Franklin, 2009). This is reflected in research over the past 20 years focussing on the psychological affects on both teachers and students in universities (Berger and Seeber, 2016).

In concluding the challenges presented here represent some of the concerns the university faces in lieu of its institutional life. The intention has here been to review some of the specific ways by which these challenges have been researched and whilst the uniqueness and ultimate strength of the university remains in its ability to embrace challenge (Scott, 2006), the problems categorised here arguably offer unique challenges to the university as a 21st Century institution (Ball, 2013; Deem, Hillyard and Reed, 2007).

¹⁵ Derrida’s (1983) acclaimed account, inspired by Kant and Heidegger, criticises these developments calling instead for a “new university of enlightenment” which must seek to render what he calls a “principle of reason” i.e. a self referential reason and cultural deconstructing of the contours of academic life. However, the irony, which does not escape Derrida, is that the French university system, considered a bastion of non-capitalist persuasions, is increasingly capitulating to corporatism in its research and administrative functions. On this matter, see in particular, Szarka (2000) and Feldner and Vighi, (2015).

University Research

The manner in which academic research in the university is arguably being affected by economic values has been well documented and is a prominent area of study in educational studies and beyond (Hoffman, 2016; Parkinson, 2011). Moreover, how and why academic research is affected by such challenges is arguably tethered to the above discussion (Kitson, 2009). Within the UK, for example, governmental evaluations of research funding have been the cause of much academic response. The Browne Review (2011) on higher education funding or the Research Excellence Framework (REF), also run in congruity with a recent historical trend of governmental policy which highlights certain values and ideas about academic research (Stevens, 2003). With increasing emphasis upon the social ‘impact’ of academic research, academic funding is set against this measure such that there must be “demonstrable economic and social impacts that have been achieved through activity within the submitted unit that builds on excellent research … to make a positive *impact on the economy and society* within the assessment period”. (HEFCE, 2009, *para 27a*, emphasis added)¹⁶. Here academic research is measured by criteria often set outside of the university in what John and Fanganel (2015) refer to as the ‘marketisation’ of research. However, the universities, especially older and elite institutions, have been criticised for helping to formulate and thus being complicit with such agendas (Holligan and Shah, 2017). Taken together, these attitudes towards the intellectual activities of academics become the increasing norm with its myriad affects being traced by subsequent presuppositions about what kinds of intellectual inquiry are ‘worth’ pursuing (Harris, 2012; MacIntyre, 2011). Gray (2012), continues by arguing these developments within the 21st Century university have created research paradigms which necessitate an attitude of “keeping up with Jones University”

¹⁶ To highlight this point, amongst the most valued impact indicators offered by REF for academic research are “(1) Production of a portfolio of high-quality, original and rigorous research, including work which is world-leading in moving the discipline forward, innovative work pursuing new lines of inquiry and *actively effectively building on this to achieve impact beyond the discipline, benefiting the economy or society*. (2) Building effectively on excellent research through a range of activity leading to benefits to the economy and society, including an engagement with *a range of stakeholders in developing and conducting its research and applying findings*. (3) A high-quality, forward-looking research environment conducive to a continuing flow of excellent research and to its *effective dissemination and application*. (HEFCE, 2009, *para 26*, emphasis added).

such that it “has stimulated an expensive “arms race” ... for more of everything and *the same of everything* in the academic realm and beyond, where in state-of-the-art facilities, new and improved student services extracurricular opportunities, additional amenities of campus life, or other responses to consumer demand” (p.95, emphasis added). Theorists of higher education have also commented on the rather unexpected consequences of such trends, including Veysey’s (1965) claims that as universities are becoming “more intensely competitive ... they have become more standardized, less original, less fluid” (p.24).

The ‘commodification of knowledge’ hypothesis (Peters, 2007; Peters and Besley, 2006) is an extension of this trend, with academic research conceptualised as a commodity to be bought and sold on the common market. In this light, Burton-Jones (1999) introduces the idea of ‘knowledge capitalism’ to discuss the KS which he defines as thriving on capital “accumulation, open market competition, free trade, the power of the individual, and the survival of the fittest. Since the overthrow of communism, free market capitalism is the only game in town” (p.20). Similarly, Bleiklie (2005) claims that “...higher education comes under pressure to expand the kinds and types of knowledge it provides and to diversify the criteria by which it is judged” (p.48) and occurs through an interaction with the various constitutive ‘knowledge organisations’ in the KS. The affects of such developments have been variously described via the university’s increasing commodification in the KS and can be highlighted through historic comparisons¹⁷. In such a historical study, Williams (2007) summates a trajectory of thought arguing that “...where in the past only propositional knowledge codified by academics was considered valid, in the new economy enabled by information and communications technology, the procedural knowledge of expertise has become a key commodity” (p.511). The approach of seeing knowledge as ‘commodity’ and bearing negative consequences for the university is not new (Shumar and Robinson, 2018a). The necessity, for example, of university knowledge and research to have public value is part of its historical legacy with the distinction made that such theorists today claim that “knowledge shares some features of public goods and can be subjected to commodification both as an educational product and academic research itself ... the simple dichotomy of public vs. private good is not nuanced enough to understand the status of

¹⁷ As a recent and penetrating intervention in the literature by Hoffman (2016) reveals there are no clear defining boundaries between commodification of knowledge and the socially ‘engaged scholar’. Rather the process of commodifying knowledge is a joint endeavour between scholarship meeting the demands of 21st Century university competition as well as macro social consequences of the university’s value in the KS.

knowledge within higher education” (Kauppinen, 2014: 393). Where the possibilities for such nuance exist, there is a more balanced approach to thinking about how academic research is affected by such trends. In this sense, such inquiries can be considered both new and old as debates on knowledge as a commodity are long standing whilst take on a different contemporary relevance with the rise of Knowledge Economy discourses (Mokyr, 2002; Williams, 2007). In other words, the debates presented here are not ‘new’ as the treatment of academic labour as commodity is evident throughout the history of the university. However, a measure of distinction can be drawn if we consider the heightening of these trends in relation to macro social developments in the late 20th Century and early 21st Century (Castells, 2015; Smyth, 2017).

‘Critiques’ of the University

This literature is commonly referred to as the ‘crisis’ of the university (Delanty, 2001) and incorporates a number of theoretical perspectives investigating the broad problems which face the institution (Amilburu, 2014). Reid (2013) argues this is amongst the more substantial areas in the sociological and philosophical study of the university, tracing its roots back to the ‘idea’ literature of the 19th Century. Here, arguments gravitate to the ways in which the university is affected by its social environment and articulates ways to understand and negotiate those circumstances. Unlike the above literature, this is not predicated on principally economic discussions but rather holds a general view of the university in lieu of its relations with the social world it inhabits. Barnett (2013b), Delanty (1998) and Denman (2005), amongst others, respectively, summarise these critiques as a way of thinking about how the literature responds to such challenges. In particular, they create a useful range of arguments which can be divided between ‘liberal’, ‘postmodern’ and ‘globalisation’ critiques of the university, each being a particular standpoint from which to assess the university.

The first of these, the liberal critique, attaches its criticism of the university to the declining cultural and traditional educational role of the university. Finding its origins in the Greek notion of *paideia*, this liberal ideal wishes to see the student grow through acculturation via adherence to traditional disciplinary notions of knowledge, its unity and relation to Truth (Jaeger, 1986). As a prime means for the reproduction and dissemination of culture, today the university loses its claim to provide a traditional liberal learning experience (Bloom, 1987). In

particular, there is a departure from classical ideas of education as ‘liberating’ the mind and endowing it to perform the functions of rational thought i.e. the *sin qua non* of the fulfilled and free life (*ibid.*). An important contribution to this critique of the university comes from Readings (1997), who charts the demise of the liberal ideal of the university and argues it is related to the fact, that “...it is no longer clear what the role of the University is within society nor what the exact nature of that society is, and the changing institutional form of the University is something that intellectuals cannot afford to ignore” (p.2). This critique continues to carry with it legitimacy, as amongst one of the most popular forms to discuss the problems and future of the university (Kontopodis, 2014). Modern forms of the critique also venture into cultural conservatism that has been associated with the liberal ideal. The *Campaign for the Public University* in the UK, for example, approach cultural associations of traditional liberal education with the need to provide large scale higher education for all when it argues:

The consequences of inequality for those not fortunate to go to University is no longer a consideration. Instead, equality of opportunities will substitute for the effects of widening inequalities of outcomes. Nor is it recognised that the creation of a three tier system of higher education will itself create education as a ‘positional’ good in which inequalities in access to the privileged tier will serve to reproduce wider social hierarchies. At the same time, the consequence of graduates paying for their own higher education will be to reinforce their belief that they deserve the higher rewards ... Ironically, the arguments that are used to recommend the privatisation of higher education and a reduced public role for Universities are also arguments that invoke ‘the public’ as a collectivity of taxpayers. The burden of spending falling upon ‘the public’ should be reduced, while we are reminded that ‘we are all in this together’. The Government invokes the ‘Big Society’, but its primary figure is the ‘private individual’ ... The public requires a different vision for higher education, truly a vision that truly expresses a ‘big society’ [...] and where] the essential need ... is the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion. That is *the problem of the public*” [emphasis in original].

The ‘postmodern’ critique, informed by socio-philosophical developments of the late 20th Century, emphasise cultural fluidity and standpoint relativity of truth claims which are themselves in the process of social construction (Mourad, 1997). In reference to the university, this critique draws from the intellectual certainties of the Enlightenment, especially relating to political liberty, reason/rationality and the perpetual betterment of humankind (Berlin, 2000);

ideals upon which the modern university was founded and today have ceased to hold their once prominence (Anderson, 2004)¹⁸.

Whilst such ideas substantially challenge what the university is, these developments need not, however, be viewed as entirely negative. Barnett (2010) for example, argues that the postmodern university is in fact a “liquid” institution which can also be a place of “intellectual freedom, authority and openness by breaking from the confines of intellectual conventions” (p.119). However, questions over where this places the institution and its role in the 21st Century are uncertain as, whilst being freed from traditional structural confines, the university becomes less obviously a relevant site for an intellectual engagement with society (Scruton, 2012). This critique calls into question the university, both in terms of its desire for freedom in an epistemologically and culturally fluid world, as well as freedom from older ideals about what the institution should and ought to accomplish (Scruton, 2016).

The ‘globalisation’ hypothesis is one in which the force of social, economic and political interconnectivity, coupled with the expansion of communicative technologies, ensures that our relation to the world is one inextricably framed by interrelatedness (Scott, 1998; Currie and Newson 1998). Ritzer (2014), a prominent theorist in the field of globalisation studies, argues that the process of globalisation ensures the domination of a particular kind of rationality (means-end) which successfully “...swept[s] across the social landscape because it offers increased efficiency, predictability, calculability and control” (p.123). The affects of such developments

¹⁸ For Derrida (1983), this is expressed by the idea of the communitarian institution, much like the Enlightenment (Kantian) idea of the *sapere aude*, is expressed in the sentiment of the *Community of the Question*. This is reflected in Derrida's personal interest as the first Director of the Collège International de Philosophie in 1984, an institution set up to render the interests of post-modern (and thus post-enlightenment) thought through university education. As such, Derrida's analysis of ‘community’ is expressed by its propensity to “interrogate the essence of reason and of the principle of reason, the values of the basic, of the principal, of radicality, of the *arkhe* in general, and it would attempt to draw out all the possible consequences of this questioning. It is not certain that such thinking can bring together a community or found an institution in the traditional sense of these words. What is meant by *community* and *institution* must be rethought. This thinking must also unmask – an infinite task – all the ruses of end-orientating reason, the paths by which apparently disinterested research can find itself indirectly reappropriated, reinvested by programs of all sorts. That does not mean that “orientation” is bad in itself and that it must be combated, far from it. Rather, I am defining the necessity for a new way of educating students that will prepare them to undertake new analyses in order to evaluate these ends and choose, when possible, among them all” (p.16, emphasis in original).

entail for the university are discussed in a variety of ways within the literature. The ‘globalised university’, argues Neubauer (2013), is an arena in which there are ‘changing ecologies of learning’, each attempting to create a common ethos for the experience of higher education. Whilst Neubauer and others claim positive outcomes of such developments, there are also educational theorists who highlight the negative capacity of globalisation as a form of social domination (Baldwin, 2016). The debate over the university’s ‘response’ to its globalised context increasingly involves the interdependency upon which globalisation stands. Whether one sees the role of the university as reflective of broader economic challenges, or as playing an important mediatory role in the world, both claims agree that the university cannot be ambivalent about the challenges and opportunities globalisation brings (Tiffin and Rajasingham, 2003).

The above review of the internalist literature highlights certain key discourses regarding the university and its social milieu. Whilst this literature review is not exhaustive, it nonetheless aids in creating a picture of academic discourses or the ‘types of university’ literature within educational studies and beyond (Weert, 1999). This is what Välimaa and Hoffman (2008) define as *zeitdiagnose* i.e. a conception of the university as an a-spatial and a-historical institution. Though empirically less useful, it allows one to create formulations of the university to illustrate the ways it can be said to exist within the social changes occasioned by an emerging KS context. The internalistic relations offer important insights into what the university’s relations with society (and by extension the KS) is and how we may understand them. As such, the following are representations of the literatures (internalist relations) responses to these social changes, summarised in Diagram 1.

Comparing the ‘Internalist’ Literature with a Neo-Institutionalist Perspective

The above review of the literature potentially suggests that there is less than an easy fit with the ideas to keep the analysis within a neo-institutionalist perspective. This is due to the fact that the literature points to the increasing dominance and institutional determination upon the university by the social pressures that it faces within a broad 21st Century context. This does not suggest the institution is a non-discriminating recipient of the varying motivations of governments, industry, and so on, but rather only that it seems unable to alter or change the

ways in which it operates. This further suggests that the general literature concedes the university to have increasingly succumbed to superordinate pressures of which it can do little to avoid. And whilst there are also alternate views on the subject which oppose this general stream of thinking, our purpose here is to review the general literature so as to create a summative account. Therefore, whilst such positions are present, they tend to be outliers to the broad trends, and commentary on the study of internalist relations (Tight, 2012). Returning then to compare the literature review to the neo-institutionalist school, its estimations on institutions were identified as firstly seeing the university as a primary institution in the KS with influence and dominance. It subsequently holds an essential position in that society due its role to conceive, create and disseminate knowledge. Secondly, the university “socially constructs significant portions of the culture of modern society, rather merely reproducing it” (Baker, 2014: 10).

From the above, the neo-institutionalist perspective would not deny that the university is facing problems to define, and act, in authentic ways in lieu of the challenges, as claims made by the literature review. It may rather respond with the rejoinder that the resources that the university has are also important factors to consider and which help it to be seen as a determiner, and not merely reproducer, of culture. Therefore, from the internalist perspective, we can see a shift towards the shrinkage of the university in that superordinate contextual factors translate into to a role of the university as being increasingly ‘influenced’ by its position in society. We may infer that this situation entails pressures placed on the autonomy and importance of the institution. To categorise this review of the general literature with more precision, we may conclude that it is a ‘problem of influence’ that the literature gravitates towards. Designating this situation in such terms is a recognition that (a) university-KS relations impede the university’s functions and social position, and (b) that a comparison with the neo-institutionalist perspective renders it outside the purview of this sociological framework. This relationship with the broader social world exists therefore in a delimiting position for the university in the face of pressures it faces from, amongst other elements, sectors of society, government, and industry. The ‘problem of influence’ can then be defined as the result of the categorisation of the general literature which views the university from an internalist perspective i.e. from the view of the university to the social context it dialogues with.

This circumstance is considered a ‘problem’ because of its incompatibility with the neo-institutionalist perspective, which the thesis is framed by. However, the rise of such discourses do not elide alternative and optimistic attempts to understand the position of the university in the KS. For example, Barnett (2018), Delanty (2001) and Marginson (2016), amongst others, argue that the university, far from becoming marginalised in this social context, can be an essential medium for the communicative interconnection embodied by social actors. In this reflexive mode of knowledge production, the university will find new breath to explore, as well as embrace, its capabilities in unfamiliar environments. Delanty (2001) goes on to argues that “...it is true that the new production of knowledge is dominated by an instrumentalization of knowledge and that as a result the traditional role of the university has been undermined, it is now in a position to serve social goals more fully than previously when other goals were more prominent” (p.158). The university can therefore become a site for cultural configuration and communication so that “...the role of the university extends beyond knowledge to participation in and the creation of cultural production more broadly. Cultural citizenship refers to the relationship between self and other, that is the rules governs membership of a culture community. While the state, and more generally political community, is the domain of social, political and civic rights, the growing salience of cultural citizenship is more relevant to the university” (p.157). Again, though such assessments and potentials for thinking about the institution are equally valid, our interest here is to extract ideas and principles which help capture the ways in which the general literature normatively treats the role of the university in the emerging KS.

PART II: 'EXOGENIC' RELATIONS: THE KS MEETS THE UNIVERSITY

The Exogenic World of the University: Governments and the Economy

The relations constituting external or 'exogenic' relations of the university are informed by a number of, often unrelated, sets of interests which mark out the nature of the institutions relationship to the social world. Here the 'external' environment is a panoply of contexts from which the university crafts its relations. Whilst all of these particular nodes of interaction are beyond this present review, the dominant areas of interest in the literature shall be focussed on here. These include two broad areas of interest in the literature namely, i) policy narratives on the University and b) the economy and the university.

Delanty (2001) defines thinking about the university from an exogenic view as "...not just a knowledge producer, but ... also important in shaping and transmitting culture, and ... coming to be a central actor in society. Second, the main social change that we need to note is that because of different rates of change the university has been most affected by changes in the mode of knowledge and changes in the social order." (p.57). The university is perennially challenged with questions over its identity and place in society. However, how this relates to macro-social trends (of which the KS is part) is an emerging area of inquiry within the literature (Alvesson and Benner, 2016)¹⁹. The following review of the diverse literature then reflects the areas of concentration in the relationship between the university with a) government and b) industry (see Tight, 2012; Tight, 2008; Tiechler, 2002). These two areas of the university's interactions with the social world are not intended to represent the entirety of the literature but rather a focus on the 'general' literature.

Policy Narratives and the University

¹⁹ For example, the expansion of universities in the post-war era, for example, has given the institution prominence with increasing importance to national culture (Scott, 2006), GDP (Wolf, 2002), civic engagement (Mcilrath and Labhrainn, 2016), personal fulfilment (Gibbs, 2017) etc.

Questions over how government policy and other forms of state authority control and coordinate universities in the broader milieu of the social world is a continuing source of study in the academic literature (Vögtle, 2014; Bleiklie, 2001; Corbett, 2005). Whilst the national character of policy differs across national boundaries, the first point to be made in reviewing this tranche of educational policy is the increasing convergence (recognised as ‘narratives’ by the scholarship) existing amongst developed societies (Vögtle, 2014). Such convergences, though not identical, help to create a picture of government policies towards the university and the nature of its governmental logics.

Considering firstly, the trajectory of educational policy, the educational historian Scott (2001) comments that the history of British HE policy has had a chequered history of both “triumph” and “retreat”. Post-war efforts, for example, towards higher educational expansion has been motivated by a number of factors, not least to increase social equality, literacy, job preparedness, financial productivity and GDP. Moreover, whilst successive governments in the UK have been able to expand higher education in the post-war era, there is growing pressure to react to increased global competition for students, research and resources (Moodie, 2007; Teichler, 2002). The importance of this inquiry remains, as Tapper (2007) argues, because “...without understanding how higher education is governed, it is impossible to reach meaningful conclusions about policy outcomes for the two are inextricably linked” (p3). However, whilst the study of higher educational policy remains a growing area of academic interest, Trowler (2002) refers to the “complex, paradoxical and essentially ‘messy’ nature of the policy process” as helping to add opacity to the study (p.20).

Amongst the determining elements of investigation in this area is the interplay between what Leydesdorff and Sun (2009) refer to as the ‘triple’ helix of coordination and contestation between ‘university-industry-government’. These help frame attitudes towards the university, allowing for a policy ethos towards the KS to emerge therein. The political theorist, Kenny (2010), tracing post-war policy narratives in the UK, maintains that the rise of political discourses towards the university are the inheritance of a dialogue existing amongst neo liberal intellectuals. He argues that “...the processes whereby ideas that were once deemed beyond the pale of acceptable political discourse have, over time, come to be advocated by actors operating from the centre-ground” (p.1)²⁰. These ideas are arguably those of market-driven capitalist values which

²⁰ For a thorough review of the incorporation of New Right thinking within conservative governments and its affects on social policy in the later half of the 20th Century, see Gray (1994).

have become part of the ways in which the university is treated as an ‘object’ of social policy (Ball, 2017; Bonaccorsi, 2014). Within the British context, and tracing these developments, Stevens (2003) identifies two periods of significance in terms of higher education studies; namely 1944-1997 and 1997-2003²¹. These dates are mirrored by an expansion of HE in the post-war era in Europe (Wolf, 2002) with the first, ‘formative period’, witnessing a growth in the political discourse over the need for universities to become ‘responsive’ to the demands in the labour market²².

Kenny (2010) maintains that today, governmental policy towards the university has ‘made up its mind’ for the institution to be a forerunner in the development of economic prosperity by reducing social inequality²³. The situation in the 21st Century translates, Tapper (2007) argues, to one in which the ‘purpose’ for the university, especially within public discourse and debate, is ‘ritualistically’ attributed to an attitude of promoting primarily economic externalities of the institution²⁴.

These trends suggest an increasingly programmatic attitude towards higher education which is used to further governmental policies for economic and social prosperity²⁵. In so doing, important unanswered questions about the institutional logic of such endeavours remain. Fuller

²¹ There are others who have focussed on additional pivotal periods in British higher educational policy as representing this more clearly. For example, see Ward and Eden’s (2009) demarcation of 1944-1969 and 1970 until the present.

²² Prime Minister James Callaghan’s 1976 speech has been marked as a turning point in the orientation of the liberal left in Britain and specifically its reading as a manifesto for *educative vocationalism* (Blonde, 2010). An apparent comity is found with Tony Blair’s 1996, speech at the same school twenty years later when he says; “like James Callaghan, I will be concentrating on schools. We have set out our thinking on the future of higher and further education”.

²³ Former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher’s own autobiographical commentary in *A Path to Power*, sheds light on this period arguing “the universities had expanded too quickly in the 1960’s. In many cases standards had fallen and the traditional character of the universities had been lost. Moreover, this had occurred at a time when market principles were in retreat and the assumption was near-universal that everyone had a right to a job and the state had the power to give it to them” (1996: 52).

²⁴ Also worthy of note is the political deconstruction of the post-war era in British HE policy by Glennerster and Hills (1997).

²⁵ This trajectory in UK higher education policy in the following white papers and policy documents. For example, 1998 *Education Reform Act: Higher and Further Education* and institutional reorientations of the 1992 *Further and Higher Education Act*. Amongst the major political acts to be researched from this period in the dissertation will include: 1988 *Education Reform Act (II Higher and Further Education)*, 1992 *Further and Higher Education Act*, 1998 *Teaching and Higher Education Act* 2002 *Education Act*, 2004 *Education Act*, 2007 *Further Education and Training Act* and 2009 *A New Framework for Higher education*.

(2007b), for example, inquires into whether the assumed benefits of universities to the economy are justifiable and whether the subsequent move towards neo liberal competition “is the best strategy to ensure their capacity [universities] to produce and distribute knowledge as a public good” (p.12). With the rising importance of knowledge in the Knowledge Economy, the rise of “knowledge policymakers” creates a diachronic relationship between *instrumental* and *institutional* rationality of knowledge. Fuller defines the former as a mean-ends sensibility to the university management in order to reach its competitive goals, whilst the latter are the specific ways in which this can be achieved. Policymakers, he continues, will have to negotiate between the two positions to avoid them being turned into self serving rhetoric from which “instrumentalists focused [are] profits and institutionalists on rent” (p.6).

The rise of such policy narratives are relevant to our understanding of exogenic relations as they show general trends towards the university as a site for the furthering of governmental social policy. This does not obviate the historical trend however, of university importance to political power (Riddle, 1989); rather, it offers ways of seeing coordination with, as well as co-option of, the institution through political means. This has been highlighted by a propensity towards economic externalities that the institution holds for society as well as the means for alleviation of social problems.

The Economy and the University

Having identified the general direction of the development of policy narratives for the university in the 21st Century, one can identify the emphasis towards, amongst other things, economic agendas within such policy (Jabbar et al. 2017). The “triple helix” (Leydesdorff and Sun, 2009) link between universities, governments and the economy has, for example, been used to connect the interplay between the university and its social context. In this interpretation of governmental policy, the manner in which the university is seen as a means for economic externalities is achieved through many vistas. Those described above reveal it to be a public good, for example, having positive externalities through providing social mobility, jobs, reduce inequity, and so on. However, underpinning these social benefits is arguably an economic philosophy, buoyed by the assumption that the ‘products’ of the university are necessary for the development of society and by extension the KS (Ball, 2017; Trowler, 2008). Here knowledge is increasingly seen within the

policy realm as a form of capital to help promote this aim²⁶. These tendencies can be seen in the growth of contemporary HE policy and gauged by, for example, the UK government's White Paper, *Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice* (2016). This paper makes the statement that, for example, "our universities rank amongst the most valuable national assets, underpinning both a strong economy and flourishing society, powerhouses of intellectual and social capital, they create the knowledge, capability and expertise that drives competitiveness and culture, the values that sustain our democracy" (p.5, emphasis added).

As a consequence of these developments, universities have arguably increased their response in like manner, creating a market orientation towards knowledge and credentials. White (2012) summarises a framing position within the literature as a turn in which:

Strict institutional boundaries no longer exist. Thus, for example, the university now competes with other research institutions, think tanks, the research and development departments of private companies, and must therefore identify its specialism, its niche that sets its apart. No special status is inherently attributed to the university. The rejection of the value of expertise can be seen as a further example of this. The educational attainment or professional status of an individual does not in itself have value. Rather, it is the continual accrual of transversal conditions that is an asset today (p.17).

The rise in governmental discourses surrounding the university infer an affinity with its role in national economies and especially the rise of the Knowledge Economy (Mansell and Tremblay, 2013). The forging of the link between the university and its value for the economy cannot be underestimated, as Olssen and Peters (2005) argue, that "the most significant material change that underpins neoliberalism in the twenty-first Century is the rise in the importance of knowledge as capital" (p.330)²⁷. The principle of neo liberalism in higher education has been described in this literature review and constitutes a rise in the institutions "flexibility (in relation to organizations through the rise of contracts); clearly defined objectives (both organizational

²⁶ Whilst this reading of contemporary developments in HE policy may be criticised for harnessing anti-economic or even Marxist proclivities, it is drawn from the growing literature which coalesces often beyond intellectual schools of policy interpretation or ideological leanings (Benkler, 2006). This does not however, make them 'objective' readings of these narratives only that agreements can, and increasingly are, being reached. See for example, The Campaign for the Public University (2017).

²⁷ In this regard Olssen and Peters (2005) clarify that 'knowledge capitalism' and 'knowledge economy' are twin terms that can be traced at the level of public policy to a series of reports that emerged in the late 1990's by the OECD (1996).

and personal), and ... results orientation (measurement of and managerial responsibility for achievement of” (p.324). Whilst the penetration of economic values into the university and the rise of the ‘neo liberal’ university are well documented (Bonaccorsi, 2014), a related inquiry is how the university is ‘perceived’ in its relationship to wider society by such economic narratives.

In this regard, Harris (2012) argues that there is a growing consensus that the university is a key motivator for economic stimulation in knowledge economies. Weber (2006) refers to their importance as a “fourth pillar” in economic dynamism of the 21st Century. The economic assumption here is that the university can be ‘influenced’ by the market, and as such can be controlled for the purposes of economic growth (Duderstadt and Weber, 2006). This is partly the reason why Crouch (2011) concludes in his study of political economy at the beginning of the 21st Century that ‘what remains of neoliberalism after the financial crisis [2008], the answer must be ‘virtually everything’” (p.179). Whilst the persistence of external policy influences on the university have been discussed above, the economic language directed towards the institution ensures what Smith (2012) points to; a ‘market’ mentally which “claims to be the language of perfect rationality: thus it narrows the range of what can be said and thought, driving out the other forms of rationality to which it is the function of education and culture to introduce successive generations” (p.649). Here the university, as indispensable to the KS, is also morphed into presumptions about the limits of its potential. This can be gleaned by a growing number of governmental and supra-governmental reports which help to promote the university’s role in industry. In a UK governmental paper by the Department for Business and Innovation and Skills, entitled *Higher Ambitions: The Future of Universities in a Knowledge Economy* (2009), it was suggested that to meet employment and industry initiative goals there must be “major change in the culture of our higher education system where the focus of expansion has hitherto been in three year full time degree courses. Reflecting demand from learners and employers, those courses will continue to play a central part” (p.4)²⁸. Moreover, Rushton (2001) claims that since the 1980’s there has been a global trend towards a number of problems facing universities related to the growth of knowledge as it becomes an “insurmountable problem” due to the demands in research, finance and government intervention. He continues that “as if all this were

²⁸ A more recent incarnation of this attitude can be found in a report by the same Department namely, *Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice* (2016).

not enough, we see governments demanding greater efforts by universities to make their research and teaching activities more relevant to the economic needs of the region and nation” (p.169).

The University and the Economy

Governmental discourses, as explicated in the literature above, suggest a growing direction in attitudes towards the university’s perception within the KS (Comunian, and Gilmore, 2016). This relates, in part, to changing ideas of governmental roles in society as well as the recognition of the university’s potential to act in the interests of governmental policy and their economic agendas. The fact that industry is marked by an increased propensity to expand its resources to attract and collaborate with universities is also reflective of this turn in exogenic relations within the KS²⁹. This emphasis can be measured by the interest the institution gathers from non-governmental agencies whose energies are:

increasingly directed to understanding the dynamics of the knowledge-based economy and its relationship to traditional economics ... The growing commodification of knowledge and its transmission through communications and computer networks has led to the emerging ‘information society’. The need for workers to acquire a range of skills and to continuously adapt these skills underlies the ‘learning economy’. The importance of knowledge and technology and technology diffusion requires better understanding of knowledge networks and ‘national innovative systems’ (OECD, 1996).

As interest from industry to universities increases, the rise in financial investments continues to the amongst the most promote area for partnership³⁰. Boud and Tennant (2006), for example,

²⁹ Robertson and Komljenovic (2016), on this issue, help explain the importance of seeing the creation of markets within HE as a processes which do not “simply appear as a result of policymaker dictat or policy fiat. And nor do markets – once made – exist in a space which sits outside, or beyond, a society and its complex of institutions and practices. Rather, markets are both made and remade, as new products and services, frontiers and spaces, are imagined, invented, implemented, inventoried, vetted and vetoed” (p. 211).

³⁰ At the University of Cambridge, for example, the drug company Astra Zeneca is set to build [at the time of writing] a new £330m global research centre, making it one of a number of new opportunities offered to the University. Moreover, its ‘Enterprise’ centre boosts that “Cambridge has a worldwide reputation as a place where new technologies emerge, companies are born and products that transform society are developed. Cambridge Enterprise invests the University’s seed funds in new companies started by staff and students, building a bridge between research

identify key features of economic, neo liberal, interest that has come to implicate university functioning in the following ways; 1) linkages between the innovation, research and economic performativity; 2) the provision of new trained labour for the knowledge economies; 3) the nomenclature of universities and defined by the neo liberal tendencies on utility and knowledge production; and 4) the moving away of knowledge creation from the universities. Here ‘neo liberal’ interests create discourses which are not dissimilar to those identified in the previous, internalist relations, section. In particular, these include the documenting within the literature of how the functioning of the university is affected by such trends. The developments of the past thirty years, for example, argues Foray (2000), have created the rise of an ‘economics of knowledge’ i.e. the study and impact of knowledge as based upon decentralised economies. The rise of ‘university-industry’ (IU) collaborations have equally grown such that there is an academic literature attempting to chart and model the ways this is occurring³¹. For example, Rossi and Rosli (2015) emphasise the significance of ‘knowledge-transfer’ (KT) in IU relations as:

... the creation and dissemination of new knowledge underpinning innovation is considered as a fundamental driver of economic growth ... In their role as knowledge producers, universities are increasingly recognised as playing a fundamental part in supporting regional and national growth. Indeed, transferring productive knowledge to the economy has become a “third mission” for universities (p.1970).

The impact of economic and industrial connections with the universities is often difficult to identify because of the nature of ‘investment’ may come in the form of financing of research, human resource exchange, intellectual exchange etc. More recent academic research suggests that research and development (R&D), though ‘positive’ in terms of financial, creative and motivational indicators, the full degree of impact on the university can, Lynskey (2016) argues,

and commercial development” (University of Cambridge, ‘External Affiliations’, 2017). For more analysis on university-industry relations, see Rosalind and Pritchard (2011).

³¹ In this regard, Ankrah (2015) usefully identifies a number of reasons for why ‘university-industry collaborations’ (UIC) may take place which include being derived from ‘necessity’ for the university, ‘reciprocity’ of future benefits, ‘efficiency’ of work that the university may not be able to do on its own. ‘Stability’ refers to financial, intellectual or social stability from collaborations whilst ‘legitimacy’ is also potentially gained, in reference to other universities. In each of these circumstances there are arguably motivating principles underscoring views towards university knowledge.

be measured more completely by the perception of knowledge in such exchanges. In this regard, whilst the “capitalizing on Knowledge” from research institutions is becoming more popular (Lynskey, 2010) there is trepidation towards, the “the extent to which universities and similar organizations [are] dedicated to the production of publicly certified knowledge [... and becoming] strategic actors” (Whitley, 2008: 23). In such circumstances, whilst the university is a key strategic actor in the growing Knowledge Economy (Deiaco, Hughes and McKelvey, 2012), it is simultaneously being limited in its “strategic actorhood” (Whitley, 2008). In particular, this relates to university knowledge as being increasingly seen solely as a form of *capital* or *economic product*. This is unsurprising, if in the Knowledge Economy “...human creativity is the ultimate economic resource” (Florida, 2002: xiii), then limiting knowledge to economic categories is not a distant proposition to adopt (Ball, 2013). As Peters and Besley (2006) contend, “if transformations in knowledge production entail a rethinking of economic fundamentals, the shift to a knowledge economy also requires a profound rethinking of education as emerging forms of knowledge capitalism involve knowledge creation, acquisition, transmission, and organization” (p.51). To elaborate the consequences of these transformations, we can see how knowledge in the KS is increasingly viewed as a composite of economic features causing a determinacy in what is considered ‘worthy’ or ‘useful’ knowledge (Striukova and Rayna, 2015). Therefore, according to these arguments in the literature, if “knowledge is fast becoming the most important form of global capital” (Burton-Jones 1999, p.vi), the consequences for the university to understand its place in the KS is an increasingly important affair. Here the ‘managing of knowing’ becomes a new political arena in which ‘knowledge agendas’ are set to dictate how the construction and flow of knowledge ought to be controlled (Duderstadt and Weber, 2006). In these ‘knowledge markets’ the university arguably plays a new role with heightened importance as a knowledge producer, on the one hand, and yet also it must control or transform its position in the KS, on the other (Florida and Boyett, 2012). Variously defined as the rise of corporate, entrepreneurial or business cultures in the university, a “neo liberal agenda” has, argues Ranson (2010), led to the championing of ‘choice’ and ‘competition’ as mantras for the universities of the 21st Century³².

³² Ranson continues however, that “when the present contradictions finally implode, the nation [Great Britain] will need a Royal Commission that leads a national conversation to rebuild education based on justice. Education should not depend on power and wealth, but on recognising that extending all the capabilities of all children is the nation's first public good” (p. 158).

Comparing the ‘Exogenic’ Literature with a Neo-Institutionalist Perspective

Attempting to summate the exogenic arguments from the literature, we see a problem emerging based upon the narrowing of knowledge namely, to ideas of outputs and its means-end use value. This may more readily be defined as the disjuncture between the assumptions of knowledge as identified in the neo-institutionalist school, categorised firstly by being a social product whose cultural influence is of great importance in the KS. In other words, the influence of the university goes beyond the realm of education and into that of culture such that it helps define the KS. Secondly, knowledge is a transformative element in the KS, altering the organisation and function of society. Finally, knowledge and culture are intertwined, meaning that the former cannot be reduced to simplistic ideas and remains a dynamic element in the KS.

For the neo-institutionalist, knowledge encompasses a large range of potential meanings with broad and socially non-reducible capacities. The assessments from the literature reviewed here, however, show it to be increasingly seen as a social tool of utility, and in particular for its monetary importance in the KS. Therefore, a ‘problem of reduction’ may be identified at this juncture as a problem which emerges from the exogenic account of the literature highlighting a move towards reducing knowledge to ever exiguous ideas in the social sphere of the KS, determined by economic discourses.

The Problems of ‘Influence’ and ‘Reduction’ emerging from the General Literature

Returning to the methodological frame of this chapter, the identification of an incongruity with the neo-institutionalist perspective requires that the resulting problems be given further analytic attention. The identification of the two problems of ‘influence’ and ‘reduction’ is the first and important marker of the thesis leading to the development of the ‘idea’ for the university. Our present concern is, then, to interrogate these problems such that we may gain contextual clarity of the KS and its relationship to the university. Of the ways the review of the literature is shown

to deal with the relations of the university with society, a common theme emerges namely, the perception of the institution's utility to governments and industry. In the internalist review, these pressures were described as being placed upon the university, revealing a proclivity towards being 'influenced' by its context. In the exogenic view, a different concern has emerged namely, the ways in which such relations identify the university's knowledge function to be used and taken advantage of (the problem of reduction). These include the social externalities that the university brings to the KS in the form of jobs, economic progress, alleviation of social inequalities and so on. With these potential social benefits, there is a supposition that the university acts as a means to help society, and the KS in particular to thrive. What does this potentially mean for a neo-institutional perspective requires attention as this sociological theory frames the investigation of the thesis.

Hitherto, both the problems of 'influence' and 'reduction' have been treated separately, and whilst this is due to the perspectives derived from the literature, they potentially point to a common denominator. A comparison with the neo-institutionalist perspective offers important ways to think about the relations that the university has with its broader social world. Amongst the most prominent being that this school of thought recognises that the university transforms the wider culture and is not merely its passive recipient. Within the KS, knowledge constitutes a primary means for social organisation, and as a primary knowledge producing institution the university must be considered as having an important place therein. In both of the problems identified in this chapter, there is a superintending ideology of use-value related to knowledge emerging from the literature. Treated primarily as a 'commodity', both of the problems of influence and reduction arguably suffer from a delimiting idea of knowledge. In terms of 'reduction', the link to knowledge is more evident i.e. that of delimiting it to a means-end tool for non-educational ends. As for the internalist literature, by reducing the ability of the university to influence and shape the KS through its institutional knowledge functions, there is also a gravitational pull towards problematising knowledge. In other words, the problem of influence infers the university is delimited in its social position to affect society through its various and important knowledge functions.

Seeing how problems converge on the issue of knowledge, we may conclude that if the problem of reduction is an epistemic conclusion of the exogenic literature, then influence is a problem derived from the institutional analysis, with both standing at odds with the ways the university creates, uses, and disseminates, knowledge (from a neo-institutionalist view). These

respective problems are important as summations of the literature, though a concluding statement can be made about them in terms of a larger problem to which they both portend. This we may define as the ‘problem of knowledge’ i.e. a categorisation of the ‘general’ literature which delimits the university both in its institutional and epistemic roles in the KS.

The ‘Problem of Knowledge’ as a summative statement of the General Literature

The above review, highlights the fact that universities of differing social and academic structures respond in distinct ways to their social circumstances (Denman, 2005), and that there is a wide degree of variance to their institutional responses (Ball, 2013). As a categorisation of the general literature, the ‘problem of knowledge’ suggests that the university’s relationship to the KS is increasingly framed by both governmental and industry discourses, as well as the institutions own responses to these challenges, through limitations of its potential. The problem has been shown to be one which permeates the relations of the university with society (exogenic and internalist), delimiting knowledge by such discourses. Specifically, it is a ‘problem’ in light of the neo-institutionalist position which views knowledge as a broad social and cultural concept related to the university’s prominence in the KS. If, as Olssen and Peters (2005) argue, that “...the most significant material change that underpins neoliberalism in the twenty-first Century is the rise in the importance of knowledge capital” (p.330), then there are questions to be raised as to what becomes of the university, and its ‘idea’, in the KS.

Chapter Conclusion: The University’s ‘Problem of Knowledge’ in the KS

This chapter constitutes the first part of the literature review. This first designation of the ‘general’ literature was expressive of a wide range of view-points which this chapter has attempted to differentiate and explain. As an initial venture into gaining greater clarity of the social context of the university in the KS, the review has shown a number of areas of interest in the pursuit for constructing an ‘idea’ for the university. Amongst these has been the ways in which the literature constructs ideas about the university’s relation with its social world and which subsequently conflicts with the neo-institutionalist perspective.

Firstly, the study of internalist relations (university-KS) revealed that whilst there are new opportunities for the university to be given special status as a knowledge producing institution in the KS, this is, however, compounded by discourses which often theoretically shrink its potential. Similarly, the exogenic view (KS-university) proposes that knowledge is increasingly being seen in limited and ever exiguous terms in the broader social discourse. As such, the institution suffers a procrustean fate of being dictated to and over simplifying its social merits to use-value (often economic) ends. In following the methodology of the thesis, both internalist and exogenic assumptions from the literature were compared with those of the neo-institutionalist school. Categorised as ‘problems’ of influence and reduction respectively, they eschew a resulting and cumulative ‘problem of knowledge’. This problem stands as an idea which requires further critical assessment. Hence the following chapter shall investigate this problem in reference to the ‘specialised’ KS literature and compare it with the neo-institutionalist perspective in order to better understand the context within which an ‘idea’ of the university may be formulated.

Chapter 2: Critical Evaluation of the ‘Problem of Knowledge’ in Reference to Nico Stehr

Chapter Introduction: Analysing the ‘Problem of Knowledge’

Disputations concerning the nature of knowledge, traced back to classical antiquity, deal with so-called ‘first order’ problems of philosophy namely, how we can know the world and what substances constitute its existence (Kitto, 1991)³³. The trajectory of such debates can be seen to inform epistemic discussions today with ‘second order’ debates in the social sciences which deal with the role and functioning of knowledge in society (Giddens, 1979)³⁴. Our interests in this chapter run in conjunction with the latter i.e. to inquire how knowledge can be understood within a KS context. The ‘problem of knowledge’, as defined in the previous chapter, revolves around questions of how it is conceived, produced and used in the KS. The reductive attitude of knowledge identified from the general literature review, whilst not new, was deemed a ‘problem’ as it runs in distinction to a neo-institutionalist perspective on knowledge as well as the institutional role of the university in the KS. Sörlin and Vessuri (2007), for example, summate the attitudes of the problem of knowledge by arguing that knowledge in the KS is formed around social determinacies of power which are not without ideological intent. They argue:

...knowledge-based economies are growing all around us, but they do so without always acknowledging the democratic, ethical, and normative dimensions of science and scientific institutions. The knowledge economy is market-driven and performs according to a market ideology, which stands in a problematic but not necessarily conflicting relation to the norms and ideals of the knowledge society (p.2).

³³ This rift reflects key debates in classical antiquity, informed by the pre-Socratics, which hold accord with more recent scholarship. The arguments here suggest that the Greek *mythos* of the 5th Century and the cosmological implications of their respective world demand attention when translating their discussions to contemporary philosophical nomenclature on the objective or relative status of knowledge. For a particularly penetrating study and the need for a ‘cultural turn’ in the study of historical epistemology see Curd and McKirahan (2011).

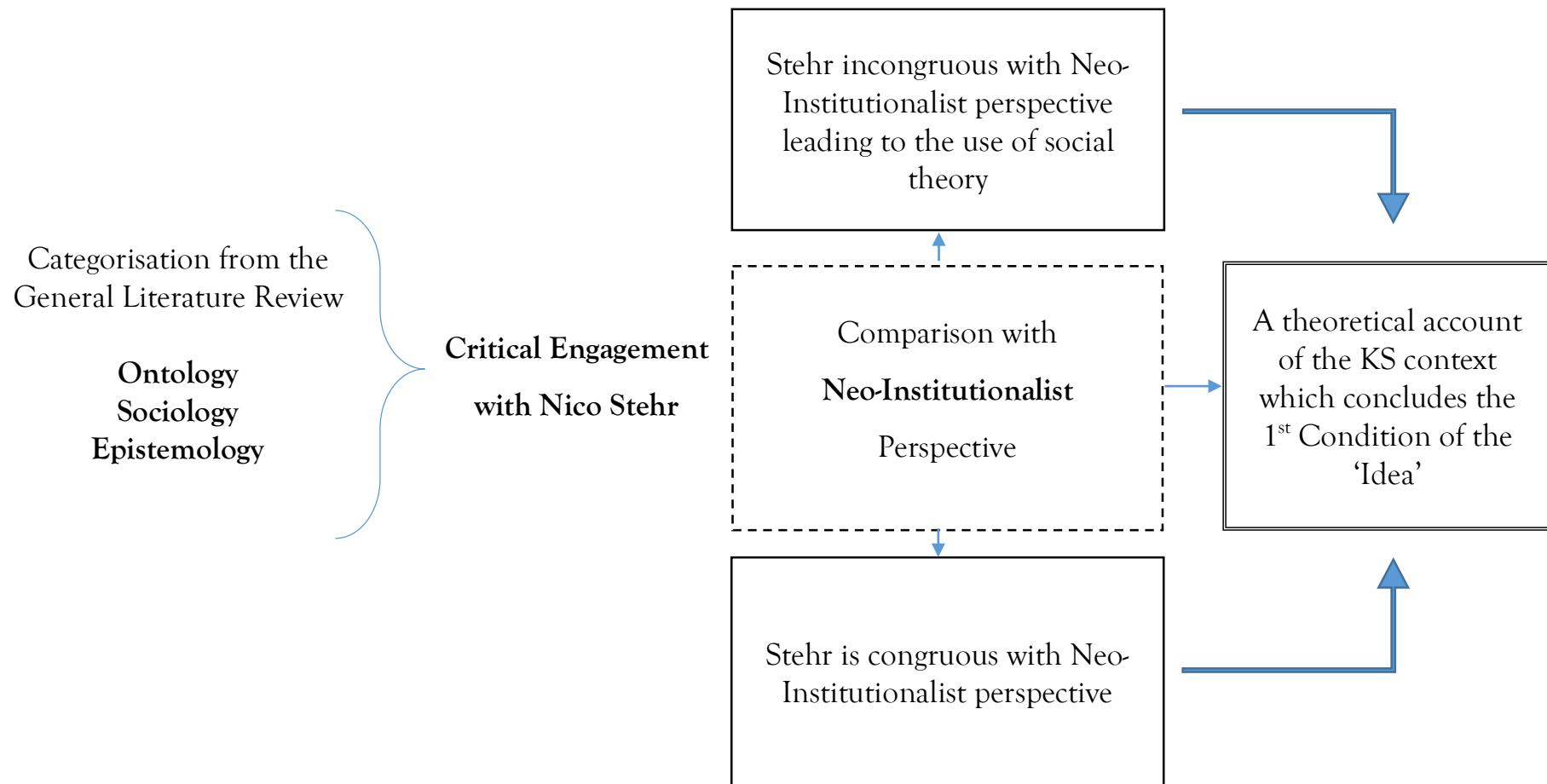
³⁴ Though social epistemological debates were prevalent in the formative period of sociology (especially in the last two decades of the 19th Century) the rise of more formal sociological interest in knowledge and society becomes substantiated with the (critical) developments made by the Vienna Circle and the generation of architects of modern social critique beginning with Adorno and Luckas and ending more formally with the latter work of Mannheim. For a history of these developments see Stark (1991).

In critically evaluating such ideas, this second part of the literature review , engages the ‘specialist’ literature on the KS. In so doing, my interest here is to present a critical analysis of the work of the prominent social theorist Nico Stehr. As an important thinker whose work focusses on the KS and the sociology of knowledge, Stehr’s contributions to the study of the KS have been various (1994, 1999, 2001, 2000, 2004, 2014) and include being amongst the first to theorise the KS in terms of its specific differences with other forms of social organisation (Grundmann and Stehr, 2012). In particular, this chapter will engage with Stehr’s work across a thirty-year period and see how it intersects with the concerns of the problem of knowledge. Stehr stands as a doyen of KS theory and thus is an important means for understanding the problem of knowledge as within the particular context of the KS (Adolf, 2018). And unlike the general literature’s critical review, the point here is to conclude the analysis and resolve any disjunctions which may exist between the neo-institutionalist school and Stehr’s work. This means, firstly, that any concluding statement made from a comparison with Stehr shall not culminate in stating a ‘problem’ in the literature (a potential option for the general literature review) but rather postulate a theory from the KS context which can be used for development in the next phase of the thesis³⁵. The overall concentration of the first two chapters of the thesis, namely dealing with the ‘general’ and ‘specialised’ literature, stand as a double filtration process in order to engage with a neo-institutionalist perspective.

The two main parts of the chapter include therefore a breakdown of the problem of knowledge into three distinct elements (ontological, sociological and epistemic) to be compared with the oeuvre of Stehr. The second is an evaluation of Stehr’s ideas as compared with the neo-institutionalist perspective (the sociological framework of the thesis). The method of the present chapter can be represented as follows:

³⁵ The problem of knowledge derived from the previous chapter is different from the theoretical ‘tension’ which forms part of Condition 2 of the ‘idea’. This tension is the result of the theoretical development of the context and which and shall be confronted in the following chapters.

Diagram 2. Summary of Chapter Analysis: 'Specialised Literature'



Firstly, to compare Stehr's work with the problem of knowledge, the problem itself shall be divided into its ontological, sociological and epistemic elements. This division is created so as to allow the work of Stehr to specifically dialogue with the problem in reference to his diverse and wide ranging oeuvre i.e. to find particular points for comparison. The problem of knowledge, derived from Chapter 1, can be divided via firstly, by ontology. This refers to the idea that knowledge is increasingly contested in the KS and thus suggests that any ontological statement about the KS must consider its fragmented and unstable nature. Secondly, sociologically, this translates to the social value of the university as limited in an increasingly open KS market of knowledge producers. Finally, the epistemic assumption of the problem of knowledge suggests that the predominant form of knowledge in the KS is its means-end and utility value

These statements provide the basis for a dialogue with Stehr's work and in particular a comparison which shall ask a) what does Stehr's oeuvre say about this specific topic and b) how does this compare with a neo-institutionalist perspective. Where discrepancies occur between Stehr's ideas and those of the neo-intuitionist school concerning the problem of knowledge, recourse to broader social theory (social sciences and social philosophy) shall be accessed in order to help re-orientate the analysis towards a neo-institutionalist position (employed however, where theorists from the neo-institutionalist school cannot be found to comment on a specific issue). The final part of the chapter draws upon these comparisons to make a cumulative statement about the university's social context in the KS and gaining 'contextual clarity' derived from both general and specialised literature.

Stehr and the Ontology of the KS

An ontological statement derived from the problem of knowledge says that 'knowledge is increasingly contested in the KS and thus suggests that any ontological statement about the KS must consider its fragmented and unstable nature'. However, whilst the literature review of Chapter 1 demonstrated the diverse range of issues explored in relation to the KS, there remains little attention paid to questions of ontology in the KS literature (Kornienko, 2015). In other words, the ontology of the KS is partly presumed in its definition i.e. as a society formed by knowledge, yet exactly how this is the case is not readily analysed in the literature. Whilst it is

arguable whether a singular ‘essence’ of the KS can be identified i.e. a singular ontological view, our concern here is to critically compare the ontological work of Stehr on the KS and compare it with the ontological assumption of the problem of knowledge.

Comparison I: Stehr’s ideas on Ontology and the Assumption of the Problem of Knowledge

Stehr (1995) argues that in the KS “...the most serious theoretical deficiency of existing theories of modern society which assign a central role to knowledge is ... their rather undifferentiated treatment of the key ingredient, namely knowledge itself” (p.91). This it can be argued is the starting point for Stehr’s ontological account of the KS i.e. understanding the ways in which knowledge relates to the KS. Whilst there is no clear ontological theory in Stehr’s theorisation of the KS (2014), a conversation with ontology in his work begins with the prominent role given to knowledge in post-industrial societies (2002, 2001). Stehr defines the KS as a new form of social organisation, distinguished from previous epochs, arguing that

The age of the industrialization approaches its end. The structures of the traditional social order are losing their meaning. Its elements, such as work and property, are being overwritten by a new social order already visible on the horizon, the bases of this social order rests on knowledge – as much on everyday knowledge as, increasingly, on scientific knowledge. As the capacity to take action, as the possibility to “get things rolling,” *knowledge is not only constitutive for economic activities, production and consumption. It is also the basis of any communication between human beings, and represents the means of organizing and integrating modern global society.* It is meaningful, therefore, to describe this society as a knowledge society. That is to say, *we mold reality by virtue of our knowledge* (Stehr and Weiler, 2008: p.vii, emphasis added).

The consequence of the dominance of knowledge within the KS has particular relevance for an ontological vision of that society. Stehr (2014) maintains that macro-social shifts which began in the post-war era leading towards the KS have had the result of an increasing reliance on knowledge. However, this reliance has met the subsequent escalation of uncertainty about knowledge in an ever challenging and tempestuous or ‘run-away’ world (Giddens, 1991). Stehr (2003) continues that “not only has the capacity of supposedly powerful institutions to ‘control’ society declined but so has their capacity to predict social developments” (p.1). Furthermore, that the rise and proliferation of nuclear weapons, technological change, environmental spoilage,

mass migration, global poverty etc. are amongst the factors which have led to a disaffection with Enlightenment ideals of knowledge. The rejection of this 'enlightenment promise' has meant, rather paradoxically, that as societies become more 'advanced' they claim a power to inflict harm as well as potentially cause their annihilation (Stehr and Machin, 2016). Relying on Beck's (1992) concept of the 'risk society', Stehr argues we are invariably made more reflective (as well as "reflexive") in our presence and comportment to that society.

The implications for Stehr towards the KS of these potential risks to modern life lie partially in the increasing fluidity and democratisation of knowledge, such that the stability of societies, based on the production and verification of knowledge truth claims become, paradoxically, more contested. Stehr (2005) argues that this greater uncertainty characterises the KS in terms of a devolution of political power through knowledge, maintaining that "not only has the capacity of supposedly powerful institutions to 'control' society declined but so has their capacity to predict social developments" (p.7). Stehr goes on to postulate that the ambiguity created by this advancement in knowledge and its democratisation leads to vulnerability which defines the inherent "fragility" of the KS³⁶.

What Stehr argues to be the causes of "fragility" in the KS, can be drawn upon by virtue of its capacity for "supposedly powerful institutions to 'control' society [has] declined but [also] ... to predict social developments" (cited in Sales and Fournier, 2007; 37). An increased sense of knowledge contestation for Stehr does not infer, for example, that in previous social epochs there was more consensus necessarily, or even that such a state of affairs was desirable. Rather the contestation alluded to here calls for allowing the intensification of 'knowledge conflict' to occur. It is in this shift that there is a specific attitude towards KS, and one which offers a way to think about its ontology.

For Stehr, societies defined by religious, political, political, monarchical ideas, and so on are no more inherently 'stable' than any other, and thus one could equally argue that all systems

³⁶ Reiterating Stehr's conception of fragility, Foray (2004) further argues "the success of knowledge management practices designed to construct a new rationality of knowledge sharing ... and the revival of collective forms of organization (networks, alliances, consortia) intended to solve problems of research and integration ... show that this public dimension is constantly being born and reborn everywhere. Moreover, the amazing success of knowledge openness ... clearly shows that new forms of complementarily between the public and the private spheres are coming into being. These highly effective but *extremely fragile forms of openness clearly constitute the future of knowledge-based economics and, more generally, of capitalism*" (p.245, emphasis added).

of social organisation are 'fragile'. In other words, all systems of social organisation are 'fragile' in the sense of a vulnerability which exists in the inconsistencies set within them, for example labour structures (capitalism), artificial assumptions of social order (feudalism), the predication of an enlightened demos (meritocracy). A case for an ontology based on fragility, for Stehr, is a very useful means for exploring those questions and the particularities of the KS which lends itself to these features. If we use this as a basis for Stehr's idea for the ontology of the KS, then there is a clear similarity with the ontological assumption of the problem of knowledge which states that 'knowledge is increasingly contested in the KS and thus suggests that any ontological statement about the KS must consider its fragmented and unstable nature'. What this means when compared to the neo-institutionalist perspective is thus our present interest³⁷.

Comparison II: Stehr's 'Fragility' Hypothesis and the Neo-Institutionalism Perspective

The view of Stehr concerning the ontology of the KS is that of fragility as 'untreatable' rather than as an opportunity to 'cope' with the dilemma. In other words, to state Stehr's ontology of the KS is to suggest an internally fractured society whose future is uncertain. The first problem that this proposition poses is that it runs contrary to Stehr's own ideas that the KS will become the new and dominant social form in the 21st Century (Stehr and Machin, 2016). Secondly, and for our present analysis, what this position means when compared with neo-institutionalist concepts is pertinent. For this school, knowledge was identified as firstly being a social product whose cultural influence is of great importance in the KS. In other words, the influence of the university goes beyond the realm of education and into that of culture such that it helps define the KS. Secondly, knowledge is a transformative element in the KS, altering the organisation and

³⁷ The problem of fragility is compounded by Stehr's insistence on the increasing autonomy of individuals from hegemonic control yet equally delimited in their ability to positively affect social change when he predicts that "the harnessing of knowledge will be accompanied not only by continuing concerns about past threats that are persistent fears for example, the horror of global destruction through nuclear weapons or a major environmental catastrophe, but a decline in the authority of experts and growing skepticism toward the possibility of disinterested expertise. None the less, reliance on knowledge will increase, and the ways in which scientists, experts and knowledge-based occupations in general are able to maintain cognitive authority in the face of uncertainty ... present of the main challenges for these occupations in knowledge societies" (2001: 260).

function of society and finally, knowledge and culture are intertwined, meaning that the former cannot be reduced to simplistic ideas and remains a dynamic element in the KS.

Whilst there is no statement about the ontology of the KS in the above points, we may surmise that this sociological school considers knowledge as having a prominent place in the KS and which cannot easily be limited to a state of fragility. Moreover, even if the KS was fragile, for example, it would require stabilising to ensure its continued existence. We see then a potential disjuncture between Stehr's ideas and those of the neo-institutionalist school. Whilst greater knowledge production leads to uncertainty about truth claims for Stehr, the foundations of the KS also stand at risk. For the neo-institutionalist school, however, this greater intensity is not grounds on which to place the ontological underpinnings of the KS in question. Therefore, to potentially square the analytical circle towards an ontological account of the KS consistent with an neo-institutionalist view requires us to think about knowledge as also having a position of ontological 'strength' in the KS. How we may do so requires considering broader social theory and ideas from which it may help join the two forces of fragility and strength defining the KS. In so doing, such an inquiry could provide a platform to begin defining the ontological nature of the KS by incorporating Stehr's ideas.

A potential way to think about the interactions between the fragility and strength of the KS as wedded together is through seeing them as *dependent* on one another. Accepting Stehr's idea of the fragility of the KS as a partial account of the ontology, a 'positive' feature is required to explain its continued existence. As a continual process, a dialectic of 'meaning making' is forged from knowledge which ensures that it is being contested, re-interpreted, used and rethought. This circular (hermeneutical) process confronts Stehr's idea of 'fragility' to suggest that it cannot be entirely relied upon as a mechanism for elaborating on ontological account of the KS. Reliance on broader social theory may therefore provide a way of using a framework and discourse in order to realign ideas about ontology towards a neo-institutionalist conception. The work of the literary theorist, Mikhail Bakhtin (Holquist, 1981), potentially provides a vehicle for such a task, especially his conception of 'dialogism'.

Recourse to Social Theory: Mikhail Bakhtin's Dialogism and Meaning Creation

The work of Russian literary theorist and philosopher presents a possible avenue through which to attend to, and steer, the discussion towards a neo-intuitionist perspective. Presenting a framework to explain the myriad ways in which a literary text is given meaning, Bakhtin argues that it is a conversation between a variety of interconnected relations that imbue exposition (Bakhtin, 2010). There occurs for Bakhtin through the governance of a dialectical process primarily via the meeting between the conditions of meaning (*heteroglossia*) and its creation (*dialogism*), resulting in the generation of textual meaning. In reference to the former, this is defined as

The base condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterance. It is that which insures the primacy of context over text. At any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions – social, historical, metero-logical, physiological - that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at the time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions; all utterances are heteroglot in that they are functions of a matrix of forces practically impossible to recoup, and therefore impossible to resolve. Heteroglossia is as close a conceptualization as is possible of the locus where centripetal and centrifugal forces colie; as such, it is that which a systematic linguistics must always suppress (Holquist, 1981: 429).

Dialogism on the other hand is defined as

... the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia. Everything means, is understood, as a part of a greater whole – there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others ... Which will affect the other, how it will do so and in what degree is what is actually settled at the moment of utterance. This dialogic imperative, mandated by the pre-existence of the language world relative to any of its current inhabitants, insures that there can be no actual monologue. One may, like a primitive tribe that knows only its own limits be deluded into thinking there is one language, or one may, as grammarians, certain political figures and normative framers of “literary languages” do, seek in a sophisticated way to achieve a unitary language. In both cases the unitariness is relative to the overpowering force of heteroglossia, and thus dialogism (p. 427).

The importance which Bakhtin gives to the dialogic relationship as a path to ‘meaning making’ in the world has been explored outside the relations of literary theory to more constructivist approaches in scientific knowledge, pedagogy, sociology of knowledge and cultural studies more generally (Bingham, 2000). For our present case, Bakhtin’s ideas can be used to contribute to the

discussion shows that Stehr's argument can potentially be reworked to include an invigorated ontological account. In this reading, the KS is not only fragile but also *strengthened* through the process of meaning construction of knowledge (just as a heteroglossia and dialogism are interdependent features for meaning that must rely on one another). In the case of the KS this, however, does not mean it is immune to being fragile, only that in adopting Bakhtin the KS can be viewed as a socially robust society through the collective work of producing meaning, ideas and solutions via the use of knowledge. This collective activity of the KS suggests that it must be seen in light of the circumstance of knowledge as a means of originating an impulse towards working together. In other words, this interpretation of Bakhtin's ideas provides an ontological robustness to the KS requiring a reordering of Stehr's fragility hypothesis.

The use of Bakhtin in our present argument helps to elaborate the ways that the KS not only creates continued meaning for its existence yet also that this is part of an ongoing process which cannot be limited to a uniform fragility hypothesis. Acting as a metaphor for the ontological contingency of the KS, the 'knowledge character' of the KS becomes, by necessity, more varied as producers of knowledge come into existence making it evermore fluid, yet ever more difficult, to legitimate those claims of knowledge. This process can be defined as the 'dialogical contingency' of the KS, portending a distance from Stehr's theoretical constraints. Dialogical contingency, as a statement about the ontological character of the KS postulates that the way the KS continues its ontological existence is through the collaborative act of meaning making via knowledge.

'Dialogical Contingencies': Consequences for the Problem of Knowledge and a Neo-Institutionalist view

Though ontological accounts of the KS remain under studied in the literature, having critically engaged with Stehr, Bakhtin may potentially help to provide a way of thinking about the ontology of the KS. What this means from the perspective of neo-institutionalism is, firstly, that ontological investigations are important as they can offer new ways to think about what the KS is i.e. its 'being'. If the problem of knowledge, defined by increasingly narrow understandings of knowledge in the KS, is confronted with a 'dialogical interpretation', it potentially reveals a theoretical path towards knowledge as having a prominent place in the KS and which, more

importantly, cannot easily be limited to a state of fragility. The ontology of the KS is then framed by the continual evolution of meaning, of which knowledge is a vehicle and cannot be constricted by social discourses of knowledge utility. The problem of knowledge in this reading is only a function of social discourses which are part of a larger, and superintending, account on how the KS comes to operate (in its ontological necessity). The neo-institutionalist perspective, employed here, is one which advocates such a view, as it sees knowledge and by extension, the university, as not being in a statement of perpetual fragility. Dialogical contingency therefore offers an argument in light of a neo-institutionalist view that does not restrict or limit the KS nor knowledge in terms of its conceptualisation, production and consumption in the university. As a multidimensional problem, ontology alone cannot explain all the particulars of the problem of knowledge and investigating and further critiquing the social elements of the problem of knowledge is required.

Stehr and the Sociology of Knowledge Production in the KS

The rise of competing knowledge producers in the KS, as shown in Chapter 1, has surfaced questions over the traditional role of the university (Nixon, 2013). This section investigates the sociological assumptions of the problem of knowledge, defined above as the ‘social value of the university as being limited in an increasingly open KS market of knowledge producers’.

Comparison I: Stehr on Knowledge Production and the assumptions of the Problem of Knowledge

To speak of discernible centres of knowledge in society refers to groups of historically significant institutions who have been at the fore of this process, and whose relations to power and politics have remained hitherto historically connected (Riddle, 1989). The university, as holding a prime place for the conceptualisation, production and dissemination of knowledge in society, is witness to a general ‘opening up’ of knowledge production (Fuller, 2002)³⁸. Stehr’s contribution to this

³⁸ Though such a thesis, claiming a sole ‘centre’ for knowledge, may have been tenable in the pre-modern world, wherein the church and university forged a social contract developing clear ideas

debate is presented in a number of works (1994, 2001; Adolf and Stehr, 2004; Stehr and Machin, 2016) which are concerned with the literature on university knowledge expansion and the importance of knowledge institutions in the KS. Stehr's appreciation of knowledge production in the KS can be garnered through his definition of that society and its distinguishing qualities when he argues that "what distinguishes a Knowledge Society above all else from its historical predecessors is that it is a society which is to an unprecedented degree the product of its own action, or a society in which our secondary nature far outpaces and outgrows our primary nature" (Stehr, 1994: 104). The liberty that the KS presents is then the manner by which these new forms of knowledge are necessarily freed from traditional and often arbitrary institutional restrictions (Stehr and Weiler, 2008).

The turn towards this loosening of traditional centres of knowledge production is part of a hypothesis, namely that the occurrence of the 'risk society' ushers new threats and social problems for 21st Century society which helps to reframe our reliance on traditional knowledge forms and 'expert cultures' (Stehr, 2003). Stehr continues that "...the harnessing of knowledge will be accompanied not only by continuing concerns about past threats that are persistent fears, for example, the horror of global destruction through nuclear weapons or a major environmental catastrophe, but by a decline in the authority of experts and growing scepticism toward the possibility of disinterested expertise" (1994: 260). In this knowledge landscape the extent to which the university serves as an important institution is also increasingly diminished (Stehr and Machin, 2016)³⁹. For Stehr, this is in part due to the KS as formed by a triad of social realities forged by 'risk', 'uncertainty' and 'knowledge expansion' which when placed together entail a suspicious attitude towards the university to act as a vehicle for social amelioration. Stehr (1994) continues, claiming that the:

potential to transform and construct at the collective or cumulative level goes in fact hand and in hand with an increasing inability even of large social entities to affect their fate. That is, the capacity of the whole to make its history should not be read to mean that this ability necessarily can be paralyzed into planned, anticipated or even desired change. The fact that the human species makes it own

of identity related to religion, citizenship and personhood (Marenbon, 2010); knowledge production has since developed towards a landscape of state institutions, private enterprises, economic and social ventures etc. which arguably weakens this view (Readings, 1996).

³⁹ For a more recent exposition of this idea in relation to knowledge expertise and the role of the university see Nichols' (2017) argument for the 'death of expertise'.

evolution does not easily, if at all, translate into the ability of parts to do the same (p. 99).

Stehr's theorising of knowledge production in the KS mirrors a number of views in the literature (see Chapter 1) and in this sense run in congruity with the ideas forming the problem of knowledge. For example, Stehr argues that the sociological spread of knowledge through institutional developments by NGO's, research institutes, governmental research arms etc. indicate that the role of the university may be kept as once on the relative fringes of the KS. Macro sociological processes which involve its historically significance to knowledge production therefore become fragmented within the KS⁴⁰. Herein, the KS rather than being formed by hierarchies based on the significance of knowledge as located within a few centres, shifts to a horizontal focus on equally competing actors (Adolf and Stehr, 2014)⁴¹.

Summarising Stehr's ideas of the university and its knowledge producing function to a decentred position in the KS, proposes important questions for a comparison with the neo-institutionalist position. Restoring the university's social position amongst these rising competitors seems unlikely in what is an increasingly 'decentred' knowledge market (Stehr and Ruser, 2017). For Stehr, this implies the pacification of the university's historical significance which neither exonerates its position in the KS nor accords it special social provision.

⁴⁰ As Delanty (2001) postulates, in tandem with Stehr's view, the nature of knowledge production in the KS as occurring through a "situation in which knowledge is being used to produce knowledge and the conditions of knowledge production are no longer controlled by the mode of knowledge itself. In this reflexive application of knowledge to itself, something else is also being generated: the production of new cognitive fields. These extend beyond knowledge as such, that is knowledge in the sense of what is or what might be known, bodies or branches of knowledge or what might be more generally characterized as information, to include new schemes of classification in the sense of cultural models making possible the interpretation of the natural, social and subjective worlds. In the knowledge society, cognitive processes not only produce knowledge as content but also give rise to new cognitive structures and identifies a deeper and more far-reaching epistemic shift in horizons" (p.152, emphasis added).

⁴¹ Hodgson (2012) usefully summarises this disaggregation as a move towards a social landscape in which "strict institutional boundaries no longer exist. Thus, for example, the university now competes with other research institutions, think tanks, the research and development departments of private companies, and must therefore identify its specialism, its niche that sets its apart. No special status is inherently attributed to the university. The rejection of the value of expertise can be seen as a further example of this. The educational attainment or professional status of an individual does not in itself have value. Rather, it is the continual accrual of transversal conditions that is an asset today" (p.543, emphasis added).

Comparison II: Stehr's 'Decentred' University and the Neo-Institutionalist Perspective

From the analysis of Stehr's ideas on the university's position in the KS above, his theory seems to run in congruity with the sociological assumption of the problem of knowledge which stated that the 'social value of the university is limited in an increasingly open KS market of knowledge producers'. Alternatively, the neo-institutionalist position on the institutional position of the university in the KS was defined as follows firstly seeing the university as a primary institution in the KS with influence and dominance. It subsequently holds an essential position in that society due its role to conceive, create and disseminate knowledge. Secondly, the university "socially constructs significant portions of the culture of modern society, rather merely reproducing it" (Baker, 2014: 10).

The apparent distinction between Stehr's conceptualisation and the contradiction with the neo-institutionalist perspective suggests the need to potentially look elsewhere to help reframe the debates in which the university stands as an historically prominent producer of knowledge. Considering broader social theory is required therefore to regain such ideas, specifically what is required is seeking an alternative to a 'decentred' conceptualisation of knowledge centres, restoring the status of the university therein as an important KS institution. In this case, the work of neo-institutionalist sociologist, David Baker (2014), presents such as an account through his 'schooled society' thesis and the place it offers to the university in the emerging KS.

Recourse to Social Theory: David Baker's 'Schooled Society' Thesis and Rethinking the 'Decentred' university

Stehr's approach to knowledge production sees a progression from a unitary to a plethora of knowledge centres; a natural consequence of the complexity of 21st Century KS's. Baker's approach, by way of an alternative, seeks to understand these occurrences through, firstly, focussing on institutions and their role in creating social knowledge. For Baker (2014), a neo-institutionalist, the starting point is the university which, in his estimation, has become a 'primary institution' in the modern world wherein it comes to change rather than merely

reproduce society. He continues that "...a symbiotic relationship between education and knowledge production as a cultural force is hardly new [... however,] what is new though is the unprecedented intensification and acceleration of both- the extension of university (and related) training to ever larger proportions ... and the immense increase in resources applied to the university's claim to generate new knowledge" (p.83-84). Further, that "education has grown to such proportions that it has become a separate and enduring social institution; thus the education social constructs significant portions of the culture of modern society, rather than merely reproducing it" (p.10). In this new form of an *educationalised* society, or as Baker defines the 'schooled society', the role that schools and especially universities play in knowledge production and dissemination cannot be reduced to a peripheral status. As Smith and Webster (1997) equally argue this "cannot be denied as matters of empirical fact" that "the virtual monopoly the university retains in the awarding of legitimate credentials testifies to the academe's vitality" (p.107)⁴².

The predominance of education and mass schooling throughout the world has changed the ways we think about knowledge and knowledge production in that it transforms "the quantity *and* qualities of knowledge itself" (Baker, 2014: 84, emphasis in original). As for the former, this refers to the demands to produce knowledge in the KS whilst the latter refers to the centrality of the university in "producing and defining knowledge and the acceptable ways that knowledge is thought to be true" (p.184). In reference to such advances, these trends cannot delegitimise, in Baker's theory, the university's role as a key knowledge producer, primarily as it has become a 'model' which other such producers imitate. This is a key element in Baker's 'schooled society' theory, namely that the university becomes a model because of its historical status (especially as within the European context) as cultural and epistemic arbitrator for what is considered legitimised and rationalised truth claims to knowledge (Hoskin, 1993). Baker continues, "...over the centuries the university has come to create, sustain, and legitimate ideologies - guiding bodies

⁴² In this vein, Baker argues that with the rise of new universities across the globe, their prominent role in the post-war era as dominant players in the advancement of the KS remains unparalleled. This is partly related to the increasing benefits they provide to society through political, economic and cultural externalities identified as significant for non-academic purposes in society such as social mobility, GDP, entrepreneurialism, international comparative advantage etc. Along with their expansion and the slow blurring of university and non-university spaces, the institutions ability to uniquely adapt, understand and respond to problems outside of its immediate sphere makes its role as a knowledge producer in society an increasingly important one.

of knowledge about truth – that define all things human, as well as the physical universe. Knowledge evolves over time, of course; yet, over a long development stemming from feudal Europe, the university has become a major (if not the man) arbitrator of ideologies” (p.62). Viewing what Baker calls the *educational revolution* (read ‘university revolution’) in this elevated social position of power and cultural influence, the next important strand in Baker’s argument is that knowledge production is social activity reflecting the place of its origins. In relation to the university, its longevity and historical uniqueness gives it a particular place within the modern KS. Baker argues therefore that the university “has the singular combination of charters to transform anything into authoritative knowledge and integrate it with the creation of experts who then carry the new understandings about the topic into everyday ... life” (p.107). For these reasons the KS, in Baker’s view, is fundamentally part of the schooled society.

Since the production of knowledge is freed, as Delanty (2001) argues, from the ‘mode of production itself’, we can speak of knowledge in society as housing a plethora of competing and varied centres. Baker’s ideas about the complexities of knowledge production in the KS do not subsequently form hierarchies but ‘relational’ connections between socially prominent actors in the KS. Whilst the decentering of knowledge theorising is derived from a particular way of thinking about production as emphasising competition amongst knowledge producers another, ‘conglomerations’ approach, may help recognise the instability of knowledge centres in the KS. Inspired by Baker and unlike the presuppositions of decentredness, which sees the university as being deposed from its historical status, a conglomerations approach uses the historical status of the university in a different way, showing how it continues to maintain a prominent place in the KS. As Baker argues “the oft-made claim that modern universities are special organizations *because* they generate knowledge shows the power of their institutional charter; no other organization in modern society makes such a claim so unabashedly. The assumption that all things can be submitted to rational scholarship appears today natural, but at its inception it was a strongly radical idea” (p.62, emphasis in original). Theorising knowledge production in terms of ‘conglomerations’ then places the university as a model by which others replicate and follow, obviating the delimiting place for the institution in the KS.

'Knowledge Conglomerations': Consequences for the Problem of Knowledge and a Neo-Institutionalist view

Returning to the problem of knowledge and the social delimitation of the university, using Baker as a means to read such social developments, suggests a potential reordering of Stehr's ideas on the place of the university in the KS. This is important primarily as it helps draw the theoretical analysis towards a neo-institutionalist position. Stehr's ideas of decentering seem less capable of explaining the continued importance of the university amidst knowledge proliferation in the KS. By considering a new vista for the study of knowledge production in the KS, there is an acknowledgement for the prominence of the university. As with the ontological study above, our sociological investigation suggests the need to critically analyse Stehr's work in light of the general literature to create a clearer picture of the university's KS context. In our present case, the role of knowledge producers in the KS is that they form 'conglomerations' which, contra Stehr, do not delimit the role of the university but rather help to see its continuing and schematic importance within the KS. In other words, the university remains socially significant in reference to its capabilities as a knowledge producer which fashions particular qualities of knowledge therefrom (rationalised, legitimised and universal). Recalibrating our understanding of how knowledge production occurs as well as its consequences in the KS, knowledge conglomerations are a way to think about the university and its contributions to knowledge production that is less well accounted for by Stehr. Considering then the problem of knowledge in lieu of this sociological reordering, we can propose that Stehr's account is not to be considered *incorrect*. As with the ontological analysis above, our sociologically examination of the problem suggests that by building upon the literature, leveraged by the ideas of neo-institutionalism, we may recognise and explore the social uniqueness of the university in the KS and find new avenues to conceptualise the problem of knowledge. The definition of 'knowledge conglomerations' suggests that the social utility of knowledge is not prevalent *because* the KS is inclined to such a disposition. In demonstrating his theory, termed decentering, Stehr explicates that the decline of certain knowledge 'voices' gives prominence to others and which incline towards the general 'means-end' outlook leading to less agency and opportunities for praxis. Alternatively, knowledge conglomerations see the rise of knowledge production in the KS as part of an institutional imitation of the university's social privileges and continued prominent status.

For the problem of knowledge, this suggests that the university remains an important institution and that influence upon other such knowledge production nodes does not have an inevitable resignation to utility. In Baker's hypothesis, the university becomes a 'primary institution' with the power to dictate knowledge production in the KS. Using this theory, we may claim that his ideas on the schooled society can equally help in changing the discourse about 'knowledge as utility'. What this potentially means for the problem of knowledge is that we cannot assume that the university is stuck within certain epistemic positions and that the problem itself is socially inevitable. Thought in this way, we are confronted with the prospect that even if they are socially influential, such discourses can change or be overturned by others. Therefore, what has been attempted in using Baker is an exercise to rethink the problem of knowledge via Stehr's conceptualisation of the space given to knowledge production in the KS and to extend the concept of decentering in clarifying how the problem may arise. In our next, epistemological section, we will attempt to gain a fuller understanding of the problem of knowledge and its social manifestations by asking what we mean by 'knowledge' within the KS.

Stehr's Epistemology of Knowledge in the KS

The idea that the university today has use-value to society is not an historical anomaly (Marginson, 2016). As 'public institutions', universities have created reciprocity with varying forms of social power helping account for their longevity (Ridder-Symoens, 1992). However, as was identified in Chapter 1, there is an ongoing distinction between the historical 'usefulness' of the university as defined by its social efficacy and the contemporary 'use-value' nomenclature identified through the problem of knowledge. This distinction may be identified as where 'usefulness' in producing knowledge has historically been a sufficient cause of its terms of operation, today the university increasingly takes 'use-value' as its *modus operandi*, seeing knowledge as a social resource with a more determined aim to gain social and economic 'outputs' (Ranga and Etzkowitz, 2013; Foray, 2000). Though such a demarcation is a simplification of complex social shifts arising from the KS, they point towards a restructuring of knowledge for the university. The 'problem of knowledge' has been identified as offering certain assumptions about knowledge in the KS. Prime amongst these is the predominant form of knowledge in the KS as being means-end and having utility value. With reference to Stehr, this assumption is our

concern here namely, to question how knowledge is conceived as well as what this may mean for the university. Framed by these questions, we are interested in critically engaging with Stehr to consider implications for the problem of knowledge.

Comparison I: Stehr's Conceptualisation of Knowledge and the assumptions of the Problem of Knowledge

Stehr's work on defining knowledge arguably takes up a considerable place in his theorisation of the KS (Stehr, 1994; 2000; Stehr and Ruser, 2017). He begins his discussion of knowledge with the caveat that it has a number of possible modes which it encompasses. The KS is, for example, "...knowledge *for* the world, as much as it is knowledge *of* the world. In this sense, knowledge is becoming. It creates. The future of modern society no longer mimics the past to the extent to which this has been the case until recently" (Stehr, 1994:160, emphasis in original). In this sense, the social world is organised by principles of knowledge production which create flexible and yet incremental (means-end) externalities in society. He continues that within:

...economic settings *incremental* knowledge [the social value of knowledge] has particular importance as a source of added value and possible sustainability rather than ephemeral and precarious growth. We are, thus, able to conclude that if knowledge may be seen as an analogy to commodities, it mostly occurs as a result of control over incremental or additional knowledge. In other words, the strategic importance of incremental knowledge in economic contexts derives from the ability of private firms to temporarily appropriate the marginal additions to knowledge and, therefore, the economic advantages that may accrue from the control over such knowledge. In a societal context in which the tempo with which knowledge is added, the peculiar and disconcerting trait that it rapidly appears and disappears as additional knowledge ... also arises from a conception of knowledge as a capacity for action (p.137, emphasis in original).

Extrapolating from the above, knowledge in the KS also has myriad forms that it takes, though is increasingly limited to being coterminous with 'capital' such that it allows one to act upon the world (*praxis*) (Stehr, 1994). In a more recent articulation of this point, Stehr argues that "it would appear to be almost self-evident that in a society in which knowledge becomes the dominant productive force, at least certain types of knowledge acquire such prominence that *knowledge turns into a commodity and be appropriated, reconsidered and treated as property*. For this

reason, one might conjecture that the capitalist economies of knowledge societies are unlikely to lose their identity as capitalistic entities” (Adolf and Stehr, 2014: 131, emphasis added). Acknowledging this social occurrence in the KS there is however, little recourse to seeing knowledge in terms other than in purely material and economically based language (Välimaa, 2016).

Stehr aims, in his epistemic approach to the KS, to define knowledge as a means to action. He continues that “...by reducing knowledge to information, economists assimilate the qualities of knowledge more easily to that of a circulating and exchangeable (material) thing that has a certain use-value to the person obtaining it. However, these and other stipulations about the “nature” of knowledge are highly contentious” (Adolf and Stehr, 2014: 138). In this formulation of knowledge within the KS it becomes a form of ‘capital’ and specifically within the university standing as a ‘product’ of academic labour, with a resultant value which can be actualised in a market situation, is evident within or outside the academy. Similarly, by defining capital as “accumulated labour” (Grundmann and Stehr, 2012), Stehr assumes that knowledge, shaped by the influence of market forces, becomes a form of 'capital'. He argues that within this social milieu there is little to be deciphered, when theorising knowledge in the KS, outside of this logic as:

Inasmuch as conventional economic goods are seen to have the property of rivalry and excludability, incremental knowledge is likely to resemble a conventional economic good, but since marginal additions to knowledge are often generated in contexts that explicitly champion non-ownership, there is no iron-clad guarantee that incremental knowledge – particularly if generated in the scientific community – will always behave like a conventional economic good (Adolf and Stehr, 2014: 205).

The above accounts of knowledge from Stehr offer important points of interaction with the problem of knowledge. His theorisation of knowledge in the KS stresses the importance of thinking about it in other than merely as ‘use-value’ however, in the overbearing presence of neoliberal thinking, extant in KS theory, Stehr obfuscates a fuller inquiry into how this might be realised in the KS. For example, he argues that “it is not contradictory ... that knowledge is neither strictly comparable to property or commodities nor is without attributes which elevate it, under certain conditions, nearer to property and commodities” (p.133-4). Having argued thus,

there is also little recourse in his theorisation of the KS to see how different forms of knowledge and their appreciation may occur:

...to put it simply, and looking at the relation from the side of the producer rather than that of the consumer who is interested in *buying* information or knowledge, a person may repeatedly buy the same product from a supermarket while each purchase of information or knowledge has to be a purchase that differs from other “pieces” of knowledge or information already acquired; otherwise, it is not *novel* knowledge the buyer is in possession of that information (p.139, emphasis in original).

We may conclude, then, that definitions of knowledge as given towards praxis suggests Stehr's account is fragmented by a lack of epistemic resolution rooted in the KS. This can be described by a tendency in his theory, of arguably encompassing ideas about knowledge which collapse into ‘utility’ discourses.

Comparison II: The ‘Utility’ of Knowledge and the Neo-Institutionalist Perspective

In returning to a neo-institutionalist view of knowledge in this thesis, categorised as firstly being a social product whose cultural influence is of great importance in the KS. In other words, the influence of the university goes beyond the realm of education and into that of culture such that it helps define the KS. Secondly, knowledge is a transformative element in the KS, altering the organisation and function of society and finally, knowledge and culture are intertwined, meaning that the former cannot be reduced to simplistic ideas and remains a dynamic element in the KS.

The KS's emphasis on the use value of knowledge is not in itself deleterious to a definition of knowledge. However, in Stehr's conceptualisation, there is an appreciation of the broad spectrum which knowledge may take without necessarily seeing its potential being realised in the KS. Identifying a superintendent capitalist conception of the KS (as KE) Stehr's theory can be directed to a broader epistemic assumption of the KS. Attempting therefore, to compare the conceptual arguments of Stehr with those of the neo-institutionalist perspective forges an apparent theoretical divergence.

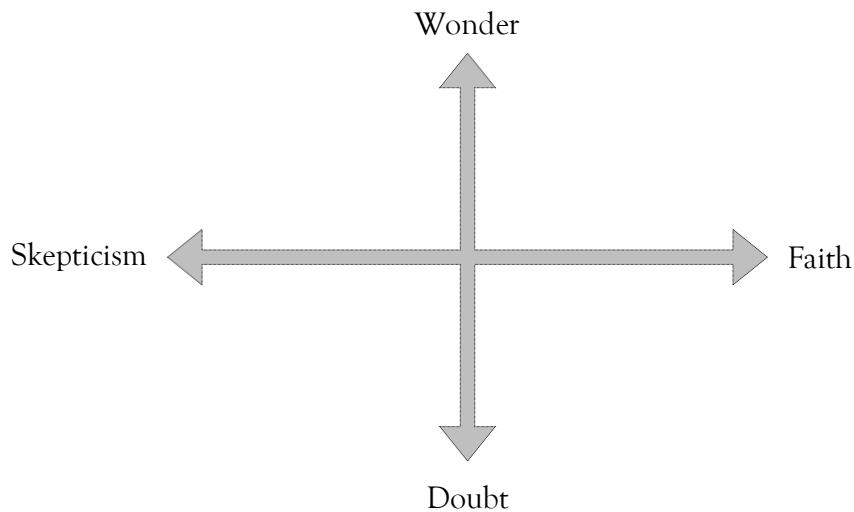
To ensure that multiple and wide ranging features of knowledge are incorporated into a definition of knowledge, recourse to broader social theory is therefore required. Alternative

positions to those identified in Stehr are located in a number of epistemic discourses drawing on ways we come to know the world. Whether this focusses on studies of knowledge constructed by religion, history (MacIntyre, 2011), economics (Foray, 2000), disciplinary location (Moore, 2011), social structures (Bernstein, 1990) or individual agents (Hanohano, 1999) etc. they all presume ways of knowing the world. A possible candidate from broader social and philosophical studies, related to this debate, is the work of James Alexander (2012) and his argument for enculturating a variety of epistemic landscapes in the study of philosophy.

Recourse to Social Theory: James Alexander's 'Way of Knowing' and the Problem of Knowledge

As a philosophical discussion on the nature of knowledge, Alexander calls upon the problem with epistemic theories of the social world and their often limited purview to apprehend the conditions for their understanding. As an alternative, he endorses a 'conversation' approach which ensures that knowledge should not be limited to one epistemic location but be envisaged as within a larger map of 'possibilities'. Arguing in opposition to what he sees is the creation of, consciously or otherwise, standpoint and entrenched ideas about knowledge in academic literature, debates over epistemology become less useful as tools for the philosophical and social sciences as they reflect prejudiced ideas derived from the disciplinary architecture from which they emerge. Beginning with an alternative standpoint, the challenge of knowledge is to encompass a broad purview from which the social world can be known. Initiating this discussion so as to explore fundamental questions in philosophy, its relevancy here lays in Alexander's insistence that our epistemic foundations colour the world we conceive and study. An alternative position is therefore presented which he defines as a 'compass' for ways of 'knowing the world' and is represented as follow

Diagram 3. Alexander's Epistemic Representation for ways of Knowing



Adapted from Alexander (2012: 80)

Each point of the compass above represents, in the broadest terms, ways of seeing and apprehending the world. Moreover, each point also moves towards its own understanding of that world and its relationship to validity and truth. Firstly, ‘wonder’ is described as “the encounter between a self and the world” and is an “attempt to abstract oneself from one’s own purposes abstracts the self into a state of wonder, where the world – formerly a world of causes and conditions and consequences – is now simply a vast image or set of images. There is no purpose, no motive, no interest. There is simply what there is. The best way to express this clearly is to say that it is where *what seems to be* and *what is* are the same” (p.81). This is the manner in which our relationship to the world calibrates in reference to ‘awe’; a poetic understanding of the world most often associated with aesthetics and aesthetical truth (Scruton, 2011).

The second point on the compass is that of ‘faith’. Here the connotation is not the conventional association to formalised ‘religions’ but any belief system that encourages the adherence to an often written or authoritative word. This may be translated into the prescriptions of a religious text, philosophical project, scientific discovery etc. all of which coalesce to a set of beliefs and ways of seeing the world. In this scheme of knowing “it is absolutely authoritative: it has authority, and our response to it is belief, or faith: what the Greeks called *pistis* and the Latins *fides*” (p.87).

The third point on the compass is that of ‘doubt’ which is “logically subsequent to faith” (p.92). Its strength is an epistemic position which laces knowledge of the world out of a cautious distance from certainty. Only when doubt has exhausted itself can the possibility of conclusive statements of truth be possible, argues Alexander. This point of the compass helps to establish much of academic epistemology namely, a rational attitude towards knowing the social world. Rather than committing to one way of knowing the world, knowledge must be kept with a broad awareness that it is not one thing or socially determined by how others may conceive it. Finally, ‘scepticism’ is “still committed to rational argument, it has a different purpose. So far we have reached the boundary of rational argument, which is the *telos* of doubt: but the *telos* of scepticism is beyond this boundary. And so we go beyond diction to contradiction” (p.99).

The interjection of Alexander to converse with Stehr’s ideas is important for the development of a broad epistemology in the KS and thus drawing back to a neo-institutionalist perspective. Moving from a paradigm in which knowledge is considered capital towards one of seeing modalities of knowledge, serves to critique Stehr and also affirm initial postulations about the KS found in the neo-institutionalist perspective. The broad compass of knowledge explicated here presents, therefore, a possible manoeuvre away from Stehr’s conceptualisations. The points of the compass represent the manner in which knowledge exists on a scale of possibility and expectations of the social world, and using Alexander as a reference point, the Stehrarian idea of knowledge as capital in the KS is perhaps an admixture of ‘doubt’ and ‘scepticism’⁴³.

Employing Alexander’s ideas, we can see that a spectrum of knowledge is not limited without consequent intellectual limitations. In other words, whilst knowledge does not ‘settle’ in anyone of these locales it ‘inhabits’ all of their potentials. Knowledge does not then have a specific epistemic mode in this reading but is rather differentiated by being ‘liminal’, inhabiting numerous ways of knowing the world at any one point in time. As an exploration of Stehr’s ideas

⁴³ The problem occurs in the undue limits of potentiality in conceiving knowledge in other ways. As argued by Alexander, the connection between doubt and scepticism are “formally the same as doubt but it is doubt completed; and doubt completed is not doubt: for if doubt is completed then it doubts that there is certainty; whereas, as I have shown, it is the fundamental postulate of doubt that there is a certainty which can be established through some method or other ... Doubt assumes that we can infer what is from what seems, and that there is a criterion of truth. Skepticism assumes that we cannot infer what is from what seems and that any criterion of truth requires, for its truth, a further criterion which leads us into an infinite regress and thus problems of fundamental contradiction” (p.99-100).

on knowledge in the KS, Alexander's account arguably helps to broaden the horizons of what knowledge can be/become in the KS. Whether it is reduced or restricted to such modes they are not therefore bound to them. Moreover, Stehr's conceptualisation of knowledge, as primarily a mode of capital in the KS, is reflected in the ways knowledge is thought of and discussed in KS discourses. As mentioned above, such a position does not deny that this can be done and is a dominant theory of knowledge, only that it requires to be broadened. If an epistemological maker of knowledge in the KS is its praxis character (embodied as capital), this does not therefore deny the many differentiated forms, or modes, of knowledge in the KS. Therefore, underlying Stehr's position of 'knowledge as praxis' we see a skew which Alexander's account helps to identify and bridge.

This approach of thinking about knowledge as having 'liminal' modes, stands therefore to mark a disjuncture with Stehr's account, as an exploration of Stehr's ideas on knowledge in the KS arguably helps to limit the horizons of what knowledge can be/become in the KS. Liminality is the 'occupation of positions on one or both sides of a boundary or spectrum' (OED). Here it refers specifically to the occupation of more than one position/location at the same time with knowledge in the KS has and which remains within a delicate balance between the varying 'modes' it may take.

'Liminal Modalities': Consequences for the Problem of Knowledge and a Neo-Institutionalist view

Appreciating that knowledge has the potential of taking a number of such modalities, the concept of liminal modalities argues that an epistemological discussion of the KS must include knowledge in the KS as neither reduced to nor excluded from ideas of knowledge as capital. To reduce all knowledge to a singular measure falls back into the problem of knowledge. A related and important consequence for liminal modality is that such a conception of knowledge in the KS critiques Stehr by arguing that as an emerging social form, the KS and its relationship to knowledge cannot be viewed merely in the narrow scope of contemporary social discourses, such as those drawn in terms of the KE. Whilst we cannot deny that governmental, industry and business etc. offer discourses about knowledge in such terms, liminal modality returns to questions of how we may better conceive our ideas about knowledge which conform to the

generous parameters of a KS. Finally, what such a conception means for Stehr's account of the KS, as a basis for discussing knowledge, is important more broadly for the arguments developed in this chapter. As with the ontological and sociological analysis above, the epistemic elaboration does not render the problem of knowledge 'solved' but rather offers a new path in which we may begin to think about the university's KS context. If the problem of knowledge is thought of in terms dedicated by the particular circumstances of the KS drawn from the general literature, and as discussed here by its dialogical contingency, knowledge conglomeration and liminal modality features, we may intimate these elements as forming a coherent theory compatible with a neo-institutionalist perspective.

Moving Beyond the Problem of Knowledge: Towards Contextual Clarity

As a categorisation of the general literature, the preceding analysis has attempted to put the problem of knowledge under critical review. Each of the strands of the present investigation have converged on the question of what remains of the problem of knowledge once attempts have been made to contextually clarify the terrain via reference to broader social theory. The consequences have already been alluded to in each of the three analytic phases within this chapter. A summary of the analysis can be represented as follows

Table 1. Summary Analysis of the Problem of Knowledge in reference to Nico Stehr

Division of the Problem of Knowledge	Summary of Stehr's work and conflict with Neo-Institutionalist perspective	Recourse to Social Theory and Summary of ideas	New Conceptual Formulation
Ontological	KS suffers from a 'fragility' which defines its ontological existence	Mikhail Bakhtin. Engagement with theorist concluded that the continued existence of the KS is based on the continual and reciprocal process of meaning making via the dialogical process	Dialogical Contingency
Social	Rise of knowledge producers marginalises the role of the university within the KS	David Baker. Engagement with theorist concluded that knowledge diffusion in the KS does not marginalise the university but rather is a model for knowledge production	Knowledge Conglomerations
Epistemological	Knowledge has value as a means to act upon the world through being a form of 'capital' in the KS	James Alexander. Engagement with theorist concluded that ideas about knowledge cannot be reduced to singular forms but rather must encompass the many modes which it may possibly take	Liminal Modality

Taken accumulatively, the above table represents the analysis of the preceding two chapters (Condition I of the 'idea'), revealing a critical engagement with a segment of the literature in order to assess its many claims in lieu of a neo-institutionalist perspective. Leading to a new contextual understanding of knowledge in the KS, this has not meant however, that the problem of knowledge has been 'solved', only that the analysis presented here offers a way of thinking which allows us to gain contextual clarity of the KS. Therefore, rather than giving a substantive 'answer' to the problem of knowledge, what has been attempted is to identify new pathways which conceptualise the KS and the university differently. Although knowledge does not fundamentally *change* as a result of the KS, its use and importance in society can be argued to alter according to its context. The outcome of our analysis, therefore, shows that *dialogical contingency*, *knowledge conglomerations* and *liminal modality* all infer new ways to conceive such changes within the KS context. Moreover, they share common attitudes to the importance, discursive and unrestricted nature of knowledge in the KS. Considering the analysis

accumulatively, how we may define the outcomes of this critical review will help to conclude this condition of the ‘idea’. In other words, the importance of a term which acknowledges the changes that have been explicated in this chapter is required.

Potential terms which may cater for such conditions include, though are not limited to, encapsulating knowledge’s *malleability*, *fluidity*, *plasticity* etc. in the KS. In each of these terms, an attempt is made to stretch the definition of knowledge to encompass its open and dynamic nature. For example, malleability is an adjective describing ‘an ability to be moulded into a shape’ (OED). Fluidity on the other hand, relates to ‘a substance that has no fixed shape and changes rapidly and unexpectedly’ (*ibid.*) whilst plasticity is ‘the quality of being able to be changed into a new shape over time’ (*ibid.*). All of these terms help espouse values of knowledge i.e. as expressed in this chapter in its open and changing nature. Specifically, fluidity and plasticity do this in greater degree, as malleability does not denote the potential for change over time (*ibid.*). A further point of comparison between fluidity and plasticity is the variability of time. For fluidity change occurs quicker than for plasticity, as inferred in their definitions, and it is for this reason that plasticity potentially provides a better discursive marker, than fluidity, to manoeuvre a course in the literature. The plasticity of knowledge or knowledge plasticity (from here on KP) is a potential term which helps capture the analysis of this chapter and by extension the forgoing condition of the ‘idea’⁴⁴.

‘Knowledge Plasticity’ as Defining the University’s KS context

Any term which stands to describe the contextual clarity of the KS becomes an “organising paradigm and meta-discourse” as opposed to a descriptive or “normative label” (Foray and Lundvall, 1996). In our present case, KP does so by taking each of the key elements of knowledge developed in this chapter and shows their suitability to a KS context. For example, to speak of the ‘plasticity of knowledge’ suggests dialogical contingencies are a set of social discourses which evolve over time to create knowledge in the KS. In the sociological sense, the pliability of

⁴⁴ This term, ‘knowledge plasticity’, was initially employed by the author in a Master’s Dissertation (MPhil: Educational Research Methods, Faculty of Education, Cambridge University). All that remains is the resemblance to the term since the features and analysis marking the above usage is distinct to this chapter. For more see, Zaman (2009: 45).

knowledge ensures that knowledge conglomerations are not to be objectively defined centres but are open to change and social construction. Finally, liminality modality, conforms to these attitudes as it itself rejects pigeonholing knowledge into limited categorisations and encourages an open and epistemically varied vista. In sum, for our present study KP (with the defining features of dialogical contingency, knowledge conglomerations and liminal modality) is a concept which helps define the context of the KS. The term portends the importance to open and socially constructed meaning making, which stresses an ongoing conversation between the locations of knowledge and its use in society. In sum, the review and analysis of the literature (both general and specialised) in reference to a neo-institutionalist perspective generates a theoretical account of the KS which I define in the following terms

KP is a term relating to the ontological, sociological and epistemic context of the KS. It is a description of the social context of the KS and is specifically defined by the features of dialogical contingency, knowledge conglomerations and liminal modality, respectively. Finally, the concept is the result of a specific discourse and engagement with the literature (identified as general and specialised) and marks the conclusion of the ‘Contextual Clarity’ condition of the ‘idea’ of the university.

KP has emerged as a commitment to thinking about the context of the KS. However, having arrived at a statement about knowledge, questions remain as to how KP ‘works’ as a conceptual tool and what may its consequences be for the university and KS more generally. Whilst the first part condition of the ‘idea’ of the university concludes here, such questions require attention for the second, ‘Theoretical Development’, condition.

Chapter Conclusion: Laying a Path Towards ‘Theoretical Development’

This chapter, as with this section of the thesis, has attempted to gain ‘contextual clarity’ on the idea of the KS through a critical assessment of the literature (both general and specialised). The purpose being here to converse the general and specialised literature on the KS to arrive at an accumulative position about the context of the university. The two main parts of the chapter included firstly, a breakdown of the problem of knowledge (derived from Chapter 1) into three distinct elements (ontological, sociological and epistemic). This division was created so as to allow the work of a specialist in the KS literature, Nico Stehr, to specifically dialogue with the problem

in reference to his diverse oeuvre i.e. finding particular points for comparison. The second part of the chapter was an evaluation of Stehr's ideas as compared with the neo-institutionalist perspective (the sociological framework of the thesis) leading to a statement about the KS context of the university. Where discrepancies occurred between Stehr's ideas and those of the neo-intuitionist school, recourse to broader social theory (social sciences and social philosophy) was employed to help re-orientate the analysis towards the neo-institutionalist position.

Beginning with the ontological analysis, the initial 'fragility' of the KS, according to Stehr, was due to its being based on the contested nature of knowledge which left little room for how it continues its existence as a form of social organisation. This position was deemed problematic as it was congruous with the ontological assumption of the problem of knowledge though incongruous with a neo-institutionalist perspective. To counter this, and to offer a theory of the KS's continued and vigorous existence, Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of 'dialogism' was employed to offer an approach which sees the KS as both fragile and yet strengthened by the process of knowledge construction, thus providing an ontological basis for its continued existence. Similarly, the sociological analysis showed that despite the rise of knowledge producers in the KS, the university retains an important role and which cannot be delegitimised by decentring forces of the KS. Again, this position was deemed problematic as it was congruous with the sociological assumption of the problem of knowledge and thus incongruous with the neo-institutionalist perspective. Therefore, using the work of neo-institutionalist David Baker, it was argued that the model of universalised and rational knowledge is part of the university's legacy and modern developments in the form of the KS, are reflections of its institutional achievement. This circumstance, it was argued, is better considered as creating knowledge conglomerations in the KS. Finally, the epistemic analysis showed that knowledge is deemed a form of social utility with primarily economic ends. Again, this was considered problematic as it also was congruous with the epistemic assumption of the problem of knowledge and thus incongruous with the neo-institutionalist perspective. Subsequently, the work of the philosopher James Alexander was used to show that knowledge has a number of 'modes' which predicate how one comes to know, think about and organise the world. Thinking about the 'liminal modalities' of knowledge helped therefore to safeguard it from collapsing merely into means-end and utility purposes.

Having with the preceding chapter endeavoured to conceptually clarify the KS, an explanation of knowledge was derived which amalgamated the analysis in the chapter. 'Knowledge Plasticity'

(KP) was used to categorise the analysis of the proceeding chapters, categorising a way of thinking about knowledge in lieu of its emerging KS context. In other words, it stands as a concept marking the social context of the university in the KS. KP was therefore defined as a term relating to the ontological, sociological and epistemic context of the KS i.e. a description of knowledge forged by the features of dialogical contingency, knowledge conglomerations and liminal modality. As a concept which is the result of a specific discourse and engagement with the literature (general and specific), it marks the conclusion of the extended literature review. This concept then stands as a summation of the proceeding analysis and the foundations for moving forward to create an ‘idea’ of the university in the KS. Having therefore explored the ‘contextual clarity’, the second condition of the ‘idea’, its ‘theoretical development’ now requires attention.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Framework: Towards an ‘Idea’ of the University

Chapter Introduction: Theoretical Development and the ‘Idea’ of the University

The university remains an ‘elusive’ institution despite the continuing intellectual interest in its past, present and future (Denman, 2005). Part of this complexity occurs through the ambiguous and changing relations it has with its social environment (Ball, 2017; Jarausch, 1983). In our present study this has been alluded to in terms of the rich opportunities and challenges occasioned by the emerging KS (Hernández-Romero, 2017). Through an analytical engagement with the literature, identifying KP as a marker of this social context gives us the opportunity to think in a ‘post-problem’ context i.e. beyond terms defined by the literatures treatment of the university in the 21st Century. The present phase of the analysis moves now towards how an ‘idea’ of the university may be constructed. However, questions over how this may be achieved are not clearly defined in the literature (Pelikan, 1992) and therefore the first part of this chapter shall consider how an ‘idea’ might be created. This I shall do through a process of identifying and analysing key texts from the literature and assessing whether there are any commonalities between the ways that they argue and propose. Having reviewed the texts and identified a general method by which an ‘idea’ may be formed, the second part of the chapter shall specifically consider the implications of this literature review for the ‘idea’ in the KS.

PART I: TOWARDS AN ‘IDEA’ OF THE UNIVERSITY

Creating an ‘Idea’: A Review of the Literature

Initially, the problem of creating an ‘idea’ is exacerbated by the fact that no explicit methodology is mentioned in the literature. Another lays in the breadth of works in this areas, stretching across a variety of literature disciplinary fields as well as social and institutional interests arising from within and outside of the institution (Alvesson and Benner, 2016). In light of this diversity there is a possibility of seeking out general trends of interests within this literature through reviewing their main arguments. My intention here is not to consider all of the works dealing with the ‘idea’ in the academic literature but rather those which are extensively cited in the literature (Peters and Barnett, 2018; Roth, 2013; Mulcahy, 2009; Arcilla, 2007)⁴⁵. The literature list for review is given as follows⁴⁶:

Newman, H., J. (1992)	Oakeshott, M. (1990)
von Humboldt, W. (1970)	Nisbet, R. (1971)
Jaspers, K. (1960)	Derrida, J. (1983)
Weber, M. (2004)	Maskell, D. and Robinson, I. (2012)
Parsons, T. and Platt, M., G. (2013)	Barnett, R. (2010; 2013a; 2015)
Kerr, C. (2001)	Collini, S. (2017)
Hutchins, M., R. (1953)	

The selection of these texts, as stated, represents the general frequency with which they appear in the literature on the ‘idea’. Before an analysis of the texts may occur however, it is important to highlight a caveat and potential criticism of this selection. To this end, the exclusion, in many cases, of women, ethnic and political minority voices from this list may represent potential problems and biases for the liberal ‘idea’. Therefore the importance of being weary of the

⁴⁵ The contemporary references used in the review are included due to their current importance within educational studies (Barnett) and wider public discourse on universities more generally (Collini, 2017; Maskell and Robinson, 2012, respectively).

⁴⁶ For a thorough and recent, anthological, contribution in the field of the ‘idea’ literature, see Peters and Barnett (Vol. I) (2018). Many of the above theorists used for the literature review appear in this anthology.

apparent universalist and *a priori* sentiments regarding education (proposed by overwhelmingly white, middle class, males) within this list, may potentially mislead one of their socially constructed, and potentially biased, nature⁴⁷.

Since the purpose of this review was to see commonalities which may emerge from the literature, its review was undertaken by summarising the key arguments of the respective authors. This was done by asking two questions namely, what was the structure of their arguments and how they arrived at their conclusions and b) what their proposal for the ‘idea’ of the university postulated, respectively. Having considered these questions, the review revealed patterns regarding how the ‘idea’ is constructed by these theorists. In other words, regardless of the ‘idea’ theorists may individually propose, the substance of their theories included discernable forms of inquiry. These patterns of the ‘idea’ I identify as a normative demarcation between its ‘conditions’ and ‘features’. In terms of the former, these are the essential qualities of the ‘idea’ and revolve around understanding and elaborating its social context, the challenges and opportunities which the university faces whilst the latter, its features, can be defined by the particular traits which the ‘idea’ is given.

Analysing the Literature: Conditions of the ‘Idea’

Firstly, from the analysis of the literature three conditions (or foundations) for the development of an ‘idea’, were identified. The first of these, ‘Contextual Clarity’, elaborates the necessity of investigating the ‘context’ within which the university operates. It is the first means towards articulating an ‘idea’ of the university by laying a foundation for its contextual analysis. This includes studying the university’s own institutional environment, as well as the social world within which the ‘idea’ shall function. The importance of this condition is underscored by educationalists as an acknowledgement that the university is not an ‘island’ and that the social world necessarily ‘affects’ its functions in ostensible and often implicit ways. To ‘clarify’ infers having a thorough appreciation of how the context may come to affect the university. Having done so, we may understand the opportunities and challenges for developing an ‘idea’. The next

⁴⁷ Such critiques of the classical liberal ‘idea’ of the university are taken up further in Chapter 5.

phase of ‘development’ is then a means of progressing towards the ‘idea’ which would not be possible without this initial contextual treatment⁴⁸.

Secondly, there is ‘Theoretical Development’. Having explicated the context within which the university is located, this condition elaborates the specific ways in which the university may operate, be challenged by and/or acclimatise to its surroundings. ‘Development’ here refers to how the context converses with the university whether by adding, affecting or changing the ways in which we think of it as a social institution. In doing so, there is an element to this condition which leads to a theoretical problem⁴⁹. This I have identified as a ‘tension’ between the university and its environmental conditions challenging the creation of the ‘idea’⁵⁰.

Finally, there is a ‘Resolution of Tension/s’. This final condition of the ‘idea’ identified in my literature review, revolves around the above mentioned tension/s. This occurs through the theoretical context and is embedded within it. The term ‘resolution’ is here employed in contrast to the notion of *solution*, as the ‘idea’ is not treated in most cases within the literature as a panacea

⁴⁸ The processes by which this is achieved in the literature naturally varies according to the theorist’s respective frame of analytic interest. For Newman (1992), for example, this means the identification of a secular world rising in Victorian England, for the German philosopher Jasper (Wyatt, 2005), this is a recognition of the existential individualism the university is confronted in lieu of modern alienation. For Weber (2004), on the other hand, this means a recognition of the age of bureaucracy and its infiltration within university life to disabuse the *bildung* ideal of education. For Collini (2017) it is the social context of neo-liberalism which defines the 21st Century milieu etc.

⁴⁹ An example of this would be Kerr’s (2001) ‘idea’ of the university, his development of a theory for the university in the 20th Century came upon a ‘tension’ which he saw as rooted within the institutional life of the institution namely, the pervasiveness of consumer ideologies in the educational experiences of students. Alternatively, Hutchins (1953), a contemporary of Kerr, saw this tension manifest as a result of his theoretical development of an ‘idea’ of the university which was confronted by an increasingly secularised world to which the university was forced to inhabit. Whatever such particular cases might be, my review of the literature suggests theoretical development raises tensions that the university faces and is required to address in the form of an ‘idea’.

⁵⁰ Another example of a ‘tension’ emerging in the construction an of ‘idea’ can be found in the work of John Henry Newman. For Newman’s (1992) construction of the ‘idea’ of the university (Rothblatt, 1997), includes a detailed exposition of an increasingly secular world view found in late 19th Century England. For Newman, the place of theology to create a religious response to this problem would be forged in the special intellectual space of the university. Here the ‘developmental phase’ in Newman’s thinking relates to the social context of industrial capitalism and the ways in which it creates a divided (and alienated) individual, disaffected by religion and unable to respond to being made in the image of God (MacIntyre, 2011). Herein lies the ‘tension’ of modern life which the university for Newman, as a place for the education and amelioration of the young, can once again be realigned to a theo-centric and God inspired vision of the world.

for the university, but rather theorists consider the ways in which the ‘idea’ helps the university to exist in relative co-existence with the social world it inhabits. Resolution of the pervading tensions provides the opportunity, therefore, for the university to define itself and its many purposes as a continuing negotiation with its larger social environment⁵¹. These conditions can moreover be said to reflect a general dialectic process where the *thesis* (contextual clarity) meets the *antithesis* of the tension (theoretical development) leading to the development of the ‘idea’ or *synthesis* for the university (resolution of tension).

Analysing the Literature: Features of the ‘Idea’

Whereas the conditions of the ‘idea’ can be defined as its requirements, the features are the particular contours which inform the university’s goals⁵². In other words, the conditions of the ‘idea’ are its essential tenets, whilst the features are its sufficient details. Both, therefore, are reliant upon one another, as without the specificities of the *conditions*, the ‘idea’ remains formless and abstract whilst to subtract its ‘features’ it becomes difficult to define how it shall exist within the university. Three features of the ‘idea’ were identified from the literature review and are, firstly, its ‘Ambiguity’. The aspect of ambiguity of the ‘idea’ ensures it is broad and not an overly detailed concept for the university to implement i.e. leaving space for interpretation by the institution. Examples from the literature include, for example, the liberal ‘idea’ of the university whose principle ambiguity is achieved as liberal education is an open and much debated concept within educational studies. However, there are also specific features defining the liberal university or a liberal education, such that the definition is broad enough for interpretation. Though the liberal ‘idea’ can, and continues to be, the source of much interpretation, there are tenets of personal, pedagogic and ethical dimensions which frame and prevent it from spawning into theoretical relativity (Mill, 2007).

⁵¹ The recent case, for example, of Barnett’s (2011) ‘idea’ shows that the Ecological University responds to the increasing constrictions placed on the institution by economic forces to co-opt and dictate it towards economic models of operations. In light of these challenges his ‘idea’ sees the university as being self-reflexive and open to the cosmopolitan values which can help ward off these problems.

⁵² For example, Barnett (2010) claims that any ‘idea’ of the university must be “necessary, feasible and desirable” (p.151).

Secondly, there is feature of being ‘Unachievable’. This feature refers to an element of the ‘idea’ which gives it a non-definable end. Iterated in the literature, the set of values which the university aims to achieve are not, and cannot, entirely be realised. In other words, the ‘idea’ is commonly defined as being continually outside the reach of realisation. For example, in the case of the liberal ideal, whether we can say that a university is entirely ‘liberal’, and therefore reached its philosophical goals, is generally unrealistic. However, its unachievable nature does not mean that the ‘idea’ is not worth striving for, but that it remains a perpetually desirable pursuit⁵³.

Finally, the ‘idea’ provides a ‘Vision’ for the institution. The final feature of the ‘idea’ identified in the review is that it provides a means to organise the operations of the university, especially in terms of its knowledge production and dissemination which reflects an educational ethos for students and scholars alike. For example, the liberal ‘idea’ encourages a collective conversation for knowledge to coexist in relative harmony within the university, organising itself around this vision. As with the other features, it does not dictate an end point or completion; it rather helps to gather the activities of the university to realise the institution’s potential. The following table summarises my review of the literature:

⁵³ An example of this would be from Derrida’s (1983) speculations over the nature of reason in the university and standing as its principle motivating drive i.e. its ‘idea’. Reason, for Derrida, is the unending drive to explore the ‘society of the question’ in which scholar and student are drawn together in a perpetual act of discovery.

Table 2. Summary of Literature Review to Construct Schema of ‘Idea’

Author and Publication	Intimations of Conditions of the ‘Idea’	Intimations of Features of the ‘Idea’
Newman, H., J. (1992)	<p>Contextual Clarity: The rise of an increasingly non-religious (secular) Victorian-industrial context forms the basis of Newman’s lectures. Specifically, there is a critique of modern man as being detached from his privilege as a vicegerent on earth. See in particular <i>Discourse I: Theology as a Branch of Knowledge</i>, for an elaboration of Newman’s account of theology and its relation to the 19th Century social context.</p> <p>Theoretical Development: Here Newman sees the university acting as a potential vanguard for the encroachments mentioned above i.e. upon the problems facing Victorian society. See in particular the lecture <i>Christianity and Scientific Investigation: A Lecture Written for the School of Science</i>.</p> <p>Resolution of Tension: Newman stresses the harnessing of intellectual, moral and spiritual energies within the university to confront and create students able to understand and target the social problems of the day. This it can only do by seeing the student as a composite of ‘body and soul’ and thus her education as being gravitated towards broad ends over a specialised (and potentially restrictive) inquires. See in particular, <i>Discourse VI: Knowledge viewed in relation to Learning</i> and <i>Discourse VIII: Knowledge viewed in relation to Religion</i>.</p>	<p>Ambiguity: The liberal ‘idea’ of the university is itself difficult to define since Newman expounds his account as being in the preoccupation of ‘mind, reason and reflection’. This is related to liberal education since it is wedded to, albeit in unclear ways, religious truths for Newman. The author argues that "religious truth is not only a portion, but a condition of general knowledge. To blot it out is nothing short ... of unravelling the web of university teaching" (p.71). See, <i>Discourse III: Bearing of Theology on other Branches of Knowledge</i>.</p> <p>Unachievable: Newman infers that the intimations of a Victorian secular outlook on life will be a long standing problem with no ready solution. See, <i>Discourse V: Knowledge as its own end</i> for the problems of achieving the liberal university in the Victorian (industrial) context.</p> <p>Vision: In referencing the philosopher Francis Bacon, Newman makes an illusion to the liberal ‘idea’ being a form of ‘perpetual gift’ such that we may speak of it as bearing “educational fruits”. Newman continues that “By fruitful, I mean, [that] which [shall] yield revenue; by</p>

		enjoyable, where <i>nothing accrues of consequences beyond the using</i> " (p.100, emphasis is original).
von Humboldt, W. (1970)	<p>Contextual Clarity: The role of philosophy (especially the school of thought which would become German idealism) to resurrect a motivating ethos for learning, <i>Bildung</i>, is imperative to Humboldt's work. This is primarily a consequence of what the author sees as the problems facing German universities in the 18th Century. This period, as Bahti (1987) argues, was a "lowpoint for German universities: unruly students, dropping enrollments, little apparent correlation between subjects taught and post-university positions available, financial marginality, etc. At this very time, the last decade of the eighteenth Century, there was talk of abolishing the university; its place could be taken by the already existing academies of science and by new, practical vocational schools (<i>Hochschulen</i>). And yet in 1810, the University of Berlin was founded" (p.438).</p> <p>Theoretical Development: In exposing the role of knowledge, and philosophy in particular, Humboldt's primary directive to help merge research and teaching, <i>die Einheit von Forschung und Lehre</i>, plays an imperative role in conceiving the liberal university. Humboldt's concern for the university to be a place for <i>Lernfreiheit</i> (academic freedom) is expressed by the role of the institution "to appoint the best intellectuals available, and to give them the freedom to carry on their research wherever it leads" (Fallon, 1980: 19). This proposal attempts to repel the increasing presence of state (Prussian) and religious (Protestant) constrictions on the university by championing intellectual freedom, <i>die Unabhängigkeit</i>.</p>	<p>Ambiguity: Humboldt's consideration of the philosophically orientated liberal university at Berlin, was at one hand clearly defined by the classification of the sciences and the ordering of knowledge (with philosophy taking a prime role). However, the directives towards such ideals should also be read as, according to Neave (2001), the esoteric influences of German idealism, which greatly influenced Humboldt. This provided an 'idea' of the university which, ambiguously, calls "these intellectual institutions to devote themselves to the elaboration of the uncontrived substance of intellectual and moral culture, growing from an uncontrived inner necessity" (p.243).</p> <p>Unachievable: The argument for the liberal university being realised is, once again, enveloped in the German idealist conception of becoming (<i>Werden</i>). Here, argues Humboldt, the institution and individual share a correlation of being (<i>dasein</i>) manifested in their joint awakening of higher intellectual realities. As a goal perpetually out of reach, he continues that "their essence [universities] ... lies in the articulation of the master of transmitted knowledge at the school stage with the first stages of independent inquiry. In other words, the task of these institutions is to effect the transition from the former to the latter" (p.243).</p>

	<p>For Humboldt, championing academic freedom was an imperative to resolve what he determined was an institutional restriction upon the university.</p> <p>Resolution of Tension: In order to combat the contemporary problems facing the university, the liberal 'idea' of the university was proposed to the institution "from the domination of their "higher" faculties, medicine, law, and theology, with their bases in writings and law. In his [Humboldt's] view, the university needed to be reconstituted so as to free philosophy, with its basis in reason, from the <i>domination of theology, and the church</i>" (Milchman and Rosenberg, 1997: 87, emphasis added).</p>	<p>Vision: His ideas on the liberal university can be found to expound thinking on the institution which hopes to increase the importance of original scholarship, promote academic freedom (<i>Lernfreiheit</i>) and order the sciences to place philosophy at the same level of medicine and theology. For example, see Humboldt (1970: 261).</p>
Weber, M. (2004)	<p>Contextual Development: The arguments presented by Weber for Prussian university ministers (of which Germany was one) are founded on the problems related to, amongst other things, the bureaucratic burden increasingly experienced by these institutions. These being, amongst other things, the limit and control upon academic and intellectual freedoms.</p> <p>Theoretical Development: Weber goes on to discuss these social problems in relation to the law-bound and means-end rationality (<i>Zweckrational</i>) coming to control and ultimately limiting the freedoms of academics.</p> <p>Resolution of Tension: Weber argues that this problem (tension) can be overturned by the restoring of a "corporate pride" in the vocation of the academic community (p.7).</p>	<p>Ambiguity: Weber's argument for the university system to be run in terms of greater professional liberty is less clearly defined. For example, he claims for the academic that in "the execution of his professional responsibility a man should confine himself to it alone and should exclude whatever does not strictly belong to it particularly his own loves and hates. The powerful personality does not manifest itself by trying to give everything a "personal touch" on every possible occasion" (p.50).</p> <p>Unachievable: As a community of scholarship, the task for truth seeking and freedom from the ever encroaching grip of means-end rationality (<i>Zweckrational</i>) becomes an ongoing task for the university. The unachievable nature of this task is due to Weber's ideas that this form of</p>

		<p>rationality is a key, and unavoidable, feature of modern society.</p> <p>Vision: The university as a place for the ‘ethical neutrality’ of political and religious views is essential. This value is one which the university must draw towards in its organisation and fulfilment of its social and intellectual duties. See, Ben-David (1975: 1468).</p>
Jaspers, K. (1960)	<p>Contextual Development: Jaspers philosophical (existential) account of the university ‘idea’ is founded on the premise of it being a truth seeking institution, essential for achieving human wholeness. As such, the ‘context’ which he describes at first is the ‘human (existential) condition’ whose meaning-seeking and fulfilment in a world of possibilities is the bedrock for the university’s concerns.</p> <p>Theoretical Development: The essential human faculty of “responsive reason” essential for human development is what the university can potentially nurture. Thus Jaspers argues that “University education is a <i>formative process arriving at meaningful freedom</i>. It takes place through participation in the university’s intellectual life” (1960: 65, emphasis added). The ‘will’ of human potential is encountered and potentially comes into confrontation with the state and the potential problems which it faces as a truth seeking institution. Jaspers claims that the task of the university should therefore be able to control “the state through the power of truth [and] not of force” (p.135).</p>	<p>Ambiguity: For Jaspers the university is tasked with providing an existential infrastructure i.e. the seeking of truth, to ameliorate the individual in her dwelling of the university’s “freedom of intellect” (Wyatt, 2005: 23).</p> <p>Unachievable: In line with the existentialist philosophers of his day, the ends of human development and potential (which in Jaspers’ view can occur through the university) is not given a definitive end. Thus the ‘idea’ of university is in a perpetual, and uncertain, purist towards human wholeness.</p> <p>Vision: The ‘idea’ is here set within the broad parameters of human potentialities with the act of university teaching deriving “from a trust in such dormant [existential] possibilities” (Jaspers, 1960: 117).</p>

	<p>Resolution of Tension: For Jaspers 'severance' (<i>die Trennung</i>) is a philosophical discussion concerning the relationship between the individual and the world. As a separation between one's individual identity and the world we inhabit, it is a tension within the existentialist condition, circumvented only by the human potential to know truth and the Other. For Jaspers it is seeking culture, something the 'idea' of the university provides, which can overcome this tension and lead to fulfilled individuals in lieu of the existential necessity for human meaning (p.117).</p>	
Hutchins, M., R. (1953)	<p>Contextual Clarity: Not dissimilar from Newman's analysis of social context, Hutchins sees the university as operating in new and unfamiliar circumstances and which require radically different ways of thinking about its role in the world.</p> <p>Theoretical Development: Hutchins wished to entrust the university once more as an agent in the "spiritual transformation of a corrupt and materialistic world that had lost all sense of purpose and descended into a dark well of skeptical relativism" (Gray, 2012: 10).</p> <p>Resolution of Tension: Hutchins proposals for university reforms are to help it regain a spiritually aware and pedagogically rigorous education. This he refers to it as the 'University of Utopia'. Outlined in an address from 1944, this would include abolishing academic rank, encouraging collegiate life, equalising pay and establishing the principal of absolute authority on all academic and university matters (Hutchins, 1953: 8).</p>	<p>Ambiguous: The arguable importance of Hutchins 'idea' lays in its necessarily indistinct (ambiguous) nature. He argues, for example, that "The University is not a center of propaganda for an official doctrine. Still less is it an institution like many American universities that is not concerned with doctrine at all. It is concerned with all doctrines that can have any reasonable claim to be taken seriously. Its effort is to work toward a definition of the real points of agreement and disagreement among these doctrines, not in the hope of obtaining unanimity, but in the hope of obtaining clarity. The object is not agreement but communication" (p.67).</p> <p>Unachievable: The liberal 'idea' of the university, of which the University of Utopia is a manifestation, must balance the concerns of specialisation, diversity and political conformity. These being forces arising from both outside and within the university (p.119).</p>

		<p>Vision: The University of Utopia, argues Hutchins, will promote an “educational system as a whole, [which] aims to bring together men of different attitudes, backgrounds, interests, temperaments, and philosophies for the purpose of promoting mutual comprehension. The University of Utopia is an understood diversity” (p.68).</p>
Parsons, T. and Platt, M., G. (2013)	<p>Contextual Clarity: The authors define the role of the university as primarily being to “act as a trustee of cognitive culture” (p.18). With the rise of the educational revolution in the 20th Century, the university has as an unprecedented advantage in creating and shaping the social consciousness.</p> <p>Theoretical Development: Using the analogy from the banking system and the need for ‘intellectual solvency’, the argument moves to one advocating that “the university may invest in adventurous and inventive programs not directly involved with accepted cognitive priorities or unproven as to their cognitive contributions. But, as with a bank, the university must remain cognitively solvent; an application of cognitive rationality is one part of its fiduciary responsibility” (p.308). The potential problem that this may accrue for the institution is increased ‘pricing competition’ leading it to act as other structures of capitalistic organisation (p.309).</p> <p>Resolution of Tension: This apparent tension (cognitive insolvency) in the future of the university (American) is encountered by the authors through the importance of the principle of ‘inclusion’ (p.383). This involves the necessary decisions to make the university a space free for religious,</p>	<p>Ambiguity: The ‘bundle of the university’ is the amalgamation of its varying and dynamic features which help continue its functioning. This ambiguous feature of their ‘idea’ is a necessary historical strength of the institution (p.351).</p> <p>Unachievable: The university in the context of structured systems of operations must be committed to “intelligence upgrading through involvement in the research complex would be limited to a narrower set of morally sanctionable activities” (pp.371-2). This the authors see as occurring through the production of scholarly (socially legitimated) contents and the training of future scholars.</p> <p>Vision: The academy must resist the splitting of research and teaching in order not to splinter the core of the institution and subsequently the ‘idea’ of the university. It is this melding which shall provide the long term scope for the organisation, intellectual and social life.</p>

	political and cultural exploration. This ‘value generation’ is key to their proposal for the ‘idea’ of the university.	
Kerr, C. (2001)	<p>Contextual Clarity: The university, in the classical and medieval formation, has ceased to be viable in Kerr’s estimation. Within this context, a new ‘idea’ and motivating ethos must be sort for the institution.</p> <p>Theoretical Development: Within the industrialised and increasingly democratic context the university is faced with, the university can no longer exist as an elite institution in lieu of the demands of the 20th Century. Herein is the ‘tension’ of the modern research institution.</p> <p>Resolution of Tension: In lieu of these challenges we ought to think about and treat the university as a ‘Multiversity’, argues Kerr. This is a place for congruous and conflicting communities, with no one unifying principle of organisation. In this ‘idea’, the university host communities be they “the community of the undergraduate and the community of the graduate; the community of the humanist, the community of the social scientist, and the community of the scientist; the communities of the professional schools; the community of all the non-academic personnel; the community of the administrators” (p.14).</p>	<p>Ambiguity: With respects to the many operations of the Multiversity, Kerr encourages the reader to see it as a physical place as well as a state of mind i.e. as a form of consciousness and activity. It is, as he argues, a “city of infinite variety” (p.31).</p> <p>Unachievable: The Multiversity is an ‘idea’ which must continuously strive to balance the increasing pressures of higher education access, maintaining academic excellence and encouraging democratic governance (p.25).</p> <p>Vision: The ‘idea’ for Kerr is a “name [for which] the institution stands ... a ... certain historical legacy, a characteristic quality of spirit” (p.15). This provides the motivating ethos for the university’s operations in the growing Higher Education environment of its day.</p>
Oakeshott, M. (1990)	<p>Contextual Clarity: The university’s mission is in part largely the pursuit for wholeness. His argument sees present day university life being restricted by social and economic problems</p>	<p>Ambiguous: The essential character of the university is such that it cannot be easily determined i.e. it defies simple definitions. Oakeshott sees the principle role of the</p>

	<p>which deserve immediate attention. He argues that "a university is not a machine for achieving a particular purpose or producing a particular result; it is a manner of human activity" (p.96).</p> <p>Theoretical Development: Oakeshott proposes that the university is faced with, amongst other things, a problem of 'time' i.e. the immediate concerns facing university administration in the post-war era, such that it will become increasingly problematic to free itself from such contextual restraints.</p> <p>Resolution of Tension: In lieu of these tensions within the university context the institution must not only be "liberated from the here and now of current engagements but liberated also from an immediate concern with anything specific to be learnt. Learning here is said to be thinking "for oneself" or the cultivation of "intelligence" of certain intellectual and moral aptitudes ... the ability to "think logically" or "deliberatively," the ability not to be deceived by irrelevance in argument, to be courageous, patient, careful, accurate or determined; the ability to read attentively and to speak lucidly, and so on ..." (p.96).</p>	<p>university as one being, for example, to recover "what has been lost, restoring what has been neglected, collecting together what has been dissipated, repairing what has been corrupted, reconsidering, reshaping, reorganizing, making more intelligible, reissuing and reinvesting intellectual capital. In principle, it works undistracted by practical concerns" (p.194).</p> <p>Unachievable: The university for Oakeshott is, as Fuller (2006) argues, similar to the philosopher's pursuit for truth. In this sense time is irrelevant to the superintendent concern for the preservation and transmission of knowledge and culture. "Oakeshott once remarked", states Fuller, "that the philosopher may have a heavenly home, but is in no hurry to get there" (p.44).</p> <p>Vision: Whist the university may not be able to fully realise the potentials which lay before it, it has the means to continuously explore them.</p>
Nisbet, R. (1971)	<p>Contextual Clarity: The profound social changes that have taken place in western societies, post WWII, have exacerbated the "degradation" of university life (p.13). This observation from Nisbet is based on the encroaching demands of "modernism" which he uses as a philosophical and social concept inverting the 'idea' of the university.</p>	<p>Ambiguous: Nisbet's critique of the university leaves little space for new proposals of the traditional (liberal) 'idea'. Thus it is difficult to see exactly how the university, can overcome, what are in the author's view, insurmountable obstacles.</p>

	<p>Theoretical Development: The context and functioning of the university has been, until very recently, similar to its medieval origins. This line of argument he develops in lieu of the dislocation of modern life which has evidenced itself in the functioning of the university. This primarily being the lose of what he calls "academic dogma" i.e. the lose of knowledge for its own sake. Amongst the causes for this he states is "the liberalization of society, here evidenced by the appearance of "experimental" and "general" courses, and almost exclusive concerns with student needs" (Button, 1971: 291).</p> <p>Resolution of Tension: In Nisbet's estimation there is no clear way back from this situation due to the over powering influences of the "Reformation" which have occurred in the university. However, there is a clear attempt to learn and understand from the specific and novel context of the 20th Century such that the university does not become irrelevant therein.</p>	<p>Unachievable: Since the lose of 'academic dogma', the <i>modus operandi</i> of the university has been forsaken and its revival becomes untenable and thus unachievable.</p> <p>Vision: Nisbet's work arguably forms part of the 'crisis literature' on the future of the university for the reasons given above. Nisbet can, for this reason can potentially, also be read as a kind of 'anti-vision' of the university.</p>
Derrida, J. (1983)	<p>Contextual Clarity: The author beings with the question of whether the university has a <i>raison d'être</i> and answers in the affirmative, using Kant's view of the 'idea of reason' (<i>das ganze gegenwärtige Feld der Gelehrsamkeit</i>) to explicate his ideas (p.6).</p> <p>Theoretical Development: The 'idea' or 'principle of reason' is developed by Derrida to show that it must be "rendered" and is thus never merely given to us (p.7). This he suggests is the pursuit of the university and the tension which it encounters as problems of being too involved with the professorial concerns</p>	<p>Ambiguous: The exact nature of Derrida's proposal exposes the unclear ways in which his 'idea' sits alongside the demands for professionalisation of the academy. He argues therefore that "desiring to remove the university from "useful" programs and from professional ends, one may always, willingly or not, find oneself serving unrecognized ends, reconstituting powers of caste, class, or corporation. We are in an implacable political topography: one step further in view of greater profundity or radicalization, even going beyond the "profound" and the "radical," the principal, the <i>arkhe</i>, one step further toward a</p>

	<p>of the institution and not enough with the principle reason for the university i.e. ‘rendering reasoning’.</p> <p>Resolution of Tension: Confronting the larger problems of the university’s context through a ‘community of reason’ within the institution is advocated as a potential remedy. Derrida claims that this ‘self reflection upon the subject of self reason’ is a key towards the ultimate reciprocity of the institution as picturing the social world it wishes to understand and explain (pp.8-17).</p>	<p>sort of original anarchy risks producing or reproducing the hierarchy” (p.18).</p> <p>Unachievable: Whether this ‘idea’ can be achieved is debatable for Derrida and not the goal of the university entirely. The author stresses that using ‘time’ is not a goal (as this is the modern language of professionalization) but rather ‘reflection’ is more important for the university. Thus an institution which is able to harvest the benefits for ‘reflective time’ can be one in which a community of reason is fostered (p.19).</p> <p>Vision: The academic community responsible for creating an environment for the perusal (or ‘rendering’) of reason would allow, for Derrida, “the responsibility of a community of thought for which the frontier between basic and oriented research would no longer be secured, or in any event not under the same conditions as before. I call it a community of thought in the broad sense” (p.16).</p>
Maskell, D. and Robinson, I. (2012)	<p>Contextual Clarity: The authors ask the prescient question as to whether education is the same as ‘training’ and what is there to show for the expense poured into the modern university (p.25). In lieu of the increasing public attention universities receive the authors inquiry into the value added benefits of these institutions and ask if it is prudent that the vast majority of “investment comes [within universities] from graduates [i.e. terms of education and research]” (p.10).</p>	<p>Ambiguous: The liberal ‘idea’ of the university is one which seeks to cultivate the student in many and often imprecise ways. The problem being that this imprecision falls against the logic of higher education policy which is increasingly motivated by economic means-end language (Chapter 1).</p> <p>Unachievable: As with Newman’s ideas, there is no utopian end to the proposed form of the liberal university and thus it is in perpetual striving to attain its goals.</p>

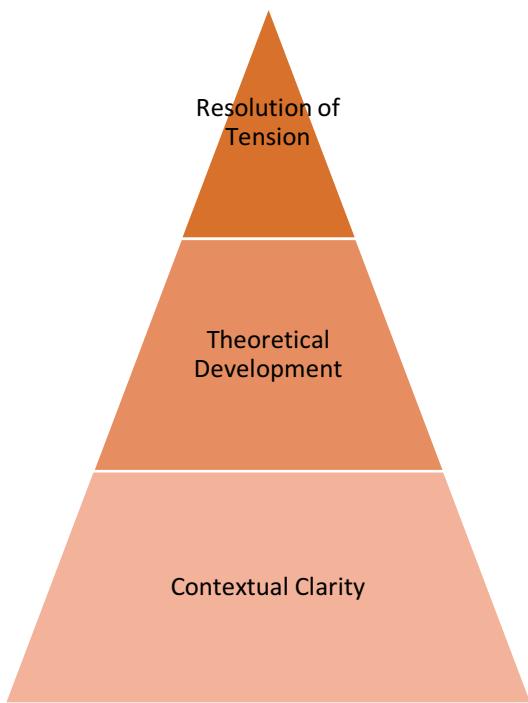
	<p>Theoretical Development: In expanding their analysis, they use lessons from English literature to discuss the problems of obstinate educational thinking (which for them is exacerbated by public policy managers). In particular, they reference Jane Austin's <i>Pride and Prudence</i> and the relationship between Elizabeth Bennet and Mr Darcy as exemplifying education as a form of 'invitation' (p.44). Herein a 'tension' of modern higher education eschews namely, that due to the lack of institutional differentiation the university has become larger than it itself can manage. Therefore, there is a situation in which 'production' over 'cultivation' of students becomes the <i>modus operandi</i>.</p> <p>Resolution of Tension: Education and training should be differentiated to lessen the burden on the university. Principally this means that university education, which is sort for its own sake and is 'non compulsory', should be able to charge fees whilst educational training, necessary for employment and job creation should be government funded (p.185).</p>	<p>Vision: The university is a space for the cultivation of the human being, following Newman, through specific and highly specialised learning. The operations of the university are thus organised by such principles.</p>
Barnett, R. (2010; 2013b; 2015)	<p>Contextual Clarity: This trilogy <i>in toto</i> presents Barnett's comprehensive account of, amongst other things, the university in its 21st Century context. This includes beginning with the very notion of the what a university is (2010) towards the various imaginings of the institution which move beyond the staid 'entrepreneurial' interpretation in order that it may "become other than it is" (2015: 3).</p>	<p>Ambiguous: To illustrate the 'idea' as a means for dialoguing the potentiality of the institution in terms of its meaning and acting in the world, Barnett offers the liminal account of "rhizomatic epistemology" (2010: 63). This refers to the positions (or points of view) which one may take, all of which interconnect and intersect in multitudinous, and always random, ways.</p>

	<p>Theoretical Development: Philosophically deconstructing the university, Barnett argues the institution operates on three planes namely, i) the university as institution and as an 'idea' ii) university-in-the-present and iii) university as a set of <i>particulars</i> and as well as being orientated towards <i>universals</i>. Within these planes there is a 'dialectic' (Chapter 5, 2015) or tension which forms as they interact and compete with one another. However, for Barnett these tensions are present and part of the modern university thus, he argues, "no antagonism, on university" (2015: 6).</p> <p>Resolution of Tension. The tension at the heart of the modern university is potentially overcome by an <i>understanding</i> (as self understanding) of its social ontology (the case for its 'being' and 'becoming'). This is not static and allows for new spaces to emerge for reconceptualising the institution. As Barnett explains "the university is always 'more than' it is; the idea of the university is never exhausted by its actual form; there is always a <i>reminder</i> within the university" (2015: 6, emphasis added).</p>	<p>Unachievable: With regards explicating an 'idea' of the university, Barnett argues that "it is insufficient to be utopian: the question is whether any proposed utopias have any degree of feasibility to them" (2015: 3).</p> <p>Vision: The 'idea' must be "necessary, feasible and desirable" (2010: 151).</p>
Collini, S. (2017)	<p>Contextual Clarity: Collini investigates the problems of confusion relating to the place and role of universities in the 21st Century. In so doing, he analyses the Newmanian 'idea' of the university in light of the Browne Review (2010) and the incompatibility of the latter in light of the former's contemporary <i>dernier cri</i>.</p> <p>Theoretical Development: In his analysis of contemporary public discourses on British universities, Collini stresses that</p>	<p>Ambiguous: The increasing recognition that universities ought to have for their historical significance and contemporary value is part of Collini's 'idea' and is explained in terms by "the idea that universities provide a home for attempts to extend and deepen human understanding in ways which are, simultaneously, disciplined and illimitable". (p.195).</p>

<p>the agenda has stagnated on points about how we justify universities in relation to public funding. This leads to a truncated evaluation of what universities ‘are for’ in his estimation, leaving economics supposition of sole value (p.199).</p> <p>Resolution of Tension: The author does not offer a systematic program for overcoming these problems in this volume, only showing rather that one ought to be aware of the varying ways the classical liberal ‘idea’ of the university is not compatible with the demands of the Knowledge Economy. It is this awareness which Collini argues should be made apparent, and most urgently, within public discourses on the universities (pp.178-194).</p>	<p>Unachievable: The extent to which Collini has faith in the university to cope with these problems is unclear. He does however, infer that the institution has a robustness which cannot easily be subverted by contemporary populist management discourses.</p> <p>Vision: The open and ongoing vision of Collini’s account of the modern university can be summated such that “the idea that universities provide a home for attempts to extend and deepen human understanding ... universities are not just good places in which to undertake such fundamental questioning; they also embody an alternative set of values in their very rationale. Attending to these values may help us remember, amid difficult and distracting circumstances, <i>that we are merely custodians for the present generation of a complex intellectual inheritance which we did not create - and which is not ours to destroy</i>” (p.199, emphasis added).</p>
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Having identified the necessary elements of the ‘idea’ we may represent the conditions as framing a pathway towards the ‘idea’ as follows:

Diagram 4. Summary of Thesis Methodology: Conditions for Creating an ‘Idea’ of the University



Condition 3 (Resolution of Tension): This final section seeks out the ‘resolution of a tension’ highlighted by the new theoretical formulations from Condition 2. The resolution leads to the presentation of an ‘idea’ of the university within the KS.

Condition 2 (Theoretical Development): Having critically engaged with the literature and clarified the ways in which the KS, as an emerging social form, affects and interacts with the university, new theoretical frameworks are offered which better cohere to the particularities of the context. A resulting ‘tension’ is identified within this new theory and which the ‘idea’ of the university is tasked to resolve.

Condition 1 (Contextual Clarity): This first section entails a thorough exposition of the KS context in order to understand the consequences for the university and the ‘idea’ from which it shall be created. This will occur through a critical analysis of the literature (both general and specialised) in comparison with the ideas of the neo-institutionalist school.

In the context of my analysis, the condition of contextual clarity was marked by arriving at the concept of KP. This has opened an avenue for thinking about knowledge in terms that seeks to recognise its scope of possibilities i.e. beyond the ‘problem of knowledge’. Having the features of dialogical contingency, knowledge conglomerations and liminal modality, our task for the remainder of the chapter is to engage in ‘theoretical development’ i.e. to investigate how we may think with KP and explore its explanatory capabilities for the university in a KS. Having done so, a ‘tension’ in KP shall be identified which the ‘idea’ of the university is tasked to resolve. In order to do so, there will be an initial inquiry, one not interested in drawing upon each and every possible aspect and implication of KP’s features but one which points towards its general possibilities as a concept. This will include asking questions, for example, such as whether dialogical contingency has a ‘limit’ in creating knowledge in the KS or how far the liminalities of knowledge can be stretched before it falls into relativism. In considering each feature, the

implications for the university are also, briefly, explored. As with the exposition of the individual features of the KP, the aim here is to briefly account for KP's implications such that we may arrive at its 'tension' and postulate its potential resolutions.

PART II: THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT: AN INITIAL INQUIRY INTO KP AND ITS FEATURES

Realising that KP was born from the specific requirements of this thesis' methodological framework (investigating the general and specialised literature from within an neo-institutionalist perspective), it does not claim an objectivist stance on the nature of knowledge⁵⁴. Whilst connoting change, movement, and transformation, plasticity also suggests 'stability within a state of flux' (OED)⁵⁵. Moreover, it neither leads to the unknowability of knowledge, nor a scenario where objectivist definitions and ideas about knowledge can be applied within the KS. KP is, rather, a concept defining knowledge in the particular context of the KS, standing as a description of the ways in which societal changes affect how knowledge is conceived, produced and consumed. The extent of the 'plasticity' of knowledge and its parameters for change present important ways to explore the concept further. An explication of the concepts individual features shall now be considered, and what they may impart about knowledge and thereby the context of the KS. The aim of this section is to identify the tensions within the theoretical framework of KP though not to explore each and all of the variant ways in which KP may be developed. Consequently, I shall point towards general theoretical trends in KP in terms of its individual features as well as for the university.

Dialogical Contingency: Ontology and Fragility

The first of the three features of KP is a statement about the 'being' of knowledge as well as the KS. More precisely, it is an attempt to explain, in ontological terms, how the KS continues to exist. It stresses that the ontology of the KS is based on the continuing dialogue (dialogism) between the production and use of knowledge in society so as to create meaning and value for the KS. As a society 'of knowledge' (Bleiklie, 2005), the KS is involved in the continuous conception and production of knowledge to sustain itself. This is what is consequently meant by

⁵⁴ In other words, this is not the only way in which knowledge in the KS can be interpreted, rather it is the conclusion of particular methodological decisions taken in this thesis.

⁵⁵ The concept of plasticity holds a number of connotations and is employed across an equally various academic terrain, most notably within neuro science. See for example, Doidge (2016).

dialogical contingency; that is, that the KS is ontologically contingent upon this process. It implies further that the KS is a product of competing knowledge systems ‘working together’ to the extent that an ontological basis emerges for the KS.

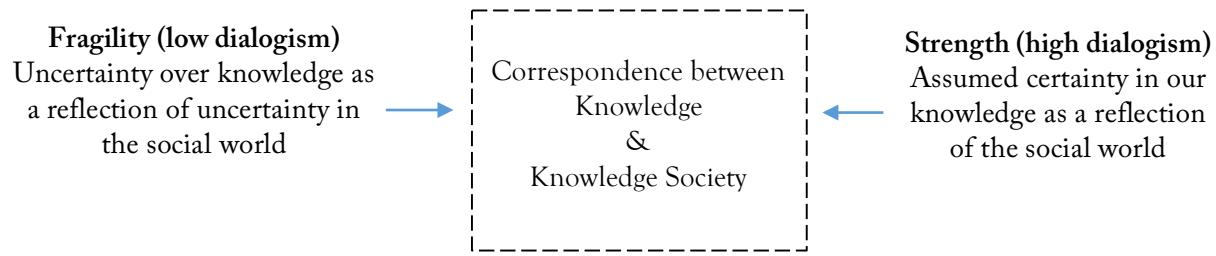
Bakhtin (2010), having coined the term dialogism, stresses that it is an iterative process of meaning construction which occurs in the encounter with a text. Such an account of dialogism entails, when applied to the ontology of the KS, that it cannot be viewed as static and thus unable to change. Dialogism is therefore itself an idea both attuned to change and thus to fluctuation (Morris, 1995). What does it mean for dialogism to change? This is difficult to answer precisely, primarily because of the generality of the concept, as whilst dialogical contingency may infer a general movement between knowledge creation (and its use in the KS), it also portends a greater obfuscation about what this process may entail. To understand such oscillations associated with this concept requires, firstly, to return to the question of why ‘fragility’ of the KS was taken as a position by Stehr (see previous chapter). Reviewing his arguments, we see that they were drawn from social critiques of modern society and the unpredictability eschewed by global ecological, economic, social trends therein (Stehr and Ruser, 2017; Stehr, 2003). Due to the uncertainty laden in the social world, our knowledge of it is less predictable and hence considered ‘fragile’. Dialogical contingency alternatively argues that we should focus on the ways that the continued iterative movement between socially-produced knowledge helps sustain the KS which is framed by the continuous act of knowledge creation. The ontology of the KS is then a meeting between knowledge, our assumptions about the social world, and our abilities to act upon it.

Moving beyond the KS’s Ontological ‘Fragility’

Fragility is a statement about the relationship of knowledge and its correspondence to the social world. Considering then the theoretical alternatives within dialogism, we can now postulate that an ontological circumstance may be equally founded on a similar premise, that is, one on the opposite end to fragility. Here, for example, the KS may be argued not to be fragile, due to the confidence in knowledge to fully correspond with and act upon the social world. Such a position would hold a positive correspondence between knowledge and the world it represents, strengthening the ontological stance of the KS. In other words, contra fragility, such a position would argue that knowledge is not fragile but rather strengthened by its correspondence to the

social world and our ability to change it. For both arguments then, between ‘fragility’ and ‘strength’ in the KS, there is a predication upon knowledge and its correspondence to the social world which leads to ontological views about the KS. The range of these ontological options can be represented as follows

Diagram 5. Range of Dialogical Contingency



These theoretical ranges are not fixed but rather offer a broad view for thinking about KP as it relates to the ontology of the KS. In other words, these positions represent an ontological range of possibility for dialogical contingency. For example, ‘fragility’ is the circumstance of a lower correspondence between understanding (i.e. social consciousness) of the social world and knowledge production (Stehr’s view), whereas the opposite holds true for the position of ‘strength’. The former is described as having ‘low dialogism’ because the correspondence between the social world, and our knowledge of it is marred by the unpredictability of that world. At the other end of the scale, high dialogism says that we can be *confident* that our knowledge is an accurate depiction or description of our world, regardless of its unpredictability⁵⁶. Whereas in the previous chapter our interests were to critically investigate Stehr’s claims about fragility of the KS, the ontological range represented in the above diagram suggests that the matter is a dynamic and ongoing encounter between knowledge, our assumptions about the social world (social consciousness), and an ability act upon it. It further suggests that such an ontological statement about the KS is a double-edged sword which can only offer an ‘uncertainty of stability’.

Knowledge Conglomerations and the Production of Knowledge

⁵⁶ Such debates are also mirrored in discussions within the philosophy of knowledge, especially ‘correspondence’ theories of truth.

The sociological feature of KP suggests that the spread of knowledge centres in the KS are modelled around the prominence of the university and its production of knowledge. ‘Conglomerations’ are normatively defined as a general sets of items, things or parts which are brought together into a collectivity (OED) whilst knowledge conglomerations include, governmental agencies, NGO’s, thinktanks, private pressure and advocacy groups. Due to their variety, what binds them in our particular context is the connection, production and dissemination of knowledge which holds increasing prestige and importance in the KS (Benner, 2018). Whilst validating the university’s place in the KS, this feature of KP raises questions as to what constitutes conglomerations and the role they play in knowledge production. Knowledge conglomerations represent the burgeoning of knowledge-growth outside traditional centres of knowledge production such as the university. The potential scale of this feature of KP stresses the expansion and competition existent between knowledge producers in the KS. As explicated in Chapter 1, the production of knowledge described in this manner is not a new occurrence, and is part of what Castells (1996; 2015) defines as the ‘network society’. Used in our present context, these networks represent multiple nodes creating a rich picture of knowledge production which follows, to one degree or another, knowledge production patterns of the university (Baker, 2014; Camagni and Capello, 2009).

The Parameters of Conglomerations

As was shown in the ontological case of the dialogic relations between knowledge and ontology, our assumptions about the social world and our ability to act upon it converge to offer an ontological account of the KS. In terms of knowledge conglomerations, there is also a possibility that whilst the university serves as a general model for knowledge production, conglomerations are themselves liable to fluctuate. Not unlike dialogical contingency, which was shown to exist on a range, a similar point may be argued for conglomerations forming the basis of knowledge production in the KS. This can be intimated in the term itself whereby ‘conglomerations’ connotes a variety of groupings which oscillate (OED). More precisely, the ability of conglomerations to fluctuate in their intensity within the KS is dependent upon social agents entering and exiting the social space for knowledge production in the KS (Foray, 2006;

Cappellin, 2003; Stehr, 1994). The potential range of the concept can therefore be represented as follows

Diagram 6. Range of Knowledge Conglomerations



Here the representation of fluctuations, at one end, is the shrinkage of knowledge conglomerations, a situation in which knowledge production nodes in the KS are reduced to a relatively small degree. At the other end, the opposite is the case, with the expansion of the number of knowledge producers in the KS. If knowledge conglomerations are seen in terms of a *dynamic* market of knowledge producers (Benner, 2018), the KS's response to such competition is that conglomerations are themselves subject to 'proliferation' and 'shrinkage'.

The cause of such fluctuations between conglomerations can be attributed to economic, social and culture factors working together to form a dynamic picture of knowledge production in the KS (Adolf, 2018). Such sociological factors cannot be undermined, however, as they infer power relations in a society which is organised around knowledge production (see Thesis Introduction). The dynamics of such power relations has been the subject matter of discussion amongst a variety of social theorists who argue that competition over knowledge is an ongoing social process (cf. Ball, 2017; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Apple, 2003). A prominent voice amongst such theorists, Bourdieu (1984), in explicating the dynamics of these relations, maintains that they are the product of 'resource competitions' which manifest themselves in society through varying forms of social distinction (Swartz, 1997)⁵⁷. Such social factors, which help determine the range of knowledge conglomerations in the KS, explain how they may occur and infer that the 'knowledge markets' of the KS (Mills and Snyder, 2009) cannot be understood without appreciating the multiplicity of factors that help construct these conglomerations.

⁵⁷ Bourdieu's influential ideas on society, its organisation and perpetuation go further in his conception of the 'field'. This being a metaphor for competition over certain socially legitimated resources whose "configuration of objective relations between positions objectively defined [via *habitus*] in their existence and in the determinations", leads for Bourdieu inevitably to "impose upon their occupants" (1992: 72).

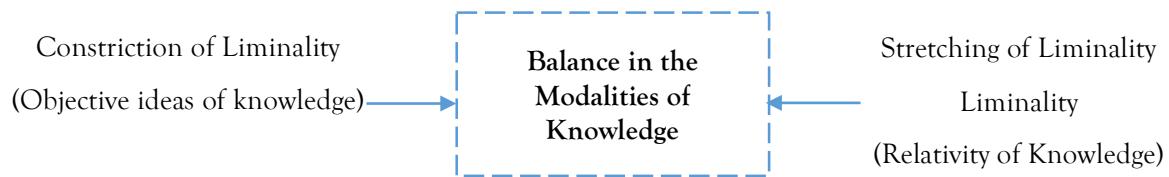
Liminal Modality and its Epistemic Possibilities

Finally, the epistemic feature of KP, liminal modality, argues that knowledge has a variety of ‘modes’ all of which intersect so as to create a rich and dynamic view of knowledge production and use in the KS. Moreover, highlighting such foundational elements of knowledge serves to set a distance from prevalent discourses related to the ‘problem of knowledge’ (Chapter 1). Since liminality shares the ‘occupation of positions on one or both sides of a boundary or spectrum’ (OED), this concept potentially shares, as with the above two features, a generous conceptual range which gives allowances for such oscillations. For example, whilst it may be platitudeous to argue that knowledge cannot be reduced to be a form of economic capital and thus take many forms, the relevance of this feature of KP is that it has the potential for ‘stretching’ its liminality and proliferating beyond recognition, such that questions of relativity and the unknowability of knowledge becomes apparent. Moreover, the opposite may also potentially run true, such as having definitive statements about knowledge can also limit the university into reducing knowledge to restricted modes.

Considering the Range of Liminality

What does it mean for the liminality of knowledge to ‘alter’? This is a question which relates to the uses of knowledge and its potential in forging meaning in a variety of ways. For example, as was argued in Chapter 2 regarding the constriction in meaning of knowledge to forms of capital, this delimits the potential of knowledge (and is problematic from the perspective of social realism and neo-institutionalism). On the other end of the scale, there is also a potential for the proliferation of knowledge to be relativized, and thus to hinder the meanings that may be derived therefrom. This would also conflict with social realism and neo-institutionalism, as the former insists on the non-relativism of knowledge whilst the latter rejects the university loosing its potential for being a significant social actor (and primary social institution) in the KS. Such variances in liminality, as they relate to knowledge, are shown in Diagram 6.

Diagram 7. Scale of the Liminality of Knowledge



Appreciating that knowledge is not static and must exist within a range of modes, the above diagram shows a potential epistemic scale of liminality and its consequences for how knowledge, as conceived by KP, is operative in the KS. Alexander's (2012) epistemic typology of 'knowing the world' suggests that the conception, production and uses of knowledge act as a boundary for the interplay of epistemic choices. Moreover, these choices lead to attitudes and beliefs about what knowledge is and what it can potentially be. In the first insistence, the constriction of knowledge, is a framework applying singular models of knowledge i.e. the constriction of knowledge which limits its scope in the social world. This leads to the aforementioned 'problem of knowledge' and the attendant concerns of it being reduced to means-end capital. On the other end of the scale, liminality is drawn out such that it moves beyond meaningful statements and ideas about knowledge, and the world it wishes to represent. In this scenario, for example, knowledge is considered not as being limited by modes for knowing the world but is rather open to standpoint views wherein there is a limitless discourse for what it can potentially be (Krausz, 2010). This kind of relativism is different from that of knowledge conglomerations, for instance, where the social locales of knowledge production are set and proliferate leading to a delimited position for the university (an idea contrary to neo-institutionalism). For liminality modality this is an epistemic problem about the nature of knowledge within the KS.

As argued above with knowledge conglomerations, the problem of knowledge is a consequence of dynamic and often complex admixtures of political, social and economic factors leading to certain discourses concerning knowledge to be given prominence, whilst others are neglected. Within the sociology of knowledge, the movement of knowledge, that is, changes in understanding what it is, and how it is used, is a contentious matter, and not limited to the considerations of our present discussion (Archer, 2014). Our concern here is with the theoretical development of KP, which is important in exploring the reasons for the oscillations I have identified above. By revealing that liminality modality, as well as the other features of KP, have

consequences for the production and use of knowledge, and opens avenues for further theoretical speculation, specifically as it relates to the university.

Knowledge Plasticity in relation to the University: A Propaedeutic Inquiry

The above initial analysis of KP shows a concept whose oscillations, found within each of its features, reveal consequences of what knowledge in the KS is, and can potentially become. Moreover, whilst these have been expressed in theoretical terms, they also have potential consequences for the university. Beginning with dialogical contingency, this ontological feature is a superordinate claim about what the KS is, and the role of knowledge therein as a means for understanding its ‘being’. Placed within the context of the university, this ‘fragility’ which is identified as one side of the ontological scale, has the ability to negatively affect the university in terms of the questions it raises over how our knowledge relates to the social world. This may translate in the university engaging less with the social world due to a recognition over a deficit existing between the world and our knowledge of it (or abilities to appropriately capture it through knowledge) (Pippin, 1999). Fragility in this circumstance may be translated as an attitude of listlessness, or more precisely, the university as being ‘timorous’ about its ability to act within, and positively engage with, the world because of its ontological uncertainty. At the other end, the idea of ‘strength’ infers the opposite, such that the university has confidence in the knowledge it produces and potentially in its capacity to resolve the uncertainties in the KS. However, a consequence of such an attitude may equally result in a kind of ‘hubris’ derived from assumptions about knowledge and its power. For the university, the power to understand, to predict, and even control happenings in the social world, are not problematic in themselves, but may lead to an approach to knowledge which denies our ability to be ‘surprised’ by that world. This arguably more ‘technocratic’ disposition towards knowledge assumes powers granted by knowledge, through specialists (Khanna, 2017) to overcome social problems with the university, are at the fore of such endeavours (Habermas, 2015). In other words, the assumed strong correspondence between our knowledge and the social world ensures a confident, if arrogant, approach to knowledge creation and its use.

Secondly, knowledge conglomerations and their ‘shrinkage’, as described above, present a potential problem for knowledge production, as it is left within the grasp of a few hands operating in the KS. Whilst the university is likely to remain prominent amongst such conglomerations, due to its historical position as a knowledge producer, this may nonetheless lead to ‘monopolies’ of knowledge producers forming (Shipman and Shipman, 2016). These may consequently lead to monopolistic behaviours within the KS and commonly associated with restrictive barriers to entry, for example. Within our present case, we can speculate that this may involve controlling the kinds of knowledge being produced through, for example, the types of questions asked and even the silencing of dissent voices in the university⁵⁸. All such cases are problematic and undesirable for the KS because of the limitations they present for liberal democratic societies more generally. At the other end of the scale, there is the proliferation of conglomerations which could equally mean a situation in which the university loses its relevance in the KS. Whilst it was argued that the university remains a model for knowledge production in the KS, such that even in this circumstance it does not become obsolete, its ‘irrelevancy’ means nonetheless a demise in its prominence as a knowledge producer. Henkel (2007) argues, for example, that this has been occurring for the past half century in Europe and North America with adjunct governmental agencies, think tanks, international economic forums and so on co-opting the space for validating and disseminating knowledge. This is partly due to the growth of social actors whose work and competition with the university moves them away from a reliance on the university as a knowledge producer (Smelser, 2013; Fuller, 2001).

Finally, liminal modality has been shown to be similar in terms of its oscillations between stretching and constriction, that is, where the constriction of the modalities of knowledge have been described as leading to the problem of knowledge. Deliberated upon in Chapter’s 1 and 2, thinking about knowledge as reduced to a form of economic capital also helps reorientate the academic exercise of research and teaching. Here, the differences between ‘education’ and ‘training’ become evident (Rauner and Maclean, 2009). As for the former, the university is a place for seeking and creating of knowledge for its own sake wherein its value is *a priori* presumed

⁵⁸ There are well documented cases of political dictatorships giving supremacy and subsequently restricting the freedoms of scholarship. Similarly, such cases can also be found within liberal democracies and the restriction of knowledge within the university spearheaded by conservative, economist, left wing, neoliberal etc. voices which ensure the restriction and/or silencing of ideas within the academia (Bilgrami and Cole, 2015).

in the liberal ideal of education (Roth, 2015). As for the latter, and which helps define the constriction of modalities, there are specific means-end relations set up for teaching and research which are motivated by economic pressures on the institution, often times by external demands and whose repercussions negatively affect the university (as described by the problem of knowledge, Chapter 1).

At the other end of the scale, there is a situation of modalities being ‘stretched’ which involves a situation where the meaning of knowledge proliferates, or ‘stretches’, to the extent that it becomes difficult for the institution to maintain epistemic boundaries for research and education. The lack of agreement on what knowledge is has repercussions for the academic disciplines, such that the move towards epistemic relativism may detrimentally affect disciplinarity as well interdisciplinarily discourses in research (Moore, 2011). Billig (2013), tracing the rise of modern epistemic relativism in academia suggests, for example, that its detrimental affects can also be felt in the contemporary language and nomenclature that is used within disciplinary discourses. For Billig, focussing on language use in the social sciences, argues that this has led to an ostensible damage in the intellectual life of the university as the:

...big concepts which many social scientists are using - *the ifications and the izations* - are poorly equipped for describing what people do. By rolling out the big nouns, social scientists can avoid describing people and their actions. They can then write in highly unpopulated ways, creating fictional worlds in which their theoretical things, rather than actual people, appear as the major actors. The problem is that, as linguists have shown, using ... passive sentences is a way to convey less not more, information about human actions (p.7, emphasis added).

Such confusion has also potential detrimental affects for the education which universities provide. From the stretching of the modalities of knowledge, we may draw conclusions about the relativity of knowledge, causing confusion about the purpose and role of education. Related to this concern, Sommerville (2006) argues, for example, that without having a clear idea about such epistemic questions over ‘housing knowledge’ can lead to a lack of preparation of students coming to do university degrees as well as not preparing them for their future, as it is not seen as something that the university can provide⁵⁹. Similarly, Roth (2015) maintains that contemporary higher education’s inability to forge a reliable relationship of educating students

⁵⁹ For a popular account of this trend and its negative implications on the university see Kronman (2007).

with a sufficient and broad preparation for life is due in part to the consequence of unresolved epistemic questions, including the increasing relativity of knowledge in the university. In sum, we are left, therefore, in this initial exploratory analysis, with potential problems for the university on either end of KP's features. These problems and consequences can be summarised as follows:

Table 3. Summary of Consequences of KP for the University

Feature of KP	Definition of Feature's Oscillation	Description of Feature's Oscillation	Potential Consequences for the University of KP's Imbalances
Dialogical Contingency	Fragility	A weak correspondence between knowledge and the social world which it attempts to describe, engage with and critique. We are left therefore with a profound uncertainty about the world	Timorousness. Inability to actualise, implement or theoretical parlance with knowledge production into the social world because of a lack of confidence in its correspondence to that world. This potentially leads to a listless attitude in knowledge production and the project of the university in the KS, more generally
	Strength	A strong correspondence between knowledge and the social world which it attempts to describe, engage with and critique. Reduces the possibility that the world may 'surprise' us (technocratic view of knowledge)	Hubris. Assumption that the university can solve social/global problems based on its production and use of knowledge. There are therefore no 'surprises' due to this correspondence which the social world may offer us and we can be completely confident in our ideas and beliefs about that world
Knowledge Conglomerations	Shrinkage	Reduction of knowledge producing nodes within the KS	Monopolies. With fewer knowledge producers, there is the potential for knowledge monopolies to emerge in the KS and thereby raise concomitant problems of monopolistic actions by such institutions. These may include, problems relating to the free access to knowledge as well as agendas for knowledge production driven solely by economic or political motives etc.
	Proliferation	Expansion of knowledge producing nodes within the KS	Irrelevance. Delimiting the place of the university within the KS with increased scope for knowledge producers
Liminal Modality	Constriction	Modality of knowledge as being truncated and conceived for particular purposes, as identified by the 'Problem of Knowledge'	Objectivism. Education and Research become a form of capital for economic ends whereby they are limited to means-end 'capital'
	Stretching	Questions over what knowledge is and can become are broadened to the extent of giving birth to the preponderance of epistemic relativism	Relativism. Education and Research has the potential to lose its relevancy to act/prepare students for the social world as there are no agreed ideas of what knowledge is and how it relates to the social world

Whilst the above and brief exposition of KP's features have highlighted some (and not all) areas wherein the university can benefit from, as well as be detrimentally affected by the consequences of KP, there are other consequences to consider which are equally important for the theoretical development of the concept. Amongst these is the concept of plasticity which itself connotes change, movement and transformation, as well as 'stability within a state of flux'. The oscillations identified in KP's features are hard-wired into the concept of plasticity, and also help to tell us something of the potential tensions which may lay within it, and subsequently the context of the university in the KS more generally.

Table 4. Summary of Theoretical Development of Knowledge Plasticity and its Features

Element of KP	Feature of KP	Scale of Feature's Oscillation
Ontological	Dialogical Contingency	Strength & Fragility
Sociological	Knowledge Conglomerations	Shrinkage & Proliferation
Epistemic	Liminal Modality	Constriction & Stretching

Whilst KP stands to describe the complex processes by which knowledge is conceived, produced, and is disseminated in the KS, the above table suggests that its features are all framed by a range of theoretical possibilities inherent to the concept. These possibilities have been described as existing on a range between upper and lower limits respectively, with each bearing its own consequences for the university. Taken together, these fluctuations can be identified as the potential 'tension' which exists in the idea of KP. These are, in other words, the result of KP and marks a significant point in our analysis since it is the resolution of a 'tension' arising from the theoretical development which is the 'idea' of the university. This means therefore that the theoretical development of the KS context surfaces an axial problem, the 'tension of imbalance', for the university which the 'idea' is tasked to resolve.

Concluding Theoretical Development and Identifying the ‘Tension of Imbalance’

In the terminology constructed regarding the ‘idea’, the above conclusions reveal the tensions within the context of the university which an ‘idea’ is tasked to resolve. In particular, the tension of imbalance is a description of circumstances derived from the KS context, as elucidated hitherto in the analysis by considering KP and which I define as

drawn from the consequences of KP specifically and which highlights the potential ranges of its respective features. These being prone to oscillation and having detrimental consequences for the university, it is therefore the ‘tension’ which the ‘idea’ is tasked to resolve.

This definition infers, firstly, that the tensions expounded in this chapter are derived from the particular circumstances of the present analysis i.e. its methodological choices, literature reviewed and aims of the thesis⁶⁰. As a statement about KP more generally, and as a study of its features in particular, what we understand to be knowledge is susceptible to change and flux, and any resolution of it (by postulating of an ‘idea’) must therefore take this into consideration. Secondly, the ‘detrimental consequences’, are referred to in the definition as problems highlighted for the university (elucidated above). The roles and affects on the university of this tension are considerable, not least because of the place it holds in the KS as a knowledge producing and disseminating institution. Finally, the statement that the ‘idea’ should ‘resolve’ this imbalance does not mean to find a solution from which thereafter there will be no tension i.e. to eradicate the problem. The manner by which the university confronts this tension is better thought of as creating responses which will allow it to better live with the challenges and opportunities that emerge therefrom rather than eliminating them altogether. The ‘tension of imbalance’ is therefore the conceptual concern laying at the centre of the KS’s context as developed in this thesis thus far. As mentioned, rather than conceiving a ‘solution’ to the problem it is better

⁶⁰ The tension of imbalance cannot be viewed therefore as an objective (or universalising) problem of the KS but rather one which has emerged from our particular analysis. The tension of imbalance implies that these theoretical constructs laid out by the methodology of the thesis (see Thesis Introduction) become difficult to stay within. This is an important caveat as it relates to the thesis’ claims more generally that it is a *particular* account of the university in the KS.

thought of as a dynamic ‘moving target’ to be negotiated and aimed towards. This is because the tension is embedded within the context of the KS and cannot be ‘rid’ of. In other words, the major implication of this ‘tension’ is that the problem of imbalance is the university’s concern and one which it must resolve as it derives from the ‘theoretical development’ of the KS context. The task of the ‘idea’ is therefore to create balance in lieu of the ‘tension of imbalance’.

Chapter Conclusion: Towards the ‘Idea’ of the University in the KS

The task of this methodological chapter has been to explore the question of how an ‘idea’ of the university may be created. In so doing, the chapter began by reviewing key works which continue to have, respectively, influence in contemporary discourses in the field. Identifying and analysing these key texts, I sort to find commonalities amidst their diverse interests and arguments. This concluded with the identification of three conditions (foundations) and features (particular characteristics) of the ‘idea’. Importantly, the review also showed that the second condition of the ‘idea’ is that of ‘theoretical development’, consecutive to ‘contextual clarity’. Having completed the latter in Chapters 1 and 2 meant exploring KP as a concept and identifying a ‘tension’ in the university’s KS context. In order to do so, the ‘theoretical development’ of KP meant analysing its three features (dialogical contingency, knowledge conglomerations and liminal modality, respectively), to explore their potential affects upon the university. This section concluded with a statement that the KP concept exists on a wide ranging conceptual purview. Of particular importance within these ranges was the identification of *imbalances* that exist within each of the concept’s features, revealing the ‘tension’ in the university’s KS context and which the ‘idea’ is tasked to resolve. Knowing this essential problem, what the ‘idea’ should be and how we may achieve this are the preoccupations of the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Corpus Analysis

Chapter Introduction: Arriving at the ‘Idea’

As an ethos for the university, the ‘idea’ is both apparent and yet also subtle, in that it permeates all aspects of the institution yet often without stating clearly how it does so (Maskell and Robinson, 2012). Within the academic literature, this ambiguity in the ‘idea’ may be illustrated by the number of possible permutations that it takes, be it liberal, economic, scientific, entrepreneurial, and so on, all validating a particular world view (*weltanschauung*) for the university. In doing so, they consequently ensure (inadvertently) that no one concept of the ‘idea’ may perfectly meet all of the demands of the institution. This is partly due to the expanding functions of the university which grow evermore beyond its traditional remit, yet also, as theorists such as Barnett (2013a) would argue, the concept of the ‘idea’ itself requires a radical rethinking. Due partly to deficiencies in contemporary theory, Barnett urges modern educationalists to understand that

Ideas of the university in the public domain are hopelessly impoverished. ‘Impoverished’ because they are unduly *confined* to a small range of possible conceptions of the university; and ‘hopelessly’ because they are too often without hope, taking the form of either a hand-wringing over the current state of the university or merely offering a defence of the emerging nature of ‘the entrepreneurial university’. Against this background, the question arises as to what, if any, are the prospects for imagining the university anew? What role might the imagination play here? What are its limits and what might be its potential for bringing forward new forms of the university? This then is the problem before us: the problem of the place of the imagination in developing the idea –*and* the institutional form- of the university (p.1, emphasis in original).

Whilst this reasoning for a new ‘idea’ of the university is not entirely novel to our present view in this thesis, the “impoverishment” alluded to by Barnett may potentially translate as the impasse or ‘tension’ reached in the preceding chapter. His argument is presently important as it highlights the necessity to return and question our assumptions about the university thus challenging the hitherto normative beliefs which have previously emerged from the literature. This chapter runs partly in the vein of Barnett’s insistence, and yet it converges upon identifying how an ‘idea’ for the university in the KS may resolve its prime task of creating balance. As such, the present chapter stands at the head of a successive chain of critical analysis and theoretical

expositions in order to answer the primary research question of this thesis: ‘what might the ‘idea’ of the university be in the KS’.

In order to respond to these research questions, social realism and neo-institutionalism are two perspectives providing the methodologically framework for the analysis and shall inform the proposal for an ‘idea’ of the university in the KS in this thesis. Firstly, the epistemological position of social realism is employed as an overarching attitude towards knowledge, its production and use in society. Laying between objectivism and relativism, any proposals for the ‘idea’ in this thesis acknowledges the social realist conception of knowledge as socially constructed by its nature. This means that the university, whilst confronting us an objective and ‘real’ institution, is in a constant state of reconfiguration and change in light of the social world it inhabits. This is because, according to this school of thought, it is the ‘social discourse’ of society which ultimately makes ideas, institutions and praxis possible (Young, 2007). In reference to the ‘idea’, the use a social realist position infers considering it as an open and iterative process of meaning construction. Thus any proposed ‘idea’ in this thesis must realise its constructed and non-objectivist position, implying we may speak of *an* ‘idea’ of the university rather than *the* ‘idea’ of the university. Moreover, the sociological perspective of neo-institutionalism provides on the other hand, the means to think about institutions, especially the university, in terms of their role and importance in post-industrial societies. This is of significance in lieu of assessing the claims and ideas made in the literature and expecting or rejecting them if they clash with this school. It is in this sense that we can argue that any proposal for the ‘idea’ of university made in this thesis will conform with the general presuppositions of the neo-institutionalist school.

This chapter is broken between two parts with the first identifying an ‘idea’ of the university in the KS, whilst the second focusses on how the newly proposed ‘idea’ will resolve the tension of imbalance. Part I of the chapter is divided between three interrelated discussions culminating in the identification of the ‘idea’ of the university. Firstly, having categorised the ‘tension of imbalance’ within the university’s KS context, I return to this issue to provide a fuller treatment of ‘balance’ as a goal to which the ‘idea’ must aim. This will entail clarifying the concept in terms of the requirements of the ‘idea’ by answering the questions of does it mean for the ‘idea’ to achieve balance and why is this important. Having explicated this goal for the ‘idea’, secondly, I return to the methodological framework of the thesis and consider the neo-institutionalist approach. With no clearly defined method from school to create an ‘idea’ (Baker, 2014), I intend

to explore ways which may be congruent with this perspective. This final section of Part I considers possible candidates (concepts or theories) for the ‘idea’ all of which must conform to its ‘features’ namely, being ambiguous, unachievable and providing a vision for the institution.

Part II of the chapter explores how the newly proposed ‘idea’ will resolve imbalances in the university. This refers specifically to finding a principle of balance between, for example, ‘timorousness and hubris’ (dialogical contingency), ‘monopolies and irrelevance’ (knowledge conglomerations) as well as ‘objectivism and relativism’ (liminal modalities), respectively. In order to do so, I shall use the three features of KP as a guide to discuss balance alongside the three defining features of the university used in this thesis namely, its teaching, research functions as well as the university’s social position (see definition of University in the Thesis Introduction). This will translate in the analysis as an investigation into Dialogical Contingency and creating dynamic balance in relation to pedagogy; Knowledge Conglomerations and creating dynamic balance for the university’s social relations in the KS and finally, Liminal Modality and creating dynamic balance for academic research.

PART I: IDENTIFYING THE ‘IDEA’

The Concept of Balance and the ‘Idea’

Before the proposal of the ‘idea’ of the university can be made, the criterion for what it must achieve should be resolutely established. This has been nominally attended to in the previous chapter such that the ‘idea’ must create balance in lieu of KP’s existing tension of imbalance. This however, requires further treatment and a fuller clarification in terms of its implications for the university in the KS. Therefore, if we define balance as the a ‘condition in which elements are in equal or correct proportion’ (OED), it begs the question why is this important for the university; what does it balance mean for the university and does it potentially have implications which may mitigate the goals it wishes to achieve? Such questions are important precisely because the integrity of any proposed ‘idea’ of the university, in this thesis, rests on how balance is understood and the tension of imbalance is resolved.

‘Balance’ within Intellectual History

The idea of balance has wide and varied sets of meanings associated with a number of religious, philosophical, ethical and social discourses. It is perhaps for this reason that the idea has been a preoccupation of intellectual inquiry for millennia (Hamilton, 1993)⁶¹. In terms of intellectual history, the concept is often associated with reaching its zenith in medieval scholasticism whereby it enjoyed a privilege as standing for a ‘grand narrative’, helping to explain the diversity within the universe and humankind’s place within it (Marenbon, 2010). This refers specifically to a fully worked out conception of the cosmos and the means by which variances in the world coalesce into a balanced and orderly appreciation of its beauty (Eastwood, 2007)⁶². This it could do by virtue of creating a conception of the world linked inextricably to a cosmology whereby

⁶¹ For an historical exposition of balance as a concept explored in law, philosophy, mathematics and art, see Bouleau (2014) and Lawlor (1982) and Finkelstein, (2003).

⁶² The link between conceiving a superordinate ideal of balance in the universe and its corresponding beauty is one found from early antiquity. For a particular medieval articulation of this link see Grant (1994).

humankind, nature and God were inherently bound together, in a ‘great chain of being’ (Lovejoy, 1976). This pre-modern conception of the world helped to substantively form a popular view of the universe as being ‘finely tuned’ and in perfect balance (Nasr, 1993). Here, the concept was understood as representing an ideal such that it was ‘archetypical’ and had prescriptive meanings associated with what it meant to be ‘balanced’ (Aristotle, 2009).

Whilst acknowledging the popularity of the concept across intellectual history, it has also been associated with harbouring social values and ideals which may favour attitudes about the world as being fixed and unchanging. This has translated into critiques of such thought more generally as advocating traditionalism, elite or even bourgeois culture; societies in which the “natural order” of the world (truth, beauty and goodness) are *a priori* good in themselves and exist beyond questionable objection (since the balance and order of the world is attributed to an unknowable, supra human or even divine origin) (Foucault, 2001)⁶³. In association with such critique of social order and balance, the intellectual developments of the Enlightenment and the 20th Century, in particular, have caused a disruption to such ideas. Specifically, the rise of post-relativist science, the Freudian revolution in psychology and the influence of Marxism, amongst other factors, have helped to redefine how the world is understood with subsequently less reliance on universal ideals as such balance and a move towards the importance of randomness, chaos and complexity (Holland, 2014). In the study of the social world (through the social sciences) this development can be traced more generally within social theory as giving increasing attention, contra discourses on balance, on how conflict, randomness and dialectics are essential qualities for the creation and development of knowledge (Lakatos and Musgrave, 1970; Khun, 2012)⁶⁴. Considering the changing attitudes and critiques towards the concept of balance it begs the question of whether it is indeed a valuable ideal for the university to pursue

⁶³ For a particularly penetrating account of this pre-modern attitude to knowledge and the world, see Foucault’s (2001) distinction between the *epistemes* of what he defines as distinguishing ‘classical’ and ‘modern’ eras in European thought.

⁶⁴ For example, Anzola et al. (2017) maintain that the social sciences have traditionally been interested in explaining the world through the “temporal stability of norms, institutions and individuals’ practices; and the dynamics of institutional change and the conflicts brought about by power relations, economic and cultural inequality and class struggle” (p.59). The increasing insufficiency of these claims requires, in their view, to adopt Non-Equilibrium Social Science (NESS), an attitude to the social world which may better encounter and explain the increasing complexity and generative qualities of modern society.

in the KS⁶⁵. In order to respond to such a question requires further distinction in regards to the terms usage in this thesis.

The concept of ‘Balance’ in relation to the ‘Idea’ of the University

The assertion that balance has associations with traditionalist (read prejudiced and antiquated) ideas and if made a central focus for the university in the KS, this institution shall also hold such values, requires explanation⁶⁶. A potential rejoinder to this potential critique would however, be to separate the concept of balance from such values and think of it instead as an articulation of a particular quandary the university faces in the KS. The use of the concept in this thesis comes out therefore from a particular engagement with the academic literature and represents a possible set of circumstances which the university faces namely, through the delimiting oscillations of KP upon the university (as discussed in Chapter 3). There are therefore no value judgements associated with my use of the concept i.e. it being an *a priori* good, rather it stands as a means to resolve a particular problem (tension of imbalance) within a certain point in my argument.

Moreover, the connotation that there is one only kind balance is also to be interrogated. My use of the term suggests that balance is not one, and an unchangeable, thing but rather it can and must have a variety of meanings. This can be garnered from the dictionary definition of balance, such that it is the ‘correct proportion’ of something. The adjective ‘correct’ here should be read as standing as a negotiable goal to which universities strive, so that the ‘correct proportion’ for one university may not mean the same for another. In terms of the ‘idea’, this suggests further that since balance itself is a concept which inhabits variances, the ‘idea’ cannot be dictated to universities. They must, in other words, create their own institutional response to the tension of imbalance.

⁶⁵ The categorisation of balance as partly defining a pre-modern intellectual predilection and its contra (multiplicity and complexity) describing the modern era, is an over simplification of intellectual history. Acknowledging this, the brief description of the concept above is instructive to help define its use in the present discussion on the ‘idea’ of the university.

⁶⁶ The appeal of balance lays, partly, in the broad stretch of human activities to which it can be applied, and within present educational discourses concerning the university - the allusive idea of balance remains a lively debate. For example, see Rudolph (2011) and Hanohano (1999).

Similarly, another potential retort to any association with traditionalist ideals which the concept of balance may occasion, can be derived from referencing the methodological framework of this thesis. For example, in terms of the epistemological perspective (social realism) it would interpret that balance cannot be prescribed to the university i.e. to be told how to be balanced, as this would run incongruent to its conception of knowledge. This is precisely due to the fact that an ‘idea’ (and knowledge more generally) is part of a social milieu within which meaning is created and negotiated with the social world whereby new forms of knowledge are created (Moore, 1996). Therefore, to say that only ‘one’ form of balance is possible, does not fit with the ideals of social realism. Moreover, neo-institutionalism, the sociological perspective of the thesis, similarly claims that the ability of the university to inform as well as reproduce social values means it’s a two-way conversation, and cannot be dictated to the university. Therefore, since the university is a social and ‘primary institution’ it is a culmination of ideas, beliefs and social discourses (Baker, 2014), meaning it does not simply receive social values but has the ability to express its own ideas within the social world. This methodological framework as well as the arguments made above, help to ensure a view of balance which elides prescriptive or traditionalist ideas which it could dictate to all universities.

Balance stands therefore, as an ostensible objective of the ‘idea’ and yet is ambiguous enough such that it does not dictate to universities exactly how it is to be achieved. This lack of prescription in implementing the ‘idea’ is also reflected within the literature, for example, in discourses surrounding the liberal ‘idea’ and its multiple interpretations offering a variety of ways by which universities may become a liberal university (Roth, 2015). Moreover, since there is no one way in which the problem can (or ought) to be resolved, this is reflected likewise in the multiplicity of ways by which the goal may be achieved. This distinction refers specifically to ways of thinking about resolving the tension of imbalance whether it come through rhizomatic (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), dialectical (Johnston, 2018), transcendental (Bhaskar, 2016a) etc. ways of thinking. In other words, this suggests that random (rhizomatic), systematic (dialectical) and esoteric (transcendental) etc. perspectives of thought, for example, do not preclude ways of tackling the tension of balance. Importantly, this underlines the point that balance does not define the parameters of thought by dictating how to resolve the problem of tension rather there is a broad sphere of resolutions which are open to the university. There is nothing therefore inherently good about balance which is being argued by virtue of its inclusion

in the present discussion. In terms of this chapter, what shall be attempted is an exercise in offering only one possible way for creating balance.

Refining the use of Balance in lieu of the ‘Idea’

Acknowledging the ambiguity surrounding the concept of balance, a more refined notion of it is required to relate to the particular tension of imbalance in the university’s KS context. Having defined it as a ‘condition in which elements are in equal or correct proportion’ (OED), attaining this goal, as stated above, is not a static process (just as each of KP’s features reveals no clear point at which their affects on the university become detrimental). Existing rather upon a spectrum of possibilities, to identify what the ‘idea’ of the university is tasked to do in the KS, a more precise definition of this task would be to resolve the tension of imbalance by creating ‘dynamic balance’ in the university. In this sense, we are potentially able to move away from simplified dualisms of ‘balance vs. imbalance’ to rather seek balance on a spectrum; that is, a negotiable goal which works with the circumstances of the university’s institutional life and goals. This usage would also better correspond with the dictionary definition of the term namely, drawing towards the ‘correct proportion’ of things where ‘correct’, as being interpretative and malleable, is to be understood as reference to the particular social circumstances of universities and their respective environments. In other words, universities have to create and interpret what such ‘dynamic balance’ may mean for them. What shall be offered in this Chapter therefore is an ‘idea’ to be interpreted by the particular circumstances of individual universities.

The pertinent question remains as to what and how an ‘idea’ in the university may lead to a state of dynamic balance. Stehr (1994) argues that “new social realities require a new perspective” and the task of reaching the ‘idea’ of the university requires creatively contemplating what this is and what it may mean for the institution. Moreover, whilst a dynamic sense of balance is the goal of the ‘idea’, there is no obvious direction for its resolution and the task of constructing an ‘idea’ must work to inhabit the problem as well as its context. In other words, the university must learn to live with the problem yet must also negotiate how to transcend it. The neo-institutionalist perspective maintains the importance of seeing the university as the product of rich influences from culture, economics, society and history all of which render it a

dynamic ‘actor’ in the KS, or as Baker (2014) argues, as a “primary institution”. In attempting to create an ‘idea’ of the university from a neo-institutionalist perspective, however, one is faced with an initial quandary since there are no methods from within the literature as to how this may occur. This is distinct from the method identified for creating an ‘idea’ (i.e. its conditions and features). However, the importance of a neo-institutionalist perspective presently is that it frames the arguments of the thesis and though no ostensible methodology is extant from this perspective for the ‘idea’, there are potential pathways that may be drawn out which will aid in creating one.

Creating an ‘Idea’ for the University: An Explorative account using Neo-Institutionalism

The confidence placed in the university by neo-institutionalist sociologists of education, when placed against the claims of the literature reviewed, helps in part to redeem its prominence in the globalising world of the 21st Century. In our present discussion this may potentially translate to the institution being a location for the resolution of the tension of imbalance itself. In other words, the university as a primary institution in the KS may have the potential for responding to the problem and thus in producing the ‘idea’. This is primarily due to arguments by neo-institutionalist educationalists, that the longevity of the university reveals a capacity for the institution to counter problems that it faces (Riddle, 1993; Baker, 2014; Ranga and Etzkowitz, 2013). It has, in this view, acquired tools - be they intellectual, cultural, economic, social or institutional - to draw upon when confronted by problems⁶⁷. For Baker (2014) moreover, these resources have helped produce a situation in which the university has an ability to thrive in difficult, new and challenging social contexts. He continues, that this has helped it to succeed such that the;

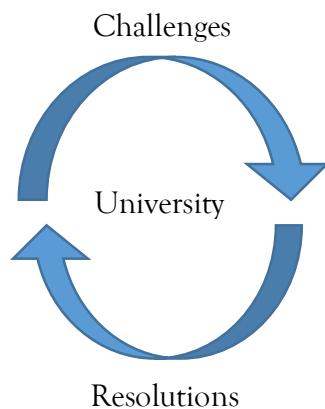
.... extraordinary global diffusion and expansion of universities and associated enrolments, the similarity in their curricular and knowledge-production goals, and

⁶⁷ Whether institutions can be conceived to have ‘conscious acts’ and ways of thinking in lieu of the collectivity of individual actors which constitute them, is a contentious proposition and confronts problems in the philosophical and sociological study of institutions. For an influential account of the ‘teleological approach’ employed in these debates see Miller (2010; 2001).

the considerable isomorphism in organizational structures across thousands of universities worldwide will attest to their success. Perhaps then, the fallacy in the paradox is the assumption that the university is a weak or somewhat isolated institutional player in society. The solution to the paradox is to instead see the university as a successful form in and of itself *and* as a major transforming force within global society (p.60, emphasis in original).

Whilst the university is not a unique institution in its capacity to perform such administrative acts in order to continue its existence, it is nonetheless of relevance to our discussion on the ‘idea’ in that a neo-institutionalist perspective may be used to identify paths towards resolving the tension of imbalance. Considering the university in such historical terms does not obviate the cases where external (or exogenic pressures) provide support for the institution, be it through governments, private citizens, interested groups, power elites, and so on. In other words, whilst the university does not, and has not, operated as an ‘institutional island’ isolated from society, the ways by which it is able to draw upon resources to confront problems in turn provides a means to arrive at the ‘idea’. In other words, a neo-institutionalist interpretation of the institution’s importance, its historical longevity, and contemporary relevance, provides ways for it to deal with challenges that it may face, such as that of imbalance. It is a process which can be represented as follows:

Diagram 8. The University’s Problem Solving Capability: A Neo-Institutionalist View



Adopted from Baker (2014); Baker and Letendre (2005); Riddle (1993)

Whilst the above diagram may potentially be applied to all institutions, thus standing for a generic approach to seeing how they function (Smelser, 2013), this representation is one which

emphasises the neo-intuitionist view of ‘confidence’ in the university to stand as a distinctive example of an institution which has become a “primary institution” in the KS. Therefore, whilst all institutions must work within a dialectic of challenges and resolutions, the university represents an historical and particularly apt example of an institution’s ability to do so. Part of this comes in the form of ‘internal resources’ (Brinton and Nee, 2002) that the university has which allows it to ‘cope’ with, for example, intellectual problems through the means of disciplinary knowledge, social problems of inclusion and access to knowledge through dissemination of knowledge, and economic problems via its importance to social prosperity etc. (Dobbin and Schoonhoven, 2010). This is coupled with the fact that as challenges arise for the university, it does not operate entirely on its own and it has support from powerful institutions and other structures, such as governments, interest groups and other universities. This macro view of the university and its abilities to resolve challenges, through a combination of internal resources and external support, suggests a continuous iterative process whereby it receives and processes challenges to forge its continuing existence. It has, in Baker’s (2014) estimation, achieved a special place in the modern world since:

For eight hundred years the university has done more than survive; it has flourished. First through outright cultural imposition by European and American forms of colonialism and then through a globally embraced model of social progress, the Western model of the university has spread to the extent that by now every nation has at least one university operating within its borders (p.67-8).

Rüegg (2004) similarly argues that the longevity of the university can partly be understood through this generic dialectical process whereby institutions attain self-identity and equilibria with their respective environments⁶⁸. In our present discussion, this holds specific relevance, as

⁶⁸ Riddle (1993) demonstrated this point arguing, that despite their overall use to nation states, many institutions suffered closure and political attack. Summarising his germane argument as follows that “the story of universities between 1200 and 1800 is one of change in the relationship between the university and various levels of political authority- especially the state. State-building within Western Europe evolved in a highly competitive environment. The newly emergent states were competing for authority and supported their claims to legitimacy by appropriating the authority that existed in the broader cultural system. One powerful source of authority was knowledge, for the culture of Western Europe gave knowledge a special status. With the increasing importance of the state, the role of the university gradually became one of support, of providing ideological and practical backing for political rulers. The bond between university and state forged within this period has had repercussions for the pattern of university expansion throughout the modern period” (p. 45-6).

it highlights the ways, particularly from a neo-institutionalist perspective, that historical significance of the institution finds its abilities for resolving problems. However, such a statement should be taken as a philosophical proposition and not one that relates all individual empirical cases of existing universities i.e. it is a generalised argument about *the university* as a social institution and not particular instances of ‘universities’ (Riddle, 1993). In other words, such a theoretical assertion is prefaced by the point that not all universities will have the capabilities nor the inclination for problem solving in the manner of the historical *durée* and contemporary relevance of the university, as mentioned above. Therefore, the neo-institutionalist view presented here, is a comprehensive (non-discriminating) statement about universities in the KS. This complex process, referencing the university’s ability to activate resources for institutional problem solving, is defined in varying ways, and alludes more generally to what we can define as an ‘internal turn’. In other words, the internal turn is not a statement about the university as being insular (i.e. internally seeking responses) but rather a term given to the strategies which the institution uses to counteract problems that it may face⁶⁹.

Questions over whether one can speak of an ‘internal turn’, or an organisation’s ‘thinking process’, are highly debated issues within organisational studies as well as the sociological study of institutions (Watson, 2017)⁷⁰. However, the internal turn, as an ambiguous idea describing a complex process within the institutional life of the university⁷¹, is not the ‘idea’

⁶⁹ Moreover, this does not mean however, that an internal turn will protect the permanency of universities from closure. In a superlative historical study of the development of universities in late medieval and early modern period, Riddle (1993) shows that despite their overall use for state building, knowledge dissemination and literacy, many institutions suffered closure and continue to receive political attack.

⁷⁰ More recently, the inclusion of Latourian sociology and Actor Network Theory has provided a potentially fruitful engagement on the nature of institutions and their ability to be studied as independent actors in social space. The sociologist Latour (2007) illustrates this theoretical framework with reference to the seemingly limpid network of butchers. He propitiously describes this process when arguing that “the butcher’s trade extends as far as the practice of butchers, their stalls, their cold storage, their pastures, and their slaughterhouses. Next door to the butchers – at the grocer’s, for example – there is not butchery. It is the same with psychoanalysis; theoretical physics, philosophy, social sciences short all trades. However, certain trades claim that they are able to extend themselves potentially or ‘in theory’ beyond the networks in which they practice. The butcher would never entertain the idea of reducing theoretical physics to the art of butchery, but the psychoanalyst claims to be able to reduce butchery to the murder of the father and epistemologists happily talk of the ‘foundations of physics’ though all networks are the same, arrogance is not equally distributed” (p.187).

⁷¹ More broadly there are theories within the sociological literature which reinforce this normative position. Amongst the most prominent being Simmelian symbolic interactionism,

of the university itself; rather it is a process which may lead towards it. The difficulty in answering what this process may be, is that the neo-institutionalist perspective offers no clear answers about the more obscure regions of institutional theory which houses this supra-institutional space of the internal turn. Whether such thinking about the university, redolent with the means to direct its energies for resolving problems can be utilised for seeking a resolution to the tension of imbalance and thus to the ‘idea’ of the university, is an important question.

A potential way to think about approaching this quandary is in reference to organisational studies and its concentration on supra-institutional matters. Within this arena of research, institutions are considered complex amalgams of social, historical, empirical and supra empirical factors which emerge from, and emerge into, identifiable entities. Stein (2007), for example, in considering these issues, argues that imagination and creativity are useful foundations for institutional life, pushing them to act and react with their respective social context. What therefore this means for the ‘idea’ of the university, and whether creativity or imagination can take this role, requires comparison as to their relative attributes and suitability.

Firstly, considering imagination, Komporozos-Athanasiou and Fotaki (2015) argue that despite its importance to organisations, the concept “remains largely under-theorized in organizational research” (p.322). This is paradoxical partly due to the need, especially after the Global Economic Crisis of 2008, which has required more organisations, the authors argue, and universities specifically, to rethink and reimagine what they do and how they operate (Wright et al., 2013). This ambiguous concept also has the elemental function on “the way in which we imagine the organizations we inhabit (through producing images, meanings and emotions) [which in turn] has a concrete effect on the actions we take within them when pursuing our individual goals and organizational objectives. Imagination is thus crucial for producing new realities in the form of new social imaginaries” (Komporozos-Athanasiou and Fotaki, 2015: 322). Giving a name to this complex and obscure process within the university, Barnett (2013) refers to it as the ‘imaginative context’ of the institution when he argues that “the university lives (partly) in the imagination, in the ideas, sentiments, values and beliefs that individual hold in relation to the university. The university that is held in the mind of an individual *is* the university to some extent for the individual. Indeed, to speak of the mind here underplays the way in which

whose emphasis on the subjective elements of social life provides means for seeking a necessary iterative process of meaning-making which individual actors attribute to their actions.

individuals are connected with ideas of the university" (p.41, emphasis in original). Similarly, there is an argument that the supra-institutional process that is alluded to by Barnett here refers to as an institutions creativity (Tsoukas, 1996; Rickards, Runco and Moger 2009). Alternatively, Murphy (2016, 2015), argues that both concepts are equally important aspects of the university. For Murphy, the university is tasked to use imagination and creativity as a means for its institutional existence. In our present study, the KS context invites the university to offer a resolution to imbalance, and as both concepts potentially offer a way of thinking about a response to imbalance, then deciphering their respective suitability as the 'idea' of the university requires further comparative attention.

Creativity as the 'Idea' of the University

Though both creativity and imagination are terms which have been identified as potentially representing the obscure processes of the university's ability to 'respond' to challenges, they cannot be treated synonymously. Etymologically, creativity is derived from the middle-Latin *creo* 'to make' with an initial meaning relating to Divine acts of creation in ancient mythology⁷². As a working definition, it is 'the *use* of imagination or original ideas' (OED, emphasis added). Unlike imagination, creativity presumes one may draw upon existing ideas, thoughts and work such that this becomes the basis for their use in innovative ways (Moran, 2017). The concept today, however, has become a much sought after commodity, whose importance stretches from politics, economics, arts, sciences, education, and all aspects of life. The UN's *Creative Economy Report* (2008) for example, makes this connection apparent arguing for creativity as acting as a central point of focus in the 21st Century since:

Globalization and connectivity are new realities that have brought profound changes in lifestyles worldwide. This is reshaping the overall pattern of cultural production, consumption and trade in a world increasingly filled with images, sounds, texts and symbols. There is a clear need to better grasp the complex

⁷² In classical Greek mythology, for example, Dionysus, the god associated with sensuality, spontaneity and supra-rational faculties is also accredited with forming creativity (in distinction with the Apollonian vision which stresses nature, society and harmony). The *creo*, found in this specific *mythos*, suggests that it is outside the arena of most humans or can only be accessed with collaboration of the particular creative functions of the Muses (Fletcher and Hanink, 2016).

interactions among the economic, cultural, technological and social aspects guiding the dynamics of the world economy and the way people live in the twenty-first century. In this era of transformation, creativity and knowledge are fast becoming powerful means of fostering development gains (p.iii).

Theorists of creativity, such as Sternberg (1999) and Hernández-Romero (2017), argue the idea of creativity has become a superintending principle of modern life whose use, promotion, and perusal, are taken as *prime facie* goods in themselves. Sharot (2017) argues from a cognitive psychological perspective, for example that the importance of creativity can be assumed from the potential it is argued to have in solving global problems of the 21st Century, whether these be social, climatic, economic, political, and so on. There has emerged, therefore, a *de facto* trust in its potential for social amelioration and in providing a means to support better and happier lives. The rise in the study and social proliferation of its externalities therefore lead it to become indispensable to institutions, specifically the modern university (Murphy, 2015).

Creativity in the University

The university is increasingly defined by its use and promotion of creativity to direct academic and administrative duties, as well as institutional life. Creativity within the university, whether it be in its academic, administrative, or social functions, is as much a researched area of study as is it is sought after (Rickards, Runco and Moger, 2009). Peters and Besley (2006) maintain that in the 21st Century KS; "...creativity, knowledge and access to information are central to this new paradigm. These factors are increasingly recognized as powerful engines driving economic growth and promoting development in a globalizing world ... What roles do or should universities play in this new model of development? **The age of the creative university has only just begun**" (p.6, bold in original). The more recent rise in the significance of creativity to the university can be seen as running in tandem with its increasing social operations (such as its role in economic and social equality), especially in the last 40 years (Scruton, 2012)⁷³. There are also more contemporary reasons for this rise in associating the university with creativity which arise from

⁷³ In lieu of this, particular interest can be found in Pratt and Jeffcutt's (2009) exploration of the ways in which post-war era social discourses on creativity have made universities champions of that process.

increased competition between universities for prestige, students and funding. In this highly competitive HE arena, the promotion of creativity to help produce new ideas and define competitive advantages remains an especially pertinent task (Barnett, 2018)⁷⁴.

Creativity and the Features of the ‘Idea’

In our present discussions, creativity presents itself as a potential candidate for the ‘idea’ for a number of reasons, including its prominence in the university of the KS and also in its ability to fulfil the requirements of the ‘idea’s’ three features (identified in the Thesis Introduction). To begin with, creativity is *ambiguous* in the sense that it is open for interpretation in its applicative use. Using its putative definition for example to create original ideas, questions over how ‘one is creative’ and whether such processes can be known are subsequently raised. Such inquiries cannot not be prescribed by the university, or any institution for that matter, and are therefore left open for discursive interpretation. This ambiguity is due partly because of the origins of creativity and deciphering a) where it comes from and b) how it may be harnessed (Pope, 2005). As neither of these inquiries have definitive answers, the primacy of ambiguity remains firmly part of what it remains to be ‘creative’.

For the university to adopt the concept of creativity as its central organising ‘idea’ suggests that it will be unclear exactly how one could measure its success, or whether one may say definitively that creativity has been ‘achieved’ (the second feature of the ‘idea’). Whilst there are indicators that may be used to measure an institutions creativity (Kaufman, and Baer and Plucker, 2008), the concept leaves itself open to be investigated in a variety of ways and it is in this sense, *unachievable*. Finally, there is the question as to whether the concept of creativity fulfils the feature of existing as a *vision* for the university. In this context, vision references a way in which the operations of the university are organised by values that help direct its institutional

⁷⁴ The use and exhibiting of creativity cannot however, be solely afforded to the contemporary world but also should reference, for example, medieval institutions which from their origins were engaged with creatively producing new ideas and acting as bastions for intellectual pursuit. Freidman (2012), for example, argues that this can be evidenced clearly in the “immense creativity that Latin Theologians in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries brought to bear on tradition theology, and the broad spectrum of their positions” (p.xviii). Freidman would therefore argue that the knowledge production element of creativity i.e. producing ideas in new and innovative way stands as a hallmark of the institution.

operations. Creativity may potentially fulfil the requirements for such a feature and act as an ethos in the manner in which the university conducts its administrative, intellectual, social affairs etc. If creativity is premised on the production and use of new and innovative ideas, then it is arguably already a focus for the modern university (Peters and Besley, 2006). For example, creativity as a vision would see academic research seeking to instil originality and innovativeness as a key measure by which intellectual endeavour is given priority and valued. A directive towards creativity in this instance would equally call upon academic disciplines to likewise do the same, whether they be in the humanities, sciences, social sciences etc.

Imagination as the ‘Idea’ of the University

As compared with creativity, the problems inherent in defining imagination are exaggerated, as it poses questions over how we think and ‘where’ ideas are generated. Such questions offer a more philosophical, even esoteric, comparison with creativity (Boorstin, 1993). Defined as the ‘faculty or action of creating new ideas’ (OED) it is derived from the Latin *imaginari* i.e. to picture oneself or something. Variously being located in the realm of the ‘higher intellect’, the ‘soul’, ‘super intellect’, consciousness etc.,⁷⁵ Robinson (2011) defines the differences between imagination and creativity with the former being a “process of bringing to mind that are not present to our senses; [whereas] creativity ... is the process of developing original ideas that have value” (p.2-3). In this sense, imagination arguably prefigures creativity as it is the ‘means’ by which ideas can be made use of. However, how this process is initiated in the individual and how it might influence and where in fact it is derived from, all remain contentious issues⁷⁶.

⁷⁵ For a comprehensive study of the concept as it emerges within western intellectual history, see Lyons (2005).

⁷⁶ If imagination is the individual act of constructing ‘that which is not present’ and yet is brought into being by the capacity of the mind, there are social consequences to this process. Castoriadis (1997a), a prominent theoretician on the imagination and society, argues that the social *imaginary* determines the ways in which society is organised and constructs ideas about it itself. This it does this through a conception of the world and the place of man within it, allowing therefore for the ‘collective imagination’ to shape society.

Imagination in the University

The ambiguity of imagination also carries into the university where it is less clear, as compared with creativity, exactly how it emerges as well as how it is employed in the institution. This is due partly to the ethereal nature of imagination which lies in the act of conceiving and articulating thought (James and Brookfield, 2014)⁷⁷. Yet despite this ambiguity, the inclusion of imagination as a concept of importance for the university is a growing area of academic interest (Murphy, 2015; 2016). This is capitalised upon specifically by viewing it as a ‘dynamic’ force whose importance should not be lost in contemporary debates on the institution’s challenges and opportunities in the 21st Century (Barnett, 2015).

In light of this trend, a relatively earlier theorist on the imagination and the university, Jacob Bronowski (1963), maintains that as a knowledge producing social institution, the university’s primary function can be articulated in terms of how it harnesses the power of the imagination. This leads to questions regarding how the university does so and if imagination can be said to ‘subsist’ in the university. More recent scholarship on the subject by Peters, Marginson and Murphy (2008; 2009; 2010), a three volume work on the Knowledge Economy in the 21st Century, commends the central role of the university as a place which can aid the globe economy to flourish⁷⁸. This they suggest is through the elemental forms of knowledge production i.e. to imagine, create and discover, each of which represents features of the university centred around the pivotal role of imagination helping define the ways the institution operates more generally.

In more philosophical terms, Barnett (2013) has argued that imagination can be seen as part of the conceptual architecture of the institution as it is “*both* institution (involving complex sets of processes) *and* a set of ideas ... the university may be understood to inhabit spaces (institutional spaces, conceptual and discursive spaces, and imaginative spaces). And ... the university may also be understood as caught up in networks (of institutions and communicative systems, and of ideas, visions, aspirations and values)” (p.41, emphasis in original). Moreover,

⁷⁷ For a stimulating discussion on imagination as a means for exploring international problems in the global 21st Century, see Steger (2008).

⁷⁸ In so arguing, these authors also take measures for the university specifically to be aware of the processes and dangers which such an economy offers. Relatedly, in light of these emerging challenges, Peters and Trifonas (2009) maintains that “only new, creative approaches to knowledge, to the organization of knowledge, and the free exchange of ideas can solve these problems” (p.vii).

Barnett's (2015) *Imagining the University*, is an important contribution to the field and further iterates the idea that the university can be understood in terms of its fundamental existence as an 'imagining institution'. In this reading of imagination within the university, it is not a static but rather complex and fluid process which "can be put to different kinds of purposes. Ultimately, too, if its to be doing serious work, it has to be *put to work*" (p.132, emphasis in the original). Where exactly imagination is 'put to work' within the university is a point of much and continuing contention. However, an answer to this question may potentially arise in terms of the intellectual infrastructure of the institution. Sociologists have disputed, for example, as to where 'disciplinary imagination' can be traced to and whether the fundamental questions within each discipline may help define their respective attitudes towards method, epistemology, ontology etc. (Korte, 2016). Abbott (2001) argues, for example, that such issues of disciplinary imagination are not set by fundamental questions within the respective disciplines but evolve alongside their individual contexts. The greater drive of knowledge production, especially in the social sciences, is instigated, for example, via isomorphic patterns within the disciplines (the constructs of their imaginative structures) by, what Abbott defines, as fractals i.e. recurrent claims made and represented as paired dichotomies (such as objectivism and relativism) and which help to form new dichotomies as a result. Whilst the precise manner in which disciplines 'think' and 'imagine', an intention of Abbott's to uncover, remains an ongoing debate within both philosophy and sociology (Lakatos and Musgrave, 1970; Khun, 2012; Fuller, 2006), it shows nonetheless the promising role for the study of imagination within the university⁷⁹. It furthermore intimates that whilst the place, affects and functioning of imagination in the university remains disputed, it is essential to the institutions continued existence (Murphy 2015).

Similarly, since the ambiguity of imagination lays partly in the formation and expression of thoughts (Kind and Kung, 2016), it is necessary to note that there equally exists a variety of imaginative forms (Shumar and Robinson, 2018b). Thought of in terms of the 'idea',

⁷⁹ In this mien of thought, Giroux (2018) usefully intimates the possible problems which may arise from contextual and social circumstances and their impact upon imagination within the university. Considering the conundrum from the view point of students, he argues that "the debt crisis represents a massive assault on the imagination by leaving little or no room to think otherwise in order to act otherwise. David Graeber is right in insisting that "student loans are destroying the imagination of youth." As he put it, "If there's a way of a society committing mass suicide, what better way than to take all of the youngest, most energetic, creative, joyous people in your society and saddle them with \$50,000 of debt so they have to be salves?"" (p.43).

imagination in this sense represents a non-descript fault of mind whose direction can be influenced by a number of factors and not all of which are directed by goals of individual and social betterment. Stating that there is a multiplicity of imaginative forms suggests that just as individual and institutional creativity are diverse, imagination can and will take on a number of forms within the institution⁸⁰. The imagination is therefore not freed from other and potentially malevolent uses, as Kobayashi (2010) argues, that the “imagination can also be used for the purposes of large-scale destruction of life on this planet, the ultimate anesthetic” (p.140). For example, the work of the philosopher Martin Heidegger (d.1976) whose influential claims about the university as a site in which, in part, the human potential (*Eigentlichkeit*) can be realised, is relevant to a discussion of differing imaginations when it comes to the ‘idea’ of the university. Whilst using the language of classical liberal ideals he conceived, as a full member of the Nazi Party, a belief that the university could promulgate an academic regime of anti-Semitic nationalism in which the German *Volk* (people) would recover their identity and historical destiny (Milchman and Rosenberg, 1997)⁸¹. Such an example helps iterate the point that ‘ideas’ of the university can, and will, be manipulated to serve a number of ends and is indicative that “an imaginative idea of the university is not necessarily a good idea” (Barnett, 2013c: 7). In other words, the perusal of imagination (or creativity) as a means to formulate an ‘idea’ is not a guarantee of its social or ethical efficiency.

The multiplicity of imaginative forms and their implications within the university offers us a seemingly placid and yet profoundly important insight. Firstly, to acknowledge that the imagination is a dynamic means of thinking is a recognised feature within the human species (Harari, 2018). Since imagination is subject to and affected by social, economic, biological influences etc. it cannot be controlled nor assumed to be used for entirely benevolent ends. Secondly, a proposed ‘university of imagination’ is not and cannot be viewed as a panacea to all the challenges that the institution faces in the KS context. Whether these be derived from inside or outside its walls, the consequences of imbalance infer that imagination as a principal driving the university in the 21st Century does not have *a priori* solutions to all the problems it shall face.

⁸⁰ Relatedly, Barnett (2013a) argues that the imaginative forms within the university, specifically within the broader structure which ‘ideas’ of the university take, can be distinguished between ‘ideological’, ‘persuasive’, ‘dystopian’ and ‘utopian’ imaginations.

⁸¹ Further such examples would include, for example, universities under the Stalinist regime (Tromly, 2014) and the influence of Maoism in the development of prominent French intellectuals in the post-war era (Karlsen and Villadsen, 2015).

Imagination and the Features of the ‘Idea’

Imagination has also a claim to fulfilling the requirements of the ‘idea’s’ features namely, those of being ambiguous, unachievable and providing a vision. Firstly, imagination is *ambiguous* in terms difficult to substantively claim what it is and precisely where it is derived from. The definition used above would infer that the study of imagination exists in a philosophical, even metaphysical, sphere as it draws upon that which is not present (Alexander, 1992). Its supra-empirical nature allows it to have an indeterminable character as it can be drawn from any number of sources (as described above). The ambiguity of imagination is then enhanced by the fact that multiple notions of the concept exist and may coexist in a particular definition of the term⁸².

Secondly, the concept is arguably *unachievable*. This is partly due to its ambiguity which gives it a non-deterministic and interpretable presence in the university. The feature of being *unachievable* relates to what is being striven for and aimed towards such that the aim of the ‘idea’ is in perpetual purist. Imagination, moreover, stands as a concept with broad interpretation such that to positively speak, for example, of the university as having become ‘fully imaginative’ is difficult. Even if indices of measurement of imagination are created, the term itself does not lend easily to measurement. Imagination, considered in philosophical terms, is always in a state of ‘becoming’ i.e. it is always awaiting realisation and stands beyond the horizon of its completion (Nixon, 2017). In other words, just as imagination is an ongoing project reflected in the dialogue between the university and its interpretation of this concept, so too is education and the individual-self, who are also ongoing projects within the institution (Derrida, 1983).

Finally, its employment as a *vision* around which the varying activities of the university can be directed has partly been discussed above. The concept of imagination, as *vision*, can potentially animate the varying operations of the university such that it gathers them around imagination and its consequences. This could, for example, be applied in knowledge production where the academic disciplines are motivated towards imagination by their respective

⁸² For an illuminating study of this idea, taken from the early romantic philosophy of the 19th Century, see Hume (1970) and his comparative analysis of Kantian notions of imagination as it interpolates with Coleridge’s poetic vision.

fundamental areas of inquiry, and the methods towards such ends (Murphy 2015). As the ambiguity of the concept can also be interpreted in a variety of ways, as also within an academic discipline, it does not, however, mean that the ‘idea’ of the university of imagination fundamentally alters the ways that a specific discipline, such as mathematics or geography, conduct their academic work. This cannot be dictated by disciplines but rather must evolve from internal discussions about what imagination means to them and their respective intellectual purists.

Comparing *Creative* and *Imaginative* approaches for the ‘Idea’

The comparisons highlighted above suggest that both the concepts of creativity and imagination potentially serve as candidates for the ‘idea’ of the university. In both cases the manner in which they may apprehend the tension of imbalance, as well as meeting the criteria of the ‘idea’s’ features, suggests that choosing between them requires a criterion that is best suited to the task. Distinguished by conceiving (imagination) as well as using ideas (creativity)- they can both be said to be committed to the same ends, yet through different means. They can be compared in the following conceptual ways:

Table 5. Conceptual Comparison between Creativity and Imagination

Imagination	Creativity
Discreet	Apparent
Inward	Outward
Contemplating	Making
Conceiving	Actualising
Reflection	Innovation

The above table conveys the notion that imagination exists *prior* to creativity as the former, by bringing into existence that which is not present, differs from creativity defined by the ‘use’ of ideas. These are also differences of *kind* and *degree* between the concepts. Firstly, differences in *kind* are related to the role of creation and the use of ideas, and whereas creativity places an emphasis on innovation and primarily the use of ideas, imagination is a superintending concept concerned with how creation occurs. The table also suggests differences of *degree* i.e. that whilst both have a claim to fulfil the features of the ‘idea’, they do so differently. A potential argument for imagination over creativity for the ‘idea’, that one may make, is that the latter potentially meets the features to a greater degree than the former. For example, the feature of *ambiguity* is met by both concepts, yet imagination is arguably *more* ambiguous than creativity due to the reasons given here. Secondly, in terms of being *unachievable*, measurement of creativity is arguably easier than imagination as the ‘use of ideas’ can be seen, whilst this is less obvious in the case of imagination. Finally, whilst creativity is driven by ‘creating the new’ it is directed towards a particular end whilst imagination offers a potentially broader *vision* due to the ambiguity of the concept. In all of these cases, the way in which the university relies upon its capabilities to imagine, think and respond to these challenges lends weight to the potential primacy of imagination as the ‘idea’ of the university.

Another point of comparison is that of using time as a measure to discern whether imagination or creativity may better be equipped for the task of being the ‘idea’. For creativity, this is the continual process to work and invent ways for the university to exist in a state of dynamic balance. As for imagination, it is the continual generation of ideas and the deep structures of its institutional apparatus (Barnett, 2013). The concept of time presents a particularly foreboding difficulty across many intellectual disciplines (Weatherston, 2002) and for the present context, our interest is to use it as a means, distinguishing it from the appropriateness of each concept for the task of creating dynamic balance in the university of the KS. In so doing, there is no clear answer as both concepts are susceptible to fluctuations. The distinguishing factors between the concepts then are the abstract sources of the imagination and the necessity of working with what is present (creativity); both stand as clear differences. Both creativity and imagination arguably exist *beyond* time in that they are supra-temporal, as is the ‘idea’ of the university. Employing imagination, however, as a longer term application for the ‘idea’ due to its non-reliance on ‘that which is’ but rather what ‘can become’ (Kaplan, 1972), potentially, makes it a stronger candidate for the ‘idea’ of the university. Creativity on the other

hand, requires the pre-existence of ideas to forge the ‘new’ and innovative ways of thinking. As imagination precedes creativity in this way, the element of time may therefore potentially favour imagination’s longevity. Moreover, as both concepts are important contenders for the ‘idea’, the ‘university of imagination’ is arguably the vehicle through which securing dynamic balance can be explored and confronted more fully, in lieu of this line of argument. Proposing the university of imagination as the ‘idea’ of the university in the KS suggests also that it has greater potential for forging this dynamic balance through imagination as opposed to creativity, without completely obviating the latter’s capabilities for doing so.

The University of Imagination as the ‘Idea’ of the University in the KS

The argument for the university of imagination, highlights the conclusion to a particular analytical investigation, culminating in the identification of the ‘idea’ of the university in the KS. It derives from a discussion which sees imagination as a supra-empirical concept located and defined by the many places in which it resides and which is engaged with, and within, the university. However, defining the ‘idea’ as such at once can be viewed as plitudinous and novel. Firstly, it is plitudinous as this is the *modus vivendi* of the institution throughout its history (Freidman, 2012), and yet it is novel as it faces new challenges from its KS context (in the present sense, referencing the tension of imbalance). A general definition of the university of imagination can be given as follows:

An ‘idea’ of the university in the KS which meets both its *conditions* and *features*. Derived from a neo-institutionalist perspective, it is born from and responds to the contextual challenges, as presented in this thesis, arising in the KS. Chief amongst which being the tension of imbalance. The ‘idea’ therefore promotes imagination to be institutionally marshalled to permeate the university in order to achieve its goal of creating dynamic balance.

This definition states that the ‘idea’ is ‘derived from a neo-institutionalist perspective’ i.e. in reference to identifying the *internal turn* of the institution as leading towards imagination⁸³.

⁸³ An ‘idea’ which also invokes the imagination comes from what Barnett (2013a) calls the *Imaginative University*. This he defines as a “university that sponsors the creative capacities of its members, both faculty and students ... a *reflexive* university” (p.147, emphasis in original).

Moreover, it is ‘born from and responds to the contextual challenges, as presented in this thesis’ which relates to the ‘problem of knowledge’ which was derived from the general literature and the ‘tension of imbalance’ which was a result of the theoretical development (Condition 2). Finally, the ‘idea’ is stated to stimulate imagination such that it is ‘institutionally marshalled to permeate the university in order to achieve its goal of creating balance’. This references the ‘idea’ as attempting to resonate within all facets of the institution, and in sum, the definition explicates the key tenets of the ‘idea’ of the university in the KS. It is therefore created in the emerging social context of the KS and ‘responds’ to the challenges, whose chief task being the creation of ‘balance’, as broadly defined by the contextual forces which encounter the university. Considering how this ‘idea’ may respond to imbalance and create dynamic balance now requires attention and is the focus for the remainder of the thesis.

Barnett’s discussion here is centred around the “feasible utopias” of the university and which see the power of self and reflective imagining of the institution as key to this process. In differs with our proposed ‘idea’ in tenor and focus i.e. not dealing with concerns over balance and the knowledge, as developed in this thesis. For Barnett this imaginative university is moreover, a general attitude of mind which the university may adopt to forge a path towards the future.

PART II: THE RESOLUTION OF THE 'TENSION OF IMBALANCE'

For the purposes of this chapter, the method which I shall employ to create dynamic balance will be defined as finding the middle position between opposing alternatives. Using this as a basis, my intention is not to approach all the possible avenues and questions raised by the task of creating balance, but rather to treat it as a propaedeutic account of the kinds of questions the university of imagination might be faced with as it offers to initiate a response to the tension of imbalance. By moving towards the specificities of institutional life in order to create balance, the primary research question of thesis shall therefore be addressed.

Dialogical Contingency: Between Timorousness and Hubris

This feature of KP calls into question the correspondence between the social world and our knowledge which attempts to depict and understand it. The oscillations of this feature were defined in the previous chapter as follows

Table 6. Summary of Dialogical Contingency's Oscillations

Features of KP	Potential Consequences for the university of KP's imbalances
Dialogical Contingency	<p>Timorousness. Inability to actualise, implement or theoretical parlance with knowledge production into the social world because of a lack of confidence in its correspondence to that world. This potentially leads to a listless attitude in knowledge production and the project of the university in the KS, more generally</p> <p>Hubris. Assumption that the university can solve social/global problems based on its production and use of knowledge. There are therefore no 'surprises' due to this correspondence which the social world may offer us and we can be completely confident in our ideas and beliefs about that world</p>

A middling position of balance between the potential oscillations of timorousness and hubris would be one which offers confidence in the correspondence between our knowledge and the social world it attempts to capture, on the one hand, yet also moves between the timidity of a low ontological correspondence (timorousness) and the potential arrogance of a high one (hubris), on the other. To exist between these positions requires a form of balance which would therefore allow the university to remain confident in its ontological position and understanding of the KS. Such a middle point between may infer the necessity of a ‘humble’ posture for the institution in lieu of what it may be subject to as a result of KS ontology. Humility here, refers to knowing what the university can be capable of and in doing so appreciate its limitations. Such a potential resolution i.e. having ontological humility, in light of the possibilities of timorousness and hubris, potentially offers a dynamic sense of balance for this feature of KP. Humility is a recognition, then, in the nature of the KS, namely its ontological positioning between *fragility* and *strength* and by taking the opinion that the institution must be aware of the consequences of both. What it means for the university to have ontological humility in practical terms, however, is perhaps less clear. We may stipulate that it is the first point of contact of the university in the KS i.e. dialogical contingency defines the ontological state of that society. There are also universities who, for example, promote being humble and extol its virtues, with discourses surrounding the concept of humility as increasingly becoming popular in contemporary research universities (Nomikoudis and Starr, 2016). For our present purposes, the idea of humility referenced here is one which sees only the natural limitations of any institution, and in lieu of the circumstances of the KS the university must also recognise this fact. Its implementation within the institutional life of the university should be read therefore as a reflection of the greater ontological circumstance within the KS of dialogical contingency. How this may translate into one of the key functions of the university, namely pedagogy, is our present concern for the university of imagination.

Pedagogy as Humility: Preliminary Considerations

Defined in broad terms, as an enunciation of preponderant questions within the philosophy of education related to dealing with the good life (Curren, 2006; MacIntyre et al, 1987; Kontopodis, 2014), pedagogy is formed through assumptions about what is a human being, what is teaching,

as well as what are the ends of education (Peters, 2006). As such, pedagogy is a manifestation of these questions through teaching as well as a presumed or unconscious acceptance of certain ideals about education (Noddings, 2011). ‘What does it mean for the university of imagination to implement humility in pedagogic terms’ is a question associated with firstly answering philosophical questions of: a) the university of imagination’s conception of the human being, b) what is teaching, and c) the ends of education. This triad of concerns formulate the basis for the study of pedagogy and questions to which the university of imagination ought to have responses. Intimating these responses are necessary for creating balance in the university and shall be addressed presently.

Conception of ‘Humankind’ in the University of Imagination

Fundamental to any idea of pedagogy, assumptions about what we mean by ‘human’ help to gravitate the discussion towards elemental educational concerns and requires a necessary response by the university of imagination. Such questions are perennially important as Noddings (2011) argues that:

...every society must answer them, not once and for all time but as well and conscientiously as it can for the benefit of its people and the future of the earth. In every age, the questions have elicited better and worse responses, and thoughtful people continue to examine the old responses, to generate new ones induced by changing conditions, and to reflect on current responses in the interest of making education as good as it can be (p.1).

In philosophical terms, a conception of the human being for the university of imagination is one which I argue can be seen as driven by our innate capacity to imagine. As a place where imagination is given prominence, the institution therefore sees humans as ‘imagining beings’ or as *Homo Imaginatus*⁸⁴. This explicitly communicates the idea that being human mean is to create, be in wonderment, to think and to imagine. This ‘imagining person’ is then the subject of

⁸⁴ This specific articulation of the imagining man is drawn from a concept as in distinction to Castoriadis’ (1987) influential *radical imagination* thesis which relies on the ‘co-foundation of the psyche’ (Urribarri, 2002). The *homo imaginatus* does not deny the historical identity of individuals as being a psychic means to self fulfillment yet distinguishes itself as a collective spirit for the representation of the potential for human ‘becoming’.

university education (in the university of imagination) which is charged with nurturing, developing and encouraging imagination through the experience of university. The idea of the *homo imaginatus* does not deny other capabilities of the human being which are not related to imagination (such as striving for equality, freedom, mercy, and justice) but which foregrounds this concept as a primary defining feature of being human⁸⁵. This is then the starting point for a pedagogy within the university as it is a presumed, or subconscious, element of university pedagogy that would consciously inform the ways in which teaching is delivered.

Teaching in the University of Imagination

Having outlined a general idea of how the university of imagination conceives the human being, the second pedagogic concern for the implementation of humility is the consideration of teaching and its purposes. Here we may intimate that teachers are given the significant role to, amongst other things, nurture and encourage imagination in students. This may occur, for example, through helping students realise the potential of imagination as it exists firstly, within themselves as *homo imaginatus*. As ‘imagining beings’ this does not mean that students are encouraged to consider imagination as distinct from their studies but that it is to be sought in all of the disciplines. This would be made evident to students in whatever their chosen field of study may be by highlighting how each academic discipline houses their own imaginative qualities. These are qualities derived arguably from the specific motivating questions and concerns of disciplines, their methodologies, historical development and attitudes to epistemology and ontology (Abbott, 2001). All of these factors are elemental in creating particular hues of imagination and reflecting their respective concerns⁸⁶. In other words, understanding the possible sources of imagination within a discipline would be viewed as

⁸⁵ Hinging the discussion on the *genus* of animals on the ability to imagine is one which may bear fruit in contemporary philosophical discourses. Gray’s (2014) recent exposition on the distinctions between human animals and animals proper, for example, serves little recourse to the cognitive impulse of imagination.

⁸⁶ In other, and historically distinct, intellectual traditions, the seeking of imaginative infrastructures for disciplines can be gleaned in a variety of ways. For example, in medieval systems of knowledge hierarchy and organisation within the university this was the role of the *mubadi al-ashara*, in the Arabo-Islamic tradition and the *trivium/quadrivium* within western Europe. See, Makidisi (1984).

necessary for engaging with, as well as contributing towards, it. This approach to teaching in the university of imagination also presupposes that we cannot speak of *one kind* of imagination but the existence of many variances which motivate disciplinary work. Therefore, as academic disciplines are products of imagination, motivating their interests and inquiries becomes a fundamental part of teaching in the university, standing at the core of the pedagogic encounter between teacher and student (Celarent and Abbott, 2017).

The Ends of Education

There are various ways of conceiving the goals of education within the university of imagination. Initially, these will be familiar to most universities such as preparing students for their future, providing a well rounded learning experience, and helping them to reach their potential (Guerra, 2013). These traditional goals of education would relate to the university of imagination through placing imagination as the means to realising them. There would, moreover, be the specific goal which the university would offer which may include the importance of realising the full potential of one's innate imaginative propensities to see and help transform the world as well as being 'balanced' and concerned citizens of that world. Firstly, realising one's imaginative potential relates to the *homo imaginatus* and helps the student express these capacities in their time at university. Helping to transform the world, is connected to applying imagination to the problems of the day, showing how imaginative thinking is key to their resolution. Finally, the university of imagination should leave students with a lifelong ability to understand and exercise their imagination, which the institution conceives of as a good in itself.

Strategies for Creating Humility in Pedagogy

In expositing these generalizable preliminary remarks, our aim here is to move towards a pedagogy of humility in the university of imagination as it attempts to respond to imbalance. Having here formed an initial framework for thinking about the motivating features of pedagogy within the university of imagination we may turn towards how the primacy of engendering humility through the pedagogic process may potentially occur. As such, there are many ways

through which humility may be instilled via the pedagogic process (Schuessler, Wilder and Byrd, 2012). Though a popular concept within pedagogical sciences in the post-war era, it has more recently gained interest as a tool for student enrichment and personal success at universities (Hess and Ludwig, 2017; Soohoo, 2015). As universities do not employ *a* single or *unified* pedagogy across the entire institution, constructing one for the university of imagination would be difficult. The difficulty is exacerbated when one considers the variety of disciplines and epistemic landscapes within any one institution. However, my use of the term ‘pedagogy’ here refers to an orientation towards learning that may help guide the ways in which teaching is thought about and delivered, and in this case directed by the specific goal of humility. Specifically, our intention is to propose how humility in pedagogy may be formed which would occur through a two-pronged approach of disciplinary teaching and moral education i.e. formally learning about (ostensible) and well as inculcating humility (subtlety).

Proposal I: Teaching about the ‘Other’ to inculcate Humility

The concept of teaching about the ‘other’ is intended to engender a cautious confidence to learning in the university of imagination which is manifested in a number of potential ways. In practical terms, for example, this would translate to inquiries into courses on the ‘nature of knowledge’ conducted by showing how imagination creates ways to help see the world through the eyes of other peoples, nations and civilizations. More precisely, it is an attempt to provide students with a so-called ‘liberal consciousness’ i.e. one open to what it means to be human, and the diversity that eschews therefrom, translating into a general sympathy with the ‘other’ (Marginson and Sawir, 2011). As Miola (2008) argues, that instructing in humility relates firstly to a recognition of the limitations that one has in understanding the world. Humility therefore serves to reflect, at an individual level, the greater problems of hubris, and a level of timorousness associated with dialogical contingency of the KS. Pedagogical humility, therefore, aims to engender amongst students the need to be cautious about the claims made about the world and thus not seeing their own ways of thinking and being in the world as preeminent measures.

Similar approaches to humility in pedagogy, for example, can be found from historical cases traced to medieval university curricula. Here the scholastic importance of ‘dialectic’ which directed logical disputations in European and Islamic universities, was arguably part of an

exercise towards seeing and understanding the opinions (and potentially world views) of others (Marenbon, 2010). This practice was premised on the idea that if one can be placed in the hypothetical shoes of others, by arguing from their stated positions, this would help engender a sympathy and humility towards others⁸⁷. Later in European history, and considered part of one's 'moral training' (Munzel, 2003), the capacity to explore the 'other' intellectually bears the intentions of renaissance and classical humanist education, via being freed from religious dogma to see the diversity and potential of human beings (Anderson, 2004). In this sense, it is not dissimilar from the purpose of classical humanistic (liberal) education in that one can potentially read the intentions of liberal education as being an attempt towards similar ends. Specifically, pedagogic humility is intended to allow one to recognise that a student holds only one opinion amongst a variety of others on a topic and she must further recognise the existence, and where applicable the validity, of other positions. However, recognition here does not mean submission to others or all beliefs, only that such a strategy aims to present the student with ideas to see the wider tapestry of human intellectual endeavour. A point of discord of the university of imagination with the liberal 'idea', however, is that whilst in the aims of previous educational systems humility may have been tangential, for the university of imagination it is given a prominent part in its pedagogic project. In other words, instilling humility is a superintending project of university education in the university of imagination, as discussed and substantiated above.

This pedagogical program includes, therefore, a commitment to epistemic openness i.e. helping students see the relations between power and knowledge and the construction of epistemic authority by cultures. An example of such attitudes can be taken from post-colonial authors who propose, for example, introducing students to alternative and non-western ideas of 'progress' and 'enlightenment' by showing the historically rooted constructions of knowledge as they relate to political and economic dominance. To this end, Dussel (1993) claims that:

Modernity is, for many an essentially or exclusively European phenomena ... but one constituted in a dialectical relation with a non-European alterity that is its ultimate content. Modernity appears when Europe affirms itself as the "center" of

⁸⁷ For paradigmatic examples of this tendency within the medieval university curriculum, see the dialectical pedagogy found in Peter Abelard's (d.1142) *Sic et Non* and John Buridan's (d.1358) *Summula de Dialectica* (Klima, 2001).

a World History that it inaugurates: the “periphery” that surrounds this center is consequently part of its self-definition. The occlusion of this periphery ... leads the major contemporary thinkers of the “center”: into a European fallacy in their understanding of modernity. If their understanding of the genealogy of modernity is thus partial and provincial, their attempts at a critique or defence of it are likewise unilateral and, in part, false (quoted in Grosfoguel et al., 2016: 95).

This critique of normative accounts of modernity suggests ways by which students could be exposed to epistemic openness in the university of imagination. It refers to, what the philosopher Jacques Derrida suggests as making the university a ‘society of the question’ in which our taken for granted ways of looking at the world are overturned by questioning their presuppositions (Peters and Trifonas, 2009). As an objective of epistemic openness is to forge humility through the pedagogic process, the university of imagination takes the route of critical examination whilst not falling into epistemic relativism i.e. a notion in which all knowledge is relative and thus we cannot make sound judgements about it because of its constructed nature. This pedagogic exercise rather demonstrates the need to see how world views (*nomos*)⁸⁸ are created and the historical, social and economic etc. factors which lead to them⁸⁹. This is in order to acknowledge that the study of other cultures etc. emphasises to students that ‘my’ views are part of a historical, human story⁹⁰. Our interest here rests only on using pedagogy for conveying humility. Such an emphasis may translate, for example, into compulsory courses for all students on world literature, the philosophy of ideas, or approaches to history, amongst others, which take a wide epistemic lens to illustrate the importance of the ‘other’. In so doing, students are intended to gain a sympathy for the ‘other’ by seeing them not as distant or abstracted entities. The teaching of diverse and global approaches to disciplinarity in universities is not new, and is increasingly part of university curricula (Pells, 2007). The university of imagination, I argue, would intend to take this further by making it part of the curricula, and particularly evident to students in its intentions. Whether students are in the humanities or sciences, these compulsory courses would

⁸⁸ This term refers to ‘state of mind’ (*weltanschauung*) in all epochs to which there is a general consensus about (whether tacit or explicit) what a human is, the ends of education and the ideas about the best ways of living etc. See Berger (1967).

⁸⁹ For a critical account of ‘western’ narratives of progress see Goody (2006).

⁹⁰ Inadvertently, the importance of teaching more generally is expressed within the university of imagination through this proposal. Whilst research, as we shall see later, is important to the university, the role which pedagogy has for the university of imagination cannot limit it to being merely a Research Institution.

be part of a sustained attempt to help them reflect upon their own positions, biases, and ideas about the world.

Proposal II: Moral Education and Humility

How moral education is to be delivered at university has a long standing discussion in the sociology of education (Durkheim, 1973). The success of delivering such education is not immediately evident, since the measures and outcomes are open and debatable. Moreover, teaching geared towards humility would not guarantee that students shall invariably take in its lessons, whether in their lives, or by gaining an appreciation for it. As with the above proposal of epistemic openness, this would also be part of the general education of all students in the university and should include discussions and illustrations of humility across cultural and historical cases. The aim here would be not to disclose to students *one way* of being humble, just as there is not one ‘other’ by way of contrast to which students are exposed. Rather the intention would be to expose students to, and experience, the diverse ways in which this is possible. This is due to the fact that attitudes towards the ‘other’ are shaped, not merely by the study of historical and epistemic roots of disciplinary work, but also as a result of contemporary cultural, economic, historical, social, media factors (Said, 2001). Whilst this is a proposal for the importance of epistemic openness so as to instil humility in university education, how the university of imagination will countervail these influences is not clear, and forms part of the difficulties of achieving the goal of humility.

In light of these difficulties, the teaching of humility would therefore require the use of a variety of methods by which it may be inculcated through pedagogy. This would include its formal teaching, as well as thinking about humility more subtlety - as a form of ‘embodiment’ (Kiefer and Trumpp, 2012). In the first insistence, to help foreground the concept of humility, the university may make the concept more intelligible with courses, for instance, on character development. A case in point is Yale University (2013), which began offering courses on ‘Humility’ and which is described in the following terms:

Traditions of modesty and humility in character building and political leadership. Contemporary understandings of character and character building. The premise that human beings are blessed with many talents but are also burdened by sinfulness, ignorance, and weakness. The concept of humility in works by and about Homer, Moses, Augustine, Montaigne, Burke, Niebuhr, Martin Luther King, Jr., and others [shall be discussed] (Yale University, Information Technology Services)⁹¹.

Courses such as these, whilst becoming increasingly prevalent in universities (especially in North America), are motivated by a variety ends and raise important questions. For example, what is to be achieved through this pedagogic process, and can we know what a ‘humble student’ looks or acts like are important questions. The obscurity of ‘being humble’ also adds to the problem of thinking about this concept in pedagogic terms. Cases in which humility is inculcated and rewarded, for example, may also be a cause to mystify this concept, as we cannot know the intentions of people who are shown to act in a ‘humble manner’. Such questions draw upon more general problems of measurement in ways highlighted by moral education thinkers (Eaude, 2015) and which are unavoidable concerns for such educational endeavours. As there are no guarantees for success, the importance of this general approach is that moral education is often most successful when delivered consciously, as well as subtlety, to students (through seeing its embodiment in their peers, teachers and staff) (West-Burnham and Jones, 2008).

If regulated to specific moments in the educational training of students, attempts to inculcate humility may be less affective as “moral education should not be thought of as a separate subject – one to be taught formally in, say, 7th grade. All of education should be guided by and imbued with moral education” (Noddings and Brooks, 2017: 3). To help create an environment wherein this may be possible, the pedagogic attitude of the university of imagination is to focus on humility throughout the entire duration of student life. Eaude (2015) argues, for example, that moral transference through the pedagogic experience is most effective when students see it being engaged with, and taken in, by teachers and other students. For a pedagogy of humility offered in this understated manner i.e. as being part of the experience of the university of imagination, it would have to come from the training of academics, for example. Considering the intellectual virtue of humility, Roberts and Wood (2009) argue:

⁹¹ This course in particular received much public criticism for reasons related to the instructor, the prominent conservative essayist and journalist David Brooks.

...people who lack humility will [not] be in all respects epistemic failures; we even think that vanity, arrogance, and other anti-humility vices can on occasion contribute to the acquisition, refinement, and communication of knowledge. Rather, we claim that *in the long run, just about everybody will be epistemically better off for having, and having associates who have, epistemic humility* (p.252, emphasis added).

This form of moral education, as related to embodiment, refers to subtle ways in which moral attributes are inculcated to the student through seeing lived examples in the university more generally. Whilst our dual-pronged proposals (of learning about as well as inculcating humility) in the university emphasises: a) educating about the ‘other’, and b) inculcating humility; its embodiment is debatable as it is culturally varied (Ahnert, 2011). However, in recognition of the importance of creating a dynamic balance in the university, this would not prevent the university of imagination providing a pedagogic ethos for inculcating humility via the use of these proposed strategies.

Knowledge Conglomerations: Between Monopolies and Irrelevance

This feature of KP I defined as the university’s social relations in the KS. Specifically, the dynamics and competition within the KS for knowledge production and dissemination, and the consequences existing between situations in which it could imitate monopolies or become irrelevant, were highlighted. Creating a dynamic sense of balance here requires mediating between these alternatives, and which conceive for the university a position which aims to exist between them. The oscillations of this feature were defined as follows:

Table 7. Summary of the Oscillations of Knowledge Conglomerations

Features of KP	Potential Consequences for the university of KP's imbalances
Knowledge Conglomerations	<p>Monopolies. With fewer knowledge producers, there is the potential for knowledge monopolies to emerge in the KS and thereby raise concomitant problems of monopolistic actions by such institutions. These may include, problems relating to the free access to knowledge as well as agendas for knowledge production driven solely by economic or political motives etc.</p> <p>Irrelevance. Delimiting the place of the university within the KS with increased scope for knowledge producers</p>
	<p>The alternatives on each side of this theoretical spectrum suggest that the university has a wide view of options between becoming a monopoly, as well as falling into a state of irrelevancy in the KS. However, as argued in the previous chapter, a neo-institutionalist position does not foresee the university becoming irrelevant; rather that it is circumvented by the presence of increasing numbers of institutions/organisations which enter the knowledge markets of the KS (Baker, 2014). To strike a cautious proposal of the university would entail being aware of the pitfalls that these oscillations entail. The possibility of reaching a dynamic balance and one which would alter, morph, and define itself according to the dictating circumstances of the KS, is essentially required. A possible definition for such a proposal may be explicated through the university of imagination in that it remains ‘prudent’ in its relations with the broader KS. Prudence exists as a means by which to negotiate the alternatives of the university becoming a monopoly and yet also falling into irrelevance. Employing prudence as a response to the imbalance of the university’s position in the KS offers the potential of a response by the university of imagination. Defined as relating to one being ‘cautious and having good judgement’ (OED), prudence can stand as the dynamic balance for this feature of KP, as it is a concept which recognises firstly the consequences of withdrawing from the KS, as well as also partaking in it. In doing so, both positive and negative aspects of the KS are made manifest as they pertain to the university. Here the barometer for a proposal of institutional prudence would make judgements such as a consideration of how this will affect the university of imagination, or more precisely, imagination within the university.</p>

The University's Prudence in the KS: Preliminary Considerations

The concept of prudence is informed by knowing when to act in relation to a possibility of potentials actions. It opens itself to forming a perspective to help the university tackle the problem of knowledge conglomerations in the KS by providing options for institutional action. The analysis and critical review of Chapter 1 uncovered that amongst economic, governmental, social, cultural factors etc. in which the university exists, there are also intra-dynamics of HE landscapes which help to differentiate universities. This serves *in toto* to make statements about the university's position in the KS as well as to negotiate a 'prudent' place in the face of difficulties because of the diversity of these factors. However, despite these obstacles, the following are preliminary factors to consider how proposals may be created.

Differentiation with in HE Environments

In creating a proposal for prudence, the first concern is recognition of differentiation that is extant in universities in HE environments. Within the UK context, Tight (2011a) argues, for example, that there are a number of ways in which to categorise universities, a common one being between 'ancient', 'red brick' and 'new' institutions. For each kind of university, it is recognised that they engage with their social context in diverse ways, such that economic, governmental, social, and cultural factors affecting them equally with distinction (Tight, 2012). To make the claim that universities are different is both platitudeous though also important in the context of our present discussions, which when contemplating strategies of prudence, we must show a divergence between the 'university' (as a socio-philosophical concept) and the social conditions and experiences of *universities*. This diversity ensures that 'pull and push' factors (Ball, 2017) on universities in the KS will serve to help them decide their respective attitudes towards what being prudent means in terms of the KS. Moreover, it suggests that we cannot speak of 'one proposal' of prudence which would affect all universities equally, and in the same fashion.

Imagination as Dynamic

Secondly, there is a need to consider the ways in which imagination is a dynamic concept, whose ability to change and fluctuate plays an important role in the university of imagination. Within the educational literature (Murphy, 2015), the study of imagination in institutions is an emerging and popular field of inquiry, and one which was discussed briefly in the preceding chapter. Presently, this is of importance also as imagination can be stimulated or undermined within the university, and that there are factors which cause either situation to occur. Key amongst these factors is the university as an important knowledge producer and its interactions with the KS which are important for knowledge creation. In other words, if imagination in the university is dynamic and changeable, shifting the discussion towards imagination as a gravitational point around the university's social interactions with the KS serves to foreground it as a barometer.

Linking Knowledge Conglomerations and Imagination in the University

Acknowledging the two preliminary factors of the university's diversity in HE environments, and that imagination is dynamic and thus prone to oscillate, we are able to offer a broad view of how the university may actualise a proposal for prudence. As there are many reasons for the numerous and complex interactions with the KS, how this affects the university's imagination is the concern of such a proposal. My analysis in Chapter 1 revealed that the influences of the university's exogenic relations appear to have affects on the articulation of knowledge and its role in the university (leading to the problem of knowledge). Such pressures may be, in our present discussion, read in another way; namely as 'limiting' the imagination. According to this reading, such influence from the KS would open up the university towards the possibilities of creating a rift between its educational goals and the demands of knowledge commodification. We may therefore interpret the university's problem of knowledge as a consequence of over-exposure to the KS, leading to a decline in imaginative responses to questions over the conceptualisation and use of knowledge. If imagination can have this potential link to the consequences of interactions with the KS, then we may also intimate the same for cases of fewer interactions i.e. situations in which the university withdraws from the KS. If the imagination potentially responds to its environment in such ways, then they can be included into a broad orientation of prudence for

the university of imagination. An analogy which illustrates the process of more or less interaction with the KS leading to enhancements in or limitations of imagination is through the concept of crosspollination⁹².

Crosspollination is defined as “the transfer of pollen from the male reproductive organ of one plant to the female reproductive organ of another plant. Insects and wind are the main agents of cross-pollination” (OED). Within the contemporary academic literature, the term has been used to describe, amongst other things, the complex ways in which identities shift due to cultural, historical and social forces. Such uses come through intellectual history, for instance when Goodman (1999) uses the term in *Jewish and Islamic Philosophy: Crosspollinations in the Classic Age*. Goodman argues there exists a symbiosis between Jewish and Muslim philosophical traditions, and moves away from explanatory models which collapse such complexities into determinable sets of traditional taxonomical explanations of cultural inheritance, to more profuse understandings based on “diffusion”. He continues;

... the metaphor that arises most naturally from long study of the materials of philosophical interchange between Jewish and Muslim thinkers is not that of a confluence [cross fertilisation] so much as that of crosspollination. Philosophers loyal to one tradition discern the issues that unite them with philosophers of another time, place or confession, inherit their problematics and creatively adapt their responses (p.viii).

The use of crosspollination in this context should be viewed less as a theory than as an ‘approach’ (Montgomery, 2007). In relation to theory, this is an “account for the world which goes beyond what we can see and measure” (Marshall, 2018: 666), whilst an approach is set *within* a broad framework from which to view the coalescing diversity of potential events. This analogy is of use to our present discussion as it employs the idea of balance as key to pollination, as without it sustaining the richness and vibrancy of organic life, it would not be possible. Crosspollination is, therefore, an imprecise system of forces which are random and indeterminate. The analogy is of use to this study of the university in the KS is when it draws attention to balance (pollination)

⁹² This term, Crosspollination, was initially employed by the author in a Master’s Dissertation (MPhil: Educational Research Methods, Faculty of Education, Cambridge University). All that remains is the resemblance to the term since the features and analysis marking the above usage is distinct to this chapter. For more see, Zaman (2009: 52).

between possible ways in which the university interacts with the KS and how prudence is suited for it.

Proposals for Institutional Prudence: A ‘Crosspollination’ Perspective

A proposal for prudence is premised on placing the imagination of the university at the centre of its concerns in relation to the KS, and with anything which could negatively affect it to be avoided. What is meant by ‘imagination’ here is specifically the attitude towards knowledge in the university, what it is, and how it changes, as elicited through interactions with the KS. The analogy of crosspollination helps provide an avenue for investigating imagination. Just as over or under pollination is not useful for the richness of organic life, so to the university if it moves towards becoming a monopoly or falling into irrelevance, does not help the institution to be imaginative. Therefore, as social/contextual factors change for the university, so too will the meaning of being prudent with relations in the KS. Appreciating that not all universities are the same and have different needs from the KS, finding a balance (between over and under pollination) to help sustain imagination is crucial. This is in part how, instead of postulating a proposal for the university’s place in the KS, we may speak of a perspective i.e. a general way of thinking towards prudence, and which can be represented as follows:

Diagram 9. Potential Scenarios for the University of Imagination in reference to a Crosspollinative Perspective

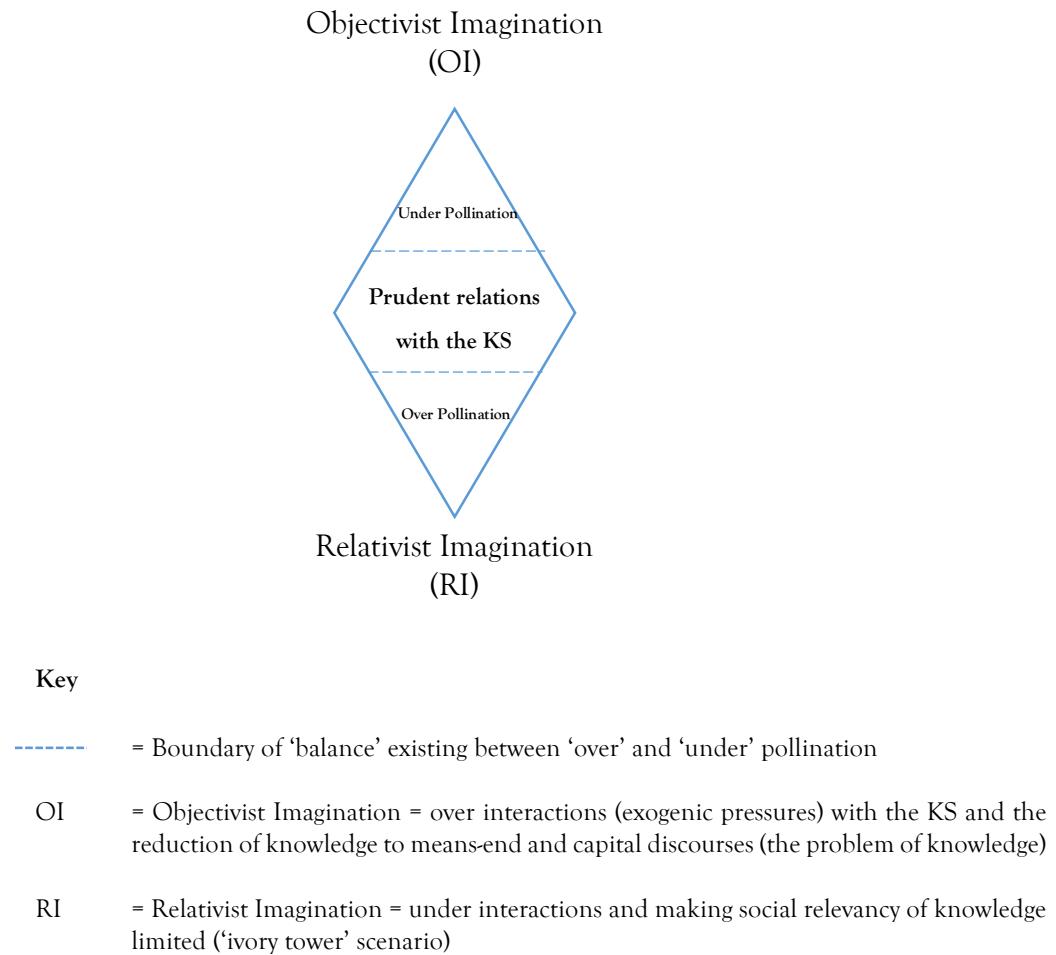


Diagram 9 illustrates possible scenarios using the idea of crosspollination to demonstrate the consequences for the university of imagination of interacting *with* the KS. At each end of the diagram there are statements about; a) the extent of interactions that the university has with the KS (i.e. the degree of pollination), and b) the consequence for the imagination of these interactions. What is meant by 'consequences for the imagination' within the university refers to the ways in which knowledge is generally conceptualised and used within the institution. For example, the first OI or 'objectivist imagination' is an approach to knowledge defined by exogenic pressures, which may potentially lead to its commodification through 'means-end' and 'capital' ideas about knowledge. This potential scenario has been accounted for by the problem of knowledge in Chapter 1 and is the result of over interaction with the KS (read as influences). It is considered 'under pollinated' because the university has social interactions and influences from within specific elements in the KS (most notably the instruments of social power who

influence civil society, law and the economy). The universities here take in specific ideas of the KS which may run counter to the interests of education and learning (as identified in the problem of knowledge). It is for this reason that we may infer that this situation is one in which the move towards monopolistic attitudes of the university may debilitate imagination and thus be a less prudent strategy for the university of imagination in the longer term (Bolderin, 2010).

At the opposite end of the scale, RI or ‘relativist imagination’, is the result of the university’s interactions with the KS. It is a situation of ‘over’ pollination, such that there is a dilution of the university’s prominence by increasing knowledge conglomerations. Here, also, the imagination is detrimentally affected due to the many conglomerations in the KS. Whilst these may not necessarily be related to the power structures of the KS (as in the case of under pollination leading to an objectivist imagination), the proliferation of conglomerations means knowledge in the university of imagination becomes ‘relative’. The relativism of knowledge here relates to an inability or unwillingness on the part of the university to interact with the world around it. As an ‘ivory tower’ scenario, the university does not deem it necessary for knowledge to correspond with, or an attempt to converse with, happenings outside its walls (thus standing in contradistinction to the objective imagination). This could be seen akin to the situation of timorousness as identified above; yet is not an exact equivalence, since the relativist imagination is not derived from a lack of confidence in knowledge but is, rather, a self imposed sanction. It is also a ‘relativist imagination’, as knowledge is here restricted in its fecundity to interact with and influence the KS⁹³.

I have briefly sketched out here how imagination might be affected by the degree to which the university either shrinks (to form ‘monopolies’), or proliferates (to dilute its influence and become ‘irrelevant’, relative to the neo-institutionalist view). If imagination requires a diverse and free mixing of ideas, relations and peoples, then crosspollination potentially offers a way of thinking about the environments in which it may be stimulated or stunted. In the particular case of institutional engagement with the KS, the university is a prominent knowledge producer and ‘primary institution’, and it is unlikely it will have the option of being completely unavailable or irrelevant to the KS (Meyer, 2007). As there are multifarious relations which the university has with the KS we may intimate that there could be factors which help to stimulate and nurture the

⁹³ This point is taken up further in the final chapter.

imagination of the university in the KS, just as there are those which may debilitate and retard it. This view of imagination, as dynamic, relates to the interactions of the university in the KS. Whilst the above discussion on humility (through pedagogy) suggested how imagination might be stimulated from within the institution, such a perspective on creating balance (and universities which constitute the HE landscape) is one which aims to help the university of imagination become aware of how imagination is affected by its ‘involvement’ in the KS.

Using the analogy and corresponding dynamics of crosspollination offers one possible way to think about connections between how the university interacts with the KS, on the one hand, and its possible affects on imagination, knowledge and the project of education within the institution, on the other. The caution to be taken by the university relates to the particular kind of HE institution (ancient, red brick, new etc.) and the interests which they wish to serve. A crosspollinative perspective on interactions in the KS cannot be used to give specific directives for achieving prudence for all varieties of university but it can show a macro approach to the ways in which possibilities for enhancing and delimiting imagination are available. Moreover, whilst this is a provisional postulation about complex social institutions, it suggests a line of inquiry which may aid in foregrounding the primacy of imagination for the university in the KS. It is also the beginning of an account about how imagination might be stimulated in the KS itself, especially in terms of institutional collaborations and networks of cooperation. Of paramount importance to this perspective is that the university of imagination (and the universities which constitute a HE landscape) should not be *told* how to interact with their social environment, just that interactions will have obvious implications for imagination in the university and consequences for how knowledge more generally is affected.

Liminal Modality: Between Objectivism and Relativism

This final feature concerns epistemology, and in particular questions over what is knowledge in the university of imagination. From the perspective of KP, as was established in Chapter 2, knowledge exists within a number of potential modalities which are subject to change and alteration. To highlight such variations, these modalities are liminal, and shown to exist on a scale of potential oscillations which saw it moving between ‘constriction’ and ‘stretching’ (Chapter 3). These varying positions are in reference to how we think about knowledge as being

restricted to particular forms and ideas, as well as proliferating so as to encompass a growing number of them. The manner in which these oscillations may affect the university were identified as follows:

Table 8. Summary Liminal Modalities' Oscillations

Features of KP Potential Consequences for the university of KP imbalances	
Liminal Modality	Objectivism. Education and Research become a form of capital for economic ends whereby they are limited to means-end 'capital' (as in the problem of knowledge)
	Relativism. Education and Research has the potential to lose its relevancy to act/prepare students for the social world as there are no agreed ideas of what knowledge is and how it relates to the social world

Between these alternatives, the university of imagination is required to find a means towards balance. To do so requires understanding, as with knowledge conglomerations, such influences upon the university which are likely to affect the ways knowledge is thought of, and used, within the institution (Ball, 2017). Creating then a dynamic sense of balance in this case would require restraint of the university from either such position because of its potential consequences. Furthermore, if the oscillations are the result of the university's relationship to knowledge, then restraining the institution such that it does not fall at either end of the spectrum is vital. The multifarious positions which dynamic balance would have to strike entails a concept that is malleable to the varying possibilities that knowledge occupies in the university of imagination. The sense of restraint that must subsequently be taken in by the university should equally allow it the freedom to act on its own volition, and not be *obliged* to act. We can define the need for restraint with the term 'temperance'. Denoting 'self restraint and/or moderation' (OED), the term would relate to our present case as the restraint required by the institution when it comes to taking up positions about knowledge. At first glance, there may seem a synonymy between temperance and prudence. However, whereas prudence emphasises the importance of the university to be cautious and wary within the KS, temperance is aligned to the moderation

required in matters relating to attitudes towards knowledge. In particular, prudence is knowing when to act in relation to a possibility of actions, whilst temperance refers to restraining from, or self-control through options which are presented to you. Proposals for temperance, I will argue, can be sought in reference to the third substantial feature of the university, namely its research function.

Temperance in Research: Preliminary Considerations

To explore how the university of imagination may resolve the problem of imbalance through temperance requires being aware of how knowledge in the KS can cause imbalances in the ways we think about research, just as the university's interactions with the KS affect imagination (a proposition of the temperance perspective towards knowledge conglomerations). Investigating such matters may aid in building a general guide towards 'temperance for research', with an underlying assumption that the university of imagination forges a conceptual relationship between imagination and research. The mitigating factors in these relationships are the pressures placed upon the institution (both from within and without) which alter the ways we think about university research.

The Social value of University Research in the KS

The social context of the university, whether driven by internal or external pressures from the KS, potentially influences the kinds of research being produced. As was discussed in Chapter 1, the KS is formed around and directed towards those externalities which emerge from knowledge, with the power dynamics identifying, amongst other things, a preponderance of economic values in the university. As such, the status of research within the university is important from this perspective because of the varying benefits it can supply to, and take from, the KS. Innerarity (2012) proposes (and in reference to the KS), that "...if we are to understand how knowledge and power are currently expressed, we must consider the fact that the status of knowledge has changed; it is no longer cloaked in the traditional signs of authority" (p.3). As a primary institution within the KS, it is evident that the university is not free from the dynamics of social

power, either in terms of being influenced by, or dictating, the social prestige of, value and influence of research (Smyth, 2017). However, these influences are defined, policies for temperance require recognition that research is a highly prized commodity (Busch, 2017; Neubauer, 2013) in the KS, which may in turn affect research done inside the university of imagination. Moreover, appreciating that such factors have an influence on the university, it ought therefore to be wary of its relationship to the KS as it may lead to other unforeseen problems, such as those which relate to imagination.

Linking Research, Knowledge and Imagination

Re-reading the problem of knowledge by linking it to imagination suggests how we may potentially associate imagination with knowledge. In this view, the greater the social pressures placed on the university, it is *likely* (though not inevitable) that they will lead to a scenario in which knowledge is restricted to, for example, the commodifying and debilitating of imagination, as described for knowledge conglomerations above. Here knowledge is reduced in its potential due to limitations of its *imagining*. This suggests that as knowledge produced by the university is of high social value in the KS, the connection between research and its affects on the imagination is made apparent in light of this context. We may intimate, as with the crosspollination reference above, that ‘greater’ and ‘less’ imagination can also correspond to conceptions of research. Here ‘less imagination’ is related to the problems of knowledge (constricting modalities), whilst greater imagination is the result of a broader conception of knowledge (stretching modalities) to non-reducible and non-specific ends.

Proposals for University Research: A Temperance Approach

The idea of temperance, from the Latin *temperantia*, infers the making of conscious and voluntary decisions regarding possible available alternatives. Therefore, if one knows x with its affects being y , we can choose p as an alternative. In our present case, the alternatives before us for liminal modality lay between objectivism and relativism. The relationship between knowledge, imagination and research recognises primarily that the pressures identified here create potential

pitfalls for research within the university more generally. A strategy for temperance in the university of imagination would not entail moderating, or indeed dictating, what kinds of research is done, but rather be motivated by questions over how to stimulate imagination.

‘Research’ and ‘publishing’ are emphasised differently across academic disciplines and institutions (Moosa, 2018, forthcoming), as well as having different meanings. My concern here is to consider the institutional emphasis on research which cannot be located in specific departments or research disciplines but rather to create ways of thinking about academic production within the university of imagination more generally. In contemporary research universities, the promotion of academic ‘production’ is a subject of much discussion. Baker (2014), elucidates these developments and trends as only being exacerbated in the KS when claiming that

A symbiotic relationship between educating and knowledge production as a cultural force is hardly new in the history of the university. What is *new* though is the unprecedented intensifications and acceleration of both – the extension of university (and related) training to ever larger proportions of youth, and the *immense increase in resources applied to the university’s claim to generate new knowledge* ... the knowledge society emerged and the university did not recede in its influence nor did it narrow its degree-creating and granting functions. Instead, as Parsons predicted forty years ago, a claim can be made that the university has become the central cultural institution in knowledge that forms basic ideologies and creates academic degrees and expertise around these ideologies (p.84, emphasis added).

In light of these developments, there is a growing strand of theoretical writings within the sociology of education which shows the detrimental affects of a highly pressured research culture on academics, and on general attitudes towards the purpose of the university (Shaw and Ward, 2014). Gilbert (2009), for example, summaries some of the pressures placed on academics by describing the increasing importance of research by acknowledging that:

...[firstly] many more social scientists and academics [are] in posts today than ever before. Second, the rise of research selectivity exercises and *performance-related pay* has persuaded most academics to write more. Third, academics in many poorer countries, at least those with solid academic institutions, are following a similar route and now publishing more in academic journals. They are assisted in this task by funding from developed countries— most funding institutions now search out people in poorer countries to conduct research and they often arrange for their writing to be published in English. Fourth, the *globalisation of academia has*

persuaded more writers to publish in English. Fifth, publishing houses have increased the number of book and journal titles so that the demand for publishing space by academics is accommodated by the growing supply. Finally, knowing that we cannot keep up with the ever increasing amount of writing, more and more textbooks, readers and encyclopaedia are appearing: an invitation to shortcut the primary material (p.258, emphasis added).

What excessive ‘academic production’ (Oswald, 2006) may mean is dependent upon the context of each university, as there is no objective measure for all such institutions. In our present discussion, a proposal of temperance for research is a general warning concerning the influences to which the university in the KS is subject, and making the institution aware of its consequences. As an attitude towards the increased focus on research, the university of imagination would take a position of moderation as it acknowledges that certain kinds of academic research can have detrimental affects when directed by exogenic pressures. If the problem of knowledge arises in part from a culture which commodifies knowledge through research, then this is the first form of moderation required. Again, this proposal is in response to the particular context of the KS which places increasing value on the university and its social externalities, and in particular placing a high social premium on research. Whilst the university remains a place for the free exploration of knowledge, ideally unencumbered by the influences of social pressures and internal competitions, these factors nonetheless affect the ways in which the institution operates (Smyth, 2017; Berg and Seeber, 2016)⁹⁴.

Proposal I: Guidelines towards Temperance

Calling upon temperance to act as a research proposal for countering the tension of imbalance in the university of imagination at first may seem counter-intuitive, and even ‘dictatorial’, in that research is being restricted. As a place for the free investigation and pursuit of knowledge, any restrictions placed on research could be equated with anti-intellectual and even anti-humanist proclivities. The proposal of temperance is, however, evidently not about reducing specific areas of research but rather is a general attitude which is wary of the potential problems related to

⁹⁴ Again, whilst in empirical terms there are differences across universities, the importance of the ‘university’ as a generalised concept is the subject matter of our present theorising for the university of imagination.

knowledge in the KS. Temperance in this context, should be seen as a reaction to the abuses of the liminal modality of knowledge by helping it not fall into the imbalances of objectivism and relativism. These positions represent the concentration of one particular spectrum of knowledge's modality with temperance attempting to act as a guiding principle which could form the basis for epistemic balance. The reason for advocating this position comes from the context in which the research capacities of modern universities are expansive and increasingly entail a broad reach which extends often times beyond the immediate scope of the institution (Smelser, 2013).

Through the uses of university knowledge within the KS, our aim here is to offer an initial strategy into how the balancing principle of temperance may guide research within the university of imagination. Whereas much work in the academic literature is currently being done on the negative consequences of university research cultures, moving away from a 'publish or perish' mentality (Moosa, 2018, forthcoming) towards one of temperance is one which helps to engage with contemporary academic debates about research, and to rethink them in terms dictated by imagination.

How this proposal may be realised is a relevant question which would firstly require a commitment from the university of imagination in recognising the problems associated in the KS with academic research in the KS. Such commitment would, for example, potentially mean not making research and publications key for academic promotion, but rather drawing in other non-educational indicators, such as student development and assessment, departmental service, and so on, so as to give these services greater credence. Illustrating the problems related to the over valuing of academic research output, Collini (2012) draws attention to how one may compare research value in the humanities and social sciences. He suggests that if one were to take, for example, the case of

Victorian poetry, and that over a number of years [...] an academic] works on a critical study of what we might call a three-star Victorian poet ("highly innovative but not quite groundbreaking"). The book is hailed by several expert reviewers as the best on the topic: it draws on deep familiarity not just with Victorian poetry, but with other kinds of poetry; it integrates a wealth of historical and biographical learning in ways that illuminate the verse; it is exact and scrupulous in adjudicating various textual complexities; and it clarifies, modifies, and animates the understanding of this poet's work on the part of other critics and, through their writing and teaching, of future generations of students, as well as of interested general readers. It also, it is worth saying, exemplifies the general values

of careful scholarship and reminds its readers of the qualities of responsiveness, judgement, and literary tact called upon by the best criticism. It is a model piece of “excellent” research in the humanities. And its “impact” is zero (p.171).

Another aspect of this proposal would be to reduce, or ‘cap’, correspondence with businesses and other such groups for research purposes. Whilst current trends show an increase in universities working with industry (through academic consultation etc.) and subsequently the prestige attached to it becoming a social norm (Hatzichristou and Rosenfield, 2017), a re-evaluation of the kinds of research which emerge therefrom is required in order that the university of imagination not be subject to the detrimental affects of its imagination and knowledge⁹⁵. Having moderation towards research would mean not to take advantage (often financial in nature) of opportunities one may possibly benefit from to the detriment of the social good⁹⁶. There are other, potentially, moral questions that such a proposal may intimate. For example, would restricting research in biological sciences mean that certain exploratory cancer prevention techniques be abandoned? In so doing, is the university at risk of putting the lives of millions of patients in danger (and millions more in the future) by not taking advantage of its skills, and other resources to tackle this, or other similar problems. A response to potential critiques of this nature may be, firstly, that not all universities have the resources for such exploratory work, and secondly, temperance in the university of imagination concerns making decisions in light of the possibilities it is presented with. Therefore, in the scenario mentioned, the question is not one that the university should, or indeed should not, employ its resources for such worthy causes, but that it be aware of the ways in which this may lead to problems of financially compromising its educational goals. Thus these are *a posteriori* factors which affect the ways in which the university takes decisions about its role in the KS. Kshirsagar and Vu (2016) note, for example, in relation to medical research, that universities aware of such consequences,

⁹⁵ This can also be stated for international governmental work which universities are increasingly interested in pursing because of, amongst other reasons, the financial incentives attached to them. For an insightful account of this correspondence with its various affects upon the university see Hatzichristou and Rosenfield (2017).

⁹⁶ The use of financial incentives to draw high ranking professors of Economics (at the universities of Harvard and Columbia, respectively) and which helped precipitate the events of the 2008 Financial Crisis, serves to illustrates this point. For a detailed account of how such academics used the uncritical teaching of neo liberal economics in university curricula as well as standing on Boards of Directors and consultants for major international banks, see Ferguson (2014).

increasingly deal with these problems particularly, when pharmaceutical industries employ greater pressure and incentives for academics and departmental research. They note that in 2010

Stanford University banned physicians from giving paid promotional talks for pharmaceutical companies, yet more than a dozen of the school's doctors were paid speakers – with two earning more than six figures during these speaking appointments. The American College of Physicians noted “a perception that a physician is dispensing medical advice on the basis of a commercial influence is likely to undermine a patient’s trust not only in the physician’s competence, but also in the physician’s pledge to put the patient’s welfare above self-interest”.

Such examples suggest that research carries with it moral questions for the university, especially within the case of the highly competitive knowledge markets of the KS. As temperance is a term which connotes a decision to be made in the presence of options available to someone, for the university of imagination, this means showing caution in light of the demands placed upon it. In sum, whilst a strategy of temperance for research is to protect knowledge and the vibrancy of imagination, the university of imagination will always be free to explore the full range of intellectual pursuits, yet it also realises that research cultures are part of a larger context which can affect the very conceptions of knowledge.

Another possible retort towards a proposal of temperance could be framed by the high research demands for universities in the 21st Century. An argument here for example, is the case where a researcher may claim that ‘if I do not research x, someone else or institution will do x’, is one which appreciates the needs to compete, produce and publish research. However, two reasons at least suggest this would be a misplaced equivalency with the proposed demands of temperance proposals. The first is stated above: that such a strategy would not limit intellectual inquiry within the university by dictating what should or should not be researched. Secondly, and more importantly, in terms of a critique towards temperance, it is conceived within the context of the KS and a realisation of the kinds of affects that may occur to knowledge and imagination. This can be illustrated by the analogy of the economic theory and the ‘tragedy of the commons’.

The ‘tragedy of the commons’ proposition takes as its premise a critique of Smithian political economy and the notion that self-interest, in economic competition, is a means towards the common good. Expostulating this account, the tragedy of the commons argues that resources held in common use (land, coal, water etc.) are subject to market forces and specifically

competition, and have wider and unforeseen social consequences. For individuals acting in their own self-interest, by securing and extracting resources - there are short term benefits, yet this may well detrimentally affect the longer term effectiveness of the resource (Hardin and Garling, 1995). The theory does not represent an exact equivalency with our present example of imagination, since imagination is not a 'collective resource' in the same way⁹⁷; neither can it be depleted and/or restored as a material resource⁹⁸. However, with this proviso, and within our KS context, we may compare the common resource to imagination if we take it to mean the collectivity of ideas about knowledge (such as the sociological concept of *nomos*, Berger (1967)). In this example, the competitive demands on knowledge, through research, mean that individuals will extract from the common pot of this resource. As universities, as well as other parties, continue to act in their self interests within the KS, the affects on imagination are such that it will alter ideas about knowledge (towards a form for capital, for example). In the longer term, the acceleration of knowledge production in this way may restrict ideas about knowledge in the university more generally. The possible scenario of the tragedy of the commons for the university informs us that if measures are not taken so as to be mindful of one's context and responding appropriately, the university is not immune to such circumstances.

Proposal II: Researching 'Imagination' in the University of Imagination

Alongside the above general guidelines towards temperance, defining the university of imagination's attitudes to research, a proposal may also help to inculcate temperance in research around the theme and study of imagination. This would mean, in part, helping forge relationships between research, knowledge and imagination, such that academics appreciate why an over emphasis upon research and output can be detrimental for the university as a whole. As a site for the promotion and celebration of imagination, the university of imagination would also direct energies towards understanding from where imagination resides in relation to varying

⁹⁷ This is a view which elides the consensus, and popular, philosophical idealism of the 19th Century, especially within its German incarnation, and which continues to have popularity. See Freedman (2000).

⁹⁸ Within classical macro economic theory, the ideas of a tragedy of the commons, has itself has come under increasing criticism (see Cox, 1985, as an early example). In spite of these problems, its use here presents a general analogy regarding collective resource use in society.

academic disciplines. This may take the form of housing interdisciplinary centres for ‘Imaginative Studies’ where departments are encouraged to critically reflect upon the defining questions of their respective disciplines in order to promulgate resources for imagination. The importance of such studies would be to facilitate stimulation of the imagination so as to help balance the varying modalities of knowledge. It would also help to think about ways of collaborating between different disciplines, methodologies, and philosophies of knowledge, in the university. In emphasising the importance of imagination, such centres would raise questions over where exactly does the imagination of disciplines arise, are they the same for all, or are there different ways in which the arts and humanities, for example, open themselves to varying kinds of the imagination. Moreover, what does it mean to speak of a ‘philosophical’, ‘mathematical’ or ‘sociological’ imagination, and how do the ideas and questions which motivate these respective studies collectively inform the project of balance in the university of imagination. These are some of the questions that an emphasis on imagination within the university of imagination would foster and orientate its activities towards.

Emphasising research on imagination would also serve to foreground the concept to act as a vision for the university. Defined as a feature of the ‘idea’, a vision in this insistence would make imagination a means for the gravitation of the varying research activities of the university. The importance of this discussion is related to a prescient debate in contemporary universities concerning increasing intellectual purists which are housed by the institution, and which increasingly have little recourse to unifying them (Wilson, 1999). In this vein, Weaver (2013) argues that the modern university suffers greatly because of the increasing diversification of knowledge and research, which then ceases to hold together the bonds of consilience for the institution. This is illustrated, for example, in the similarities and differences between the humanities, arts, social sciences and natural sciences. Slingerland (2008), in clarifying these distinctions, concludes that:

The university today is, as we know, divided into two broad magisteria, the humanities and the natural sciences, usually located on opposite sides of campus, served by separate funding agencies, and characterized by radically different methodologies and background theoretical assumptions. Although rarely explicitly acknowledged in our secular age, the primary rationale behind this division is a rather old-fashioned and decidedly metaphysical belief that there are two utterly different types of substances in the world, mind and matter, which operate

according to distinct principles. The humanities study the products of the free and unconstrained spirit or mind – literature, religion, art, history – while the natural sciences concern themselves with the deterministic laws governing the inert kingdom of dumb objects (p.3).

With the traditional role of theology or philosophy as being the ‘queen of the sciences’ (Marenbon, 2010) around which all other knowledge gravitates being side-lined, we are now left with varying ideas and disciplines to take this role. For the university of imagination, it is imagination which holds this position, and a commitment to the study of it as a way through which the varying disciplines of the university can jointly converse collectively. Due to the allusiveness of the concept, imagination has the ability to be researched in relation to a broad sway of disciplines, amongst others, philosophy, history, biological and natural sciences, economics, literature etc. The expansive directions which it may take has a bearing that might potentially unify research across the university. Though in previous eras the principle, or sets of disciplines which took this role were theology, philosophy, philology, and so on, and which held certain cultural and political motivations for the university⁹⁹, ‘imagination’ is not a discipline in the same way, and yet could equally be explored through them all. An advantage here is that since it does not belong to any one faculty, imagination is freed from disciplinary divisions which often harbour discord and act as barriers to consilience in the university (Christie and Maton, 2013)¹⁰⁰ and wold thus stand as a gravitational concept for the research activities of the university.

Humility, Prudence and Temperance: Principles of the University of Imagination

As balance is the overarching task of the ‘idea’ of the university of imagination, the related concepts of humility, prudence and temperance present the ways through which the university moves towards achieving this aim. Interpreting imagination as a concept which can be integrated into pedagogy, and interactions with the KS and research in the university, it then shows how

⁹⁹ Specifically, what has been referred to as the ‘queen of the sciences’ historically meant the superordinate preferencing of a, or group of, disciplines such that others are either informed by or lead towards its center of interests. See, Solomon (2006).

¹⁰⁰ For an acclaimed account of disciplinary distinctions in the modern research university see Becher and Trowler (2001).

the ‘idea’ can potentially permeate into all aspects of the institution, revealing principles which define the ethos of the university of imagination in its pursuit for balance in the KS.

These principles of balance can be viewed as a means for achieving balance in relation to each feature of KP. Yet they can also be conceived of as related to one another. ‘Prudence’ acts, for example, as a principle which reveals a level of caution necessary for the university of imagination in terms of being in the KS. As a prominent institution in this society, it is not immune to the demands of knowledge production and dissemination, placing a premium on the social externalities that the institution can offer. However, as imagination is deferentially affected by too much, or indeed, too little engagement within the KS as proposed above, institutional caution is required. This attitude of prudence subsequently sets the tone for the university of imagination’s relations with its social context. Within its institutional functions, this caution is reflected through the ‘temperance’ of research. In order to encourage and facilitate imagination in research, balance here presumes that moderation must be sought in light of the demands on the university in the KS, and realise that equally there are detrimental affects in acquiescing to high pressure research cultures for imagination in the university. Finally, an emphasis on humility is reflected through pedagogy, as balance in the ways we think about knowledge is the starting point for education and learning, and the potential ways of creating (hosting) imbalance in the university. Stated another way, attitudes to balance, and a commitment to imagination, can be seen to run through all aspects of the university of imagination. Through education, students are exposed to balance via a ‘humble’ approach to knowledge which is reflected as temperance for academics in terms of the production of research and knowledge. Finally, the prudence of the institution ensures that caution with being in the KS enables a balanced and imaginatively stimulating university. Therefore, responses to imbalance given in the form of humility, prudence and temperance, and discussed above - can be seen as principles which animate the university of imagination and open a way of thinking about its operations in new and perhaps unconventional ways. A summary of our analysis here is given in Table 9.

Table 9. Summary of the University of Imagination's responses to each of the Tensions of Imbalance

Feature of KP	Scale of imbalances	University of Imagination's responses to imbalance	Aspect of university to which the resolution is focussed	Potential strategies to achieve balance in the University of Imagination
Dialogical Contingency	Hubris & Timorousness	Humility is a recognition in the ontology of the KS and its attitudes to knowledge. As the university must be aware of the consequences of both, humility is a recognition of the problems of imbalance and stands to ensure that the university balances the power of knowledge in the KS. This it does by being 'humble' in the face of the prominent place it has in the KS	Pedagogy	Creating a 'pedagogy for humility' points towards the construction of a philosophy of education which can approach fundamental questions about learning in the university of imagination. Two approaches to achieving this goal were discussed. Firstly, a universal teaching program across the university which emphasises the diverse and complex ways in which other societies and civilisations conceive the world. Appreciating the views of the 'Other' is to show that one must always be open to see and study the world as broader human narratives of knowledge. The second relates to the instruction in humility through pedagogic courses. Teaching the concept, illustrating it through embodiment as well as analysing its consequences in terms of power social
Knowledge Conglomerations	Monopolies & Irrelevance	Prudence is a means to negotiate the interactions of the university with the KS. A particularly cautious attitude was championed such that the university avoids becoming a monopoly as well as falling into irrelevance	Social position of the institution in the KS	A 'crosspollination' perspective acts as a means to think about how imagination is affected within the institution as a consequence of interactions. The terms 'over' and 'under' pollination were employed to show that as the university interacts with the KS, its attitudes and ideas about knowledge are likely to change and caution is required as not to detrimentally affect imagination in the university. Due to the diversity of universities in the KS, such a perspective was chosen which could act as a means for universities to decide for themselves about which circumstances stimulate or debilitate imagination

Liminal Modality	Objectivism & Relativism	Temperance is a recognition of the problems related to how knowledge (and as a consequence, imagination) may become exploited for other than educational needs in the KS. It advocates for the university to show moderation in relation to the pressures, attention and power associated with university research in the KS	Research	The links between knowledge, imagination and research were highlighted to reveal longer term problems which the university may face if it acquiesces to the pressures of the KS. To counter these trends, a general approach of moderation in research was proposed which may aid the university to see the problems of over knowledge production in the KS i.e. relating to the issues of the problem of knowledge (Chapter 1). This was linked to the importance of creating a culture in which considerations for the imagination become an important part of the research focus for the university
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Table 9 summarises the university of imagination's means for resolving the tension of imbalance. In so doing, the primary question of the thesis has been attended to. Connections between the principles of balance, humility, prudence and temperance suggest that not only are they dependent upon one another to achieve balance in the university but they also open the possibility of a 'perspective' emerging from the university of imagination. This means thinking *with* the 'idea' to open the door of comparison with other 'ideas' of the university as well as help it to engage with extant discourses within educational literature. And whilst being an institution dedicated to the creation and dissemination of knowledge may not naturally lend itself to such inquiries, it does open possibilities to speak about the larger consequences of the 'idea'. Thus whilst the 'idea' was tasked to resolve a contextual problem in the KS, we see that the university of imagination points towards ethical, and even moral, ideals. Therefore, having resolved the tension of imbalance, we have still only gained a segmented view of the university of imagination as it focusses on the particular features of KP and the tension of imbalance. What this 'idea' of the university may mean as a concept as a whole still requires further attention.

Chapter Conclusion: The University of Imagination as the 'Idea' of the University

Whilst the 'idea' of the university is an allusive and much speculated upon concept within higher education literature, this chapter has offered its own answer to the question of what this may be in the emerging KS. Knowing the essential problem which the 'idea' is tasked to resolve, tension of the imbalance, the chapter was divided into two part. The first dealt with identifying the 'idea' through firstly, considering and refining what is meant for the 'idea' of the university to achieve balance. There was then a return to the methodological framework of the thesis, neo-institutionalism, to discuss how an 'idea' may be created which the serves the aim to create 'dynamic balance' in the university. Premised on the view of the importance of the university as a 'primary institution' in the KS, a concept drawn from neo-institutionalism, was shown to point towards the university as itself a possible site for the resolution of the tension of imbalance. This was identified specifically as an 'internal turn' of the institution, an obscure which stresses the university's capability (drawn from its longevity and social relevance) to resolve problems by relying upon and activating its resources (being both internal and external to the institution). The

internal turn was not identified as the ‘idea’ itself, only a process which points towards how the ‘idea’ may emerge.

Next, concepts which may define the obscure process of the internal turn were discussed, namely *creativity* and *imagination*. These concepts were used as candidates for the ‘idea’ since whichever was chosen would also act as the motivating ethos animating the process of the ‘internal turn’. In their comparison, subsequent similarities and differences were shown in the forms of degree and kind. However, as creativity requires imagination to exist, that is to imagine, is to create that which is present, whilst creativity uses that which already exists to generate the new, the discussion concluded that both terms are appropriate candidates for the ‘idea’ with imagination providing the greater possibility for a resolution to imbalance. The ‘university of imagination’ was therefore chosen as the ‘idea’ of the university in the KS and which I defined as:

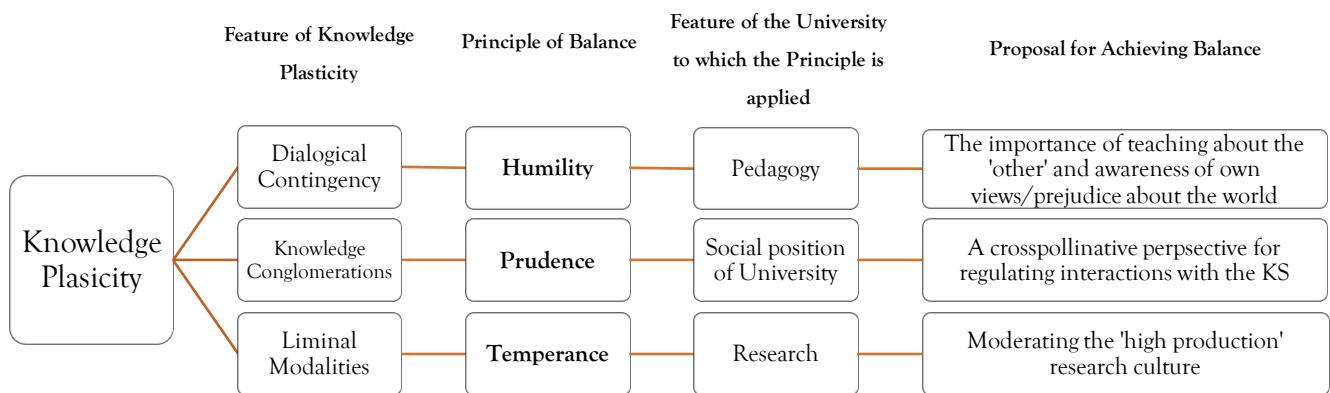
An ‘idea’ of the university in the KS which meets both its *conditions* and *features*. Derived from a neo-institutionalist perspective, it is born from and responds to the contextual challenges, as presented in this thesis, arising in the KS. Chief amongst which being the tension of imbalance. The ‘idea’ therefore promotes imagination to be institutionally marshalled to permeate the university in order to achieve its goal of creating dynamic balance.

The ‘university of imagination’ has provided the means, therefore, towards the final and third condition: the ‘resolution of a tension’. The internal turn shows that the resource of imagination can be used to encounter and help resolve the ‘tension of imbalance’. As Barnett (1997) perceptively notes, “higher education is a particular social institution, established by and called upon by society to perform certain functions; and the *balance of that relationship – between higher education and society – has, over the centuries*, produced different definitions of education and knowing which are to be put the way of students” (p.28, emphasis added). Similarly, the task to create an ‘idea’, with the focus upon balance, entails a vision for the university and a way for it to ‘be’ within the KS. As a way of framing what the university is and does, there are wide ranging implications for the institution, the remainder of the thesis shall identify these particular forms, features and implications of the university of imagination.

The second part of the chapter considered how precisely this ‘idea’ will tackle the tension of imbalance. To do so, the three features of KP were taken to show how in each case how dynamic balance could be constructed by focusing on the three primary aspects of the university

namely, pedagogy, its social position and research. The formation of such balance was attributed to the need to have humility (dialogical contingency), prudence (knowledge conglomerations) and temperance (liminal modality). Whilst these principles form a response to the tension of imbalance they also suggest in increasingly broader terms the shape and contours of the university of imagination. A summary of the analysis can be represented as follows:

Diagram 10. Summary of creating Dynamic Balance in the University of Imagination



Having in this chapter then answered the primary research questions of the thesis; namely, to identify the 'idea' of the university in the KS, questions remain as to how, for example, this 'idea' of the university may compare to the liberal 'idea' of the university, and what may its future entail. To answer these questions, we must explore the university of imagination further by thinking about it in terms which go beyond the particular features of creating dynamic balance and begin to see this 'idea' as a way of thinking about education more generally. This takes us to the final chapter for this thesis.

Chapter 5: Implications of the University of Imagination

Chapter Introduction: The Way Ahead for the University of Imagination

Whilst the primary aim of this thesis has been the identification of an ‘idea’ for the university within the KS, it can also be read as a general commentary on the significance of this very particular institution in the 21st Century. The university elicits not only educational values, it also harbours a space where individuals may realise their potential as human beings and help shape as well as transform the world (Denman, 2005). The relatively unique privilege that the university is afforded in this sense makes it of significant and continuing importance. As Scott (1998) argues, the institution today has served to become “the leading institution in the knowledge society ... [in which] the primary location ... [of] symbolic goods are, if not produced, at least conceived and designed” (p.127). Pondering over its future, and specifically in reference to the university of imagination, serves our interests in this final chapter in order to move towards a broader conception of the proposed ‘idea’ and its consequences. Whilst the previous chapter answered the primary research question of the thesis by resolving the tension of imbalance as it relates to the three primary functions of the university, this chapter considers the university of imagination as a sum of its parts. Defined by the principle characteristics of humility, prudence and temperance, when taken together what this ‘idea’ means in broader terms is the subject of this chapter.

To explore these ideas, this chapter engages with the ancillary research questions of the thesis which call upon developing the ‘idea’ as operating beyond the immediate concerns of resolving the tension of imbalance. This specifically relates to a comparison of the university of imagination with the prominent ‘liberal’ concept found in the literature, and secondly, to explore the broader consequences of the ‘idea’ in terms of its possible future/s. Whilst the significance of the university of imagination may be argued to be one born from an analysis of the complex and emergent context of the KS, questions over its future are both stimulating and prescient. The first part of the chapter shall consider the liberal ‘idea’ in reference to two prominent educational theorists associated with this concept (Humboldt and Newman, respectively), whilst the final contemplates the possible futures of the university of imagination in the KS using questions raised by the liberal ‘idea’ comparison.

PART I: THE UNIVERSITY OF IMAGINATION AND THE LIBERAL 'IDEA' COMPARED

The concept of liberal education and the liberal 'idea' of the university remains amongst the more significant concerns within educational philosophy (Rocha, 2014). Part of its prominence can be traced to the longevity of this ideas as well as the diversity over what constitutes 'liberal' education (Joseph, 2002). It is often conceived in terms which suggests, amongst other things, a conception of education, learning and knowledge which should be sought for its own sake. It is, moreover, a broad view of education such that learning enhances the intellectual, moral and even spiritual development of students. In so doing, an appreciation of human nature as being nurtured by the process of education is championed (Bauer, 2015). As Mulcahy (2009) summates, these features are rudimentary principles offering an:

...ideal of the educated person ... who possesses knowledge and understanding in depth and breadth. It is not just any knowledge and understanding, but knowledge and understanding as developed in relation to recognized forms of scientific or scholarly knowledge. It is through initiation into these forms of knowledge - disciplined, theoretical knowledge - that the mind is developed and enabled to reflect analytically and critically ... one accomplished not merely in such theoretical pursuits, but in action, including a wide range of practical pursuits, such as work in various forms, knowledge production, and service to others (p.481).

Such broad features ensure a wide nomenclature for liberal education and the liberal university to inhabit. Where does the university of imagination stand then in relation to this historically significant collection of ideas concerning the university? Before a comparison may be initiated, we ought to be wary of *what* and *whose* notion of the liberal 'idea' is being described as the basis of a comparison (Mulcahy, 2008). Due to its diversity, this 'idea' may better be differentiated to allow clearer access of distinction and parlance with the university of imagination. Whilst there is much diversity associated with the concept, there are at least two prominent ways in which it is used (Maskell and Robinson, 2012). These are related to the theoreticians to whom they are attributed and whose work has helped to frame the many ways the liberal ideal of the university has been discussed and debated, at least since the 19th Century (Humphreys, 2006). These theoreticians are Wilhelm von Humboldt (d.1835) and John Henry Newman (d.1890), respectively. The former represents the 'idea' of the university in terms of a philosophical

orientation towards knowledge and education, whilst Newman is associated with, amongst other things, theological and ‘religious’ interpretations¹⁰¹.

The demarcation of these respective authors into philosophical and theological orientations is not a perfect determination of the ‘idea’ as there is much disagreement as well as comity in their respective theories (Gray, 2012). In many cases within the literature they are both used as espousing a vision of the liberal university which continues to inform contemporary discourses (Roth, 2015; Maskell and Robinson, 2002). However, whilst the ‘philosophical’ and ‘religious’ interpretations of the liberal ‘idea’ are not entirely distinct categories, they reveal a separation in light of the purpose of education, methods of learning, and role of the university in society. Taken together, however, they form the basis for a potentially fecund discussion and comparison with the university of imagination. Whilst these two streams of the liberal university remain significant within the literature, broader nuances within this ‘idea’ should be accounted for before a comparison can begin.

Liberal ‘Idea’ and its Discontents

The formative place which the liberal tradition occupies in the academic literature is significant (Giroux, 2018). Assumed to have self-evident value, Roth (2015) expresses the character of the liberal university by drawing on the putative historical tradition tethering its values into a single and unbroken narrative. He argues, for example, that:

...the roots of the [liberal] concept extend back to the ancient world, [where] they grew into enduring institutions in the Middle Ages. In Western traditions going back to the Greeks, a "liberal" education was to be liberating, requiring freedom to study and aiming at freedom through understanding. The medieval emphasis on the seven liberal arts (grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy) pictured all of them within a framework set either by philosophy/theology or by rhetoric/oratory. Although today in education we tend to emphasize the legacies of the philosophic ideas of inquiry (think Socratic method), for centuries education had been conceptualized as the deepening appreciation of great cultural achievements (p.3-4).

¹⁰¹ In terms of Newman’s contribution, in particular, Rothblatt (1997) describes his works on liberal education as the “single most influential book on the meaning of a university in the English language” (p. 7).

Whilst conceived as bearing universalist ideals, such a narrative helps to elide the constructed nature of these ideas and the potential biases which they may harbour. For example, the review of key texts on the liberal ‘idea’ (Chapter 3) discloses that they are often represented by middle class, white, males of European decent (Louis et al., 2016). The exclusion, within these texts, of gender issues (Mullen, 2013), political and ethnic concerns as well as religious minorities (Khattab and Modood, 2018) and the treatment of class conflict and ideology (Smith, Mayer and Fritschler, 2008) etc. presents potential criticisms of the classical liberal ‘idea’. In not treating these issues, the texts chosen for the review, potentially fail to show divergent voices in the discussion of the liberal ideal of the university and thus to gain a fuller conception of what it means to be educated in such an institution¹⁰². In light of these considerations, philosophers of education such as Shilliam (2016) and Bhambra (2013), argue that the liberal ‘idea’ should not be seen as a monolithic concept but rather a popular ‘European’ enunciation and one which attempts to champion Enlightenment ideals of secular rationalism and humanism and are not necessarily valued by all peoples uniformly¹⁰³. Appreciating that there are differences to which the liberal ‘idea’, in light of these critiques, can be conceived is of paramount importance. This being not only in deconstructing the liberal university but also the potential concerns it raises for the university of imagination. This is due to the fact that if the university of imagination resembles the liberal ‘idea’ then it also intimates questions over the latters future and ability to represent diverse peoples and ideas and ultimately to be a force for social good¹⁰⁴.

In our present discussion, these critical voices are then necessary to create nuance and complexity concerning the concept of the liberal ‘idea’ not only for our current comparison but also in placing the liberal tradition within its broader intellectual context. The purpose of a liberal ‘idea’ comparison in this chapter stands to show its longstanding and dominant voice in educational discourses on the university. The methodological decision to use Humboldt and Newman comes from the frequency with which these authors are referenced in the literature

¹⁰² In this regard, for an early anthropological work on the problems confronting black students and their engagement with white ‘liberal’ university attitudes in the United States see Feagin and Hernan and Imani (1996).

¹⁰³ This concern has been partly taken up in the previous chapter concerning post-colonial thinkers and their critique of western education and social progress (See Chapter 4: Strategies for creating humility in Pedagogy).

¹⁰⁴ This point shall be discussed further in Part II of this chapter.

(Marginson, 2016; Mulcahy, 2009) and yet serves to show only one possibility of that tradition. Therefore, appreciating the complexities and critical narratives to be found in the liberal tradition, my concern here is to specifically use these popular enunciations for comparison with the university of imagination.

Humboldt's Philosophically Liberal 'Idea' of the University

The discussion on what is meant by *philosophical* in relation to the the liberal 'idea' of the university is an ongoing debate¹⁰⁵. The most popular interpretations of this conception of the university comes from the 19th Century educationalist and philosopher, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and it is his ideas which we shall review and compare with that of the university of imagination. The work of Humboldt is of particular use in this context as he is credited with envisioning the modern research university (Fallon, 1980; Barnett, 2013a). As Rector of the University of Berlin (1810), he helped to successfully lay the foundations for and intellectual discussions surrounding what the university should be in the modern world, running in distinction to its medieval forebear. His formative idea behind the university was "...to appoint the best intellectuals available, and to give them the freedom to carry on their research wherever it leads" (Fallon, 1980: 19). The consequences of this were threefold, namely increasing the importance of original scholarship, promoting the idea of academic freedom (*Lernfreiheit*), and ordering the sciences to place the liberal arts at the same level of medicine and theology. As a 'son' of the Enlightenment, Humboldt's views on the university, as a place for the free exploration of knowledge unencumbered by principally religious restrictions, remain still relevant in the 21st Century (Rüegg, 2004).

¹⁰⁵ For example, we can discern two formal aspects of the same concept which can be used for our present investigation (Roth, 2015; Roth, 2013). The first is to think about philosophy as an *approach* to the university or more precisely, an amalgamation of discourses showing certain pedagogic principles of rational inquiry to explore the full extent of human existence, nature and the cosmos. This is so that education is freed from non-rational and dogmatic ideas for the perusal of the good life (Delanty, 2001; Pring, 1976). In the second sense, it refers to the *study of philosophy*, as an academic discipline, standing as the 'queen of the sciences', actualising the possibilities of the liberal university (Marenbon, 2010). Both senses of the concept work together to inform a particular hue of the liberal arts university.

Working within a Kantian framework, and in particular Kant's *The Conflict of the Faculties* (1798), Humboldt saw the place of the university as being necessary for helping civil society to flourish and for citizens to reach their innate potential (*entelechy*)¹⁰⁶. Furthermore, expressing the higher ideals of philosophy to be sought in and for themselves also had social utility. Explicating this position, Kant argues that;

...a university must have a faculty of philosophy. Its function in relation to the three higher faculties [i.e. law, medicine and theology] is to control them ... since truth (the essential and first condition of learning in general) is the main thing, whereas the utility the higher faculties promise the government is of secondary importance (1992: 45).

For Humboldt, this translated into an 'idea' of the university which would allow, argues Marginson (2008), the university to be a "teaching/research institution in which each function informed the other: professors were free to teach and inquire as they wished, students were mature self motivated persons, and received authority was open to question" (p.16). An environment such as this would allow the university to join research and education for the joint purpose of open and free intellectual inquiry. This was seen as necessary as the university engaged with a *sui generis* eye on knowledge as it conceived of "science and scholarship as dealing with ultimately inexhaustible tasks: this means they are engaged in an unceasing process of inquiry" (Humboldt, 1970: 243). The commonality between research and teaching extended for Humboldt to debates over the role of governmental assistance. However, he is also aware of the disadvantages of governmental interference which may equally arise from a desire of control. He continues that the;

...state must always remain conscious of the fact that it never has and in principle never can, by its own action, bring about the fruitfulness of intellectual activity. It must indeed be aware that it can only have a prejudicial influence if it intervenes. The state must understand that intellectual work will go on infinitely better if it does not intrude (p. 244).

¹⁰⁶ In this conception of the university he sought "to free the universities from the domination of their "higher" faculties, medicine, law, and theology, with their bases in writings and law. In his view, the university needed to be reconstituted so as to free philosophy, with its basis in reason, from the *domination of theology, and the church*" (Milchman and Rosenberg, 1997: 87, emphasis added).

Taken together, the tenants of philosophical training, research, education and governmental distance, form the basic semblance for Humboldt's influential ideas. Though whilst not an exhaustive presentation, this brief sketch of his ideas serves as a means for comparison with the university of imagination.

Comparing the University of Imagination with the Philosophically Liberal 'Idea' of the University

Comparing the above philosophical orientation of the liberal 'idea' with the university of imagination suggests that there are important similarities which help define a comparison. Firstly, the project of Humboldt's university, as motivated by rational/philosophical inquiry which joins research and teaching, serves a similar purpose in the university of imagination. In accepting the many ways of knowing and investigating the world through the disciplinary mechanisms of research, this occurs though not at the expense of reasoned debate and inquiry. This point corresponds also to the principle of pedagogic 'humility' for the university of imagination which expresses the importance of protecting the pedagogic process from potential *hubris*, forging the importance of many ways of knowing the world. One way in which this may occur is through an appreciation of epistemic diversity, which may challenge one's own views of the world (liminal modalities). Other important areas of discussion between the two 'ideas' can be delineated by attitudes towards 'reaching one's potential'. Here there are comparable attitudes to the ends of education. Reaching one's potential through education is dependent on our innate capacities; for Humboldt this is via reason, and for the university of imagination, via imagination. Firstly, whilst reason and imagination are not the same, it is of little consequence here since the primary point of comity is that the university is a place which recognises that it can harness and nurture innate capacities and does so through its processes of teaching and research.

Moreover, a second point of comparison is the freedom from the intrusion of external bodies to manipulate and force the hand of the university. Within the Humboldtian schema of the university, this relates to the preponderance of the state (or church) to act as censors for the free exploration of ideas and theories within the university, which may counter and question their authority (Valls, 1999). For the university of imagination, this also applies, though within the context of the KS, the social value of knowledge and research creates the potential for

excessive forms of competition which would be detrimental to the institution and needs to be countered by a strategy of institutional self-restraint (prudence). This caution is used also to inform an attitude towards research more generally through a balance between the centripetal forces of external pressures on the university and its centrifugal pressures of institutional intra-competition. The balance, reached by ‘temperance’ (Chapter 4), suggests that the university, as a primary institution in the KS, has a moral responsibility not to allow interference to mar the ways it does research, teaches and ultimately creates knowledge.

Furthermore, considering the superintendent view of Humboldt’s ideas on reason, there are a number of important points of comparison between the two ‘ideas’. An evident example would be that reason could be seen as a function of the imagination in that the latter creates the means to conceptualise the former. As such, the two are related as tools for understanding and exploring the world. Responding to this philosophical version of the liberal ‘idea’ draws on the analysis of this thesis and the findings related to the ways in which the oscillations in KP lead to often negative consequences for the university. Appreciating therefore these pitfalls, the Kantian predisposition towards the university as a place of reason is not objectionable in itself. Rather, the university of imagination stresses caution in regard to the particular *forms* of reason which are not balanced by other ways of knowing the world. A pedagogy for rationality, as conceived by the values of the enlightenment, is problematic for the university of imagination as the latters starting point is a conception of the human as defined by her capacity for imagining (*homo imaginatus*)¹⁰⁷. Whilst rationality is essential for the investigation of the natural world, this particular philosophical mien of the liberal ‘idea’ advocates, arguably, the rational facilities to the potential detriment of others ways of knowing the world. The liminal modality of knowledge therefore stresses the balancing of knowledge through restraint, specifically in recognition of the influence it has in the KS. The university of imagination cannot be said to conform to this typos of the university, precisely because it is weary of the role reason can have without the tempering influences of the imagination (as a supra rational faculty) to restrain it.

Questions for the University of Imagination from Humboldt’s ‘Idea’

¹⁰⁷ The case of rationality and the caution required in developing university ideals therefrom, are issues to be raised later in the chapter.

In light of these substantive similarities and difference, there are questions which may more clearly define their respective approaches to the ‘idea’ of the university. This we may do by returning to the respective attitudes towards knowledge and epistemology. Firstly, what is meant by ‘rationality’ in Humboldt’s (after Kant) work presents a specific philosophical position about the ways in which the world can be known, and is heavily associated with enlightenment thought (Robertson, 2015). Kwiek (2006), clarifying this proclivity in enlightenment philosophy, argues that “...philosophical instruction ... [was] the basis of all that is to be carried on at the university. But transcendental philosophy is not enough: “real” knowledge [was] needed, and therefore both more advanced information and other information that was not included in the school curricula is provided at the university” (p.44). For the university of imagination, the importance of rationality is pivotal, as it is contextualised by assumptions related to knowledge. This attitude towards rationality should be considered as outlining one side of a concept along with the many possibilities it may take.

However, a culture of rationality, and knowledge more specifically, has the ability to take on a variety of forms and partake of particular significance within the university (as shown in Chapter 3, liminality modalities). Exploring these ideas, Horkheimer and Adorno (2002), writing in the first half of the 20th Century, argue that culture and its associations with knowledge is imperative for an assessment of how it affects a particular society. They argue that it was precisely the championing of secular rational ideals of the enlightenment that paradoxically led to illiberal values about knowledge and education in the 20th Century. Summarising their now acclaimed response, they argue that the;

Enlightenment, understood in the widest sense as the advance of thought, has always aimed at liberating human beings from fear and installing them as masters. Yet the wholly enlightened earth is radiant with *triumphant calamity*. Enlightenment’s program was the disenchantment of the world. It wanted to dispel myths, to overthrow fantasy with knowledge What human beings seek to learn from nature is how to use it to dominate wholly both it and human beings. Nothing else counts. *Ruthless toward itself, the Enlightenment has eradicated the last remnant of its own self-awareness.* Only thought which does violence to itself is hard enough to shatter myths (p.1-2, emphasis added).

For Horkheimer and Adorno the Enlightenment was able to invert its initial humanist ideals by creating a culture where knowledge became a product to be bought and sold in the communal market of ideas. Translating these repercussions for the university in the 21st Century helps to

clear a path for the problem of knowledge, which we defined in Chapter 1, as the reduction of knowledge to means-end and economic goals. Whilst such outcomes were not foreseen by Humboldt, and he cannot therefore be accused of ownership for its consequences, Horkheimer and Adorno's arguments do represent a comity with his liberal 'idea', especially in regards to knowledge. Through the concept of KP, however, and specifically its liminal modality, knowledge is appreciated as having the possibility to be constricted to specific methods of knowing, helping to truncate the perspective of the viewer and world view of institutions more generally. Appreciating that discussions about knowledge are entangled with social economic, culture, and historical factors, the university of imagination, in promoting and striving for balance, implicitly recognises that such occurrences may take place and that a better form of protection is to take precaution amongst them¹⁰⁸.

The argument for the negative consequences of the capitalisation of knowledge in the university can also be considered alongside the balance of the ontological feature of knowledge in the KS (dialogical contingency) and its adaptation towards a pedagogy for the university of imagination. Directed by an epistemic openness in terms of ways of seeing the world and the 'other', the need for *humility* to be engendered by pedagogy stresses the necessity to refrain from restriction in the ways we think about the world. In the case of Humboldt, this is accounted for by the enlightenment's notions of reason and philosophy. However, an important question for the 'idea' is: could not recourse to imagination, which the university of imagination advocates, also lead to a kind of fundamentalism which Humboldt is accused of? Such a charge of mutual reductionism between the 'ideas' may not exist if we consider *what* reason and imagination are attempting to achieve. The example of Humboldt's values associated with the philosophically orientated liberal 'idea' offer an important question for the university of imagination. As Humboldt's views on reason are founded upon enlightenment values which have since become

¹⁰⁸ In the Humboldtian view of knowledge, there is also a potential caveat for rethinking 'private' reason (a division taken from Kant whose counterpart being 'public' reason), as there is a need to understand how the world is connected through the various means by which it can be investigated and the emphasis on one aspect of knowledge is detrimental to the university and ideals of education to which it seeks to strive (Sorkin, 1983). In this case, philosophy allows for the possibility for the connectivity of knowledge as it is a 'master science'. Yet this still does not entirely diverge its interests from a larger Enlightenment (predominately) secular project which Humboldt strongly advocated.

highly contested¹⁰⁹, could the same occur for the ‘idea’ of the university in the KS? This raises an important question for the future of the ‘idea’ as to whether there are limits to imagination in the university of imagination, and if so, could they possibly act to invert its ideals for the university. As an institutional question, it deserves to be addressed when contemplating the many possible futures of the university of imagination. This question forms part of the focus of the latter part of the chapter.

Newman’s Religiously Inspired Liberal ‘Idea’ of the University

Newman’s interpretation of the ‘idea’ has broadly been taken as a summation of the classical liberal ideal of education, our focus here is the direction this vision takes towards spiritual and anagogic ends. Barnett (2010) defines Newman’s ‘idea’ as sustained by the medieval university system in western Europe; a “metaphysical university” which finds “...its bearings from assumed connections between knowing and an ascent into a world of pure being. Its forms of knowing offered personal salvation” (p.6). Mulcahy (2009) continues by describing the essence of Newman’s account which he argues can be found in the theorists “...view of the nature and structure of knowledge and the capacity of the mind for intellectual development. Consistent with the Aristotelian metaphysics he embraces, in accordance with which knowledge is considered to be a true account of reality [and that] ... knowledge is truth or a true account of reality” (p.4). This connection to Aristotle presumes a link to philosophy and potentially to Humboldt’s ideas,¹¹⁰ however in our present comparison we shall focus on John Henry Newman and his orientation towards the religious ends of learning and the university. Whilst this latter aspect of his work is often overlooked in favour of his thoughts on liberal education more generally, Newman remains as an important voice in the discussion of the parlance between liberal education and religious thought (Ker, 1990)¹¹¹.

¹⁰⁹ The normative view of the enlightenment as a period for the championing of reason which was socially received without question has more recently been challenged by intellectual historians. For a penetrating account of the ‘counter-enlightenment’ and especially the role of the 18th Century philosopher, Johann Georg Hamann, in that process see, Berlin (2003).

¹¹⁰ It is not irrelevant to this conception of knowledge that religiously orientated educationalists and theologians have capitalised upon Newman’s ideas as a basis for constructing their own views on educational philosophy. In particular see MacIntyre (2011) for a summary of his legacy.

Newman and the ‘Theology’ of the University

Newman’s ideas for the liberal university derive from the University College Dublin for which he gave his now famous lectures, *The Idea of a University* (1854/1992). A starting point for a discussion is his reliance on an epistemic basis for the university which sees as a “seat of universal learning”, this being due to its foundations laid within a Christian-centred cosmology of the world. In other words, *how* the university is even possible is by navigating its sacred origins of knowledge, Newman continues:

All branches of knowledge are connected together, because the subject-matter of knowledge is intimately united in itself, as being the acts and the work of the Creator. Hence it is the Sciences, into which our knowledge may be said to be cast, have multiplied bearings one on another, and an internal sympathy, and admit, or rather demands, comparisons and adjustment. They complete, correct, balance each other (p.92).

Referencing a “Creator” forges a particular tenor of epistemology for this view of education in that it sees the importance of the university as a means for exploring meaning in the world, given by a divine-being. In so doing, Newman argues that in such a liberal university, students shall profit from personal development emerging from ethics, moral and spiritual awareness (Newman, 1961). For a definition of how a liberal university may do so, he maintains that the institution should become;

An assembly of learned men, zealous of their own sciences, and rivals of each other [... being brought together] by familiar intercourse and for the sake of intellectual peace, to adjust together the claims and relations respective subjects of investigation they learn to respect, to consult, to advise each other. Thus is created a pure and clear atmosphere of thought, which the student also breathes, though in his own case he only pursues a few sciences out of the multitude. He profits by an intellectual tradition, which is independent of particular teachers, which guides him in his choices of subjects, and duly interprets for him those which he chooses ... Hence it is that his education is called “Liberal” (cited in Shea and Whitla, 2003: 235).

For Newman, this “intellectual tradition” is formed around the primacy of forging a ‘queen science’ which offers meaning and purpose not only to the other disciplines but also to the

institution as a whole. Principally, this is the role of theology, which serves as a font from which meaning to the institution is dispensed (Mulcahy, 2009). Just as god is the creator of knowledge and the alpha and omega of existence, so too theology stands to anchor institutional life of the university. Newman describes its functions in creating what he terms the ‘philosophical habit’, which is a;

...habit of mind ... which lasts through life, or which the attributes are, freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom or what ... I have ventured to call a philosophical habit. This then I would assign as the special fruit of the education furnished at a University ... This is the main purpose of a University in its treatment of its students (cited in Shea and Whitla, 2003: 235).

The unity of Newman’s ideas about the university, education and pedagogy, are all framed by a larger discourse which inheres in the place and the order of creation to its correct and proper, divinely ordained, place. Just as god created the world in sublime order, Newman would argue that so too the university and education must reflect this in helping students to find the very best in themselves. His reliance on theology, as ‘queen of sciences’, may find a less welcome place in the 21st Century research university, or that man’s inherent (god given) genius is to be found and celebrated in all walks of life. However, this version of the liberal ‘idea’ of the university has continued to be referenced as a source from which the present day institution may benefit, often excluding its ostensible religious overtones not least within the confines of the modern university (Maskell and Robinson, 2012).

Comparing the University of Imagination with Newman’s ‘Idea’ of the University

It may initially seem difficult to endeavour a comparison with Newman’s ‘idea’ of the liberal university, as the university of imagination has no specific religious orientation. How theology might be given the place it holds in Newman’s university is problematic. Apart from its religious overtures, there are more fruitful beginnings for comparison based on the ethical basis of Newman’s ideas of education. Firstly, having claimed that the “philosophical habit” creates a basis for the liberal university, it reveals a possible parlance with the principles which define the university of imagination. These principles (balance, humility, prudence and temperance), identified in the previous chapter, are a foundation upon which the ‘idea’ is laid to serve the

university. These principles stretch across the entire university with a particular focus on pedagogy, research, and the social position of the institution. For Newman, his principles of freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom (Mulcahy, 2009), relate to the functions of education though they can be applied in other forms to the institution as well. In both cases, there are similarities as they point towards universal ethics to provide an experience and orientation for education which is sought for its own ends (Ostovich, 1995). This comity of values for the pedagogic process shows an attitude to learning which can be shared potentially by both ‘ideas’.

A point of divergence is potentially the broad direction of Newman’s vision which steers to create a god-centric institution (the university of imagination not being ‘religious’ in the sense of advocating or promoting religion). However, even here, this does not mean that it could not accommodate for such ideas. Presumed to exist within a secular modern higher education space (e.g. Europe and North America), the place of religion in the modern university is much debated in contemporary HE both within and outside of the academy (Jacobsen and Jacobsen, 2008). On either end of the spectrum, there is discontent with the place of both positions in the university (Roberts and Turner, 2000) with arguments suggesting, for example, that religion would only be a source for minimising the potential of research and therefore would be incompatible with the project of knowledge in the KS. Such arguments are countered by those who see the situation in a different light. Educationalists, such as Sommerville (2006), maintain, that as the ‘secular university’ becomes more institutionally competitive, it is also less original, and subverts its own (educational) goals. Higton (2012) presents a more nuanced discourse to such anti-secular ideas, arguing that there may not be such a demarcation as inferred by Sommerville, and that both the Newmanian vision, and secular ideas of knowledge, can and should reside together. Referencing Newman, Higton continues that the modern 21st Century university must be a “negotiable” institution in which “the university [...] is] a negotiation between voices ... In the first place, the university ... is a context of its own, and, however much of it comes to reflect the ideas present in the culture around it, it also has its own density and momentum: it is not simply the repetition of the traditions from which its practitioners come” (p.245). In the context of the university of imagination, we can argue that it may play the role of negotiation in that it is an ‘agnostic university’ in terms of its position on religion. In other words, the university of imagination is agnostic in terms of allowing for a place for god-centric views and even extend to spiritual or

metaphysical conceptions of the world which are not routed in traditional religious ideas or beliefs (Bhaskar, 2016b).

Questions for the University of Imagination from Newman's 'Idea'

Particularly with reference to the university of imagination, the consequences of tipping the balance towards a theological vista would be a welcome turn from a Newmanian perspective. It may find a home for the principles identified with the university of imagination which could also be viewed as embodying Christian virtues (Newman, 1961) and forming the basis for learning, teaching and institutional life. However, this does not obviate the potential to raise questions concerning the role, if any, which religion may have within the institution. How, for example, would the university of imagination interpret Newman's vision for the liberal arts university, and could it hypothetically absorb this vision (the difficulty being exacerbated by the fact that theology is a formal discipline whilst imagination is a concept which manifest itself in disciplines). Similarly, if it could do so, what would the consequences of this be? Does the university of imagination, for example, cease to be imaginative once religion (or supra-rationality) is given precedence, or may it create its own sense of imbalance? Such questions are important, not least because they widen the perspective of the university of imagination beyond its presumed secular environment, and challenges how it may accommodate peoples of varying ideas and beliefs. More important than the particular question of religion is the predominant inquiry which arises from such questions, namely, what kind of variances may the university of imagination be subject to without detrimentally affecting its function to be imaginative and create dynamic balance. If it is a truly humanist institution, the university in the KS should be able to have a way to accommodate such variety. Such questions relate to the future of the university and are explored later in the chapter.

The Liberal 'Idea' in the University of Imagination (and vice versa)

The liberal 'idea' of the university constitutes one the most significant intellectually fecund debates on the institution. It has become, implicitly or otherwise, associated with the highest

values that the institution should strive for and be modelled after. In our discussion we see that there is much in common between the university of imagination and the liberal ‘idea’ of the university. However, the extent to which they are compatible with one another is best answered by returning to the definition of the university of imagination. It is defined as being ‘born from’ and responding to contextual challenges such as those presented in this thesis, and chief amongst such challenges is the tension of imbalance. The ‘idea’ therefore promotes imagination as a resource to be institutionally marshalled so as to permeate the university in order to achieve its goal of creating ‘dynamic balance’. In this definition, we see that the prerogative of the ‘idea’ is to create balance, due to the tension of imbalance occurring in the KS context. Having speculated how this may be resolved in the previous chapter, the university of imagination is ever defined by the social context of the KS i.e. problem of knowledge, KP and the tension of imbalance. Therefore, whilst the potential number of ways in which we may compare the two ‘ideas’ is exhaustive, as they both have similar interests and ends for the process of education, a possibly more fruitful point of comparison between them may come through a discussion of *imagination* and *balance*, respectively. These two concepts may serve to highlight the potential similarities and differences between the respective ‘ideas’.

Firstly, in regards to imagination, for the university of imagination, the conception of man as *homo imaginatus*, informs the purpose of teaching as being to inspire imagination and the ends of education i.e. marshalling it towards the good life. Such a view is potentially open to being tempered by both the philosophical and religious versions of the liberal ‘idea’. In the case of the liberal ‘idea’, imagination is not explicitly made a source of the university’s institutional mission (as whilst theology and philosophy are formal disciplines, imagination is a concept) yet this does not mean that imagination is excluded from such discourses on the liberal ‘idea’. Freedman (2000) argues for the increasing importance and focus upon imagination as a key source for liberal education in today’s universities. We may then tentatively conclude that imagination, whilst not a primary characteristic of the liberal ‘idea’, is nonetheless to be found, in a subtle sense, concerned with the ultimate objectives of the university.

Similarly, the subtlety with which a conception of balance forms part of the liberal ‘idea’, and which potentially draws the two ‘ideas’ into conversation, is equally important. In terms of its features, the liberal ‘idea’ is broadly conceived as a view of education such that learning enhances the intellectual, moral and even spiritual development of students, and finally in so

doing, there is an appreciation of human nature being nurtured and balanced in its propensities (Roth, 2015). The university of imagination, in creating balance through humility, prudence and temperance, explicitly shares these ideals, and as such it could be argued that balance stands as a unifying principle between the ‘ideas’. This could be the case if we expand our understanding of balance to include the various goals to which the respective ‘ideas’ are committed. For example, in the case of the university of imagination, this relates to the aforementioned principles, and in the liberal ‘idea’, balance is also considered an important part of the university’s mission. Randall and Good (2004) argue, with specific reference to the pedagogic process, that liberal education concerns the nurturing of students to be ‘balanced individuals’. Whether balance is a meta concept of liberal education is debatable (Zakaria, 2016), though it does reveal a possible broad goal to which both ‘ideas’ ostensibly strive, albeit in different ways.

Moreover, though there may be a number of reasons for such parallels between the ‘ideas’, it nonetheless raises the question of whether there are possible superintending reasons for such a comity. Whilst these similarities bring them into close association, they may also be better understood as intimating sets of ‘family resemblances’¹¹². This suggests that whilst there are similarities they are also not identical and thus exhibit differences. Where these resemblances have been identified, and that they relate to one another to some extent, it does not mean that the liberal ‘idea’ could be substituted for the university of imagination. In other words, they are not similar to the extent that they could be interchangeable, as both have distinct features and characteristics which limit such a possibility.

A Family of Resemblances between the two ‘Ideas’

Exploring reasons why such resemblances exist is an inquiry which can be understood partly in contemplating the history of the ‘liberal’ idea. Having a long and diverse past, it is the amalgamation of ideals whose adaptation and reformulating over time have procured a status by which other philosophies of education and ‘ideas’ of university are measured (Rüegg, 2004).

¹¹² This is a term taken from the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (d.1951). The original German term, *Familienähnlichkeit*, was used in his *Philosophical Investigations* (1953/2009) to exemplify individual similarities which can be expanded to encompass a class of categories spread over a larger subset of cases.

Recognising the generalisable nature of its humanist ideals has made it subsequently difficult to ignore the liberal ‘idea’ when discussing the university. Therefore, if we may postulate that the liberal ‘idea’ is a kind of ‘master concept’ of the university (Marginson, 2016), then the university of imagination is related to it in the sense of being the same *kind* of ‘idea’, though also differing in *degree*. In other words, what unifies them are humanist ideals, such as seeking knowledge for its own sake. Yet their respective differences are derived from the university of imagination being a specific directive towards resolving the tension of imbalance in the KS.

Due to these family resemblances, it is possible to assume that the university of imagination is a version of the liberal ‘idea’ in the KS. This means that the university of imagination is both a continuation of the historical legacy of the liberal ideal of education as well as also contextually refined to contend with the demands of the 21st Century. However, it is not to be interpreted that the liberal ‘idea’ becomes irrelevant or redundant in the KS; far from it, it is simply that there are ways we can conceive its continuing adaption within the circumstances of the emerging KS. Due to its contextual sensitivity to the KS and resemblance to the liberal ‘idea’, we may even postulate that the university of imagination is a means by which the liberal ‘idea’ may flourish in the KS. In other words, the university of imagination is a means through which the liberal ‘idea’ may better be expressed in the emerging KS. Whilst this is one reading of the possible future of the liberal ‘idea’, it is one which retains its identity through the vista of the university of imagination, by drawing the two into closer union.

Speculations on the future of the university of imagination arguably open new areas of inquiry, and cause our discussions to expand, as shown above, beyond its initial remit, to encompass a wider preview of consequences. To further investigate its possibilities and consequences the final part the chapter shall discuss the second ancillary research question; namely the future consequences of the ‘idea’. In so doing, we shall inquire into the limits and opportunities of the university of imagination in the KS, by way of comparison with the liberal ‘idea’.

PART II: THE FUTURE OF THE ‘IDEA’

Imagination, a concept which has been treated in the present discussion, is not an unchanging and immutable thing, but rather as an evolving concept to be applied in varying circumstances. Castoriadis (1997a, 1997b), a prominent 20th Century theorist on social imagination, defines the concept as having a collective as well as individual capacity, shaped by historical and individual consciousness. Imagination in this sense is “radical” as it is prone to be reformed and reshaped by the temporal conditions of life as well as being subject to superordinate categories of time and space (Adam, 2014). Specifically, underscoring the production of ideas, creativity and innovation places new kinds of pressure on being *imaginative* in the KS which in turn holds high social premiums as a resource for the university as well as the economy, IT industries, government etc. (Thomas and Brown, 2011)¹¹³. I conclude that the KS therefore, whether it is conceived as a knowledge economy, a networked society or an innovative society, the social value placed on knowledge as a resource to be competed over places new pressures on ‘being imaginative’ (as was discussed in relation to ‘temperance’ in research in the previous chapter) (Amabile, Hadley and Kramer, 2002). This view of the university pens potential questions over whether we can speak about the ‘extent’ to which imagination can exist within an institution and its possible limitations.

Just as the university of imagination is tasked with creating dynamic balance, we can also speak about imagination as being a contested and changeable entity in that institutions future. The future, however, is a problematic terrain for social scientists (Rees, 2004). Sociologists, such as Beck (2017), maintain that it is precisely because of the “fixed stars” of certainty becoming

¹¹³ In lieu of this observation Smith, (1998) perceptively makes the argument, referencing the Creative Economies of the 21st Century, that the ability to be imaginative takes on new significance precisely due to a reliance upon “creativity and imaginative intellectual property, [such that it is] ... the most rapidly growing and important part of our national economy. They are where the jobs and the wealth of the future are going to be generated” (quoted in Flew, 2011: 10). For the production of knowledge, this suggests that its utilisation within the KS requires imagination in the conception as well as the creative use of knowledge. Howkins (2013) argues, commenting upon the rise of the KS and the role of imagination in global industries that “creativity is present at all levels of business from the management of a company to the development, branding and shape of each product. Few businesses today are the same as they were ten and even five years ago; fewer still will be the same in the next five years. Increasing competition ... and the arrival of the Internet require all companies to be *imaginative* in the way they do business” (p. 11, emphasis added).

dissolved in the 20th and 21st Century that the future becomes a dangerous concept. Bearing this in mind, speculating upon the future of the university is a long established preoccupation of educational theorists. Ferruolo (1988) shows in his study of pre-modern university culture in Europe that contemplating the future of the institution can be traced back to its medieval foundations¹¹⁴. Our present discussion runs in congruity with this tradition in terms of appreciating the difficulty of the endeavour whilst understanding that the future of the ‘idea’ is a necessary discussion for the university of imagination. Considering the questions raised in the above liberal university comparison, the following shall consider possible consequences of the ‘idea’ by exploring negative (crisis) as well as positive (redemptive) scenarios for its future. The final part of the chapter intends to raise questions for the university of imagination which may stimulate and occasion further research in the area.

Crisis I: Selling the ‘Idea’ of the University of Imagination

The competition over imagination as a prized resource in the KS (Reich, 2017) suggests the influences to which the university of imagination is prone (as was discussed in the case of ‘temperance’ in the Chapter 4). Referencing the creative economies within the KS, Comunian and Gilmore (2016) similarly realise such pressures when they argue:

Historically, universities have long been key cultural players in cities and communities ... Alongside this cultural role, there is a much richer knowledge impact, as ‘Creative Knowledge’ is generated within and on the boundaries between academia and the creative economy ... The concept of knowledge ... has become increasingly important [in the subsequent creative economies] (p.8).

As imagination and its exploitation in the global economy helps its potential commodification, the potential ‘crisis’ which the university of imagination may suffer is not ostensibly distinct from the general ‘crisis of the university’ literature discussed in Chapter 1. The latter makes the claim that the university is in, in one way or another, confronted with existential threats which call into question its future. This form of critique may come from the university’s educational

¹¹⁴ Of particular interest here is Ferruolo’s (1988) seminal work on the 13th Century poet and satirist Walter of Chatillon, especially the poet’s speculation upon the *artes liberales*. See in particular his poem, *Tanto viro locuturi*.

‘decline’ (Sanderson, 1999); reasons for which include being deprived of its ‘spirit’ (Bloom, 1987), having ‘sold out’ (Readings, 1997), losing its liberal ideals (Roth, 2015), becoming a mega-institution (Smelser, 2013), conforming to exogenous pressure, or not engaging with its social context enough (Collini, 2017) etc. Questioning the future of the university of imagination also serves to potentially align with this category of literature, as speaking about the limitations of imagination in the university also serves to infer a critique of the institution through the potential loss of its animating principle namely, imagination. Therefore, when speculating upon the future of the university of imagination, a potential ‘crisis’ may spring from two founts. The first font is the exploitation by exogenic pressures for the use-value of imagination in ways described in Chapter 1 and the identification of the problem of knowledge. The second font is potentially that which relates to the concept of imagination itself. If, as Castoriadis (1987) argues, imagination is a dynamic and “radical” concept such that we can speak of its oscillations, how imagination may be limited or be in decline is a matter of increasing theoretical importance.

As discussed in Chapter 4, social theorists have more recently began to analyse the future of the university in terms of the role of imagination (Murphy, 2016; Barnett, 2013a). This they have done by taking aim at the problems facing HE institutions as a means to discuss deeper concerns over the role that imagination plays within the conception and production of knowledge. Murphy (2015), a prominent contemporary theorists of institutional imagination, takes the position that the university has failed to deliver on its promises of being imaginative and innovative in the KS, due to a number of systemic factors. He summarises his position by arguing:

The promise of post-industrialism was innovation. The primary cause of modern economic growth, the theory went, was innovation. Innovation is the social application of the of creation. Modern societies that lack the capacity for creation struggle socially and flounder economically. The theory was not wrong. The extended economic stagnation in many OECD countries that follow 2008 was a symptom of depressed innovation. But this despondent state pointed to a deeper problem: namely that the post-industrial ‘knowledge society’ ... *had stopped innovating on a large scale* – or rather it has never lived up to its self-image as an innovating epoch ... The university was the symbolic core of the post-modern age. It embodied its desires. It presented its aspirations. It was emblematic of the knowledge and infliction that, supposedly, elicited the technological and sociological innovations that energised economies and enlarged social prosperity ... Yet *in reality growth, prosperity and ideas proved to be much scarcer than in the industrial age* (p.1, emphasis added).

If we are to take the arguments of theorists such as Murphy as an indication of the state of imagination in the university, where does this potentially lead the ‘idea’ of the university of imagination? If, as argued above, imagination is malleable to social influences for definitive ends, imagination can also be said to be subject to change depending on the purposes for which it is put to use. Such ideas have been explored extensively by sociologists, such as Ritzer (2013), who trace symptomatic features of modern globalised society and how they change the ways we ‘imagine’ those societies. Arguing that the KS has become dominated by one particular form of thinking, that of formal rationality¹¹⁵, it has resulted in what he calls the ‘McDonaldization’ of society. This, he defines, as a process typifying the tenets of the fast food industry namely, efficiency, calculability, predictability and technological control and which have come to dominate evermore aspects of our daily lives from leisure to health care to higher education. Following Ritzer, Bryan (2004) argues further that the subsequent problems for imagination and being creative are more pronounced. Consolidating these arguments under the term ‘Disneyization’ of society, he explicates that the 21st Century is increasingly governed by processes which mirror the entertainment industry. Amongst the most prominent of these concerns relate to ‘consumption’ and ‘competition’ in the global space of universities. This has led, Bryan would argue, a decline in educational standards, shrinkage in quality pedagogy as well the rising importance of ‘student experience’ on campus etc. This can also be read through the rise and necessity of promotional literature, university advertising and increasing services on campus, as all key to international ranking of universities and their standards for ‘good’ universities (Taylor and Braddock, 2007)¹¹⁶.

The importance of these theorists, whilst not being alone in their critique of the university’s supposed acquiescence to exogenic pressures (Schrecker, 2010), have particular relevance to our present discussion in the form of the future of imagination in the university. If

¹¹⁵ This form of rationality (after Weber) is defined by the dominance of ruled and regulatory-based (means-end) rationality. This defining feature of industrial society, according to Ritzer, ensures there are increasingly limited choices for individuals to discover the ends of their decisions from themselves. Where previously, family structures and religious ethics would have provided guidance for such choices, ‘formal rationality’ is the means by which individuals are organised in 21st Century who increasingly have less autonomy to act in authentic (read imaginative) ways.

¹¹⁶ In this vein, the forms of entertainment which universities are tasked to provide can be summed up by Clark Kerr, former President of the University of California, who once remarked that "the chancellor's job had come to be defined as providing parking for the faculty, sex for the students, and athletics for the alumni".

such factors as mentioned by Murphy, Ritzer and others can affect the university's institutional functions, could it not also be said to affect ways of imagining the world in general and the imagination in particular. As was discussed in Chapter 4 in relation to the under 'pollination of the university' in light of its social relations with the KS, the potential for the university to be attracted by and driven towards such externalities, and negatively affecting conceptions of knowledge, is probable. However, instead of the McDonaldization of the university, which is premised on neo liberal arguments for an internal reordering of the institution based on monetarist ideas, the exploitation of imagination may lead to a kind of 'Disneyization' where the university is compromised by the monetary incentives of the KS affecting its imagination. For the university of imagination, this may be a scenario in which neo liberal economic principles come to affect the imagination of academic and intellectual discourses such that ideas of knowledge and education are reasons for other than their own sake. Forging a university which becomes less critically rigorous and more open to such non-academic influences creates an arena for 'academic entertainment' mirroring the influence of Disney in how ideas, knowledge, and imagination are shaped (Bryan, 2004). This Disneyization (unlike McDonaldization) of the university is a critique, and potential future scenario which focusses on how the institution changes according to its imagination i.e. conceiving and producing knowledge. Academic entertainment may take many forms and suggests a general betrayal of the university's resources, and offers an attitude (though not exclusively) towards: a) using resources for non-educational, and most often, pecuniary ends and b) employing imagination towards a kind of academic relativism. More fundamentally, as a primary institution in the KS, there are repercussions for the imagination of the university; in other words, how is knowledge conceived, produced and disseminated.

Academic Entertainment, the Disney Corporation and the University of Imagination

The Disney corporation is an organisation which prides itself on the use of imagination for the purpose of entertainment (Wills, 2017). Whilst it may have other aims and ideals for business,

its cultural products remain important corporate objectives¹¹⁷. A corollary with the university of imagination may be drawn if imagination is utilised for non-educational, and principally financial, objectives thus risking its integrity. These problems are not new to the university, as the review in Chapter 1 disclosed in a discussion of exogenic pressures, regarding acquiescing to the demands and externalities facing the institution. However, in the case of the university of imagination where the institutional operations are focussed around the allusive nature of imagination, the Disney example is perhaps more apt. In dislodging from liberal ideals, the university engages in a kind of academic entertainment, just as Disney employs the use of imagination for entertainment and financial gains. Whilst these are not new exploitations of the university, and much has been documented in the literature, such problems may be rethought in reference to a broader concept of imagination within the university. For example, the university's striving towards an 'idea' through non-educational externalities may open new, and potentially detrimental, consequences for the institution at the same time. As the university is not immune to such affects, as is the case for other institutions of the KS, there are certain considerations for the university as being committed to imagination. For example, we may use Bryan (2004) to help speak about imagination in a particular, albeit transmogrified way, as it poses the question of whether the Disneyfing of the university of imagination is possible¹¹⁸.

Using imagination as a tool to exploit its potential for monetary and non-educational gains does not necessarily lead to the university mirroring the Disney corporation. It is rather a potential consequence which typifies a certain kind of imagination, for example, altering research, how education occurs and what the purpose of the university becomes. In other words, it is the altering of the institutional imagination of the university which could lead imagination itself, paradoxically, to be an instrument for imbalance. The work of Ferguson (2014) may help to illustrate this point when dealing with the Financial Crash of 2008, and the role of key academic

¹¹⁷ This of course does not to disclude the financial imperative and profit maximisation which the corporation posts and is evidenced through its annual financial reports. The purpose of using Disney as an example is to focus on its corporate (read financial) use of imagination.

¹¹⁸ Arguments for changes in the imagination as a result of external pressures/influences is a possible way to construct an account for the university's future. In particular, Bryan's argument for the Disneyization of the university can be expanded here to include critiques such that therapeutic approaches to university education i.e. reflective of move towards 'customer-led' educational consumerist practises becoming popular (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2008).

and university assistance as catalysts for the global credit decline. He expresses the situation in the following way:

The sale of academic “expertise” for the purpose of influencing government policy, the courts, and public opinion is now a multibillion-dollar business. Academic, legal, regulatory, and policy consulting in economics, financial, and regulation is dominated by a half dozen consulting firms, several speakers’ bureaus, and various industry lobbying groups that maintain large networks of academics for hire specifically for the purpose of advocating industry interests in policy and regulatory debates ... They do not exist to help companies make better products or lower their costs or forecast demands. The principal focus is on helping companies avoid or influence legislation, public debates regulation, prevention, class-action lawsuits anti-trusts judgements, and taxes. (p.243).

This particular scenario shows that the KS’s proclivities towards using imagination for creative problem solving could lead, in a wider sense, to its exploitation and delimitation (as was discussed using the crosspollination analogy of the university’s relations with the KS, Chapter 4). Such are the possibilities which render the university at a disadvantage in terms not dissimilar to the circumstances which led to the problem of knowledge (Chapter 1). However, in the case of Disneyification, exogenic pressures are viewed in light of their affects on the imagination and how the university may operate as a result.

Despite the fact that the university has obvious non-monetary responsibilities towards its educational duties to teach and create knowledge, it is not immune to the ways in which monetary influences affect the ways the university functions (equally, nor are all monetary influences negative). For example, the idea that education may become a self-reverential form of entertainment has been argued by educationalists Ecclestone and Hayes (2008) through “therapeutic education”. This, they argue, is a social-psychological turn in modern society which helps to create coping mechanisms for individuals through self-assurance and positivity to help them live in modern, isolated and fragmented societies (Reiff, 2006). Arum and Roksa (2011) refer to this as being “academically adrift” a situation in which standards of university education fall and become substandard as a result. This has led to the modern university being affected by ways in which education is presented as a therapeutic experience making sure students “feel good about themselves” (p.ix). This form of academic entertainment specifically concerns intellectual culture amongst students, and problems for society it may ensue. There are a number of reasons for such changes, which are a mixture of exogenic and internal pressures that modern universities

are placed (as well as place themselves) under. They include the pressure of professors to publish, increasing student competition for jobs, administrative burdens which limit student prospects, or recognising the weight placed on grades by employers.

The term ‘academic entertainment’ represents limits on the university of imagination, and yet is by no means the only one. As mentioned above, these debates are extant in the literature and are therefore not unique for the university of imagination to confront. However, they do provide a way to potentially think about them in terms of imagination, understood as a way of conceiving and acting in the world, which may alter when confronted by such pressures. It furthermore draws on the wider potential of our discussion on the university and its future. Would the university of imagination, as an ‘idea’ to create balance in the institution, have the potential for leading to imbalance? This is a question which also has importance for the future of the ‘idea’. If a paradox of this kind is possible, could it help undo the task of the university which attempts to create a dynamic balance in the KS context? Understanding how such circumstances may be possible potentially opens avenues for a broader discussion about the ‘idea’ of the university in the KS. Specifically, this would entail a discussion of how ideas and concepts change over time. Such considerations are of paramount use for the university of imagination, since being aware of them may help to inform institutional strategies and possibly avoid such scenarios. The importance of these potential paradoxes of the ‘idea’ shall then be our present focus.

Crisis II: The Fecundity of Imagination and its Future

A key consideration for choosing the concept of imagination over creativity to stand for the principle ‘idea’ of the university is time. If creativity is preceded by imagination, it was argued, it may have a longer period of time to resolve the tension of imbalance in the KS. Whilst this was one of the reasons for its selection, the ‘idea’ is not a utopian solution, as it recognises that concepts are open to change and revaluation. Similarly, as the context of the university changes, so will the ‘idea’ in order to better cater for the challenges it is presented with. Therefore, whilst the goals of the university of imagination are to resolve the tension of imbalance, it raises questions over whether imagination may potentially become its own form of imbalance. This paradoxical situation, though not an inconceivable future occurrence for the ‘idea’ i.e. becoming

a parody of itself, does offer a broader reflection upon intellectual history in terms of the development and change of ideas, thoughts and beliefs over time. Through an understanding of why such occurrences may happen, the university of imagination should be aware, if not prepared, for such events and to cope with the fact that whilst it may resolve one tension, it itself could be the source of another.

Paradoxes of Thought: Speculations for the 'Idea' from Intellectual History

The study of intellectual history can be subsumed by approaches to ideas and their investigation into particular kinds of interactions with society, history, culture, attitudes and beliefs (Berlin, 2000). Part of the complexity entwined with ideas arises from what they might mean for individuals and communities at a particular point in history in comparison with another (Khun, 2012; Fuller, 2007a). Their non-static nature serves to remind us that the university is always confronted with surprises concerning the future. The philosopher, Marx (1994), stated (after Hegel) that history represents itself "first as tragedy, then as farce" indicating a useful analogy for expositions of the 'idea' and its future by casting doubt on what we may know about the future. It furthermore draws on larger questions about ideas and how they may be understood in macro-historical terms¹¹⁹. An awareness of this potential and its consequences was treated in Chapter 4 -albeit in a different context- in terms of 'humility' as a principle for the university of imagination. However, for a macro conception of the university of imagination, perhaps this is even inadequate. An example can be taken from the above discussion of Humboldt's use of rationality as a social project of the enlightenment, and which served to be undermined by the 20th Century deconstruction of its consequences by theorists such as Adorno.

¹¹⁹ In contemporary intellectual history, prominently since the late 19th Century philosophers such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, Jung, Freud and Taylor, amongst others, have spoken of the unintended consequences of modernity as creating the conditions for an inauthentic life. This suggests that, amongst other things, that we are subject to an unconscious inability to stand inside the realm of 'being' or, that modernity (and post modernity) present unique problems for human beings to be truly *authentic* in terms of finding meaning in their lives. This is due to a number of reasons including the loss of belief in God, the alienation of modern life, a rapture in our beliefs in scientific and social evolution etc. the consequences of which have led modern man estranged from himself. For an illuminating discussion of this philosophical debate see Pippin (1999).

The degree to which philosophers, historians and social scientists have since critiqued rationalism i.e. as a social programme for the alleviation of social problems, is one example of a paradox in intellectual history. Bauman's (1989) superlative study of the consequences of the project of rationalism gravitates toward the antipodal incident of the Holocaust during the Second World War. Arguing that this event serves as a "test of Modernity" he states that:

...the unspoken terror permeating our collective memory of the Holocaust (and more than contingently related to the overwhelming desire not to look at memory in its face) is the gnawing suspicion that the Holocaust could be more than an aberration, more than a deviation from an otherwise straight path of progress, more than a cancerous growth on the otherwise healthy body of the civilized society; that, in short, the Holocaust was not an antithesis of modern civilization and everything (or so we like to think) it stands for. We suspect (*even if we refuse to admit it*) that the Holocaust could merely have uncovered another face of the same modern society whose other, more familiar, face we so admire. And that the two faces are perfectly comfortably attached to the same body. What we perhaps fear most, is that each of the two faces can no more exist without the other than can the two sides of a coin (p.7, emphasis added).

Bauman's argument here is by no means one in which rationalism serves as a defunct idea and thus not worth pursuing as a social project. Rather, he gestures towards the confidence once held in the enlightenment ideals of rationalism, as a panacea for solving social problems, have not only ceased to remain as rigorous, but reason, as a source for ameliorating human life has been used to cause human annihilation. Bauman's theory expresses the possibility of ideas, in part, to work paradoxically to their initial intent¹²⁰. Other examples include the principles of the Liberal University as leading to inequality and social exclusion (Donoghue, 2008), the communitarian ideals of the Internet leading to oligarchic actors creating virtual social forums which exacerbate depression and anomie (Keen, 2015). Such paradoxes are useful to also illustrate the possible fate for the university of imagination, in particular by showing one of the many futures of the 'idea' in broader historical terms. The reasons why this may be the case i.e. the ostensible mark of an ideal leading to its opposite, is unclear, though potential reasons for why this may be so can be summed up the aphorism: that 'to define is to limit' i.e. highlighting a feature of

¹²⁰ A similar account of historical paradoxes can be drawn from religious belief and in particular the birth of the Reformation. As an unforeseen and paradoxical consequence in intellectual history, Gregory (2012) shows that "the Reformation's influence on the eventual secularization of society was complex, largely indirect, far from immediate and *profoundly unintended*" (p.2, emphasis added).

something can cause another element of it to diminish¹²¹. An analogy and possible explanation of this circumstance may be drawn in reference to quantum mechanics and the ‘Heisenberg Principle of Uncertainty’.

Heisenberg’s principle states that the measurement of an atom’s location and its speed are co-dependent, and can exist in harmony until a measurement is made (Lindley, 2008). The process of measuring reveals an ability to know the speed of a particular atom but not its position, with the opposite case holding true for its position. The subsequent paradox defines the ‘measurement problem’ and has become a mainstay of physics and the study of nature. As Heisenberg argues, the interference with nature (making a measurement) is a necessary part of physics, and without making an intervention, the paradox would not exist. The analogy suggests a potential way of thinking about the ‘idea’ and specifically the longevity of imagination as an institutional ideal. Just as Heisenberg’s ideas on particle acceleration and their measurement shines an explanatory light on quantum mechanics, we may argue that making explicit the ‘idea’ for the university i.e. to be imaginative, is tantamount to the ‘measurement’ in that it may tell us something about the university yet ultimately evades other aspects of it. In doing so, the university may unduly limit its ability to fully express that ‘idea’ thereby leading to an imaginative paradox (Disneyization/academic entertainment). Whether this means that the university avoids such a possible state of affairs and endeavours to be ‘furtively imaginative’ i.e. unconsciously imaginative, is nevertheless open for discussion. Perhaps an even more sustained paradox may be opened by following such a line of inquiry, namely that if to ‘define is to limit’ than the ‘idea’ of the university itself becomes a paradox. Whilst this opens a possible infinite pool of problems the university may possibly have to deal with, it raises important questions nonetheless which educationalists will have to reflect upon with the emergence of the KS. Employing Heisenberg here is a way to think about the ‘idea’ in the *longue durée* and how it may potentially sit alongside discourses on intellectual history. It does so by presenting a cautionary note i.e. whether the paradox of imagination comes to pass, we cannot here present all the possibilities though we can be assured of the unpredictability of the future and its potential affects on the institution. Yet despite these challenges we may perchance be comforted by the fact that one of the features of the ‘idea’ is its unachievable nature and as such shall always allude us.

¹²¹ This popular phrase is taken from Oscar Wilde’s *Portrait of Dorian Gray*.

Positive Futures: Redeeming the ‘Idea’ of Imagination

Whilst such scenarios of the long term fecundity of the university’s ‘idea’ remains uncertain, other possible futures exist which are perhaps more positive in their assessment. Amongst these possibilities include taking the university of imagination as a means to explore existing problems in educational studies. This was partly intimated above, with the potential consequences of ‘academic entertainment’ through oscillations in the concept of imagination. As an explanatory tool, the ‘idea’ has been argued to be contextualised to the particular circumstances of the KS, and offers new ways of thinking about the university’s place therein. As the interests of the present thesis deal with the university and its role in society, there are commonalities between its interests and those of the sociology of education. We may then begin by considering how a rapprochement may be established with it, and the university of the imagination.

The field of the sociology of education serves to investigate the myriad ways in which education, interacts with society, institutions, communities and individuals (Ball, 2013). A predominating feature of the sociology of education is the investigation of how social power manifests itself through the practice, legitimisation and culture of educational institutions in modern societies (Apple, 2012). Concerns over inequality, social exclusion and power dynamics serve to create an architecture around which the study of education, its place, affects and outcomes, are realised. The areas of research which the university of imagination may contribute to this sub-field of educational studies are potentially numerous. In this section we shall focus on questions related to applying the ‘idea’ in a HE environment, the possible contributions to theories of the sociology of education, and finally future research questions for the university of imagination.

The Sociology of Education and the ‘Idea’

The paradox which much of the sociology of education attempts to explain is that education and the institutions that form it are established to ameliorate social inequity and yet arguably create the conditions for its reinforcement (Dale, 2001). In this field, inequality in education is expressed through factors such as social class (Apple, 2012), economics (Wolf, 2002), language

(Bernstein, 1990), culture (Bourdieu, 1984), religion (Modood and Levey, 2009) etc. The role of the university within these debates has been well researched over the past forty years, particularly as its social importance has grown through institutional expansion and the increasing social value given it in developed societies¹²². What role, if any, may the university of imagination have in these debates is an important question. In order to explore such an inquiry, considerations over how the ‘idea’ may be implemented within a HE landscape will provide the sociological details necessary to open such debates.

Questions over the implementation of the university of imagination welcome empirical considerations that deal with how the ‘idea’ may be actualised within HE institutional environments. We henceforth move our discussion from ‘the university’ to *universities* and in particular focus on the UK context, and with reference to North American. Firstly, the university operates as a collection of HE institutions differentiated by a number of factors and categorised in various ways. Tight (2011b) draws upon this diversity in reference to the UK¹²³ arguing that these include universities, higher education institutes, further colleges, and private universities. For our purposes, the university is defined in this thesis as post-compulsory education institutions that has prominent teaching, knowledge production, and dissemination functions, and holds a significant social role within the emerging KS context. However, universities are themselves differentiated by history, social prestige, research and teaching agendas, wealth, amongst other factors (Whyte, 2015).

Within their own rich social contexts these institutions of HE are differentiated in the ways that they relate and respond to the social world. We can speculate that such differences help expose universities to different aspects of the same problem (see Chapter 3). In other words, the tension of imbalance is unlikely to affect universities in the same ways and therefore the

¹²² As the neo-institutionalist Baker (2014) argues, what makes the study of modern education and its relations to society become evermore necessary is the fact that “education has grown to such proportions that it has become a separate and enduring social institution; thus the education revolution socially constructs significant portions of the culture of modern society, rather than merely reproducing it. Not only are people trained and credentialised through schooling, but the institution itself changes other social institutions and the entire culture of society” (p.10).

¹²³ For example, within the UK, the ‘ancient’ universities are Oxford and Cambridge established in medieval times (12th and 13th centuries, respectively) the ‘red brick’ are newer establishments, mostly from the 19th Century and the ‘modern’ institutions arise mainly from the *Further and Higher Education Act* (1992), these being the former polytechnic institutes.

manner in which they respond is also expected to vary (Ball, 2017)¹²⁴. In a ‘traditional’ sociological approximation and typography of responses, a preliminary sociological account may emerge such that universities are potentially ‘rigid’ (ancient), more flexible (red bricks), and institutionally innovative (modern), to the challenges placed before them in the KS (Tight, 2011b). However, whilst these are potential responses, they are also problematic as they represent commonly used tropes in the literature to help explain institutional differences in the KS (Richardson and Woodley, 2010; Chapman, 1997). Such explanations which, whilst offering ‘conventional’ explanations about how universities may react to problems of the KS, do not consider how the context of the university in the KS (as developed in this thesis) potentially challenges or even overturns such conventions. As such, how the university of imagination may provide new ways for institutions to resolve the tension of imbalance is uncertain. Adumbrating existing points of inquiry in the sociology of education, such as class, culture and inequality, are important to see how imagination may differ from traditional explanations of social power and inequality. How it may potentially do so, is through returning to reflections about the university of imagination in the previous chapter. Here we find preliminary questions about pedagogy, the social interactions of the university in the KS, and so on, all of which may find ways to differentiate from normative debates in the sociology of education.

Prospects for the Sociology of Education in Light of the University of Imagination

A starting point in addressing the questions raised above is to remind ourselves, firstly, that the university of imagination is not a utopian ideal or panacea which will eradicate social problems in the KS. Importantly, this means that it does not delegitimise the concerns of the sociology of education but that social inequality and exclusion in education are present also in the university of imagination. The ‘idea’ is best thought of as a strategy for the university as it operates within its particular context. Prefaced by this assertion, the university of imagination stands as an ideal which has repercussions for all aspects of the institution. Key amongst these is its assumption about what it means to be human. Defined in the previous chapter’s propaedeutic discussion of a pedagogy of imagination, the starting point is a recognition of the human as being *homo*

¹²⁴ On this point see Trowler (2008) for an exposition of these attitudes within the literature.

imaginatus i.e. the one who imagines. This was argued to be a way of thinking about the human being, and one which is reflected in, and valued by, the university of imagination. Using this as a starting point, we may pose the question as follows: could imagination stand as a principle by which we may speak of all people as having universal access? If we can, there is a universal starting point from which we can all enter educational institutions i.e. all being endowed with an aptitude for imagination. The task of the university of imagination then becomes how to nurture and activate imagination in the student through the process of education (see Chapter 4).

In this reading, it is a ‘value free’ and socially independent entity. Moreover, outside the university, could imagination also stand as a means for discussing equality and fairness in the KS more generally? As a university system based upon the celebration of imagination, could it potentially serve meritocratic ideals and be a source for discussing inequality? In this view, the university potentially becomes a place in which the freedom to use and nurture imagination is a natural right and people are limited only to the degree that their imaginations are limited. Within the context of HE institutions, and taking into account their specific needs, pressures, and so on, ‘to be imaginative’ would mean something quite different depending on the context of the university in question. However, it nonetheless is an ideal around which the broader concerns of equality and fairness in HE may be discussed through being orientated toward the implications of imagination. In sum, if imagination is treated as an innate property of humans, then it is potentially a greater basis from which to start a discussion about themes in the sociology of education, such as inequality.

Exploring Research Themes in the Sociology of Education through the University of Imagination

A retort by sociologists of education to such a ‘value free’ account of imagination, however, may come in the form that, as a socially valued entity, imagination may not be treated as an equalising or ‘universalizing’ tool in the ways described above. It is precisely due to imagination being socially valued that it is the basis of competition between social groups, who find ways to be differentiated and distinguished along class, economic and cultural lines (Swartz, 1997)¹²⁵. Such

¹²⁵ Amongst such questions for the university of imagination would be, for example, whether the imagination plays a similar role as does *habitus* in Bourdieu’s sociology, for instance.

a critique, whilst delimiting the ability of imagination to potentially stand as a new concept of equality, may however, inadvertently be considered a contribution to the sociology of education. This would mean through thinking about imagination as a socially valued concept and how it may be used as a tool by HE institutions to enhance inequality. Questions of whether imagination acts the same, or is distinctive from, economic, culture and class-based forms of inequality is something which would require further investigation by sociologists of education. In other words, factors such as class, social prestige, history and cultural relevancy, are among the issues given for the existence of social demarcation and inequality amongst HE institutions, and whether such factors are barriers to the expression of imagination. This poses important questions for the university in the KS. Amongst the most important of these is related to inequality within the university of imagination, and whether it has the ability to supersede traditions of elitism found in university systems across the world (Ball, 2017).

The questions raised by explicating the broader consequences of this inquiry emerge from imagination itself. In other words, the considerations for its application, and the questions it raises for the university of imagination, are potential research areas in themselves. In the above cases, the university of imagination was described as a means for creating ‘balance’ as well as used for exploiting the resources for non-educational ends (thus becoming detrimental to the goals of the university). As has been argued in this chapter, the ambiguity of imagination will leave it open for interpretation by HE institutions, leading them to create their own forms of contextualised balance. These are possibilities for the sociology of education, and offer a window into the potential research required to further define as well as explicate the possibilities of the university of imagination. It suggests, further, that arriving at the ‘idea’ is only the first step in exploring how its applications and continued existence provide questions for the academic community.

Chapter Conclusion: The ‘Idea’ and its Many Meanings

This chapter has attempted to broaden the discussion that has been at the heart of this thesis. Having offered an ‘idea’ for the university in the KS, what it may mean for its place within the literature and HE institutions was discussed. This inquiry constituted the ancillary research question of the thesis namely, a) how the proposed ‘idea’ compares with the liberal ‘idea’ of the

university and b) what may be said of its future. The chapter was divided to reflect these different concerns, and sought to move towards discussions about the university of imagination in broader terms, specifically moving away from its technical elements (conditions and features) which have, up until now, been the focus of our discourse.

The first part of the chapter, the comparisons with the liberal ‘idea’, surfaced important points of continuation and difference. The comparison included the philosophical interpretation of the liberal ‘idea’, optimised by the philosophical works of Wilhelm von Humboldt, as well as the religiously inspired ones of John Henry Newman. In both cases, questions were raised that helped to differentiate the ‘idea’ of the university of imagination from these classical interpretations. The most evident fruit of this comparison was the conclusion that the university of imagination and the liberal university may best be seen as revealing differences in *degree* rather than *kind*. In other words, they are fundamentally related in their joint commitment and perusal of educational ideals. For the university of imagination this being achieved through the superintendent concept of imagination and its tandem features of humility, temperance and prudence. As such, the two ‘ideas’ are best thought of as having ‘family resemblances’ rather than being diametrically opposed conceptions for education and the university. Importantly, the university of imagination was argued to best serve the liberal ‘idea’ of the university in both its aspirations and ideals in the KS.

The latter part of the chapter was divided between two views of the university of imagination and its future based upon the questions raised by the comparison of the liberal ‘idea’. The first investigated the limitations of imagination, and how its future may be consumed by paradoxes, which could be accounted for by intellectual history. This discussion explored the possibility that the university of imagination may indeed lead to becoming ‘unimaginative’ and why this may be so. The last part of the chapter turned towards redeeming the ‘idea’ by showing an alternative way of thinking about its future. Here the sociology of education provided the backdrop to pontificate upon the university of imagination and which may provide new ways of thinking about extant problems of inequality. Questions for the inclusion of imagination into the repertoire of the sociology of education suggests it may be used to think about inequality in ways which are presently understudied in the literature. This section concluded with the assertion that it does have much to contribute to the discourse on social inequality even if that means imagination plays, paradoxically, a role in that process.

Thesis Conclusion

This thesis has been an investigation into fundamental questions concerning the aims, purposes and goals of the university in the 21st century. Philosophical questions of this nature are referred to in the academic literature somewhat ambiguously - as the ‘idea’ of the university (Mulcahy, 2009). Standing as an amalgamation of the higher ideals of the institution, it has historically been discussed through the prominent, classical ‘liberal’ version of the university. Such an ‘idea’ sees the university as being a site for, amongst other things, the personal development of students, intellectual freedom and education as a ‘whole’ experience. Whilst this specific annunciation of the ‘idea’ of the university remains prevalent in the literature, what would the ‘idea’ mean in light of the emerging social world of the Knowledge Society (KS)? This is a question yet to be confronted in the literature, and one that this thesis has sought to grapple with. Whilst all societies and civilizations have been ‘knowledge-based’, the specific hue of the KS lays in the emergence of a new form of social organisation premised on knowledge within a post-industrial, 21st Century, social landscape (Stehr and Machin, 2016). Subsequently, understanding the specificities of the KS context and what this means for the university has become an increasingly important area of academic interest. A gap in the literature has remained however, to place the ‘idea’ of the university into conversation with the KS literature and its context. The primary research question of this thesis was therefore: ‘what may an ‘idea’ of the university be in the KS context?’ Two ancillary research questions were also posited, ‘how would the proposed ‘idea’ compare with the classical ‘liberal idea’ of the university?’ and ‘what are some of the future possibilities for the proposed ‘idea?’’ Whilst the first of the ancillary questions gave prominence to the prevailing importance of the liberal ‘idea’ of the university, the second sought to explore the proposed ‘idea’ and its potential opportunities and challenges in the KS context.

This thesis was an ‘explorative’ study seeking new ground in the study of the sociology and philosophy of education (Arthur, 2012). Methodologically it was framed by a social realist epistemology and a neo-institutionalist perspective. In terms of the former, the social realist school argues that social institutions, such as the university, and ideas about society, are social products yet they nonetheless appropriate an existence which is objective to us, thus being ‘real’. This does not mean however, an epistemological collapse into relativism is inevitable wherein no substantive claims can be made about the social world but rather it encourages us to see the world, and in particular, how actors, institutions, culture help to create it. The latter, sociological school, claims that the university has become a “primary institution” (Baker, 2014) suggesting

that it has the potential (which it exercises) to imprint values upon society and not merely to act as a means for reproducing social norms. Imparting its ideas and values on society suggests a break with the normative study of social institutions which has traditionally assumed that they reflect the broader ideas and concerns of a society (hence the prefix of ‘neo’). The role of neo-institutionalism in this thesis was employed to determine that the ‘idea’ conforms to such conceptions about the university, and which acted as a means to compare and interpret the literature on the university. Specifically, this school was used as a means for navigating the assumptions about the literature on the university in the KS, as well as to act as a barometer for the construction and assumptions of the proposed ‘idea’.

To create an ‘idea’ of the university in the KS, the first two chapters focussed on an extensive critical analysis of the literature. Due to the breadth of the literature on the KS, its analysis was split between the ‘general’ and ‘specialised’ literatures. The former was literature which may not specifically investigate the KS but considers broader social trends and societal change affiliated with the 21st century and the university. Splitting the literature in this way, between general and specialist, provided a double filtering of their respective ideas such that it may be compared with the assumptions of the neo-institutionalist perspective and accepted or rejected, according to this perspective accordingly.

Chapter 1 constituted the first part of the literature review, dealing with the ‘general’ literature. Due to the broad vista which this chapter attempted to identify i.e. the relationship between the university-KS, the literature was divided between that which dealt with internalist relations (university-KS) and an exogenic view (KS-university) of the university. In terms of the former, the study of internalist relations (university-KS) showed that whilst there are new opportunities for the university to be given special status as a knowledge producing institution in the KS, these discourses often collapse this potential by shrinking the social role of the university. Similarly, the exogenic view (KS-university) proposed that knowledge is increasingly being viewed in limited and ever exiguous terms in the broader social discourse. This review of the literature was therefore defined as having ‘problems’ when compared to the neo-institutionalist perspective, precisely as it delimits either the role of the university in the KS (exogenic view) or reduces what knowledge is to means-end and useful ideas (internalist view). In concluding these comparisons, the literature was cumulatively defined as having problems of influence (exogenic) and reduction (internalist), respectively. However, both of these problems

were related by a broader ‘problem of knowledge’ which stands as a summative statement about the ‘general’ literature. This problem of knowledge sees the university’s relationship to the KS as therefore increasingly framed by both governmental and industry discourses, as well as the institutions own responses to these challenges, through limitations of its potential. The problem was one which therefore summated the relations (exogenic and internalist) of the university with the KS from the general literature review.

Chapter 2 engaged with the specialist literature, specifically analysing the work of Nico Stehr. As a leading KS theorist (Adolf, 2018), Stehr was referenced to engage with the identified problem of knowledge. Due to the breadth of Stehr’s work, the problem of knowledge was divided into its ontological, sociological and epistemic assumptions to provide areas of specific contact with the theorists’ oeuvre. The aim of this chapter was to firstly compare the problem of knowledge with Stehr and to see how his work corresponded with the neo-institutionalist perspective (the sociological framework of the thesis). Where Stehr’s ideas were consequently not found to be congruent, there was recourse to general social theory (where neo-institutionalist theorists could not be found) to help draw the theorising back towards the framework of a neo-institutionalist perspective. In other words, the double filtering of the literature saw Stehr’s work (as KS specialist) as a means to converse with the general literature (the latter being summated in terms of the ‘problem of knowledge’). In so doing, Stehr’s ideas would also be assessed in relation to neo-institutionalist claims.

Beginning with the ontological comparison, Stehr’s ideas were found to offer a ‘fragile’ conception of the KS due to the instability of knowledge in the KS. Running counter to the neo-institutionalist view of knowledge as having a prominent place in the KS and which cannot easily be limited to a state of fragility, recourse to ideas from social theory were employed to help rebalance the discussion. Specifically, the work of the literary theorist, Mikhail Bakhtin, and his concept of *dialogism*, was employed to offer a ‘dialogical approach’ which sees the KS as both ontologically fragile yet strengthened by the process of knowledge construction. Similarly, the sociological analysis showed that the rise of knowledge producers in the KS limits the role of the university therein. As this conflicts with the neo-institutionalist idea that the university remains an important knowledge producing force and which cannot be delegitimised by ‘decentring’ forces of the KS, the work of neo-institutionalist theorist David Baker, was employed. He argues that the model of universalised and rational knowledge is part of the university’s legacy and the

growth of knowledge producers in the KS only acts to reflect the institutions status. The varying clusters of knowledge production were defined, using Baker's ideas, as the 'knowledge conglomerations' of the KS. Finally, the epistemic analysis showed that Stehr's ideas about knowledge are reducible to means-end and 'capital' discourses (as in Chapter 1's general literature review). Running in opposition to the neo-institutionalist conception of knowledge, the philosophical work of James Alexander showed that knowledge has a number of modes which presume ways of knowing the world. The idea of knowledge as having 'liminal modalities' was shown to also safeguard knowledge from collapsing into merely means-end purposes.

Accumulatively, the outcome of this critical analysis identified a concept which helped define the university's KS context. This was knowledge plasticity (KP) and stood for the ontologically, sociologically and epistemologically context of the KS, whose features were dialogical contingency, knowledge conglomerations, and liminal modality, respectively. This concept stood as the result of a specific engagement with the literature: the result of a double filtrating process (general and specific) through a neo-institutionalist perspective and marked therefore the conclusion of Condition 1, 'contextual clarity' of the 'idea'.

Chapter 3, focussed on the question of how, methodologically, an 'idea' might be created. As the literature provides no precise methodology for creating an 'idea' due partly to its philosophical nature (Peters and Barnett, 2018; Barnett and Peters, 2018), the starting point was to define what was meant by an 'idea' and whether the literature might provide general guidelines for creating one. This involved reviewing the extensive literature (spread over fields and disciplines such as educational studies, philosophy, sociology and theology) so as to seek common characteristics of the 'idea'. This resulted in identifying a normative demarcation between its 'conditions' and 'features'.

The literature review showed firstly that the conditions are threefold in nature, and form the foundations for, or road-map towards, the 'idea'. The first of these was 'contextual clarity' and included exploring the university's own institutional environment as well as the social world within which the 'idea' functions. The second, the 'theoretical development' condition, elaborates the specific ways in which the university may operate, be challenged by, and/or acclimatise to its surroundings. 'Development' refers specifically to how the context 'converses' with the university, whether by adding, affecting or changing the ways in which we think of it as a social institution. Finally, the condition of 'resolution of tension/s' revolves around an

apparent ‘tension’ (problem) within the social context which the ‘idea’ is tasked to resolve. Collectively, these conditions formed the methodological structure of the thesis as well as mirroring a dialectical process for reaching the ‘idea’ in the KS where, ‘contextual clarity’ stood for the *thesis*, ‘theoretical development’ and the identification of the tension, the *antithesis* and the ‘resolution of the tension’ the *synthesis*.

The features of the ‘idea’ identified in the literature showed it to have the attributes of being ‘ambiguous’, ‘unachievable’ and acts as a ‘vision’ for the institution. In terms of ‘ambiguity’, this refers to the ‘idea’ being not overly defined and thus leaving space for interpretation by the institution (e.g. such as the liberal ‘idea’ of the university). It being ‘unachievable’ refers to having a non-definable end, that is, the set of values which the university aims to achieve yet are never entirely realised. For example, in the case of the liberal ideal, whether we can say that a university is entirely ‘liberal’ and therefore reached its philosophical goals is unrealistic. Finally, it being a ‘vision’ refers to the ‘idea’ as providing a means to organise the operations of the university, especially in terms of its knowledge production and dissemination, in turn reflecting an educational ethos for students and scholars alike. In order to reach the goal of the ‘idea’, each of its conditions had to be met.

Having reviewed the literature and concluded with a concept (KP), marked the end of condition 1, within this schema, the remainder of this chapter then focussed on condition 2 namely, theoretical development. This phase of the analysis considered how the concept of KP may function and whether a ‘tension’ could be identified which the ‘idea’ would then be tasked to resolve. This I did by firstly identifying the implications of KP by investigating its features, namely dialogical contingency, knowledge conglomerations, and liminal modality, respectively. Of particular importance in this investigation was the identification of ‘tensions’ within each feature, namely that they all suffer from possibilities which potentially have detrimental consequences for the university. These tensions were identified as ‘imbalances’ in the KP concept.

Having highlighted these general ‘tensions’ (or imbalances) within KP, Chapter 4 was occupied with firstly identifying what the ‘idea’ of the university should be and secondly, how it will it resolve its tensions. The first part of the chapter therefore considered what the ‘idea’ of the university should be. However, as there is no clear answer from the neo-institutionalist perspective, or how one should arrive at it, we began by considering the assumptions of this

school of thought and its views about the university. This led to identifying a process which claimed that the neo-institutionalist perspective saw the university as having the internal capabilities/strategies to counteract challenges that it faced. Defined as an ‘internal turn’, this term describes a complex and multifaceted process within the institutional life of the university for problem solving. Having defined it meant that the internal turn stood for a process which could potentially resolve the ‘tension of imbalance’. What exactly the obscure processes of the internal turn meant was thereafter discussed in terms of creativity and imagination i.e. as the motivating ethos animating the process of an ‘internal turn’. Whilst there are similarities between the concepts, differences exist between them in both degree and kind. The discussion which ensued argued that both terms were appropriate candidates for the ‘idea’ with imagination providing the greater possibility for a resolution of imbalance in lieu of factors related to time. The ‘university of imagination’ was therefore selected as the ‘idea’ of the university and I defined it as:

an ‘idea’ of the university in the KS which meets both its *conditions* and *features*. Derived from a neo-institutionalist perspective, it is born from and responds to the contextual challenges, as presented in this thesis, arising in the KS. Chief amongst which being the tension of imbalance. The ‘idea’ therefore promotes imagination to be institutionally marshalled to permeate the university in order to achieve its goal of creating dynamic balance.

The university of imagination subsequently met the three conditions as well as the features necessary for the idea i.e. ‘unachievable’, ‘ambiguous’ and providing a ‘vision’. As the ‘idea’s’ third and final condition, the resolution of outlaying tensions within its context, finding a way to create dynamic balance in the university, was the task for the remainder of the chapter.

The question of how the university of imagination might resolve the tension of imbalance was divided between of the three features of KP and offered how the ‘idea’ could be employed in this way. This task was paired in reference to the three primary functions of the university (defined in this thesis) namely its pedagogic, social position, and research functions. In each of these cases, the formation of balance was sought and achieved by finding a middle position between the oscillations of firstly, dialogical contingency whose imbalances stretch between hubris and timorousness. In this case ‘humility’ was chosen as a balance between these polarities. As for knowledge conglomerations, its imbalances stretch between monopolies and irrelevance. Thus a ‘prudence’ was chosen as a balance between these polarities. Finally, liminal modality

whose imbalances stretch between objectivism and relativism with ‘temperance’ chosen as a balance between these polarities.

Firstly, ‘humility’ referred to recognition in the ontology of the KS and its attitudes to knowledge. As the university must be aware of the consequences of both polar possibilities, humility is a middle position between the problems of imbalance. ‘Prudence’ on the other hand, suggested a particularly cautious attitude such that the university avoided becoming a monopoly as well as falling into social irrelevance. Finally, ‘temperance’ was the recognition of the problems related to how knowledge may become exploited for other than educational ends in the KS and therefore advocates for the university to show moderation in relation to the pressures, attention and power associated with the KS. The ‘university of imagination’ then answered the primary research question, of what the ‘idea’ the university is in the KS by showing how it creates balance in light of its contextual tension (tension of imbalance). However, questions remained as to how the ‘idea’ of the university might be compared to the liberal ‘idea’ as well as what may its future entail.

To anticipate these questions, Chapter 5 explored the university of imagination by investigating it in terms which go beyond the particular features of creating balance, and thinking about it as a way of reflecting on education more generally. This final chapter constituted a response to the ancillary research questions of the thesis, namely a) how the proposed ‘idea’ compared with the liberal ‘idea’ of the university and b) what may be said of its future. The first part of the chapter, served to show important points of connection and difference with the classical liberal ‘idea’. Due to the breadth of this particular ‘idea’, two specific renditions the liberal university were analysed. The first was its ‘philosophical’ interpretation, optimised by the works of Wilhelm von Humboldt and then the ‘religiously’ inspired work of John Henry Newman. In both cases, the comparison concluded that there is a fundamental parlance between the university of imagination and which the liberal ‘idea’ and can be said to differ in degree rather than in kind.

The latter part of the chapter was divided between two views of the university of imagination and its future. The first investigated the possibility that the university of imagination might indeed lead to becoming unimaginative, and why this may be so. Reasons for this – in terms of an ideal leading to its opposite, are not clear cut, though a possibility to which the university ought to be aware. The realm of intellectual history points towards potential reasons for why this may be so, and can be summed up the aphorism - that ‘to define is to limit’ i.e.

highlighting a feature of something may cause its opposite (or hidden features) to occur. The chapter then turned towards redeeming the ‘idea’ by showing an alternative way of thinking about its future. This included questions for the inclusion of imagination in the repertoire of the sociology of education, that may in turn be used to think about inequality in ways presently understudied in the literature. In sum, the analysis and outcomes of the thesis can be represented as in Diagram 11.

Diagram 11. Summary of Thesis and construction of the 'Idea' of the University of Imagination

CONDITION 1: CONTEXTUAL CLARITY

'General' Literature

'Internalist' Relations: The University's relations with its broader social context

'Exogenic' Relations: The social context of the university and its relations to the institution

Comparison with Neo-Institutionalist Perspective

The Problem of Knowledge

'Specialist' Literature

Engagement with Nico Stehr

Stehr as incongruous with Neo-Institutionalist perspective leading to use of social theory

Stehr is congruous with Neo-Institutionalist perspective

Knowledge Plasticity

CONDITION 2: THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

CONDITION 3: RESOLUTION OF TENSION

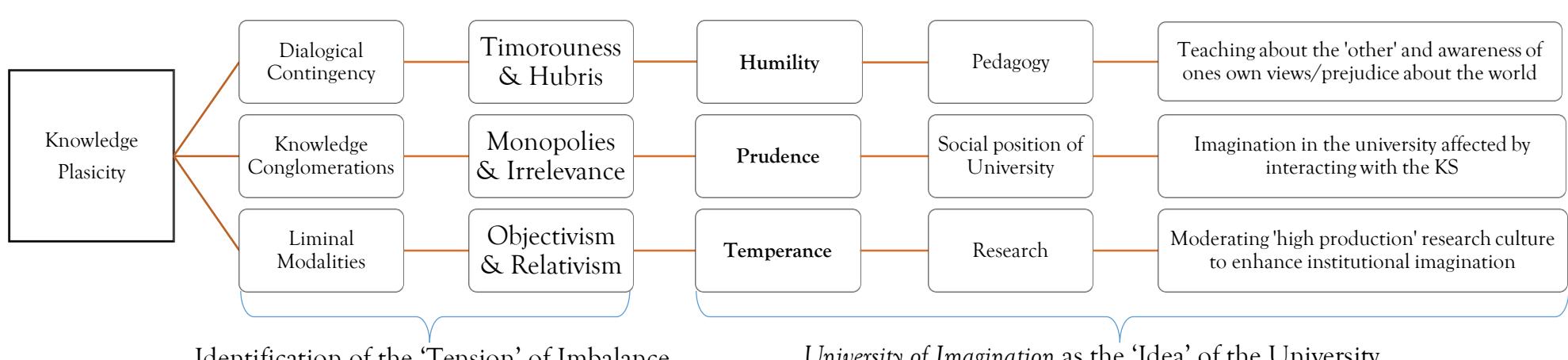
Features of Knowledge Plasticity

Features of the 'Tension' of Imbalance

Principles of the University of Imagination

Areas to which the 'idea' was discussed to resolve imbalance

Proposals for the Resolution of the 'Tension' within the University of Imagination



Whilst the thesis has been framed around the specific contextual environment of the KS, the ‘idea’ cannot be said to be *new*. The university of imagination, as governed by the principles of balance, humility, prudence and temperance, can equally be said to offer not revolutionary new ideas which would change the face of the institution. On the one hand, these principles can be said to harken to traditional ideals of learning and education as discussed in terms of ethical and even religious meanings. On the other, the ‘idea’ of imagination in the university intends to awaken new possibilities that are at its disposal, specifically as a generative means for thinking and acting confidently within its world (identified as the ‘internal turn’). The ‘idea’ may possibly serve to uphold a broader and more generous conception of the KS; one which sees the problems associated with the Knowledge Economy as only limiting the creation and dissemination of knowledge. An optimism is therefore wrought in the university of imagination, reinforced by the neo-institutionalist perspective, such that the institution has the ability to cope with the challenges arising from within or without its walls.

Apart from questions of the novelty of the proposed ‘idea’, another point of contribution of the thesis is in the identification of KP as defining the context of the university in the KS. The contemporary educational literature is redolent with explorations of knowledge, and its changing nature. However, where KP attempts to stake its own ground is through the process by which it was arrived. Derived from an extensive treatment of the literature on the KS and university, KP stands as a theoretical articulation focussed towards the affects upon the university, and in so doing stating something about the ontology of the KS, the social production of knowledge, as well as the varying epistemic qualities of knowledge. Moreover, the concept of humankind and her place in the ‘idea’ identified by the role of *homo imaginatus*, that is, the one who imagines, is thus a starting point for discussions about pedagogy and the study of inequality within educational studies. The inference that imagination is an innate category defining the social actor can be used more generally, as was argued, towards an understanding resource for competition amongst social groups in the KS, as well acting as a form of social distinction (Bourdieu, 1984).

Another intended aim and contribution of this thesis, as stated in the Thesis Introduction, was to create a methodological purview for producing an ‘idea’. In identifying the three conditions and features of the ‘idea’, the thesis has provided the means for further discussion and refinement in the literature concerning methodologies for the ‘idea’. Whilst acknowledging that the free following and speculative nature of the literature does not lend itself easily to discussions of a methodological nature; the method postulated in the thesis should be

considered as an exploratory account and sojourn into the matter. Equally, the methodology of this thesis is open to critique and revaluation as it was informed by selected works and ideas from the literature and is thus reliant upon them for the integrity of its structure. The university of imagination should be valued as being a specific conception of the university via a particular account of the literature yet one, despite this potential criticism which hope will provide fruitful new discourses in the wider literature.

Moreover, whilst the third point of significance of the thesis was related to the investigative analysis of the KS (tackled in Chapters 1 and 2), the fourth was to forge an ‘idea’ in reference to the neo-institutionalist school. Whilst not attempted in the literature hitherto, the proposal of the university of imagination may inadvertently and potentially surface larger critiques in the thesis. Amongst these relate to the problems within the sociology of education and how social power and agency will affect the university of imagination. Whilst a point of contention from the neo-institutionalist perspective would be that the university is a ‘primary institution’ and thus of primary importance in the KS, how the university will exercise its intentions in a world which increasingly encroaches upon the institution through economic and political power is unclear¹²⁶. This is a larger critique then of the neo-institutionalist view (the version of which was taken up in this thesis) and relates to the (under) theorisation of power and social agency in this thesis (Zaman, 2017). Since there is no ready answer for these questions, it serves to be a critique of the university of imagination more broadly i.e. the overly optimistic and ‘reverent’ place it affords the university in society.

Finally, the significance of the thesis can also be made in reference to its comparison with the liberal ‘idea’ (Chapter 5). The fruit of this comparison was the conclusion that the university of imagination and the liberal university should be viewed as differing in terms of *degree* rather than *kind*. This it assumed that they are fundamentally related in their joint commitment and perusal of educational ideals. The two ‘ideas’ are best thought of therefore as having ‘family resemblances’ rather than being diametrically opposed conceptions for education and the university. Importantly, the university of imagination was argued to best serve the liberal ‘idea’ of the university in both its aspirations and ideals in the KS. This holds important questions

¹²⁶ Such a claim is not intended to obviate the resolution fashioned by the author to the same problem in this thesis i.e. the features of KP and its re-articulation of a multifaceted conception of knowledge, in distinction to the problem of knowledge. The critique mentioned above is one which highlights a general lack of theoretical consistency with social power in the neo-institutionalist position taken up in this thesis.

within the educational studies literature and beyond about the role and status of the university of imagination in the 21st century.

Chief amongst these is the observation that the university of imagination may provide a means through which the liberal ‘idea’ may better express its ideals in the emerging KS. Whilst this is one reading of the possible future of the liberal ‘idea’, it was expressed as a recognition of the social context of the university and how within the KS it may realise those ideals. Such a discussion also relates to the broader aims and potential significance of the thesis more generally. Highlighted in the Thesis Introduction, these aims serve to explicate the broader impact of the ideas presented throughout this work. The first aim of which was to postulate an ‘idea’ in reference to the KS which was achieved by rendering it through the specific form of the university of imagination. As an ‘idea’ born from the KS context it marks a potential source of scholarly engagement in the field of educational studies and beyond. Placing imagination at the fore of the ‘idea’ serves to speak to innate and individual propensities in the human subject which are to be valued and nurtured in the KS. The *homo imaginatus*, a conception of the human being and starting point for our ‘idea’, it to reflect upon the self-governing mission of the university namely, what and how imagination is to be nurtured in the 21st Century. Presenting an understanding of the social agent in such terms may furthermore inform how individuals relate to as well as understand society and social problems such as social inequality. Since scholarly interest in education for social equality, cultural amelioration and political emancipation are long standing preoccupations, how the university of imagination may interrogate these concerns presents potential future research areas in the field of educational studies. Whilst not seeing itself as a social panacea (remembering that the ‘idea’ by its definition is unachievable) the university of imagination rather views social engagement as a necessary part of its mandate and may be said to further provide encouragement for individual agency in a world which is experiencing rising global inequality and poverty by stressing that imagination is a tool shared by all humankind (Chapter 5).

The manner in which challenges in the HE landscape are to be faced is uncertain especially as a mandated knowledge producer, the university operates in a social world increasingly defined as one being in a ‘post-truth’ era. As the boundaries between truth and fallacy begin to merge in certain sectors of civic society, such uncertain times must not allow the university of imagination to retreat from its purpose nor feel content to socially disengage. As the philosopher Michael

Oakeshott (1990) reminds us that “the university is not a machine for achieving a particular purpose or producing a particular result; it is a manner of human activity” (p.96). And whilst directing this ‘activity’ towards the common good may lead the university towards unchartered territories, we can be comforted by the fact that education cannot be contained within the walls of an institution. Having thus explored imagination through the university’s teaching, research and social functions, the importance of the ‘idea’ can be measured by how it moves beyond the domain of the university itself.

Examples of the challenges facing the university, beyond its walls, are the unprecedented risks and opportunities facing the planet, for example. The philosopher, Martin Rees (2004), underlines this by arguing that the 21st century shall be a watershed era in human history and that:

...our choices and actions could ensure the perpetual future of life (not just on Earth, but perhaps far beyond it, too). Or in contrast, through malign intent, or through misadventure, twenty-first century technology could jeopardise life's potential, foreclosing its human and post human future. What happens here on Earth, in this century, could conceivably make the difference between a near eternity filled with ever more complex and subtle forms of life and one filled with nothing but base matter (p.8).

For the university of imagination, such dilemmas run in the course of larger contextual concerns over imbalance within the KS i.e. learning to live in relative harmony with the planet. The future of the university of imagination’s role in these debates should not be deemed peripheral especially as the institution becomes an increasingly visible global actor helping to create and reproduce culture and knowledge, it will serve to hold a prominent role in helping to stir and respond to such challenges. However, whilst the ‘idea’ does not propose to dictate responses to these questions, it can draw upon imagination as a tool for confronting global problems. In other words, if imagination infers how we think about the world as well as what the world can potentially be, then the university in the 21st Century is tasked with the burden of walking the fine line (and finding the balance) between being rigidly secular, religiously fundamentalist, socially insular, or indeed too available for society’s demands. This means that neither fideism nor scientism can prevail as the imagination has a claim potentially to be a beacon for intervening in and offering resolutions for global problems. As Barnett (2018) claims, in a perceptive contemplation on the university in the 21st century that “...we are witnessing a re-territorialization of the global knowledge economy, a reconfiguring of the geopolitical assemblages across

universities ... The idea therefore, of universities worldwide as constituting a *global academic ecosystem* can plausibly be entertained” (pp.182-3, emphasis in original). The university of imagination, invigorated by an optimism of purpose and freedom of exploration (harnessed through a reliance on imagination), could potentially tease out and examine new questions, the likes of which Barnett intimates for the global academic community. This optimistic and courageous view of the university occurs through confidence in its intellectual architecture, global networks and common purposes illuminated through a purism of knowledge and truth which the institution stands for.

In concluding this chapter and the thesis, the now infamous events of 1900 International Congress of Mathematicians in Paris serve to be a propitious reminder of our desire for knowledge and for being balanced. The conference was witness to an intellectual exchange between the two maths doyens, David Hilbert and Emil du Bois-Reymond. Standing at different ends of the intellectual spectrum, Hilbert argued that “wir müssen wissen. Wir werden wissen” (we will know and we must know), a reference to mathematical knowledge and the ability for humans to gain mastery of the cosmos. His opponent Bois-Reymond, argued to the contrary that “ignoramus et ignorabimus” (we do not know and will not know). This brisk exchange of ideas and ideals about knowledge and our capacities for understanding, mastering, and using it, serves to mark our possibilities and limitations as humans more generally. At the turn of the 20th Century the certainties, ideals and place of knowledge, which rendered the Hilbert-Bois-Reymond debate so lively, have been significantly altered since. Today’s world, transformed by the rise of the post-industrial KS, is confronted with new as well as familiar challenges and the place of the university of imagination in this complex state of affairs hitherto presents opportunities to which it may direct its energies. Appreciating knowledge stands between ‘we can know and we must know’ and ‘we do not know and cannot know’, the university of the 21st Century must venture forth towards balance through the mandate in ‘ever striving to know’.

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