Anthropology Beyond Discipline: Reinterpreting the Crisis of the Disciplines in the American University

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> *But certainly, this much is true in the United States: it cannot be denied that the university is a place of refuge, and it cannot be accepted that the university is a place of enlightenment. In the face of these conditions one can only sneak into the university and steal what one can. To abuse its hospitality, to spite its mission, to join its refugee colony, its gypsy encampment, to be in but not of – this is the path of the subversive intellectual in the modern university.*
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> —Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons*

Introduction

Somewhat of a common sentiment, at least among certain circles of anthropology, is that few academic disciplines have seen the sort of drastic transformations that American anthropology underwent during the latter half of the twentieth century. Of course, this is not an undisputed fact. For some, the "crisis of representation" and the various "turns" that followed it in anthropology have changed everything for better or worse, yet for others the resonance of the crisis remains in question and at times it feels as though not much at all has changed. Regardless of what side we may fall on in this debate, it is clear that something has happened. For some, this something is the occurrence of a drastic transformation and for others what has happened has really been *nothing*, an insignificant change, just more of the same. What is needed on the topic is one or perhaps several novellas of the sort that Deleuze and Guattari spoke of, in order to approach the question of "What happened? Whatever could have happened?"[1] The usefulness of the novella is that it takes up, rather it is itself defined by various lines of existence imminent to the *something* of the past, providing a "special revelation" to the question of "what happened?" We must return to the past, to this moment of crisis, but enter it through new doors so that the lines we are taken on out of the crisis put us in a better position to try something new; a new perspective on what becomes possible in the present having experienced the crisis that got us here in such a way.

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[1] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 192.

Keeping the above words from Stefano Harney and Fred Moten in mind, I would like to continue here on a general study looking into the various thefts that have been carried out by anthropologists over the course of this short history, both during and after the crisis. Stealing from the university and anthropology itself in a quite different manner than anthropologists have been stealing from others for so many years. "Sneak into the university and steal what one can"—I am convinced that Harney and Moten are speaking of an activity akin to the lines of flight that Deleuze and Guattari once wrote about. Lines of theft that traverse the body of the university, that have cut through the territory of anthropology. Countless times throughout *A Thousand Plateaus,* Deleuze and Guattari speak of existence in terms of lines: "Individual or group, we are traversed by lines…We said that we are composed of lines, three kinds of lines. Or rather, of bundles of lines, for each kind is multiple."[2] Of these three types, lines of flight make possible the invention of new forms of life and the persistence of those lines within an assemblage. Despite what may come to mind from the English word "flight", these lines "never consist in running away from the world but rather in causing runoffs."[3] Rather than a disengagement, they are a certain type of engagement, an activeness: "It is on lines of flight that new weapons are invented."[4]

What does it mean then, in this sense, to steal or to have stolen from the university? If we say quite simply for now that the major tools of the university are its various forms of knowledge and their uses, then stealing here along so many lines of flight does not involve making the tools of the project of enlightenment more available. Neither does this flight

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[2] Ibid., 202.
[3] Ibid., 204.
[4] Ibid.

involve the extension of enlightenment beyond the university's borders and the traditional subjects of enlightenment. In short, what is stolen are not the university's tools but the resources in place to support the production of such tools. As Harney and Moten suggest, we must reject the notion that the university offers a truly enlightening experience while acknowledging the sort of refuge it makes possible. In sneaking into the university, "a single group functions as a line of flight: that group or individual creates the line rather than following it, is itself the living weapon it forges rather than stealing one."[5] The subversive intellectual breaks into and takes refuge within the university in order to construct their own tools for the furthering of projects that have different trajectories than the major projects of the university.

In some sense, it has no doubt been these several lines of flight that have made possible any difference or change that has made its way through anthropology over the latter half of the twentieth century. As such, studying what sorts of thefts have been carried out here in some sense is the same as asking what happened that has transformed the discipline so drastically. Yet at the same time it is precisely these agents of flight or the subjects made possible from such movement that are most likely to deny that any sort of drastic transformation has taken place. Of course, in denying this transformation they are not erasing the sort of disruptive movements that have made their very existence possible, rather they are rejecting the *reflection* of such changes that takes place on a different level, which at the same time attempts to put an end to the continuation of their movements. Another of the three kinds of lines is the line of rigid segmentarity. If lines of flight are the flows that

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[5] Ibid.

cause assemblages to "leak from all directions," then lines of segmentation are the blockages put up in response to such leakages. An assemblage that has been traversed by lines of flight "makes its segments increasingly rigid in order to seal the lines of flight"[6]—a sort of defense against the weapons that are formed as lines of flight break through. Nevertheless, in sealing off lines of flight, the reinforced assemblage is in many respects no longer the same assemblage that it was before. Its rigid segmentation takes a shape from the specific flows that it has most recently obstructed. It is in this sense that one side of the debate can say that anthropology has in fact changed, its altered segmentations tell of a sort of "acceptance" of a number of movements that have broken it out of its old form; yet in the same breath, the other side can dispute that nothing of significance has in fact changed as their movements have been closed off once more by the reformation of the university under a new rigid segmentation.

How then can we adequately take account of the two sides of this debate over the crisis in anthropology, the split between those who have highlighted the sorts of changes that have come and those with a more criminal attitude who argue that not much of substance in fact has changed? Moreover, what could such an account tell us about the desire of those criminals that have found refuge within the discipline, and the sorts of weapons they have hoped to forge? The trouble with focusing on such criminality directly is that in doing so we tend to lose sight of what remains most important to it; its "movement has an essential relation to the imperceptible."[7] Theft as movement can only be grasped "as

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., 281.

the displacement of a moving body or the development of a form."[8] Certainly we can give such an account by providing the movement with a certain form, highlighting key desires, projects and personnel that retrospectively appear to have established its general flow. However, approaching the movement retrospectively we must keep in mind that these ruptures we see in the past have for the most part been re-contained in one way or another. The discipline continues to produce criminal inhabitants who have their origins in these movements of the past so to what extent can we expect for the desires of these movements to have come under adequate consideration, to have been fully incorporated into the disciplinary archive? This is not to discount such accounts from the start but to say that an easier option is available to us at first—"begin with the rigid segmentarity, it's the easiest, it's pregiven."[9]

Two things are perhaps undeniable: that the lines of theft are what bring any substantial change to an academic discipline, and that "the man of power will always want to stop [them], and to this end trap and stabilize the mutation machine."[10] However, such stoppage does not involve taking us back to where we started from, as the mutations have already taken us too far adrift. On this new terrain, it is the rigid segmentation that once again attempts to seal off any lines of flight whether in the name of conservatism or progressivism, as a marker of change that is registered in the form of a debilitating compromise. Thus it is first towards the emergence of rigid segmentations that we should look both as a sign of the change that has come and the reintroduction of a certain form that

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[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid., 204.
[10] Ibid., 229.

remains undesirable—part of the discipline and the university's lingering conservatism. What do efforts, both explicit and implicit, to re-stabilize anthropology at various points throughout the crisis under a specific segmentation tell us about the sort of movement that the field and the university have been willing to "accept" and that which must still be sealed off?

As it relates to the university, we can understand lines of rigid segmentation to be something like what Harney and Moten identify as the "call to order," which functions differently depending on where in the university one attempts to locate it. In terms of the ordering of academic fields and discourses, the call to order would traditionally be something like the disciplinary system within the university and the logic by which the disciplines are organized. However recent efforts by the editors of University of Chicago's *Critical Inquiry,* particularly those by editor James Chandler, have demonstrated that our understanding of the disciplinary system has grown quite uncertain, ever more so as a result of the same "crisis of representation" that permeated much of the humanities and social sciences besides just anthropology. The key issue with this understanding is that something like a call to order has been distanced from our conception of the academic discipline. As an attempt to allow for a more nuanced view of the discipline post-crisis, we have ended up dissociating it from the question of power. Rather than a concerted ordering or organizing of academic discourses and subjects under a specific disciplinary logic, the discipline has been made into merely a banal grounding for academic identities, a mode of belonging within the university that lacks any specific sense or structure. The first part of this thesis then involves an effort to draw out the sort of ambiguity that has come to haunt this understanding of the academic

discipline as it relates to the American research university and to rethink the discipline through the question of power.

What is needed is a return to thinking about the academic discipline as an assemblage that orders and directs the production of academic knowledge in a very specific way. In a similar study to my own, Jafari Allen and Ryan Johnson return to what they call the "decolonizing generation" to trace efforts and movements put forth by some anthropologists in the 80s and 90s intent on decolonizing the practice and the manner in which it produces knowledge. The insurmountable obstacle for a generation that sought "to open the discipline to a wider discursive field and an ever more complete apprehension of our social world" were the "constrained limits into which it had been disciplined."[11] This approach stands opposite to the one above as the discipline is quite rightly thought of as a site of power to be confronted; nevertheless the understanding we are given remains too ambiguous as the disciplining of knowledge is described simply as the limit that holds knowledge in its problematic place. To overcome this shortcoming we must analyze the shifting shape of the disciplinary framework as it threatens to reemerge at various points throughout the crisis. With each return, the segmenting limit on knowledge takes a new form as the combination of constraints, at least some part of which remains undesirable, that produce as an effect a newly ordered academic practice.

As no one would surely deny, such talk of discipline and power in a contemporary landscape always already bears the mark of Foucault. However, it will soon be clear that we must go deeper into Foucault's writing on disciplinary power if we hope to give our

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[11] Allen and Jobson, "The Decolonizing Generation," 133.

understanding of the functions of power in the American research university a greater significance. A return to Foucault will demonstrate that the relatively stable disciplinary system that existed within the university up until the crisis in the 60s was a direct extension, or rather an imminent effect of the general disciplinary regime or diagram of power that is first presented in *Discipline and Punish.* Moreover, we must pay close attention to what Deleuze calls, in his reading of Foucault, "the transience of [the disciplinary] model;"[12] understanding that if the crisis of the American university in the 60s marks the end of a singular disciplinary system within the university it means that a new model of power had already been forming in its wake.

To tell the story of the rigid segmentations, the various calls-to-order, that reemerge within the discipline and the university in and around the crisis, I will attempt to stick to the trajectories of a single anthropologist in Clifford Geertz. Geertz provides an interesting path to follow through the crisis, as not only does his career extend beyond each end of it but also because he has an interesting way of responding to crisis, as can be seen in two key texts from this period: *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973) and *Local Knowledge* (1983). In both texts, he provides a reflection on the state of the field and with that the university more generally at the time of publication. Yet in neither text is this explicitly a meditation of sorts on the magnitude of the problems that either is facing. Instead, he almost always presents a vision of anthropology that is beyond crisis, with a new and promising project ready to be carried out or already in motion. As a "man of power," Geertz is always ready to get back to the work at hand, engaged in a pragmatic anthropology, which we should not mistake for the

[12] Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," 3.

beginnings of a flow or movement but rather its very stoppage, the sealing off of flights and the instauration of order.

The Problem of the Persisting Disciplines

In 2009, the University of Chicago journal *Critical Inquiry* released a special issue titled "The Fate of the Disciplines," marking the third and final part of an "academic trilogy" consisting of special publications and accompanying conferences put together primarily by editors James Chandler and Arnold Davidson. This trilogy began—though at the time a three-part project had not yet been envisioned—in 1994 with the release of a book edited by Chandler, Davidson and Harry Harootunian titled *Questions of Evidence.* This special publication gathered a selection of essays that had appeared in *Critical Inquiry* between 1991 and 1992 as well as responses by University of Chicago faculty. This release was then followed up in 2004 with an issue in the journal edited by Chandler, Davidson and Adrian Johns titled "Arts of Transmission," which was then followed in 2009 by the aforementioned issue. Each part of this academic trilogy had set out in some way to think more intently about the nature and stakes of an ever-shifting academic landscape within the American research university. It is with the most recent issue on the "Fate of the Disciplines" that the ambiguity that has come to haunt our contemporary understanding of the academic discipline is the most apparent however we will shortly see that the inadequacy of this view takes its roots at the outset of this three-part series.

The 2009 issue on "The Fate of the Disciplines" looks to deal with, in the words of Chandler, the "sense of a mismatch in American higher education between, on the one hand,

the developing forms, practices, objects, and communities of scholarship and, on the other, the institutional arrangements that are supposed to advance them."[13] More specifically, one can assume given the title of the issue that the institutional arrangements presumed to be at fault here are the disciplines, which at times have failed to adapt to the changes in contemporary scholarship and have instead maintained a certain rigidity, the result of which is this sense of malaise. Nevertheless, despite the noticeable title, the issue as a whole is not intended to question and potentially write off the discipline as a too antiquated form for contemporary academia. Instead, its purpose is to question the disciplinary framework in a way that allows us to better understand why "accommodations of shifting patterns in and between the disciplines has been managed unevenly across [the American university's] several domains."[14] The first place we may wish to start from in building an understanding of why some disciplines have kept up with the developments in academic life and others have not would be in arriving at a general and working definition of the discipline. Such a definition would allow us to better understand what components of the discipline leave it more equipped to adapt to changes in scholarship and which do not. Unfortunately, arriving at such an understanding appears to be one of the principal obstacles that we have come up against.

In his introductory essay, Chandler attempts to provide a basic definition for the term discipline that would ground the rest of the issue; however in doing so he only further reveals the sort of ambiguity that this word has come to carry. Firstly, he identifies at least

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[13] Chandler, "Introduction," 731–732.
[14] Ibid., 730.

two notions of discipline: a general sense of the word and its significance "in the academic sense." A basic understanding of discipline is taken to mean something like "submission to a regularized set of practices, a sense of imposed ordering of life and thought, body and mind."[15] Whereas discipline in an academic sense is not as straightforward as it "can be taken to mean something less like submission to rules and more like a field of study," and yet, "there remains an important distinction to be made between a discipline and a subject matter."[16] An additional aspect of the academic sense of discipline is the role it plays in situating scholarship within the broader academic field—it "carries with it a sense of something more definable in terms of professional attachment, a sense of belonging."[17] This sense of belonging though derives from the fact that the discipline is responsible for producing academic subjects, ones that must be shaped by a particular discipline before they are able to properly reside within it. As such, the discipline relies upon and operates through "some sort of institutional framework within which whatever regularity they impose [in the production of academic subjects] can be mediated and effected."[18]

From Chandler's description then we walk away with an academic conception of discipline that is less like a specific ordering of practices and more like a common set of academic interests grounded in a sense of belonging, something like a common investment in a general subject matter and all that may come with that. And yet this attachment derives from the discipline's production of subjects through the instituting of a specific regularity. According to Chandler then, though the academic discipline makes use of disciplinary

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[15] Ibid., 732.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid., 733.
[18] Ibid., 734.

techniques in order to produce the proper academic subjects for the field, the field itself is not fully explicable under the straightforward terms of disciplinary power. In other words, there remains an excess within the contemporary academic discipline that is not produced through the systematic ordering of academic knowledges and practices, and as such is not fully defined by any organizing principle. This is the irreducible sense of belonging or identity that Chandler says remains essential to the academic discipline and which stands in contrast to the sorts of attachments and identities that are taken up in specific economies of power in order to carry out certain functions. However, we should not accept on face value that this irreducible excess that Chandler alludes to in fact exists—at least not in any sort of major way by which it would stand as the general ground for an entire academic discipline—and instead ask how it has made its way into our contemporary understanding of the discipline.

In order to do this we ought to return to the first text of *Critical Inquiry's* academic trilogy. The first publication in this trio came at a moment in which the traditional disciplinary system was in a growing state of disarray. As Chandler describes it, the "generative circumstance [of this publication] was really the one described in Clifford Geertz's essay on the 'blurring' of the disciplinary genres in his lifetime."[19] The essay that Chandler is referring to is Geertz's "Blurred Genres" within which he takes account of the changing nature of academic life by which "we more and more see ourselves surrounded by a vast, almost continuous field of variously intended and diversely constructed works" rather than "an array of natural kinds, fixed types divided by qualitative differences."[20] The

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[19] Ibid., 730.

[20] Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, 20–21.

emergence of this vast field coincides with the dissolution of the traditional disciplinary system through which a specific order was given to academic life. In this essay, Geertz highlights the rise of the interpretative modes of analysis traditionally associated with the humanities into the social sciences as the new dominant epistemological framework through which scholarship would proceed. Of course Geertz was not speaking about the entire range of academic work but rather a large portion of it that encompassed the humanities and social sciences. It was within these quarters of the university that distinctions once grounded in disciplinary attachments had now begun to slip away. Precisely what was becoming undone here was the disciplinary system which constituted a general organizing structure that permeated most areas of the university through which academic fields were divided up according to objects of study, methodologies, and theoretical frameworks.

In this sense, the climate within which *Questions of Evidence* was put together is one in which the future of the disciplinary assemblage, as an extension of this disciplinary system, remained uncertain. As such, the turn towards evidence marks an effort to arrive at a new ground for mapping out and reorienting one's self within certain parts of the university. In their introduction, the editor's highlight the crucial role that evidence plays in the production of academic work, and that, despite this central role, it has received an inexplicably limited amount of attention. Part of the reason for this supposed negligence is that "practices for constituting and deploying evidence" have remained largely divided up along disciplinary lines for much of the short history of the American university. Of course this traditional differentiation can no longer be as surely relied upon, and with the academic horizon more and more resembling the sort of vast field that Geertz described, questions of evidence

much too often "devolve into oversimplified debates about who has the evidence and who does not."[21] Thus one of the primary objectives of *QOE*, at least from the editor's perspective, was to arrive at a new mode of differentiating academic work so as to get out of the blurred state the academic horizon had fallen into.

Unfortunately, if the intention of *QOE* was to identify new, more stable modes of differentiating work within the university, rooted in evidentiary protocols, then this effort seems largely insubstantial as two decades later the editors are forced to return to question the persistence of attachments that cannot be reduced to one's notion of legitimate evidence but rather more closely maintain the contours of the traditional disciplinary framework. With the 2009 publication, the editors must come to terms with the fact that evidence would not emerge as the ground for a new system of organization and turn instead to question the lasting disciplinary assemblages that we thought became only arbitrarily enclosed during the crisis but would go on to maintain their shape over time. In fact, it is with this realization that Chandler begins to embrace the ambivalence and arbitrary nature of disciplinary enclosures, at least with regards to the question of power. It was the disciplinary system that ordered and organized the disciplines to take a certain non-arbitrary shape. Thus with the demise of the disciplinary system and the continued endurance of the academic discipline, Chandler turns to ask what beyond a specific type of power gives the academic discipline its shape, or at the very least sustains the inherited shape it has come to carry. This is precisely the sort of questioning offered up in the introduction to "The Fate of the Disciplines," as Chandler says, "A discipline…carries with it a sense of something more permanent and less

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[21] Chandler, Davidson, and Harootunian, *Questions of Evidence*, 2.

procedural, something perhaps more definable in terms of professional attachment, a sense of belonging"[22]—that irreducible excess that finds its way into our definition of the academic discipline.

Yet this definition seems to invoke something like the "metaphysics of substance" that Judith Butler reminds us must be abandoned. Although she defines it as it relates to sexuality, her brief definition remains helpful here. The metaphysics of substance involves the presumption of a substantive being "who is the bearer of various essential and nonessential attributes."[23] Is this not the presumption that Chandler makes in defining the discipline as he endows it with a "more permanent" sense of belonging? In contrast to the metaphysics of substance, she proposes for us to take identity "as a shifting and contextual phenomenon" that "does not denote a substantive being, but a relative point of convergence among culturally and historically specific sets of relations."[24] In other words, that identity is always already caught up in and produced by a "matrix of power" rather than standing outside of it. On second view then, Chandler's definition seems to present us with two different modes of questioning the discipline: a substantive questioning that presumes an identity that stands outside of disciplinary procedures and a relational questioning that turns directly towards these procedures in order to locate the grounding source of any attachments. Certainly Chandler is sympathetic to the first approach but how would we define the academic discipline differently in the aftermath of the crisis if we returned to questioning its existence as it takes shape within a specific matrix of power?

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[22] Chandler, "Introduction," 733.
[23] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 14.
[24] Ibid.

The Discipline and Other Modes of Mapping

In his short essay titled "Postscript on the Societies of Control," Deleuze takes account of the sort of crisis that had been disrupting disciplinary environments and societies since just after the Second World War. While he does not speak specifically here of the sort of disciplinary environment the research university had been before its moment of crisis, such a connection remains plausible and will prove to be a productive one. In his analysis, Deleuze commends Foucault's description and recognition of "the transience of [the disciplinary] model."[25] Such is to say that disciplinary power does not maintain a permanent or timeless effectiveness on societies but rather is a specific regime of power that came into dominance in the wake of sovereign power and itself will in turn most likely be overtaken at some point in time. In fact, the lasting sense of crisis that had been felt during the latter half of the twentieth century points to the fact that this day may have already been at hand. As Deleuze describes it: "in their turn the disciplines underwent a crisis to the benefit of new forces that were gradually instituted...a disciplinary society was what we already no longer were, what we had ceased to be."[26] One regime of power gives way to another; the former comes apart as the latter has already taken roots and is beginning to expand. Such is the understanding of power that is left out of Chandler's questioning of the discipline. For Chandler, the disciplinary system becomes undone and the discipline continues to live on outside of this matrix of power. In contrast to this, we ought to presume that if the disciplinary model no longer maintains a dominating hold over life, it is because a new

[25] Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," 3.
[26] Ibid.

power has already taken its place. It is this new power, which comes in the wake of discipline, that must be interrogated if we hope to understand how academic identities are continuously being made up. In fact, we can take our lead from "Blurred Genres" as well, as long as we read it differently than it has been above, placing an emphasis on Geertz's assertion that: "what we are seeing is not just another redrawing of the cultural map—the moving of a few disputed borders…but an alteration of the principles of mapping."[27] This is not to say that we are left without a map after the blurring of disciplines, but that a new principle of mapping has already taken hold; we are already caught up in a new map, a new rigid segmentation that asks us to perform somewhat differently than we were made to before.

In starting down this new path, it remains necessary to deal with the work of Foucault, a figure that has haunted any discussion of discipline(s) since the 70s, yet who has been dealt with only to a minor extent so far in this discussion. Returning to Foucault will provide us with the necessary language to think of this specific crisis in the American university as the movement from one regime of power to another. To his credit, Chandler makes reference to the sort of impact Foucault has had on our understanding of discipline, saying, "Disciplinarity itself was a troubled term, not least, perhaps, by the shadow of Foucault's influential reconception of discipline between *The Order of Things* (1965) and *Discipline and Punish* (1975)."[28] However, I would fault Chandler for constraining Foucault's reconceptualization of discipline primarily to the time period between these two major works

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[27] Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, 20.
[28] Chandler, "Introduction," 737.

as his continued return to the question of discipline in his lectures at the College de France after the publication of *Discipline and Punish* prove especially useful for our purposes, as I will attempt to demonstrate shortly. Additionally, Chandler's suggestion that Foucault's work on discipline made it a "troubled term," causing a sort of anxiety about remaining disciplinary within the university is to deal with Foucault only in terms of the sort of existential angst he produced—he says immediately following the quote on Foucault that "what was needed, in short, was the space of the interdisciplinary."[29] Moreover, it suggests, at least inadvertently, that Foucault's notion of discipline was principally a vilification of disciplinary practices, thus if one is trying to salvage a sense of discipline for the university then Foucault's understanding is less needed. Chandler's willingness to engage Foucault in this simplistic manner hints at his conviction that the notion of discipline he is interested in questioning and the one Foucault deals with are of differing kinds, and that the stigma of the latter should not impact how we approach the former—however this effort seems not to stand up to a more complete reading of Foucault's work. To what extent is Foucault's description of disciplinary power relevant to the academic discipline that assembles within the university? Pursuing such a line of questioning will show that Chandler's attempt, even if it is not explicitly stated, to distance his notion of discipline from Foucault's is an unnecessary complication that encapsulates the sort of ambiguity that discussions on the academic discipline have come to carry. Finally, we will see that it is through Foucault that a more effective answer to the question of the fate of the disciplines can be reached.

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[29] Ibid., 738.

Firstly, it is worth recalling that Foucault thought of discipline as a specific diagram of power, and he defined a diagram as, "a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form; its functioning, abstracted from any obstacle, resistance or friction...represented as a pure architectural and optical system."[30] It is discipline in a diagrammatic sense that Chandler can so easily define in almost the same way that Foucault once did: recalling that for Chandler it involves the "submission to a regularized set of practices, a sense of imposed ordering of life and thought, body and mind;"[31] for Foucault, "a domain of objects, a set of methods, a corpus of propositions considered to be true, a play of rules and definitions, of techniques and instruments."[32] Thus, it is only in applying or adapting this term to the academic context, the university assemblage, that the ambiguity arises—at least such is the case for Chandler.

Yet it is important to remember the nature of the relationship between a specific diagram of power and the concrete assemblages that a particular type of power functions through. In Deleuze's essay on Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* titled *A New Cartographer*, he says, "the diagram acts as a non-unifying immanent cause that is coextensive with the whole social field: the abstract machine is like the cause of the concrete assemblages that execute its relations."[33] In this sense, the regime of power that dominates a particular social field is visible in the very movements and relations that make the assemblage up insofar as this power functions immanently as "an abstract machine" that "makes others see and speak."[34]

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[30] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 205.
[31] Chandler, "Introduction," 732.
[32] Foucault, "The Order of Discourse," 59.
[33] Deleuze, *Foucault*, 37.
[34] Ibid., 34.

Thus, holding on to the definition of discipline that we get from Foucault, there should be little ambiguity as one moves from the abstract to the concrete; in fact, "there is a correlation or mutual presupposition between cause and effect, between abstract machine and concrete assemblages."[35] In other words, if discipline is the specific sort of power that animates the life of the research university, then this should be evident in the ways in which bodies within this assemblage behave.

Of course the argument could be made that disciplinary power never takes hold of the university to the same extent as it did the prison, the factory, the military barracks, or those sites of education before the level at which academic research takes place—the well-known examples which Foucault explicitly touches upon in *Discipline and Punish.* However here one sees the trouble in constraining Foucault's work on discipline to the works that Chandler marks out. If we look at Foucault's lectures at the College de France shortly after the publication of *Discipline and Punish,* we see that he gives us a brief description of the involvement of disciplinary power in the establishment of the research university. Towards the end of the eighth lecture from *Society Must Be Defended*, he speaks briefly about the "disciplining of knowledges" that took place at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. He says that what we see at this time is the attempted homogenization of a multiplicity of different knowledges that were constantly in struggle with one another. It is at the cost of this multiplicity of knowledges that a more efficient organization of knowledge begins to emerge. The sort of organizing project that eventually

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[35] Ibid., 37.

takes hold is the disciplinary regime, with the four main goals of "selection, normalization, hierarchicalization, [and] centralization."[36]

Under these four mechanisms or techniques, knowledge is organized through (1) the elimination or disqualification of certain knowledges, (2) the normalization of included knowledges that "makes it possible to fit them together, to make them communicate with one another," (3) "the hierarchical classification of knowledges" that connects the most general forms of knowledge with the most particular ones, (4) and "a pyramidal centralization that allows these knowledges to be controlled."[37] These four mechanisms are fundamental to the disciplinary diagram, and their effects can be seen on the enclosed disciplines that form as a result of them. In order to maintain their enclosed status, a particular discipline utilizes processes of elimination and selection in order "to eradicate false knowledge or nonknowledge."[38] The enclosed disciplines "were then arranged, made to communicate with one another, redistributed, and organized into a hierarchy within a sort of overall field or overall discipline that was known specifically as science."[39] In this sense, the disciplinary project can be understood as the organization of each included knowledge into its own disciplinary domain, homogenizing the sort of contents or forms that knowledge can take, and giving them a centralized location and a specific ordering under the domain of science. With the understanding of this process of disciplining, Foucault says we can make better sense of "the appearance of the university," by which he means "the emergence of something like a sort of great uniform apparatus of knowledges, with its different stages, its

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[36] Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 181.
[37] Ibid., 180.
[38] Ibid., 181.
[39] Ibid., 182.

different extensions, its different levels, and its pseudopodia."[40] The university becomes the centralized space where the disciplines are gathered, with the role of "homogeniz[ing] knowledges by establishing a sort of scientific community with a recognized status."[41]

It nevertheless remains the case that Foucault here is dealing explicitly with the rise of the "Napoleonic university" after the French revolution, which was said to stand largely in contrast to the Humboldt model that appeared in Berlin[42] and that Chandler says the American university had been modeled after.[43] While I confess that I am unable to give an extensive account of the differences between these two university models, it nonetheless appears to be the case that the two are similar enough so that the sort of disciplinary mechanics Foucault identifies in the formation of the Napoleonic university can likewise be identified in the Humboldt model. A short publication by Wilhelm von Humboldt titled "On the Internal and External Organization of the Higher Scientific Institutions in Berlin," begins with the assertion that "the notion of the higher scientific institutions…is based on the ideas that they are destined to work on science in the deepest and broadest sense of the word."[44] Moreover, this work of science, which must remain fundamental for the university to fulfill its purpose, is only possible through a certain mode of "cooperation":

> "…not merely in that one fills in what another lacks, but in that the successful work of one inspires the others, and that the general, original

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[40] Ibid., 182–183.
[41] Ibid., 183.
[42] Rüegg, *A History of the University in Europe. Volume III.*, III:47.
[43] Chandler, "Introduction," 735.
[44] Von Humboldt, "On the Internal and External Organization of the Higher Scientific Institutions in Berlin," 1.

> power that shines forth in the individual person only singly or deflected becomes visible to all, the internal organization of these institutions must bring forth and sustain a collaboration that is uninterrupted, constantly self-renewing, but unforced and without specific purpose."[45]

While Humboldt's ideal university seems to appeal to a sort of openness, eschewing any deliberate programming—insofar as it remains "unforced and without specific purpose"—we can justifiably assume that in practice a certain mechanization takes hold that makes this cooperation possible. A *selecting* must occur as the university becomes the institutional site of science and thus disqualifies any knowledge that exists outsides its domain. A *normalization* of knowledge contents so that they can remain available and communicable to other fields within the university. Lastly, a *hierarchical classification* ultimately forms as knowledge is arranged with the purpose being "to derive everything from an original principle (through which the explanations of nature are elevated, for example, into dynamic, organic, and finally psychic ones in the broadest meaning)."[46] Thus, while the Humboldtian university may lack the sort of centralized control found in the Napoleonic university, with the more dominant role of the State, its internal structure is still organized by similar disciplinary mechanisms. Although speaking over a century later, Fred Moten provides an interesting anecdotal perspective on the issue of centralized control as he says, in comparing his experience in the American system to his writing partner's exposure to a more European model, "What I think we have here [in the United States] is a situation in which

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[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid., 3.

the presumption that the necessity of the call to order is so powerful that they can pretty much count on people issuing it. But they don't have to check up on you."[47]

At the moment of its inception, then, we can say that the American university was in fact disciplinary in the Foucauldian sense of the word. It was tasked with selecting certain disciplined knowledges, homogenizing, centralizing, and ordering them into a hierarchy under the domain of science. Moreover, within the university resided the disciplines that enclosed themselves on a specific knowledge and established criteria, methods and procedures for producing that knowledge. Disciplinary power here operates on a different level than the one on which we are used to seeing it. This is not the (auto-)manipulation of human bodies towards a pre-established set of norms, though certainly this takes place elsewhere within this institution and for the same purposes. Rather, it involves bringing the university to life and giving it a specific shape. The body of the university goes to work on itself in accordance with certain principles of mapping—the university and its disciplines as the concrete effects of the disciplinary regime of mapping. This is a history that Chandler would quite likely accept as he himself recounts the successful establishment of the American model, inspired by Humboldt's, which involved a specific "founding scheme" and the organization of the arts and sciences into separate departments. In fact, it is this disciplinary system, as Chandler himself calls it, that had "seen a particularly profound disturbance"[48] with the start of the crisis sometime around the 60s.

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[47] Ibid., 127.

[48] Chandler, "Introduction," 736.

The primary difficulty that arises in continuing this analysis beyond the crisis of the disciplinary regime is that the university no longer stands as the site of a cohesive and all-encompassing disciplinary system. Let us recall one of Chandler's initial descriptions of the contemporary university: "The American university's accommodation of shifting patterns in and between the disciplines has been managed unevenly across its several domains."[49] That is to say that in the latter half of the twentieth century a splintering had emerged at the heart of the university. In one region, there are those domains that have more adequately accommodated shifting trends and as such have been more able to continue with their normal practices. These are the fields that have been able to respond to the challenges posed during the middle of the century and nevertheless have been able to re-differentiate themselves and the specific knowledge projects they have taken up. In a sense then, for this portion of the university we have a continuation or reiteration of the disciplinary model, perhaps under a newly substantiated scientific domain.

On the other side of this splintering, we have those fields that Chandler says have adapted more poorly during the post-1960s period. These are the disciplines making up the humanities and social sciences, where Chandlers says, "changes have not been as radical."[50] While never explicitly stating the sort of changes he finds lacking, an idea can be gleaned in how he describes part of the problem. He says, "it has not been uncommon…to find senior administrative officers charged with reviewing personnel cases observing that they might have difficulty knowing which…came from which department were they not labeled

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[49] Ibid., 730.
[50] Ibid., 736.

accordingly."[51] That is to say that these fields have not adequately differentiated themselves since the blurring of genres and as such have yet to be re-inscribed under the more familiar disciplinary model; instead, they remain on the other side of this fissure. Nevertheless, we must remember that this other side is not an outside relative to the influence of power but simply the site of a new model of power at work within the university. As such, in order to catch sight of this new matrix of power, we must narrow our focus to these fields, bracketing for now those disciplines that appear to be in a healthier state.

The second issue we come up against in using Foucault to carry out this analysis is that he never writes as exhaustive of a description for this new regime of power as he did for disciplinary or sovereign power before it. There simply is no text as comprehensive as *Discipline and Punish* that describes the sort of regime of power to come next. Foucault does begin to sketch out a description in his lectures at the College de France, however the image we are left with remains largely incomplete. As such, in order to proceed along this line of thought, we must attempt to continue the sort of sketching that Foucault has started, returning to his lectures as they will help us establish a preliminary outline for the diagram of power we are hoping to more fully draw out. For this reason it becomes necessary at this time to return our general study of the crisis in the university to a more specific example or set of examples that will give it a much-needed texture and fill in for where Foucault's description remains lacking.

As such, I will now further narrow my focus and attempt to give a specific history of this crisis in the American university as it plays out within the discipline of anthropology,

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[51] Ibid.

considering it as the transition from one regime of power to another—the emergence of a new call to order in the place of one that has become outdated. More specifically I will look at the career of Clifford Geertz who by no means speaks for any majority of anthropologists but nonetheless has played a substantial role in how the crisis has been interpreted. However I am not primarily interested, like Chandler, to see what Geertz has to say about the crisis itself, instead, I think his peculiarity rests in the manner in which he responds to crisis. Throughout his career, Geertz responds to a general crisis in anthropology by acknowledging it and then immediately attempting to move past it. At two critical points in his career, the early 70s and early 80s respectively, Geertz reflects on the discipline in a state of crisis never in order to intensify the criticisms taken up against it but simply to move the field forward. His two major reflections on anthropology, which come a decade apart from one another—*The Interpretation of Cultures* in 1973 and *Local Knowledge* in 1983—are always of an academic practice ready to begin its work again, of course having undergone some necessary changes. It is in these moments when Geertz attempts to reboot an anthropological practice that we can catch a glimpse of a new model of power emerging. Not in the sense that Geertz in some way is its mastermind, instituting a new era of order for the field, but that he himself appears merely as one of its more rigid effects.

The Crisis in Anthropology

The now famous essay that appears at the beginning of Geertz's 1973 *Interpretation of Cultures* titled "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture" certainly was not written during a completely stable time for the discipline of anthropology. In fact, the essay was written specifically for the publication of this text, which situates it well within the

period of the crisis, at least according to the timeline we get from anthropologist Matti Bunzl in his article "Anthropology Beyond Crisis." Bunzl argues that the general sense of malaise which plagued anthropology throughout the 50s and 60s was transformed "into a full-blown crisis" in 1967 with the publication of Bronislaw Malinowski's fieldwork diaries. According to Bunzl, Malinowski's diaries revealed the ways in which the imperial project frustrated his work and the concerns he had with regards to the power imbalance between the anthropologist and their interlocutors. These issues exposed the fallible nature of the "ethnographer's magic," which up to this time had "served as the founding myth [for] a discipline whose pragmatic realities rested on the objectifying possibilities of cultural relativism."[52] Beyond these primarily intra-disciplinary issues, we also have the emergence of postmodern modes of thinking, which Jean-François Lyotard lays out quite succinctly and sufficiently, at least for our current purposes, in the Introduction to *The Postmodern Condition*:

> "I will use *modern* to designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse of this kind making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative, such as the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth."[53]
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> "Simplifying to the extreme, I define *postmodern* as incredulity toward metanarratives."[54]

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[52] Bunzl, "Anthropology Beyond Crisis," 188.
[53] Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, xxiii.
[54] Ibid., xxiv.

Thus, thinking back to Foucault's description of the disciplinary system, which he says relies on a centralizing scientific project, we can see that the concept of science that the modern disciplinary system relied on, with its various attempts at formulating a universal narrative, was itself in a state of crisis. It is within this context that Geertz is writing this essay and assembling this text, and with it he in many ways is attempting to salvage the discipline of anthropology, and perhaps even the disciplinary system in general, by situating the work of anthropology within a new "scientific" project.

This break between the modern scientific project and a potential postmodern science and the space that anthropology may occupy within each becomes more apparent if we consider Geertz's text alongside the more modernist agenda found in Clyde Kluckhohn's *Mirror For Man,* which Geertz almost explicitly writes in the shadows of. Geertz came to learn much about anthropology from his Harvard professor, which is not to neglect the fact that his "Thick Description" essay marks a crucial break from Kluckhohn's version of anthropology. In the first chapter of Kluckhohn's text, we get a clear depiction of the sort of scientific domain that the discipline of anthropology resided in at the time. It is commonly understood that much of anthropology then was fixated on an otherness that was demarcated at the cultural level; a foundational tenet of the anthropological paradigm was the belief that there are so many cultures populating the earth and each of them maintains an order within themselves, forming some sort of cohesive whole. Yet at no point was the field, at least in terms of its strict disciplinary purpose, ever content to "merely produce exotic and

amusing facts which have nothing to do with the problems of here and now."[55] Rather, anthropology maintained a proper place within a universal scientific project:

> "Only when we find out just how men who have had different upbringing, who come from different physical stocks, who speak different languages, who live under different physical conditions, meet their problems, can we be sure as to what all human beings have in common. Only then can we claim scientific knowledge of raw human nature."[56]

To discover a raw, universal human nature was the overarching scientific project that anthropology along with a number of other humanistic and social sciences were centralized under. As to the question of why anthropology ought to have been included as a legitimate type of knowledge, Kluckhohn's answer is straightforward: "The primitive society is the closest to laboratory conditions the student of man can ever hope to get."[57] In other words, anthropologists were able to claim domain over a specific field of knowledge that was necessary to the scientific mission of the university.

If we look towards the internal structure of Kluckhohn's anthropology, the disciplinary framework he worked under remains equally as clear. Broadly speaking, Kluckhohn's principle object of interest was "Culture," understood as "the total life way of a people, the social legacy the individual acquires from his group."[58] Nevertheless, culture as

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[55] Kluckhohn, *Mirror For Man; The Relation of Anthropology to Modern Life*, 7.
[56] Ibid., 9.
[57] Ibid., 14.
[58] Ibid., 17.

an object is something that "one never sees,"[59] instead what remains visible are a people's habitual or ritualistic behaviors as well as the material artifacts that they have possessed and produced. Moreover, one must remember that "the full significance of any single element in a culture design will be seen only when that element is viewed in the total matrix of its relationship to other elements."[60] Thus it is the job of the anthropologist to closely observe a people, identify and record the range of their cultural elements, and transform these recorded notes into a holistic account that can then be interpreted and drawn upon for various purposes. In this sense, we have two distinct knowledge projects that are situated on different levels of importance within the hierarchical university and yet work in tandem with one another, one specific to the discipline in culture and the other the grand narrative that encompasses all the disciplines in the human and social sciences. Furthermore, within the discipline we can imagine a set of methods and protocols for acquiring and evaluating collected cultural artifacts and the holistic accounts that are produced from them. If one desired to go further, I am certain that they would discover patterns in the ways anthropologists would present their knowledge in order to make it communicable to the other disciplines within the university.

Moving now to Geertz's 1973 text, the question to be asked is what sort of academic assemblage he is attempting to situate himself within. Of course, as will be seen, the answer is quite complicated, and an argument can be made that Geertz' vision for the discipline in many ways fails to fully develop, an argument that is perhaps proven with the publication of

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[59] Ibid., 22.
[60] Ibid., 34.

the '83 text and the direction it will eventually pull us in. Like Kluckhohn, the primary object for Geertz is "culture," which he understood in a semiotic sense, borrowing from Max Weber but not untouched by the influence of Kluckhohn, as those "webs of significance [man] himself has spun," and now finds himself "suspended in."[61] The primary difference between Geertz and Kluckhohn, at least in terms of the broader disciplinary landscape has to do with the kind of science they both fall under. Whereas Kluckhohn's anthropology aimed to study difference in order to find a common order, a universal human nature, Geertz's anthropology comes as a response to the failures of this project, "Having sought complexity and, on a scale grander than they ever imagined, found it, anthropologists became entangled in a tortuous effort to order it. And the end is not yet in sight."[62] Without flatly rejecting the possibility of universal characteristics or the discovery of a single order underlying the practices of man, Geertz wants to move the conversation in a less reductive direction by asking "whether such universals should be taken as the central elements in the definition of man, whether a lowest-common-denominator view of humanity is what we want anyway."[63] Thus we arrive at Geertz' vision of a new "scientific" project. This project is a science of *man* rather than of *Man*, "to discover what man amounts to, we can only find it in what men are: and what men are, above all things, is various."[64] In this sense, the overwhelming diversity that anthropologists have stumbled upon has without a doubt

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[61] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 5.
[62] Ibid., 34.
[63] Ibid., 43.
[64] Ibid., 52.

complicated modern science's universal aspirations but beyond that it has opened up the door to a new project that seeks a new sense of totality in the plurality of human existence.

Turning away from this broader disciplinary domain towards the intra-disciplinary details of Geertz' anthropology, we find it becomes harder to pinpoint exactly what sort of organization of knowledge Geertz is attempting to establish. In other words, whether his anthropological practice appeals to the organizing principles of disciplinary power or one of a different nature. In one sense, he gives us a specific methodology for anthropological work: thick description, a phrase he borrows from Gilbert Ryle. Anthropologists are chiefly ethnographers, and in their ethnographic work they face "a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit."[65] The task of the anthropologist is to try to capture signs of these structures in those fleeting moments when they find themselves exposed to the culture in motion—"The ethnographer 'inscribes' social discourse; *he writes it down.* In so doing, he turns it from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscriptions and can be reconsulted."[66] The ethnographer here interprets a culture both in observing it and recording it as they arrive at a finite set of elements or signs to represent in their written account. From Geertz's perspective, this is how anthropological knowledge is produced and, when done sufficiently, the scientific project is further advanced as a result of the expansion of "the universe of

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[65] Ibid., 10.
[66] Ibid., 19.

human discourse"[67] insofar as we then have a greater understanding of man's untold variations.

Yet there is another problem here that moves Geertz further away from Kluckhohn as well as perhaps the general dynamics of the disciplinary diagram. This problem stems from the reliability and verifiability of ethnographic description. As Geertz says, "what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to."[68] In other words, anthropological texts are first and foremost a fiction; they construct the cultural image they experience both in observing and recording it. If the role of anthropology within this new science is to unlock the symbolic structures of a culture in order to capture and record its singularity, then a disciplinary problem arises when it is revealed that this content is essentially a product of one's own making. This is precisely the sort of problem anthropology, among other fields, has been struggling to deal with since the demise of representationalism. Nevertheless, Geertz wants to argue that, yes, anthropological accounts of culture are "fictions, in the sense that they are 'something made,' 'something fashioned'...[but] not that they are false, unfactual, or merely 'as if' thought experiments."[69] And while this point may very well be true, the line between factish-fictions and false-fictions appears to be only ambiguously determinable, and it is precisely this dividing line that remains crucial to a disciplines foundation. A discipline, in the strict sense of the term, is founded on the inclusion of certain knowledges and the exclusion of others based on whether or not they satisfy the discipline's objectives.

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[67] Ibid., 14.
[68] Ibid., 9.
[69] Ibid., 15.

It is in this aspect of Geertz's anthropology that one can see signs that the disciplinary diagram has begun to unravel, at least from an anthropological perspective. To his credit, Geertz himself questions the validity of anthropological interpretation and, as far as one can tell, seems to be relatively satisfied with the answer he is able to provide:

> "A good interpretation of anything—a poem, a person, a history, a ritual, an institution, a society—takes us into the heart of that of which it is the interpretation. When it does not do that, but leads us instead somewhere else—into an admiration of its own elegance, of its author's cleverness, or of the beauties of Euclidean order—it may have its intrinsic charms; but it is something else than what the task at hand...calls for."[70]

Rather than being marked by a number of established disciplinary protocols that would legitimize the ethnographic text and guarantee its inclusion within the discipline, the legitimacy of an ethnographic interpretation can be decided simply by determining whether or not it "takes us into the heart of that of which it is the interpretation." Of course I do not intend to present this aspect of Geertz' position as lacking in seriousness or discernment, as he took the issue of the adequacy of ethnographic description quite seriously and valued "long-term, mainly (though not exclusively) qualitative, highly participative, and almost obsessively fine-comb[ed] field study."[71] Instead, what I have intended to demonstrate is that, for Geertz, the production of anthropological knowledge cannot be prefigured by a set of established and homogenized practices nor certain evaluative criteria, which is not to say

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[70] Ibid., 18.
[71] Ibid., 23.

that these characteristics will not appear in time but simply that anthropology does not begin with them at hand as a dictate to the practice. Thus, Geertz' vision of anthropology in *The Interpretation of Cultures* is a difficult one to explain seamlessly within the disciplinary model. On the one hand, as is characteristic of discipline, anthropology aspires to remain part of a general knowledge project in "the science of man." Yet within the discipline itself, the production of knowledge takes on a greater ambiguity as ethnographic practices can no longer be sufficiently prefigured by a set of protocols and criteria that would allow it to reliably produce certain knowledges that have been identified at the start but not yet ascertained. As such, the publication of Geertz' 1973 text provides an interesting marker for the history of the transformation of the organization of anthropology as an academic field insofar as Geertz's vision of anthropology, regardless of whether or not we deem it a successful one, seems to straddle the line between discipline and the moment at which this diagram of power begins to come undone.

Geertz's 1983 text *Local Knowledge* was published during a time period in which Bunzl says we see the emergence of new visions of anthropology beyond the crisis. But what sort of academic horizon do these visions emerge within? Geertz gives us an idea early on in the introduction to this text as he reflects on the pluralistic attitude that had swept through the humanities and social sciences as of late. He says, "Whether this is because it is too soon to hope for unified science or too late to believe in it is, I suppose, debatable. But it has never seemed further away, harder to imagine, or less certainly desirable than it does right now."[72] Anthropology appears at this moment to exist within the university at a time where a general

[72] Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, 4.

or comprehensive scientific project appears if not impossible, at the very least unwanted. "The Sociology is not About to Begin, as Talcott Parsons once half-factitiously announced. It is scattering into frameworks."[73]

"Scattering into frameworks" stands as an interesting way to describe the sorts of changes being dealt to this section of the university for a couple of reasons. For starters, the opening essay in this text is the aforementioned "Blurred Genres," which we recall was intended to "cast doubt upon the force of the distinction"[74] between the humanities and the social sciences. As such, at the same time as the humanities and social sciences grew more and more to resemble one another, they were at the same time respectively being broken up into so many different parts. The second peculiarity of this description is that the "scattering into frameworks" of academic work is precisely what we are accustomed to seeing within the university under the disciplinary model. However, Geertz is quick to clarify that though the academic fields remain differentiated, we cannot or should not "attempt to...locate them at some definite latitude and longitude in scholarly space."[75] Thus, without the presence of any general scientific domain nor the need nor want to map out the still-divided academic landscape in any deliberate manner, it is clear that the disciplinary model no longer maintained its dominance within this section of the university; it had lost its grip. Yet Geertz understood that with the passing of disciplinary power, the academic horizon would not quickly revert back to any sort of undifferentiated mass. Rather we were left with a still fragmented multiplicity and these fragments in turn had maintained a certain activeness or

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[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid., 7.
[75] Ibid., 8.

purposiveness in the post-disciplinary era of the university. What remains unclear is exactly what sort of fragments these fields become and on what basis they would remain closed off from one another.

Before seeing what Geertz offers up in response to these questions, we ought to pivot back towards Foucault for a moment in order to familiarize ourselves with the sort of outline he begins to sketch of the model of power that emerges after discipline. In the first lecture from the *Security, Territory, Population* lectures given in 1978, Foucault speaks explicitly of *security* as a new regime of power that was beginning to establish a set of relations and as such produce a certain kind of life within various social assemblages similarly to how sovereignty and discipline once did before it. Foucault provides a number of key characteristics for this new diagram of power, which are demonstrated through the ways in which the problem of town planning had been carried out from one regime to the next. While the term security seems to be a quite unusual one for thinking about the organization of academic knowledges, we can take comfort in the fact that Foucault himself was quite dissatisfied with this word and that we are only looking to use it here for a general diagram, in order to lay the groundwork for our study. In addition to security, we can refer to this new regime as the "government of populations," which may prove more appropriate as it relates to the university.

The first critical difference between discipline and security has to do with the sort of space that the two models are respectively associated with. Disciplines use of space involves the "*constitution of an empty, closed space* within which artificial multiplicities are to be constructed and organized according to the principle of hierarchy, precise communication of

relations of power, and functional effects specific to their distribution."[76] We see this at work in the modern university's initial emergence through which it opens up an empty space that will host the domain of science, which will then be divided up and populated by the enclosed disciplines. With security, on the other hand, "there is no longer any question of construction within an empty or emptied space," instead it "will rely on a number of material givens."[77] In other words, there is "no question of reconstructing everything, or of imposing a symbolic form that could ensure the function, but [rather] projects in which something precise and concrete was [already] at stake."[78] This fairly accurately describes much of the humanities and social sciences in the bounce back from the crisis, where there is no new "founding scheme"[79] but rather a series of fields and practices that one already finds in place. Secondly, the ambition of disciplinary power is to reconstruct until one "arrive[s] at a point of perfection."[80] Lyotard's definition of the modern condition can be recalled here, where one sees a single grand narrative being replaced by another in pursuit of a more perfect science. Security, on the other hand, does not concern itself with the question of perfection, as there are too many givens to account for. Rather, "it is simply a matter of maximizing the positive elements, for which one provides the best possible circulation, and of minimizing what is risky and inconvenient."[81] Lastly, the space of security maintains an opening, as it "will not be conceived or planned according to a static perception that would ensure the perfection of the function there and then, but will open onto a future that is not exactly

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[76] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 17. (Emphasis added).
[77] Ibid., 19.
[78] Ibid., 18.
[79] Chandler, "Introduction," 736.
[80] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 19.
[81] Ibid.

controllable"[82] nor foreseeable. While this definition currently remains too general and seemingly inconsequential for our purposes, as we return to Geertz's '83 text these diagrammatical points will be given a much-needed density.

In the seventh essay in *Local Knowledge,* titled "The Way We Think Now: Ethnography of Modern Thought," Geertz attempts to take account of the sort of impact the pluralistic attitude described above has had on contemporary modes of thinking. Reading this essay with Foucault's description of this new regime of power in mind, the extent to which Geertz begins to take on the same sort of language that is used in describing the planning involved in security is quite remarkable. For starters, the remaining fragments or fields within the university after the crisis are now to be taken as "more than just intellectual coigns of vantage but...ways of being in the world...forms of life...or varieties of noetic experience."[83] Each academic discipline becomes a life, a social world, or perhaps even a town onto itself, which manifests two interrelated points that are fundamental to security. Firstly, we see the naturalization of the academic discipline and the work carried out within it; what Foucault calls, "the sudden emergence of the problem of the 'naturalness' of the human species within an artificial milieu."[84] That is to say that before this time, the academic discipline as an artificial space within the American university was constructed through "the form of need, insufficiency, or weakness;"[85] anthropology sustained itself as one of those spaces insofar as it could purport to tell us something we did not know about man. In

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[82] Ibid., 20.
[83] Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, 155.
[84] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 22.
[85] Ibid.

contrast, through this naturalization, the milieu is no longer constructed but already found in existence, considered a natural type of academic existence; it "now appears as the intersection between a multiplicity of living individuals working and coexisting with each other in a set of material elements that act on them and on which they act in turn."[86] Secondly, each naturalized discipline has a number or sets of given elements such as a specific language, a field of objects, a range of practices, solidified relationships and connections, etc., that go into making up both how one comes to know the world and the specific world they come to know. The discipline transforms from an assemblage of individuals, disciplined with similar skill sets and a technical expertise, into a general population. In each of its iterations as a naturalized subjectivity after the crisis, it constitutes a "variousness beyond the merely professional realms of subject matter, method, technique, scholarly tradition, and the like, to the larger framework of our moral existence."[87] Or as Foucault puts it, the population as a form of subjectivity, which appears under apparatuses of security, "varies with the moral or religious values associated with [its] different kinds of conduct."[88]

Remaining within the space of the discipline itself, we now see that a point of emphasis is being placed on the fact that each discipline consists of some set of normal circulations, what Geertz calls life cycles, that are useful for "marking states and relationships almost everyone [passing through this milieu] experiences."[89] These cycles, two of which he

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[86] Ibid.
[87] Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, 161.
[88] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 71.
[89] Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, 158.

identifies as the career pattern and the maturation cycle, are useful in that they "provide at least reasonably fixed points in the swirl of our material."[90] Anthropologist George Marcus, no doubt a man of power of comparable distinction as Geertz from the era of crisis, has described an interesting sort of life cycle perhaps unique to anthropology whereby "there is a distinct break between first and second projects of research."[91] These first projects consist of a much more traditional sort of anthropological work, "fieldwork with the aim of making a contribution to the world ethnographic archive."[92] The second project tends to come as a "break point with the initial career-making and conservative-trending research project when the scholar attempts to do something very different than what he or she was trained to do." [93] What is peculiar to both Geertz's and Marcus's fascination with life cycles is that they are no longer speaking of individuals and mandatory performances but rather certain trends at the level of the general population.

Foucault tells us that whereas disciplinary power concerns itself with individual "bodies capable of performances, and of required performances," under security, "one tries to affect, precisely a population."[94] This shift in focus involves a corresponding shift in the techniques most important for each regime of power, a move from techniques of normation to those of normalization. While normalization is typically associated with disciplinary power, Foucault says that we ought to think of the mechanisms of discipline more in terms of normation. Normation separates the normal from the abnormal by "positing a model, an

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[90] Ibid.
[91] Marcus, *Ethnography Through Thick and Thin*, 233.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid., 234.
[94] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 21.

optimal model," then "trying to get people, movements and actions to conform to this model."[95] In this sense, the *norm* or ideal model has a "prescriptive characteristic"[96] insofar as it prefigures the movement that will follow. In contrast, apparatuses of security operate through normalization:

> "We have a plotting of the normal and the abnormal, of different curves of normality, and the operation of normalization consists in establishing an interplay between these different distributions of normality and [in] acting to bring the most unfavorable in line with the most favorable."[97]

This technique works by identifying various flows or circulations of activities, marking out those considered normal from those deemed abnormal or undesirable and then working to maximize the frequency or efficacy of the former while minimizing the presence or impact of the latter. The norm, then, comes as the product of this work, as the favorable balance one is able to strike between normal and abnormal circulations.

With the interest in life cycles above, we see this shift towards normalization underway—a greater interest in general circulations at the level of groups or populations and the derivation of a norm or favorable balance that arrives after the flow of practice rather than before it. Marcus's grievance is not with the failure of certain individuals to conform to a required disciplinary performance, rather he is fearful that "an interesting career pattern among a strong number of the most noted anthropologists"[98] may begin to threaten the

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[95] Ibid., 57.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid., 63.
[98] Marcus, *Ethnography Through Thick and Thin*, 233.

more conventional patterns of life within the field. As an experimental engagement, this emerging trend to undergo a radical transition between first and second projects poses a risk to "the central tendency of the discipline."[99] Of crucial importance here is that this central tendency does not derive from a set of first principles, in other words it is not established beforehand as a precursor to practice, rather it is a sort of "overwhelming tendency,"[100] a balance that appears after the fact as one looks at the flow of activities in play at each level of the discipline. We also see here how the discipline comes to maintain an openness towards the future. Marcus's concern with this emerging trend between first and second projects is not that it fails the practice today, squandering disciplinary resources; but rather that it poses a risk to the future of the practice, threatening in time to disrupt the central tendencies of the discipline. Likewise, Geertz's interest remains at the same level, wondering about what "consequences for thought" a "peculiar pattern of incorporating people into academia"[101] may hold. An engagement with different tendencies and life cycles in conjunction with an unforeseeable and uncontrollable future, rather than the establishment of a new set of first principles, becomes the frame through which one attempts to influence the discipline.

Taking all of this in mind, we have a clearer picture of the sort of general structure that the individual discipline begins to take at this time. For starters, it is not imagined as being constructed atop an empty space. In other words, there is no clear need or void in a larger disciplinary domain that the field will come to fill. Instead, it becomes a naturalized space, one of many academic cultures that simply think about the world in their own specific

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[99] Ibid., 235.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, 159.

way. Moreover, the circulation of thought within the field is animated by and takes its shape from a series of givens, be they modes of communicating, considering, observing, or recording, as well as the various elements that are taken into consideration in this circulation, which are themselves pre-given to the practice of thinking. Additionally, required performances play less of a role in structuring the movement of academic life. This is not to say that they completely disappear. One more or less still needs to focus on a geographical region and carry out fieldwork there in order to get their start as an anthropologist. However after this first project, one's options become less rigidly pre-determined; a series of flows or life cycles appear that speak to possible trajectories or common trends amongst various groups within the field. Lastly, the discipline is planned with an emphasis placed on the question of tendencies. The man of power no longer attempts to reconstruct the discipline from a new set of first principles that mandate a number of required performances, but rather attempts to influence the balance of trends already at work within the field.

Similarly to the disciplinary regime, this new organizing logic is reflected at the general level of the university, in the manner in which the disciplines are thought in relation to one another. One of Geertz's principal concerns in both the introduction to *Local Knowledge* and this reflective essay on modern thought is the question of circulations or translations between disciplines. The primary concern of Geertz at this time, is in determining how various cultural populations within the university, "who are radically different, not just in their opinions, or even in their passions, but in the very foundations of their experience, can begin to find something circumstantial to say to one another again."[102]

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[102] Ibid., 160.

So the question of interactions between the disciplines becomes one of promoting favorable circulations between them and minimizing those that are riskier, while accepting that a perfect translation that would be grounded in an "agreement on the foundations of scholarly authority"[103] becomes now more than ever an unattainable hope. Moreover, this effort to maximize positive circulations between the disciplines remains open onto the future that is unforeseeable. Rather than techniques of normation that mandate a specific interaction for the attainment of some specific end, the normalization under security remains "discomposing not only because who knows where it will end, but because as the idiom of social explanation, its inflections and its imagery, changes, our sense of what constitutes such explanation, why we want it, and how it relates to other sorts of things we value changes as well."[104]

In Foucault's inaugural lecture at the College de France he provides us with the truism that "in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality."[105] We have seen that before the time of crisis, the general field of academic discourses was organized under the disciplinary regime of power: each discipline was constructed atop an empty space under the overarching domain of science, the production of knowledge was prefigured by the determination of an ideal model, and this model was

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[103] Ibid., 161.
[104] Ibid., 8.
[105] Foucault, "The Order of Discourse," 52.

held-up as each individual was scrupulously monitored and disciplined to carry it out. However, sometime starting at the very latest around the 60s, something of significance took place. What exactly we cannot entirely be sure, but regardless it seems to have spelled trouble for the disciplinary regime of power. The general crisis of the university and the various forms it took in the latter half of the twentieth century stand as signs that the era of the disciplinary system and the model of power that came with it had come to an end. In its wake, as the crisis wavered and eventually fizzled out, a new rigidity took hold of those same strains of academic discourse—the disciplines had been reincorporated under a new regime of power. The university becomes something like a security apparatus—however this language remains insufficient and must continue to be worked on in order to increase our understanding of the organization of knowledge production after the time of the crisis. Of course, uncovering a new order at work should not be taken as an end in itself, such a revelation is not meant to stand up on its own, as signs of a promising change or realizations of the inescapable reach of power; instead we must ask at each moment what can be done with this knowledge in light of such transformations—"There is no need to ask which is the toughest or most tolerable regime, for it's within each of them that liberating and enslaving forces confront one another…There is no need to fear or hope, but only to look for new weapons."[106]

For starters, then, we ought to ask what such an uncovering tells us about the possibilities of movements going on below. Certainly with each new regime, the range of possible movements varies, which is not to say that they are determined by the dominant

[106] Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," 4.

order but rather that some lines of flight will simply have an easier time breaking through than others; they will come up against less rigid blockages. We see this as we move from disciplinary power to security, as the sorts of required performances that were central to the disciplinary regime become less of a point of emphasis. This is not to say that they disappear entirely but that they certainly no longer remain as present and demanding at every level of the discipline's practice. In anthropology, for instance, the mandatory undertaking of fieldwork still remains a rigid barrier to entry but once inside, one's options open up significantly. No longer faced with as strong of a demand to perform necessary duties, one has the option of pursuing a number of normalized lines of existence or life cycles that often have little to do with any central tenets of the discipline; such tenets, if they remain in place, have seen their influence come under question. Now we must ask, how does one experiment with the various life cycles available to them in order to open up onto new modes of existence, and how is this experimentation different than what had been possible under a disciplinary regime? Moreover, how would we go about challenging the required performance which remains rigid and stands at the entryway of anthropology, and what would become of the discipline if such a challenge were successfully carried out? These are just a few of the questions, specific to this case, that must be asked as we continue to unveil the ways in which contemporary modes of thinking are incorporated under regimes of power.

Moreover, with each change of regime, elements that may have existed across multiple models come to take a greater emphasis under one than they had under another. Under Foucault's analysis, these elements become the "general principles" of a diagram of

power. In concluding, I would like to pause and begin to question one of these elements that has taken a central role in the organization of the university after the fall of discipline. Returning to the third lecture from *Security, Territory, Population,* Foucault says that central to the governing of populations, its general principle in fact, is "the matrix of an entire…utilitarian philosophy."[107] As we have seen, the government of populations or the apparatus of security involves going to work on a population that has been naturalized, that one already finds in existence. One of the principal modes of influencing this population, as Foucault points out, is through its "one invariant," its "one and only one mainspring of action," which is desire.[108] The utilitarian philosophy that Foucault says underpins the government of populations carries with it the rationale that "Every individual acts out of desire. One can do nothing against desire."[109] With this basis, this singular desire "becomes accessible to governmental technique" with the consequence that insofar as "one gives [desire] free play, and on condition that it is given free play, all things considered, within a certain limit and thanks to a number of relationships and connections, it will produce the general interest of the population."[110] In other words, we see here a single invariant in desire that arrives with the naturalization of the population and becomes a crucial site of control for this new model of power. Moreover, the key to controlling this desire so that it leads to a favorable outcome for the entire population is to learn "how [governance] can say yes; it is how to say yes to this desire."[111] In other words, the free play of desire does not involve a

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[107] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 73.
[108] Ibid., 72.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid., 73.
[111] Ibid.

radical freedom or openness but rather comes up against an absolute limit, and yet this limit is not a *no* to the wishes of desire but rather an absolute constraint that gives it a specific activeness, a constraint that allows desire to then play freely within it.

Once again, this description by Foucault finds a remarkable reflection in Geertz's discussion of the disciplines in the seventh essay of *Local Knowledge*. As we will recall, the disciplines at this time appear as so many naturalized populations that constitute a multiplicity of worlds unto themselves—"We are all natives now, and everybody else not immediately one of us is an exotic."[112] Nevertheless, despite this plurality there remains a single commonality to each of these fields: "thought is spectacularly multiple as product and wondrously singular as process."[113] Thinking as the "mainspring of action" for the academic discipline becomes that which drives life for the entire academic population and any thinking population beyond that. For Geertz, all thinking is a process of ethnography, which he defines broadly to mean "an historical, sociological, comparative, interpretive...enterprise, one whose aim is to render obscure matters intelligible by providing them with an informing context."[114] This is the general activity that we can trust to be at play for any thinking population: a singular engagement with the world that manifests itself as a plurality of ways of both knowing it and coming to know it.

However we should not think that this general activity of thinking is given open room to roam. Certainly we can acknowledge those constraints put in place by the specificity of the population we find it at work within. These constraints vary from population to

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[112] Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, 151.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid., 152.

population and must be pursued on a case-by-case basis. Nevertheless, can we say that there is a general constraint or absolute limit placed on thought that attains a central importance under this new regime of power? Geertz's definition of the process of thought above remains entirely unilateral, a thinking subject looking out towards the world in order to give it a specific meaning. Certainly we have come to accept that this subject's vision is clouted for a number of reasons: the place from which they look, the direction in which they focus, the ways of seeing they have become accustomed to. This is what a large number of discussions after the crisis of the disciplines had come to be about, the subject of knowledge and the problematic ways in which they see and read the world. However, always in these discussions and this mode of questioning, the process of thinking remains a looking outward towards the world, whatever world that may be; of a knowledge that simply *is*, and as such is ready to be revealed in some way.

Does this constraint of thought within the realm of a knowledge that simply *is* represent a general principle of the organization of the disciplines under this new regime of power? Have we identified here "the universal of desire regularly producing the benefit of all?"[115] How would the limiting of thought in such a way prove beneficial for the general population of thinkers? If, for now, we identify this general population as the collection of naturalized disciplines that appear in the bounce back of the crisis, then the constraining of thought to a knowledge that *is* guarantees these populations a legitimacy within the university and a sustained mode of existence. As thought remains the singular enterprise of coming to know the world, these naturalized disciplines maintain legitimacy in simply

[115] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 74.

continuing to look into the sorts of worlds they for so long have already been thinking about. However, the question remains as to what stands beyond this specific realm of knowledge.

What sort of assemblage would we want the university to be besides a space for this singular mode of thinking? Certainly answers to such a question will work themselves out best in practice, however such experimentations have already been taken up in the past, waiting only to be picked back up again and carried on further. Eve Sedgwick has said that we need "To open a space for moving from the rather fixated question Is a particular piece of knowledge true, and how can we know? to the further questions: What does knowledge *do* –the pursuit of it, the having and exposing of it, the receiving again of knowledge of what one already knows?"[116] In short, we need to make space in the university for a "performative knowledge." One can catch glimpses of this space attempting to open up in the aftermath of the crisis with the turn towards reflexivity within anthropology; however, such trends seem only to have re-solidified into new ways of accounting for and ultimately bracketing the subject of knowledge so that one can carry on describing the "world out there." We must find a way to maintain the opening of this space, this line of flight that allows us to continue to "unpack the local, contingent relations between any given piece of knowledge and its narrative/epistemological entailments for the seeker, knower, or teller."[117] Such a questioning becomes all the more pertinent under new regimes of power for ordering discourse and perhaps even all the more possible.

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[116] Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling [electronic Resource]*, 124.
[117] Ibid.

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