

# Research as Pedagogy: Administrative Discourse and the Politics of Knowledge Production

**Franz Giuseppe F. Cortez**  
**Prince Airick S. Gapo**  
**Rhochie Avelino E. Matienzo**  
**Rene Luis D. Tadle**  
University of Santo Tomas, Manila

**Abstract:** This paper presents a philosophical interpretation and analysis of empirical data collected from interviews with 10 senior academic administrators at a Philippine higher education institution, including college deans, research directors, and other senior administrators. It is mainly informed by some concepts from Paulo Freire and Michel Foucault. The analysis posits research along four interrelated dimensions: as pedagogy, insofar as it forms academic identities and dispositions; as ontology, in defining what it means to be a university; as ambivalence, revealing tensions between intellectual vocation and institutional survival; and as performance, enacted under conditions of visibility, evaluation, and self-surveillance. Together, these dimensions show that research operates as a political practice that both enables and constrains academic life. The paper argues that recognizing the political rationalities entrenched in research practices is crucial for rethinking the

university as a space for critical investigation, diverse research interests, and socially responsive knowledge production.

**Keywords:** governmentality, higher education, pedagogy, university administrators

---

“The university is so many things to so many different people that it must, of necessity, be partially at war with itself.”<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

In a 1964 book titled *The Uses of the University*, the American economist and academic administrator Clark Kerr argues that the university’s ends are already settled. They are “the preservation of the eternal truths, the creation of new knowledge, the improvement of service wherever truth and knowledge of high order may serve the needs of man.”<sup>2</sup> Today, we simply refer to these as the three interconnected core functions of the university: Instruction, Research, and Extension Service. It is through instruction that eternal truths are preserved and transmitted from one generation to the next; through research that new knowledge is pursued, discovered, created, and advanced; and through the extension service that truth and knowledge are applied to address the practical needs of society.

In this series of papers, we explore the university’s second function: the Research Component. Research is increasingly recognized for its role in driving innovation, fostering critical thinking, and promoting societal progress. In the contemporary higher education landscape, universities face increasing pressure to demonstrate research productivity.<sup>3</sup> Global ranking institutions, driven by quantitative metrics, compound this pressure. Institutions strive for higher rankings to attract students and secure funding.<sup>4</sup> Predominantly, research quality is equated with publication in top journals, shaping policies that encourage

---

<sup>1</sup> Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1964), 8-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen Hazelkorn, *Rankings and the Reshaping of Higher Education: The Battle for World-Class Excellence* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Philip Altbach, “The Costs and Benefits of World-Class Universities,” in *International Higher Education*, 33 (2003), 7; Brian Martin, “The Politics of Research,” in *Information Liberation* (London: Freedom Press, 1998).

publication output.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, uneven research productivity globally persists, particularly in the Global South, such as the Philippines, and is influenced by multifaceted factors, including resource limitations and cultural dynamics.<sup>6</sup> This context necessitates a closer examination of universities' research dynamics, motivations, and challenges.

It is essential to recognize that research cannot be understood solely as an academic endeavor, but must also be approached as a political practice. We move beyond the conventional and limited understanding of politics as the affairs of government, the actions of politicians, or the formulation of public policies. As South African political scientist Adrian Leftwich astutely observed, politics is a universal and pervasive aspect of human behavior, manifesting wherever two or more individuals engage in collective activities, whether formal or informal, public or private.<sup>7</sup> This broader and more critical understanding of “politics” and “political” aligns with the conceptualization and development of progressive concepts by scholars such as the politics of education,<sup>8</sup> politics of hope,<sup>9</sup> politics of research,<sup>10</sup> politics of knowledge,<sup>11</sup> politics of language,<sup>12</sup> politics of hearing,<sup>13</sup> and various other approaches to the subject.

---

<sup>5</sup> Fran M. Collyer, “Global Patterns in the Publishing of Academic Knowledge: Global North, Global South,” in *Current Sociology* (2016), 9.

<sup>6</sup> Maria Ana Quimbo and Evangeline Sulabo, “Research Productivity and Its Policy Implications in Higher Education Institutions,” in *Studies in Higher Education*, 39:10 (2014), 1955-1971.

<sup>7</sup> Adrian Leftwich, *What is Politics? The Activity and its Study* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004), 100.

<sup>8</sup> Paulo Freire, *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation*, trans. Donald Macedo (New York: Bergin & Garvey, 1985).

<sup>9</sup> Henry Giroux, *Pedagogy and the Politics of Hope: Theory, Culture, and Schooling—A Critical Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

<sup>10</sup> Brian Martin, *Information Liberation* (London: Freedom Press, 1998), 123.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Ohmann, *Politics of Knowledge: The Commercialization of the University, the Professions, and Print Culture* (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2003).

<sup>12</sup> Fernando Dominguez Rubio and Patrick Baert, eds., *The Politics of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>13</sup> Lauri Siisiäinen, *Foucault and the Politics of Hearing* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013).

---

In the context of this study, we adopt the term “politics of research” or “politics of knowledge production” to encompass a more comprehensive and critical understanding of politics. It emphasizes that research within universities is not a neutral, apolitical endeavor; instead, it is intricately intertwined with power dynamics, vested interests, and ideological currents. Decisions regarding research priorities, resource allocation, and the promotion of specific research agendas are subject to negotiation, influence, and contestation among diverse stakeholders. Indeed, research in universities has become a political issue, drawing critical attention from researchers themselves. The politics of research in the university simultaneously shapes and is shaped by the contesting norms, values, and assumptions of both the dominant and the dominated stakeholders within it.

This setting forms the foundation of our research rationale. We collected data from administrators, faculty researchers, non-research faculty members, and students at a particular university. Using these data and through the lens of various critical education thinkers, we explore how the struggle for power permeates academic life. By analyzing the lived experiences of these main internal stakeholders of a university, we aim to document the tensions between the university’s mission to create knowledge and the market-driven demands of modern higher education.

## **A CLARIFICATION ON METHOD**

This paper, the first of four articles in this issue, presents a philosophical interpretation and analysis of empirical data collected from interviews with 10 senior academic administrators at a Philippine Higher Education Institution (HEI), including college deans, research directors, and others. At the outset, it is essential to clarify that this is neither a case study nor any other form of qualitative work in the field of social sciences. Thus, we do not code, measure, or generalize the culled material. Rather, we treat these administrators’ discourse as prompts or scenarios from the ground,

---

sufficiently ripe for philosophical reflections on certain rationalities that pervade contemporary Philippine HEIs. Additionally, we do not read the interviews as expressions of the administrators' personal beliefs, although it is not improbable that subjective convictions can be gleaned from their responses. Rather, we consider them as broader manifestations of what the French philosopher Michel Foucault describes as "regime of truth." In the oft-cited words of Foucault:

Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements; the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, the interviews are occasions of administrative discourse that are accorded varying degrees of truth-value precisely because administrative language occupies a position and emanates from "those who are charged with saying what counts as true."

Furthermore, we anonymize not only the 10 participant-administrators but also the lone HEI where they serve. We will simply refer to the HEI under study as HEIM. Aside from the usual ethical, disciplinary, and reputational considerations, we are more concerned with how research is discussed, justified, and normalized than with where it takes place or who makes the claims. The interviewees do not own the discourse; they are, in fact, its receptacles and bearers, without, of course, denying their agency. The institution is not the originator of the regimes

---

<sup>14</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, trans. by Colin Gordon et al. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 131. See also, Paul Rabinow ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 73.

---

of truth; it is simply a site of this “general politics of truth” that Foucault talks about. To put it simply, we neither inquire into what is happening at a particular university nor evaluate its policies nor benchmark its practices. Rather, we are inquiring about the forms of rationality that speak through contemporary university administration. Thus, the definite identities of both the administrators and the institution where they serve are irrelevant in maintaining the internal coherence of our analysis of the responses.

Finally, we do not intend to select philosophical categories and verify if they align with the administrators’ responses, thus possibly reducing this work to a confirmation of prevailing views. We do not cull the data to fit our pre-existing theories. Rather, we aim to uncover the rationality behind how some practices may be thought out, expressed, and defended. Specifically, we hope that the data gathered can shed light on how research is justified, normalized, and depoliticized. It is for this reason that we formulated only four very broad and general questions, while during the interview, we asked more probing follow-up questions. The same questions were asked of the four main stakeholders, namely, administrators, faculty researchers, non-research faculty members, and students. The following are the four main questions:

1. Why do you think HEIM should be involved in research? What makes research in HEIM important?
2. How will you describe the current research environment at HEIM?
3. What is your perception of the impact of HEIM’s research practices on research, instruction, and extension?
4. Will you do research at HEIM if given a chance? Why?

## **RESEARCH AS PEDAGOGY**

The research component of the university is usually understood in terms of its function of generating and advancing knowledge. What may

---

probably be overlooked is that research is, at the same time, a pedagogical practice that forms institutional subjects and norms. In *Pedagogy of Freedom*, we find Freire devoting a brief but profound discussion to the dynamic interaction between instruction and research. He says:

Once again, there is no such thing as teaching without research and research without teaching. One inhabits the body of the other. As I teach, I continue to search and re-search. I teach because I search, because I question, and because I submit myself to questioning. I research because I notice things, take cognizance of them. And in so doing, I intervene. And intervening, I educate and educate myself. I do research so as to know what I do not yet know and to communicate and proclaim what I discover.<sup>15</sup>

Here, Freire sees teaching and research as inseparable aspects of human inquiry. To say it in another way, they are two intrinsically linked moments of a single human activity. When one teaches, they are already inquiring; and when one inquires, they are already teaching. Furthermore, we see Freire discussing the act of research in a non-technical manner. The research activity is not about being obsessed with method, output, or expertise. Rather, this is an act of re-searching, questioning, noticing, taking cognizance of, and submitting oneself to questioning. Research, therefore, is an attitude and a disposition toward the world. It is essentially an orientation of one's consciousness, a mode of attention towards reality.

It is in this Freirean sense that we talk about research as pedagogy. It is not just instructional or instructive, but also formative of an individual or a collective consciousness. To say that research is pedagogical does not mean only that research is an instructional method

---

<sup>15</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*, trans. by Patrick Clarke (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998), 7.

---

or that it is produced to support and improve the instruction component of the university. More importantly, we are more concerned with the power of dominant views on research to shape academic entities, form institutional culture, and create various forms of self-governance. Take, for example, this excerpt from the interview with Administrator 3, a sort of reflection on the expectations attached to holding a doctoral degree:

*Kasi may mga doktor na hindi nagre-research. Isang area of concern iyon para sa amin, dahil kung doktor ka, it should be incumbent upon you to produce articles [in] journals ... that at least sabi namin kahit isa man lang article sa isang taon ay mayroon kayong ma-produce.*

(The fact that some doctors do not conduct research is an area of concern for us. As a doctor, it should be incumbent upon you to produce journal articles; we believe you should be able to produce at least one article per year.)<sup>16</sup>

Here, we do not make any normative judgment on whether a holder of a doctoral degree should publish or not at least once a year. We are curious about the formative dimension of research evident in this administrative discourse, which links research productivity to academic identity and responsibility. Research is now primarily framed as an obligation associated with academic status. Such discourse educates the faculty into normative expectations that will legitimize their academic standing. Notably, this discourse promotes self-regulation rather than external enforcement by administrators. Thus, research operates pedagogically, shaping the academic individual, even in the absence of explicit instruction.

---

<sup>16</sup> All translations were done with the help of Google Gemini. The authors double-checked the translations and revised accordingly if there were some errors by the machine.

---

Perhaps this pedagogical character is also more evident in how another administrator recounts some strategies to motivate faculty participation in research. We quote in length Administrator 6:

*... sinasabi ko sa mga faculty, 'oh, estudyante natin nakakapag-present, kayo hindi kayo maka-present? Ibig sabihin, it's attainable. Ayaw niyo lang talaga.'* Somehow, nagiging start 'yon. Nagkakaroon ng conscious effort, eh. Siguro, do'n nags-start 'yun eh, sa conscious effort na ... 'kailangan ko 'to,' at saka everyone else is doing it. Yung fear of missing out ... fear na ikaw yung maiwan. Ayon, personally, nawi-witness ko 'yan. Yung mga faculty namin dati, 'di na gumagalaw yung PhD, walang interest mag-publish, pero 'pag nakita nila yung ibang ka-batch nila, or even younger batch sa kanila na faculty is doing it, medyo natri-trigger sila ... nagre-research na 'rin sila on their own. Nagpu-pursue na 'rin sila ng higher degrees. Somehow, I think, it's all about motivation as well. Kasama yung motivation. I think, minsan yung faculty natin, may pagkachild-like 'din, eh. Hindi childish, child-like, na parang nakakapagod na, eh. Ayoko na gawin 'yan, pero pag in-encourage mo siya na 'oh, matatawag kang Assoc. Prof. That's enough incentive minsan, eh. Kailangan mo lang talagang ma-tap kung ano yung mag-appeal sa kanila. It's not impossible. It's a matter of ... 'yun nga, motivation, and making them realize the benefits that it could give them.

(I tell the faculty, 'Our students are able to present their work, so why can't you? This proves it is attainable; perhaps you simply don't want to.' In a way, that serves as a starting point. It creates a conscious effort. I believe it

---

begins there—with the realization of, ‘I need to do this,’ especially when everyone else is already doing it. It’s the fear of missing out—the fear of being left behind. Personally, I have witnessed this. We had faculty members who weren’t making progress on their PhDs or had no interest in publishing. However, when they see their peers, or even younger colleagues, succeeding, it triggers something in them. They start conducting research on their own and pursuing higher degrees. Ultimately, I think it is also about motivation. I believe our faculty can sometimes be ‘child-like’—not childish, but child-like—in the sense that they get overwhelmed and feel like giving up. But when you encourage them by saying, ‘You could be promoted to Associate Professor,’ that is often enough incentive. You simply have to tap into what appeals to them. It isn’t impossible; it’s a matter of motivation and helping them realize the benefits they can gain.)

Again, we do not say that the administrator’s strategy here is inappropriate or even morally questionable. Rather, we interpret this narration in its capacity to shape faculty behavior, to orient or re-orient their desire, to cultivate alternative modes of motivation, and to internalize specific norms through comparison. We notice that comparisons with students or other faculty members act as subtle forms of shaming. Faculty members are neither coerced nor sanctioned. They were not indoctrinated, manipulated, or controlled. It is the anxiety brought about by comparison with students who can do it and with faculty members who have been incentivized that changes their behavior. This is self-directed compliance at its best. Indeed, this is pedagogical in the Freirean sense.

The pedagogical character of research is not limited to its capacity to shape individual motivations or be conscious and anxious about one’s

---

professional obligation. Rather, research is also pedagogical because it shapes an institution's culture. Very instructive on this particular point is the following excerpt from our interview with Administrator 5:

*... and I think recently even yung mga drive natin for ranking... like mga, QS... ano ba 'to... mga THE and QS rankings... 'yon, nakikita rin natin 'dun eh. If you would want to be one with those other universities who are also ... affiliating themselves with those institutions na gumagawa ng ranking, research is an important component, 'no, kaya I think [XXX] also is emphasizing ... dapat makasabay tayo doon sa ganung trend. It's a way of ensuring na we won't be lost , I mean, our public presence would have to be maintained kasi, sa totoo lang, sa ngayon, parang... that public impression also really matters na, eh. We don't want to be defined by public perception, but we also are aware that public perception really matters. And so, we have to deal with the question of how the public perceives us. And, I think, as a university, research is an important component of how the public also perceives us as a university. Kaya, kung makikita natin, the university is also really trying to cope with the demands of itong mga recent development na 'to ... mga ranking, may mga kung ano-anong mga ... tawag neto ... audits ang ina-undergo natin. And, in going through these things, I think research has been identified really as an important component in university life.*

(And I think recently, even our drives for ranking—such as the QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) and THE (Times Higher Education) rankings—we can see it there as well. If you want to be at par with those other universities that affiliate

---

themselves with the institutions creating these rankings, research is an important component. That is why I think [XXX] is also emphasizing that we must keep up with that trend. It's a way of ensuring that we won't be lost; I mean, our public presence must be maintained because, honestly, nowadays, that public impression really matters. We don't want to be defined solely by public perception, but we are also aware that public perception truly matters. Therefore, we have to deal with the question of how the public perceives us. As a university, I think research is an important component of how the public perceives our standing. This is why we can see that the university is really trying to cope with the demands of these recent developments—these rankings and various types of audits we are undergoing. In going through these processes, I think research has been identified as a truly vital component of university life.)

Administrator 5 acknowledges the pivotal role of a university's research component in maintaining its public presence and fostering a positive public perception. It is here that ranking systems and external audits become inevitable as modes of coping with the demands of the contemporary global academia. Similar to what Administrator 6 says about the faculty member's fear of being left behind professionally, Administrator 5 emphasizes the institutional anxiety caused by the possibility of losing reputation and standing within the academic community. Research is a prerequisite for belonging, a symbol of legitimacy, and a mode of retaining national, if not global, relevance. What happens, therefore, is that research teaches the institution how to perceive itself, respond to the demands of its external stakeholders, and develop and implement its policies and practices.

Taken together, what becomes intelligible through the mentioned administrative utterances is the pedagogical character of research not in the traditional classroom settings but in the life of the university itself. It is this pedagogical character that informs how academic life is conceived and coordinated. Specifically, it forms subjects and institutions in terms of what they should desire and value, and what they should be anxious about and consider rational.

## RESEARCH AS ONTOLOGY

At the outset, we clarify here that the mention of ontology does not signal a venture into the discipline of metaphysics. We are not interested in investigating the independent, permanent, and timeless essences of practices and institutions. Rather, our take-off is the oft-cited line from Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. There, he states that both dehumanization and humanization are historical realities and ontological possibilities for human beings by virtue of their humanity, although humanization is the people's vocation, while dehumanization is a negation of this vocation.<sup>17</sup> When Freire describes humanization as an ontological possibility, he is not referring to the fixed essence of human beings. Rather, ontology refers to a condition of possibility, a creation of history, and one that is always subject to contestation. That is why he immediately says that this ontological vocation of humanization is always thwarted by its negation: dehumanization.<sup>18</sup> The ontological, therefore, is historical.

Perhaps another enlightening thought can be gleaned from an article written by Johanna Oksala regarding Michel Foucault's politicization of ontology. Drawing on a Foucauldian framework of historical ontology, Oksala asserts that "[o]ntology is politics that has

---

<sup>17</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition, trans. by Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Continuum, 2005), 43-44.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

---

forgotten itself.”<sup>19</sup> Ontology also refers to realities that are historically produced but have become so stabilized and filtered that their political origins are no longer obvious, appearing instead as normal depictions of phenomena. Pointing specifically to Foucault’s diagnosis of various social institutions, Oksala says:

To be able to argue that entities such as homosexual, delinquent and pervert are not natural phenomena which human sciences could simply discover, describe and refer to objectively, but effects of power relations and political struggles, requires a profound denaturalization of ontology: We have to sever any direct, natural or necessary link between scientific concepts and their referents.<sup>20</sup>

In simple terms, reality is instituted through practices; ontology is created and not discovered.

Along these lines, we examine the glaring similarities in the responses of several interviewees to the twin questions: “Why do you think HEIM should be involved in research?” and “What makes research in HEIM important?”

1. Administrator 4: *Yung iba po siguro ay utilization lang po ng research to improve their practice, pero we want to say more academic staff engaged in generation of new knowledge kasi iyon po talaga yung purpose ng university. We have to produce or contribute to bridging gaps.*

---

<sup>19</sup> Johanna Oksala, “Foucault’s Politicization of Ontology,” in *Contemporary Philosophical Review*, 43 (2010), 464.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 450.

(Maybe for some, they are more concerned of the utilization of research to improve their practice, but we want to say that more academic staff engage in generation of new knowledge because that is really the purpose of the university. We have to produce or contribute to bridging gaps.)

2. Administrator 5: *Sa tingin ko kasi part na ng identity ng isang university ang research. Alam naman natin 'yan na, lalo na sa panahon ngayon, talagang well-emphasized yung research component ng responsibilities ng isang academic staff ng isang university. So, being a university ... and if we want really to live up to the dream of becoming a premier university, I think we really have to involve in research—research understood as a way of generating, nurturing, and disseminating knowledge, kasi ... even I think if one is not affiliated formally with a research center, kung magtuturo tayo, and if you have to be true to that responsibility of teaching, we could not but do research, kasi do'n naman natin napapalalim yung ating kaalaman ....*

(I think research is already part of a university's identity. We all know that, especially nowadays, the research component of an academic staff's responsibilities in a university is really well-emphasized. So, being a university ... and if we really want to live up to the dream of becoming a premier university, I think we really have to be involved in research—research understood as a way of generating, nurturing, and disseminating knowledge. Because ... I

think even if one is not formally affiliated with a research center, if we are going to teach, and if you have to be true to that responsibility of teaching, we could not help but do research, because that is how we deepen our knowledge.)

3. Administrator 7: *[Research] is a mandate for university. There should be research and, you know, production of knowledge is really grounded in the university, uh, philosophy, the production of, uh, particularly new knowledge. So, lahat ng university, I think it's very important to have research and ang nagiging problema, dapat may consciousness na ... napakaimportante [ang research]. Knowledge production in the academic setting ... kasi without that, what will happen? It's really grounded on knowledge. And as a university, what do you teach if you don't have knowledge. So it's not only ... parang sinasabi na a teaching university, but what do you teach if you don't produce knowledge? So you become stagnant. You become dependent with others when you should be the forerunner, really, for information production, especially in our setting, which is in the Philippines.*

(Research is a mandate for a university. There should be research and, you know, the production of knowledge is really grounded in the university philosophy—the production of, particularly, new knowledge. So, for all universities, I think it's very important to have research, and that there should be a consciousness that research is very important.

---

Knowledge production in the academic setting ... because without that, what will happen? It's really grounded in knowledge. And as a university, what do you teach if you don't have knowledge? So it's not only ... like saying it's a 'teaching university,' but what do you teach if you don't produce knowledge? So you become stagnant. You become dependent on others when you should really be the forerunner in information production, especially in our setting in the Philippines.)

4. Administrator 8: *I guess the operative word in our name is university. Uh, I forget the names of those philosophers and a social scientist. Parang ang sabi niya ay core function talaga ang research noon pa man. Kaya nga ang university plays a special role in society, not just for the production of workers in the labor force, but also in terms of the knowledge it generates.*

(I guess the operative word in our name is 'university.' Uh, I forget the names of those philosophers and a social scientist ... but it's like what they said: research has been a core function since the beginning. That is why a university plays a special role in society—not just for the production of workers for the labor force, but also in terms of the knowledge it generates.)

5. Administrator 9: *As a university, we should participate in creating knowledge, not just disseminating it. So it's intrinsic to the identity of a university and a university educator, I think, to not*

---

*just teach, but also to, uh, learn new things, to kind of learn together with the learners so that what I can offer is more than what is already known.*

6. Administrator 10: *Hindi natin masasabi na university tayo kung walang research na nagaganap. And for me, hindi dapat siya top-down approach. Sa akin kasi, may knowledge nung pumasok ka [sa university] or may expectation na part of it has to do with research ... And so that's why it's important to have research in the university. Eh di sana hindi na lang tayo university. Sa CHED nga may typology sila, ano yung college, ano yung ganitong level ng university or what. Eh misnomer nga sa akin yung research university kasi lahat ng university [dapat] nagre-research. Nasa higher ed ka. So, talagang part ng mentality mo is magbigay ng ample space for research activities in your daily tasks. Kasi kung pinili mo sana na pure teaching, hindi ka dapat nag-apply magturo sa university. Iyon ang thinking ko. University is a place where knowledge is created, not just shared to the students. And you cannot share it effectively if you just... let's say, lamang ka lang ng isang librong binasa. Pero kung nagtuturo ka at nasa higher ranks ka na ng academic community, dapat mas malalim dapat yung research mo.*

(We cannot say that we are a university if no research is taking place. And for me, it shouldn't be a top-down approach. In my view, you already had the knowledge when you entered [the university], or there was an expectation that part of your role has to do with

---

research ... And so that's why it's important to have research in the university. Otherwise, we shouldn't have called ourselves a university in the first place. In CHED, they have a typology—what a college is, what a certain level of university is, and so on. To me, the term 'research university' is actually a misnomer because all universities [should] be doing research. You are in higher ed. So, it should really be part of your mentality to provide ample space for research activities in your daily tasks. Because if you had chosen pure teaching, you shouldn't have applied to teach at a university. That's my thinking. A university is a place where knowledge is created, not just shared with students. And you cannot share it effectively if you are just ... let's say, only one book ahead of them. But if you are teaching and you are already in the higher ranks of the academic community, your research should be much deeper.)

What emerges from these responses is the apparent agreement among several administrators that research is a necessary condition for being a university. It is not something that the university simply does or values. Rather, for the interviewees, the university is not fully itself without research. It belongs to the very being of the university. Now, our concern is not to affirm or dispute the accuracy of this claim. Rather, following Freire and Oksala's Foucauldian insight, we take an interest in what this ontological language does—its potential to turn a historically manufactured interpretation of the university into something that is natural, self-evident, and uncontested. From Freire, we interpret research as an ontological vocation of the university scholars emerging within specific historical and political contexts. But there is, at the same time, the real risk of considering it as fixed rather than problematizing it.

---

From Oksala's Foucauldian insight that ontology is politics that has forgotten itself, we note the administrative discourse on research as a tendency to depoliticize ontology. In concrete terms, it means that while the identity between research and the university becomes increasingly clear, the power dynamics, institutional struggles, and governance regimes that make this view dominant become increasingly obscured. Thus, the real question is not whether research is part and parcel of the university's being, but how this ontology is understood and articulated within particular regimes of truth, because this understanding may limit other alternative modes of imagining what a university could be. The analysis of Sharon Stein and Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti is a fitting case in point here. According to them,

[t]oday higher education institutions continue to reproduce an epistemological hierarchy wherein Western knowledges are presumed to be universally relevant and valuable, while non-Western knowledges are either patronizingly celebrated as 'local culture,' commodified or appropriated for Western gain, or else not recognized as knowledge at all.<sup>21</sup>

Recognizing this depoliticization of ontology is important for maintaining a critical perspective about university practices. Institutional identities are not fixed and inherent. The ontological is both political and historical. We do not merely describe the university in neutral language; we also recognize the normativities that emerge from ongoing contestations over knowledge and authority. In practical terms, this awareness encourages critical distance from administrative rationalities

---

<sup>21</sup> Sharon Stein and Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti, "Decolonization and Higher Education," in *Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory*, ed. by M. Peters (Singapore: Springer Science+Business Media, 2016).

---

shaped by forces beyond the university's control.<sup>22</sup> Absent this reflexive stance, research becomes another activity that can create and hone a compliant academic vassal. Thus, any emancipatory rethinking of the university's existence necessitates a clarification of the ontological character of its research component.

## RESEARCH AS AMBIVALENCE

Another word of clarification is needed here. By 'ambivalence,' we do not mean that the administrators exhibit confusion or contradict themselves. Neither are we saying that their discourse is incoherent. Furthermore, we do not, in a very simplistic manner, pass judgment on research practices as good or bad at the same time. Rather, we assert that research simultaneously empowers and limits. It is an act of freedom subsumed by some constraints. From the interviews, we therefore set aside simple contradictions arising from personal feelings of uncertainty, but we look for sites of tension arising from the structural conditions of contemporary university life.

To explain research as ambivalence, we find Foucault's concept of governmentality enlightening. In *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault lays down three meanings of governmentality. Its first sense, the most relevant for our purpose here, speaks of governmentality as "the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit complex form of power which has population as its target, political economy as its principal form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security

---

<sup>22</sup> Here, we refer to what various scholars would consider as neoliberalism's invasion of higher education. For some studies, see: Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996); Sheila Slaughter and Larry Leslie, *Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies, and the Entrepreneurial University* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Henry Giroux, *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2014); Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone Books, 2015).

---

as its essential technical instrument.”<sup>23</sup> Here, Foucault is actually talking about power and how it works. He is saying that power is not singular; rather, it is a network of things that work together: institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics. For example, in the context of university research, governmentality refers to the ensemble of research centers, research policies, evaluation methods, incentives, statistics, strategies, and mechanisms for achieving research goals that work together to create a system that shapes research activities. Furthermore, Foucault calls this modern power “complex” because it is not based on the power-wielder giving direct orders and punishing their subjects, but rather on guidance, regulation, and the shaping of behavior. Oksala says that this particular description of governmentality “refers, on the one hand, to a distinct regime of power that emerged in the eighteenth century and that can be distinguished from both sovereign power and disciplinary power in terms of its rationality, its aims, and its means.”<sup>24</sup> Again, in the context of university research, governmentality is at work when faculty members are not coerced into publishing through threats. Rather, institutional goals are set, and faculty members are assessed, encouraged, and rewarded based on their alignment with and achievement of those goals and targets. In another book, Oksala explains:

Instead of ruling over a territory and its inhabitants, the object of modern forms of government is a population: an object of statistical analysis and scientific knowledge with its own intrinsic regularities. To govern it, forms of knowledge specific to it are needed. It is necessary to know its rates of death, birth and diseases, life expectancy, labour capacity and wealth, for example. Population and its

---

<sup>23</sup> Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College de France (1977-78)*, trans. by Graham Burchell (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 144.

<sup>24</sup> Johanna Oksala, *Foucault, Politics, and Violence* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2012), 29.

---

welfare form both the field of intervention of governmental techniques as well as the ultimate end of governmental rationality. Governmentality refers to the development of this essentially modern, complex form of power that focuses on the population: it is exercised through administrative institutions, forms of knowledge as well as explicit tactics and strategies. Instead of political power primarily taking the form of sovereign power—individual or communal sovereign ruling judicial subjects with the instrument of laws—we live in society in which a complex managerial and administrative apparatus governs a population with policies and strategies.<sup>25</sup>

Simply put, Foucault’s description of governmentality concerns how modern institutions regulate people collectively (not individually) through the application of rules, knowledge, and structures to shape their behavior in pursuit of specific goals. It is a subtle, smooth power that is not coercive because its focus is on the network of the environment, arranged to shape people’s behavior. That is why Colin Gordon is correct for calling it the “conduct of conduct.”<sup>26</sup> Foucault sometimes uses the phrases “political rationality,” “state rationality,” and “the art of government” to refer to governmentality.<sup>27</sup> Oksala calls this governmental rationality.<sup>28</sup>

Against the backdrop of the university setting, governmentality manifests most clearly in the disjunction between institutional definitions

---

<sup>25</sup> Johanna Oksala, *How to Read Foucault* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008), 82-83.

<sup>26</sup> Colin Gordon, “Governmental Rationality: An Introduction,” in G. Burchell et al., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1991), 1.

<sup>27</sup> Mark Kelly, *Foucault and Politics: A Critical Introduction* (UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 140.

<sup>28</sup> Johanna Oksala, “Violence and Neoliberal Governmentality,” in *Constellations*, 18:3 (2011), 476.

of research and the meanings research holds for those who actually conduct it. One of the glaring tensions lies between the lived meanings of research and its official definitions. Administrator 2 explains the difference between research for publication and research conducted by some faculty members in the actual practice of their profession:

*Each project namin would entail research on the standards, the codes, everything like that ... So, mayroon pa ring research in anything that we do. It's just that we have faculties who are more in-depth in the research. And you know, publish sila ng mga libro. Yung iba naman ay nagresearch pa rin pero inaapply na sa kanilang actual project.*

(Each of our projects would entail research on the standards, the codes, everything like that ... So, there is always research in anything that we do. It's just that we have faculty members who are more in-depth in the research. And you know, they publish books. Others also conduct research but they already apply this in their actual project.)

Administrator 6 also sees research as an essential activity for faculty members, enabling them to teach effectively and contribute more to the advancement of their students:

*It is necessary for students and faculty members to do research so that they will be able to deepen their knowledge about the fields that we are pursuing. So, in a strict sense, 'pag gumagawa tayo ng curriculum, we normally have intended learning outcomes ... ito yung dapat ma-achieve ng mga students after they graduate.*

---

*And, most of the time, the intended learning outcomes cannot be achieved through classroom instructions only. May mga learning outcomes na hindi mo talaga matuturo based on content, but matuturo mo siya based on practice, based on doing research ... the faculty members are the ones teaching the students, so dapat may lalim yung tinuturo niya. Hindi lang galing sa libro kasi, otherwise, kung puro galing lang sa libro yung tinuturo natin, mag-modules nalang tayo. I-guide nalang yung students kung ano yung babasahin mo, kung ano yung iintindihin mo.*

(It is necessary for students and faculty members to engage in research so that they can deepen their knowledge in the fields they are pursuing. In a strict sense, when we design a curriculum, we normally have intended learning outcomes—these are what students are expected to achieve after they graduate. Most of the time, however, these intended learning outcomes cannot be achieved through classroom instruction alone. There are learning outcomes that cannot really be taught purely through content; they can only be taught through practice, through doing research. Faculty members are the ones teaching the students, so what they teach must have depth. It should not come only from books, because otherwise, if everything we teach is just from books, we might as well rely on modules. We could simply guide students on what to read and what to understand.)

Administrator 7 talks of a wider meaning of research publication and not just in terms of being counted for the purpose of official rankings:

---

*I tell the faculty na you enter to research, may kontrata tayo to publish. So, to publish. It's not because kailangan kang ma-count. So my role is to inspire the faculty to do research and to do their work. If you're into research, try to publish in any form. Minsan ano lang 'yan, industry report, okay din lang. Kung eto book. Eto yung nature eh. Pero kung iyan ang field nyo. You have access to be able to publish in Scopus, then why not?*

(I tell the faculty that when you enter research, we have a contract to publish—to produce publications. It's not because you need to be counted or tallied. My role is to inspire the faculty to do research and to do their work. If you are engaged in research, try to publish in any form. Sometimes it can simply be an industry report—that's already fine. If it's a book, that's also fine; that's just the nature of the work. But if that is your field, and you have access to publish in Scopus, then why not?)

The administrators' responses reveal a mixed understanding of research going beyond conventional metrics. Those whose research work is geared towards publication in reputable journals are just one form of research. Research is variously described as material construction, creative performance, pedagogical preparation, and intellectual inquiry. These varied meanings produce tension with institutional evaluation systems that primarily recognize research published in reputable journals for official metrics and international standards. This is what we mean by ambivalence: research is simultaneously experienced as embedded in everyday academic and professional practice while also being governed as a measurable output. Drawing on Foucault's notion of governmentality, this ambivalence can be viewed as the consequence of regulatory mechanisms that seek to manage research productivity in the university

---

through standardized measurements, favoring dominant forms of knowledge due to their measurability, comparability, visibility, and security.

This ambivalence reveals a related one which pertains to the tension between internal freedom and external validation, between institutional commitments and market imperatives, and between research as an intellectual vocation and research as a survival technique. Administrator 9 says:

I think research now is really ... a way for us to aspire towards status that we already have and that we want to keep improving. There's a noble side to it, but also there's that practical but also neoliberal side to it. That to stay as top university in the country ... that means we have to produce a lot of research that is recognized. But those that will be recognized and what is recognized through research will also depend on where we publish. And it's all about counting points and things like that. But also because that redounds to practical benefit, that if we are recognized as a top [university], continue to be recognized as a top university, or if we improve our status, that means more students will come to us, that we are able to keep our jobs, or that we are able to earn more. So at the end of the day, it's really a game. It's a neoliberal game.

Administrator 5 airs a similar sentiment when they say “[w]e don’t want to be defined by public perception ... but we are aware that public perception really matters.” While Administrator 2 observes that evaluators and rankers use schools abroad as reference:

*[Research] is also a requirement ... in the progress, in a way, in the standing ng mga universities, because just like*

---

*other schools abroad, it's actually the benchmark. Iyon ang reference ng mga nag-evaluate, so kailangan din talaga natin gampanan yung pagiging malalim sa research. So I think that's the reason why we have to really be involved in research.*

([Research] is also a requirement in terms of progress and, in a way, in the standing of universities. Just like in other schools abroad, it is actually the benchmark. That is the reference used by evaluators, so we really need to fulfill the expectation of depth in research. I think that is the reason why we have to be genuinely involved in research.)

In these responses, we notice not blind compliance from the administrators but a certain form of ambivalence, one that involves a reflexive awareness of external pressures that may lead to either passive acceptance and adaptation or integration, that is, an effort to retain one's agency despite massive pressures from outside. This reflexive ambivalence is an effect of governmentality. Institutional actors are not coerced but are seduced to align their practices with external benchmarks. Administrators admit that research operates within a broader arena of market competition, international visibility, and institutional survival. Thus, research operates as a technology of governance that forms the conduct of a population within an institution. This is smoothly accomplished by defining what is valuable and sustainable for the organization. The administrators' discourse manifests the modus operandi of governmentality through self-regulation. Research becomes ambivalent as university actors simultaneously embrace the task as a meaningful academic practice and as a mechanism for maintaining

---

institutional standing. Indeed, power works immensely through subtle means.<sup>29</sup>

## RESEARCH AS PERFORMANCE

In *Discipline and Punish*, we recall Michel Foucault borrowing the British social reformer Jeremy Bentham's idea of a panopticon and explaining it in the following terms:

The Panopticon is a marvelous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogeneous effects of power. A real subjection is born mechanically from a fictitious relation. So it is not necessary to use force to constrain the convict to good behavior, the madman to calm, the worker to work, the schoolboy to application, the patient to observation ... Bentham laid down the principle that power should be visible and unverifiable. Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so.<sup>30</sup>

The main effect of this setup is that prisoners discipline, regulate, and govern themselves through the constant threat of visibility. Thus, the actual presence of the guard is rendered obsolete and unnecessary. The panopticon, according to Foucault, represents modern forms of

---

<sup>29</sup> Governmentality “refers not to forms of domination but technologies of government that may lead to a state of domination.” Stephen Ball, *Foucault, Power, and Education* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 121.

<sup>30</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 202.

surveillance, control, and the internalization of power,<sup>31</sup> thus, it is not surprising that “prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, and hospitals, which all resemble prisons.”<sup>32</sup>

Foucauldian scholars apply the concept of panopticism in contemporary school settings. For example, Cris Shore and Stephen Roberts argue that higher education reforms, such as quality assessment exercises, function as disciplinary technologies that manifest Foucault’s panopticon and result in lowered academic standards, the undermining of intellectual freedom, and impairing student learning.<sup>33</sup> Similar findings were reported by Emery Hyslop-Margison and Ramonia Rochester in their study on the prevalent use of assessment in higher education, which serves as a panoptical tool of surveillance to mainly control university academicians rather than to improve students’ academic performance.<sup>34</sup>

During the interview, one administrator says something that we think is better understood from the lens of Foucauldian panopticism. Administration 1 says:

*... ang lalaki po kasi ng bilang ng faculty sa bawat department. Pero, hindi lahat gusto sumulat ... siguro po talagang bahagi na rin ng sinaunang kultura dito. Takot magsulat. Yung tipo na ang tagal na panahon na parang okay lang, basta (natapos ang bachelor) magtuturo ka na tapos kapag lumabas yung MA, ang tagal nag-adjust and nag-adapt yung mga tao. Yes, that was the time. Yes, it is one of the struggles po ... Parang for them, research is a burden. Writing is a burden. Kaya parang minsan naiisip*

---

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 228.

<sup>33</sup> Cris Shore and Stephen Roberts, “Higher Education and the Panopticon Paradigm: Quality Assessment as Disciplinary Technology,” Paper presented at the *Society for Research into Higher Education Conference* (Brighton, England, December 14-16, 1993).

<sup>34</sup> Emery Hyslop-Margison and Ramonia Rochester, “Assessment or Surveillance? Panopticism and Higher Education,” in *Philosophical Inquiry in Education*, 24:1 (2016).

---

*ko, mahirap ba talagang sumulat or baka yung confidence as a person na [natatakot], kasi ang tinitingnan talaga natin dito ay how would people act kapag mayroon ka nang ginawa. Kasi minsan ay [nagdududa] ka rin sa sarili mo. Tama ba iyon? Iyon ba talaga yun? Kasi sinusulat mo na. Kino-quote ka na dito. Hindi yung kagaya ng naglecture ako tapos...may natutunan sila. Ito kasi, you're being cited already. So, baka natatakot. Mas takot tayo ma-bash or ma-criticize, baka ganoon.*

(The faculty size in each department is quite large, but not everyone wants to write. Perhaps it's really part of the old culture here—a fear of writing. It's the kind of environment where, for the longest time, it was seen as 'okay' to just teach as long as you finished your bachelor's degree. Then, when the Master's degree requirement came along, it took people a long time to adjust and adapt. Yes, those were the times, and it is definitely one of our struggles. For them, it's as if research and writing are burdens. Sometimes I wonder: is writing actually that difficult, or is it a lack of personal confidence caused by fear? Because what we are really looking at here is how people will react once you've actually produced something. You start to doubt yourself: 'Is this right? Is this really it?' When you write, you are being quoted. It's not like giving a lecture where students simply learn from you; here, you are being cited. So, perhaps there is fear. Maybe we are afraid of being 'bashed' or criticized—maybe that's what it is.)

Administrator 1 voices out the challenges that surround scholarly writing, research, and publication. First, there is hesitation to write,

---

probably arising from long-standing cultural factors that discourage it. Second, there is the slow adaptation to higher academic standards. They note that, at one point, faculty members were slow to adjust when a master's degree became a requirement. It has often been the case that there is resistance to change in academic qualifications and expectations. Third, research is perceived as a burden. Even among deans and faculty members who have earned higher degrees, research is often viewed as a heavy responsibility rather than an opportunity for intellectual contribution. Fourth, there is fear and a lack of confidence. Administrator 1 suggests that writing for publication requires a distinctive kind of vulnerability compared to teaching. While in a lecture, students may learn from the faculty member; in writing, their ideas are permanently recorded, quoted, and scrutinized. This exposure makes people more fearful of criticism. Fifth, and in connection with the fourth, faculty members seem to doubt their capacity. There is an underlying anxiety about whether their ideas are "correct" or valuable enough to be cited by others, leading to hesitation in publishing work. Therefore, resistance to conducting research may not just be about the inconvenience and difficulty of writing; it may also involve deeper fears of judgment, a lack of confidence, and a culture that has not strongly encouraged research as a normal practice for university academic staff.

Drawing on Foucault's notion of panopticism, we see this response as a manifestation of what we will term performance under constant surveillance. Performance is an apt word, and we consider at least three of its dictionary definitions. First, performance refers to "an act of staging or presenting a play, concert, or other form of entertainment." In this sense, to write is to perform in a show. Writing is turned into a public spectacle. Faculty members must "perform" before an audience, demonstrating their competence and credibility and living up to their titles as university professors.<sup>35</sup> Like nervous and anxious neophyte stage actors and

---

<sup>35</sup> It may be argued as well that Thomas Mathiesen's "Synopticon" (1997) which is the reverse of the Panopticon may be a more fitting concept to explain what we are saying

actresses, faculty researchers fear the theater of publication, where they may be exposed to judgment and scrutiny. Their identity as university academicians is tied not only to what they know and convey in the classroom but also to how the world may perceive them. They must present at academic conferences, publish in reputable journals, and take efforts to be cited and recognized by their peers in the disciplines. They must perform, or else they may be relegated to the shadows. The reluctance to write may stem from a fear of not living up to the role or of being criticized for lacking appropriate qualifications. In the present academic set-up, highly influenced by market demands, writing is not just about one's passion to learn something within their area of interest and specialization; rather, it is about creating an image of scholarly success, a kind of performance for a satisfied audience. Stephen Ball says that "[t]he new performative worker is a promiscuous self, an enterprising self, with a passion for excellence" and they "organize themselves as a response to targets, indicators and evaluations."<sup>36</sup>

Second, performance may also refer to "the action or process of carrying out or accomplishing an action, task, or function." Doing scholarly research is a requirement to be fulfilled, a quota to meet. Publish X number of articles per year. Publish in Y journals with ISI and Scopus. More publications, more chances of winning. The most cited and the most

---

here. In the Synopticon, the many watch the few, such as when the public watch the celebrities via the proliferation of social media. Corrolarily, the students and other professors may be the public watchers of their professors as scholars. See Thomas Mathiesen, "The Viewer Society: Foucault's Panopticon Revisited," in *Theoretical Criminology*, 1:2 (1997).

Although Mathiesen's viewer society (as opposed to Foucault's disciplinary society) may be used to explain the same phenomenon of research as performance, our focus is on the behavior of the one being watched and not that of the watcher. The concern of Mathiesen is on how the general public (the many, the watchers) model their behavior by watching the actions of the few such as celebrities, politicians, or other public figures in the contemporary society. Our concern, still, is the behavior of the one being watched, that is, how they are disciplined by the act of being watched. See Meghan Kallman, *An Analysis of Michel Foucault's Discipline and Punish* (London: Routledge, 2017), 61.

<sup>36</sup> Stephen Ball, "The Teacher's Soul and the Terrors of Performativity," in *J. Education Policy*, 18:2 (2003), 215.

---

published are university rockstars. Writing as an intellectual pursuit is relegated to the background. The thirst and passion for knowledge are undermined by an obsession with productivity metrics, which deprive research of its personal and intellectual meaning. Writing is no longer seen as a creative vocation but as an entrepreneurial means to assure professional standing and institutional survival. We are reminded here of Karl Marx's reflection about alienation in *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Faculty members may feel alienated from their own intellectual work as writing becomes less about personal choice and passion for knowledge and more about institutional compliance.<sup>37</sup> We also think of Hannah Arendt, who distinguishes between labor, work, and action in *The Human Condition*. In the current condition of research in the university, writing is reduced to labor, something done out of necessity. Arendt says, "[i]t is indeed the mark of all laboring that it leaves nothing behind, that the result of its effort is almost as quickly consumed as the effort is spent."<sup>38</sup> Impact factor and hundreds of citations cannot hide the vanishing of writings as mere products of what Arendt would call "labor." High impacts and hundreds of citations, but it lacks the transformative power of authentic action. Numbers accumulate but real value vanishes into thin air.

Third, performance is also understood as "the capabilities of a machine, vehicle, or product, especially when observed under particular conditions." In other words, performance points to efficiency, and in this sense, university researchers are seen as machines, deriving their value largely from impact factors and citation indices. Thus, they are not differentiated anymore from a mere commodity whose efficacy is reduced

---

<sup>37</sup> "The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He is at home when he is not working, and when he is working he is not at home. His labour is therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it is forced labour." Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, trans. by Martin Milligan (New York: Dover Publications, 2007).

<sup>38</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 87.

to certain specifications under particular conditions. To write is to perform a required function—to contribute to the maximization of visibility and institutional ranking. To write is to expose one’s intellectual contribution to judgments based on metrics rather than the depth of insight or the originality of thinking.

Taken together, this section shows that university research may also be understood as performance in three levels: public spectacle, accomplishment, and efficiency. From being a private intellectual exercise moved by passion for knowledge, research has become a public act performed before a gallery. Under public scrutiny and institutional indicators, faculty members regulate themselves, whether they will write or not, and whether they will conduct research, in line with norms and expectations. Thus, research has become a performativity in which scholarly identity is continually generated, examined, and disciplined within the conditions of perpetual gaze.

## **CONCLUSION**

Drawing on university administrators’ discourse and insights from educational thinkers, we argue in this paper that the research component of the university is not merely an academic practice aimed at generating knowledge, but a political activity that shapes how individuals and institutions think and act. Research functions as pedagogy by forming academic identities and expectations. It functions as an ontology by defining what qualifies as an “authentic” university. It is also a performance because it subjects scholars to various procedures of visibility, evaluation, and comparison. Interestingly, these dynamics are not coercive, but are normalized through policies, incentives, rankings, and evaluations that encourage self-regulation. In this sense, research is a significant factor not only in what a university accomplishes but more importantly in how the lives of its stakeholders are understood and lived.

---

To acknowledge the politics of research, however, is not to undermine the value of research in the university. Rather, it is to recognize the power relations that affect university life, particularly under the influence of market-oriented decisions and policies. This recognition is indispensable so that university stakeholders can engage in meaningful critique and participate in crafting policies that truly matter to them. By treating research as a contested terrain and a plural practice rather than a fixed and cold commodity ripe for metrics, the university can begin to recover research as a space for genuine inquiry, intellectual risk-taking, and socially responsive knowledge production.

---

**REFERENCES**

- Altbach, Philip, "The Costs and Benefits of World-Class Universities," in *International Higher Education*, 33 (2003).
- Arendt, Hannah, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958).
- Ball, Stephen, "The Teacher's Soul and the Terrors of Performativity," in *J. Education Policy*, 18:2 (2003).
- Ball, Stephen, *Foucault, Power, and Education* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 121.
- Brown, Wendy, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone Books, 2015).
- Colin Gordon, "Governmental Rationality: An Introduction," in G. Burchell et al., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1991).
- Collyer, Fran M., "Global Patterns in the Publishing of Academic Knowledge: Global North, South, Global," in *Current Sociology* (2016).
- Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, trans. by Colin Gordon et al. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980).
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College de France (1977-78)*, trans. by Graham Burchell (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007).
- Freire, Paulo, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*, trans. by Patrick Clarke (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998).
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition, trans. by Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Continuum, 2005).

- 
- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation*, trans. Donaldo Macedo (New York: Bergin & Garvey, 1985).
- Giroux, Henry, *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2014).
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Pedagogy and the Politics of Hope: Theory, Culture, and Schooling—A Critical Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1997).
- Hazelkorn, Ellen, *Rankings and the Reshaping of Higher Education: The Battle for World-Class Excellence* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015).
- Hyslop-Margison, Emery and Ramonia Rochester, "Assessment or Surveillance? Panopticism and Higher Education," in *Philosophical Inquiry in Education*, 24:1 (2016).
- Kallman, Meghan, *An Analysis of Michel Foucault's Discipline and Punish* (London: Routledge, 2017).
- Kelly, Mark, *Foucault and Politics: A Critical Introduction* (UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).
- Kerr, Clark, *The Uses of the University* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1964).
- Leftwich, Adrian, *What is Politics? The Activity and its Study* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004).
- Martin, Brian, "The Politics of Research," in *Information Liberation* (London: Freedom Press, 1998).
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Information Liberation* (London: Freedom Press, 1998).
- Marx, Karl, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, trans. by Martin Milligan (New York: Dover Publications, 2007).
- Mathiesen, Thomas, "The Viewer Society: Foucault's Panopticon Revisited," in *Theoretical Criminology*, 1:2 (1997).
- Ohmann, Richard, *Politics of Knowledge: The Commercialization of the University, the Professions, and Print Culture* (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2003).
- Oksala, Johanna, "Foucault's Politicization of Ontology," in *Contemporary Philosophical Review*, 43 (2010).

- 
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Violence and Neoliberal Governmentality," in *Constellations*, 18:3 (2011).
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Foucault, Politics, and Violence* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2012).
- \_\_\_\_\_, *How to Read Foucault* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008).
- Quimbo, Maria Ana and Evangeline Sulabo, "Research Productivity and Its Policy Implications in Higher Education Institutions," in *Studies in Higher Education*, 39:10 (2014).
- Rabinow, Paul ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).
- Readings, Bill, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).
- Rubio, Fernando Dominguez and Patrick Baert, eds., *The Politics of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2012).
- Shore, Cris and Stephen Roberts, "Higher Education and the Panopticon Paradigm: Quality Assessment as Disciplinary Technology," Paper presented at the *Society for Research into Higher Education Conference* (Brighton, England, December 14-16, 1993).
- Siisiäinen, Lauri, *Foucault and the Politics of Hearing* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013).
- Slaughter, Sheila and Larry Leslie, *Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies, and the Entrepreneurial University* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).
- Stein, Sharon and Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti, "Decolonization and Higher Education," in *Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory*, ed. by M. Peters (Singapore: Springer Science+Business Media, 2016).