

The ceremonial bookends to a professorship in a German university consist of an inaugural and a farewell lecture. I spoke before a public that included the six disciplines represented in the John-F.-Kennedy Institute for North American Studies (besides economics: political science, sociology, history, cultural studies and literature) as well as colleagues from the economics and business faculty of Freie Universität Berlin. Those attending included first-year undergraduates through the oldest cohorts of emeritus professors. I needed a lecture to keep the filled hall alert for 45 minutes on a particularly warm Berlin summer afternoon. I chose the fourth of July because there was no World Cup soccer on the day to compete with.

The ceremony began with an introduction by the Institute's director, Professor Christian Lammert, who provided a comparative analysis of the twitter activity of President Donald Trump and me. It is a great way to get laughs and a gentle way to roast an honoree. Try it at your next official function, you'll be glad you did.

Next a local American folksinger, John Shreve, warmed up the crowd for me with two songs, after which I took to the lectern and presented the following remarks.

“Reflections on academic communities, clans, and clubs”

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One of the self-granted privileges of age, is to talk about oneself under the altruistic guise of sharing experience. And for this I beg your indulgence. On the other hand this is a farewell lecture, what else could you really expect? Now you needn't worry that I am about to spew the cumulated bile of an underappreciated, unfortunate scholar bitter at the prospect of sealing his academic obscurity with a ceremony where others are about to celebrate his exit. While as delightful as it would be to speak long-repressed truth to the powers-that-be, this occasion lends itself to thoughtful reflection. No, instead I'll offer from my own experience a few simply illustrative stories that most of you can relate to either through direct personal experience or have heard within your personal information bubbles.

Before getting started, let me make one thing pedantically clear: when I use the words “community”, “clan”, and “club” in what follows, but especially those latter two words, they are only to be understood as short-hand, metaphorical labels. I trust there is no need for attempting *Über*-precision in what is after all only offered as a series of personal reflections. My intention in speaking of communities, clans, and clubs is to offer you a simple alliterative triad that has a better chance of surviving into long-term memory than, say, “communities, tribes, and networks”, though that is what I actually mean, to be honest.

When I say academic both as adjective and noun, it is in the sense of having to do with individual membership in “the Academy” broadly understood. I have always liked how the words “scholar and scientist” fit comfortably within the single German word “*Wissenschaftler*” and the Academy for me has its foundation in the Humboldtian dual mandate of research and instruction. We, the scholars and scientists of universities, have answered the call to follow that dual mandate. Of course knowledge gets produced outside the hallowed halls of the university and there are plenty of institutions that exist with the sole mission of advanced instruction. As an economist I have mostly good things to say about such division-of-labor and specialization. But personally, I have spent about a half-century studying or working within a university setting, and half that time here at Freie Universität, so my preference is clearly revealed to serve that dual mandate.

Having a career-long interest in the history of economics, I have often had occasion to consider the life of scholars among scholars. While the filiation of ideas typically takes center stage in histories of economics (by this I mean the chronicle of how Adam Smith’s ideas begat those of David Ricardo and Thomas Robert Malthus, that in turn begat the ideas of John Stuart Mill, that begat innovations by William Stanley Jevons, on to the synthesis by Alfred Marshall and so on up to the present day), sometimes historians of economics explore the ideas of economists within particular historical contexts (e.g., the Progressive Era, the New Deal or the Thatcher-Reagan revolution) or within the specific policy debates of their times (protectionism, industrial policy, social insurance, monetary policy rules). This afternoon I will be guilty of thinking aloud about the social context of the creation and diffusion of scientific methods and knowledge generally. Since I am an economist, presumably what I have to say fits my home discipline best. Nonetheless I would wager at least one free lunch that the structures and mechanisms I have identified are present at least in some modified form elsewhere in the Academy.

Now somewhere in my unordered college papers that have followed me from New Haven to Cambridge, Massachusetts down to Princeton, then Houston and finally a transatlantic trip to Berlin in 1994, followed by three moves within the greater Berlin area there must be the original acceptance letter I received from Yale in the Spring of 1969. One phrase in that letter has been etched into my memory, namely, that I was thereby welcomed into the “community of scholars”. I can smile now when thinking about the enthusiasm and naiveté of that boy turning man about to embark on his journey of academic life. A “community of scholars” turns out to have been what I had sought and what I was convinced I found in the undergraduate life of Yale College. When I first explored stacks in the tower of Sterling Memorial Library and argued about philosophy and politics in beer-fueled bull-sessions into the night with my roommates and classmates, I felt at one with a much larger academic community, not merely that of the Yale microcosm but one extending to the authors of century-old books with uncut pages waiting to be discovered in the stacks. As far as the larger academic community in that thin slice of the historical present, well I felt cosmopolitan to a fault. I saw no higher calling than that of the scholar/scientist. Excellence was not about winning a phi-beta-kappa key for display, it was about serving a higher purpose within that greater community of scholars. I believed that the true academic freely contributed and imbibed from the ever growing pool of human knowledge and was free

from lesser motives. Life-work balance could not be an issue, the life and work of an academic were simply an identity.

Two modifications of my scholar's life plan resulted from changes in scenery: an internship in Washington DC and later graduate school along the Charles River in Cambridge, Mass.

During my early undergraduate years I had little concern for applying knowledge for good, it seemed too much like engineering. Two spells in Washington, D.C. as an intern at the Council of Economic Advisers during the highpoint of the Watergate crisis taught me much about the importance of the work of policy wonks, a concept that only gained currency decades later during the Clinton Administration. My respect grew for the leaves of absence for public service or earlier work in the war effort (WWII) that I found was quite common among my professors. Had plan A, serving the university dual mandate, not have worked, I probably would have pursued my personal happiness with a plan B, working as a government economist perhaps in the Department of the Treasury, the Bureau of Labor Statistics or Bureau of the Census and this afternoon's ceremony would most likely be taking place in some office building in the District of Columbia. But it was still clear under either Plan A or Plan B, I would need further training.

Graduate School at M.I.T. marked a transition to a higher concentration of economics than I would have ever considered possible and looking back can hardly believe I survived with any dignity. Graduate coursework was not conceived according to the tenets of liberal arts to broaden the mind. Quite to the contrary, the graduate coursework at M.I.T. was an intellectual boot-camp, where the brain got trained without ever so much as a doubt on the part of the drill-sergeants or the recruits themselves whether this was a good way to educate a professional economist. You want to be a Navy Seal, OK, it's your choice...and if it turns out to be too much for you to handle, ring the bell, take your M.A. and leave honorably. Of course I am exaggerating, but I do recall a West-Point graduate in my class who declared that graduate school was the most academic freedom that he had ever enjoyed. Incidentally, that M.I.T. classmate turns up in Michael Lewis' *The Big Short* as having been the chief risk officer for Morgan Stanley during the financial meltdown in 2008. I'll add here that another classmate was a principal in Long-Term Capital Management when that famous hedge fund crashed and burned in 1998. I became an expert on the East German economy and we all know what happened there in 1989. You can see the pattern, but I digress...

Clearly I wouldn't be standing here before you today had I not survived the rigors of graduate school. In a meantime that spans not quite a half-century I have come to the realization that a "community of scholars" is actually only a Platonic ideal, something as unreal yet appealing as the Garden of Eden, the legend of King Arthur's court in Camelot or the utopian socialisms that fired the imaginations of radical progressives in the second half of the 19th century. And yet, my experience from dealing in an academic setting, having had contact with many permutations of human natures and across a few societies, has not at all discouraged me from the quixotic quest of building or becoming a part of a genuine community of scholars. The fundamental question we all face is how to get nearer there

from here. Plot spoiler: this is my farewell lecture so that can gets kicked down the road for you young folks here.

My thesis is that real existing research and instruction take place in a world spanned by two basic types of institutional frameworks, that we can call clans and clubs for short. Just as there is a spectrum of virtuous behavior along which we, our friends, rivals, and enemies can be placed, clans and clubs differ in the degree to which they help meet the criteria of a “community of scholars”.

So what constitutes an ideal or a genuine community of scholars? (1) **Inclusivity**. There is no frontier between us and them with respect to the search for knowledge and understanding other than a sharp boundary separating magical thinking from those in the community for whom the collection and honest interpretation of evidence and logical thinking constitute the supporting pillars for science and scholarship. (2) **Meritocratic**. There is not a fixed caste system within the community of scholars. It is not a hive with a queen, drones and worker bees. Results from the mixture of individual genius, creativity, good fortune insight and discovery are recognized, appropriated, and honored by the community. The demographic fact of overlapping generations results in a natural ordering of junior to senior, but the filial piety of Confucianism must yield the right-of-way to the *Wunderkinder* in the community of scholars. (3) **Self-critical**. By this I mean members of a community of scholars share a categorical imperative with respect to criticizing our own work as we criticize that of others. This is important because the accumulation of knowledge and understanding is but an imperfect ratchet. Any one of us, repeat...anyone, has the capacity to pursue dead-ends, and even to forget lessons once learned. (4) **Team spirited**. Yet even with all that humility we still have a capacity to cry Eureka upon discovery and other members of the community rejoice at the sound of that cry.

Undoubtedly I have missed a few items in my proposed check list of criteria. But it is easy to see their necessity to be included in any such list by considering what a university would look like when the polar opposite cases occur, where (1´) exclusivity (2´) impermeable stratification (3´) immunity from doubt and/or criticism (4´) *Schadenfreude* are the rule. Sounds a bit like a sequel to *A Handmaid's Tale* without the dramatic costuming doesn't it?

The essence of club and clan is captured in the Groucho Marx quip “I wouldn't want to be a member of any club that would have me as a member” and the familiar expression, “You can choose your friends but not your family”. While I grant that there is a process of selection and self-selection to graduate schools that bears a resemblance to the formal admission procedure for joining a club, there is a good reason to distinguish between the two. In the case of a club you are accepted or rejected for who and what you are. When you enter, you are a member, a peer. In contrast for a clan, the selection criteria can be quite distinct from the requirements to attain full clan membership. The network from club membership is valuable to you as a member, but the clan becomes a part of your identity.

But before we talk about this psychological transformation of identity, allow me a brief historical word here.

My research over the past several years has focused on evolution of graduate training in economics. Both from my own experience but also from listening to colleagues as well as reading random biographical and autobiographical accounts, I became convinced that the critical transmission of the tools of research and the ultimate values that provide the background for the selection of “interesting” questions takes place in graduate schools and there the formation of scholarly character embedded within a network of graduates becomes recognizable as a “school”. This interest led to an inaugural grant from the Institute for New Economic Thinking for me to begin exploring university archives for documentary material that would prove useful for marking the evolution of economic theories and methods actually acquired by successive cohorts of professional economists in different universities. The research question was to identify the forces that have contributed to the convergence of economics into a contemporaneous mainstream of common scope and methods.

It was in Germany where the modern university seminary for science and scholarship emerged and it provided the ultimate model for research training at the graduate level. And that academic DNA from those seminaries was carried across the Atlantic to the emerging great universities of the United States. Johns Hopkins, Harvard, Columbia, Chicago and points west all profited from the ambitious young scholars and scientists who had been “made in Germany”. The leading role played by Germany will come again when we turn to clubs.

The clan or tribe has played an enormous role in the history of economics. Just to name a few instances, there was the grand *Methodenstreit* between Carl Menger of Vienna and Gustav von Schmoller of Berlin in the late 19th century on the relative merits of deduction vs. induction (sort of chicken-or-the-egg debate). The debate was ultimately won in a scientific sense by Menger but the academic street-fighter Schmoller had much greater success in occupying the professorial chairs in the German-language areas of Europe for several generations.

Other notable debates between “schools” of economics include the capital debate between the “two Cambridges” of the 1950s and 1960s, Keynesian fiscalism vs. Chicago Monetarism, especially in the 1960s, fresh- vs. salt-water macroeconomics more recently, and there is the always evergreen controversy between Austrian economics and wherever the mainstream happens to find itself (which I note in its present form is neither Austrian nor economics). There have been cases in economics where Saul turns into Paul well along in the career. But such late breaks, such as that from the Keynes critic hired by Harvard to the man who brought Keynes to America, Alvin Hansen, or from neo-classical darling to radical economist, Stephen Marglin in the 1960s, have been rare. These are news stories much as “man bites dog” is news, because “dog bites man” is considerably less newsworthy. The correlation between where and how you have been trained and your research style/policy positions is strong and robust. But of course you ask, is it really causation or a case of *post-hoc-ergo-propter-hoc* inference when there is really a background factor responsible for both?

So what leads me to assert the strong identification of scholar with the school? My pop-psychological explanation is that the intense training and focus of a graduate education brings a young scholar up to humanity's frontier of knowledge for the first time. That frontier advances rapidly and only a few, certainly not all Ph.D.'s, will move fast enough or long enough to remain on that frontier. Nonetheless that moment of arrival at the hilltop and looking out on the vast, uncharted landscape before you for the first time is a profound life-altering experience in adulthood and there is a warm-fuzzy object that you bond with — it is not a parent, rather it is the collectivity of the professors from whom you have learned and been guided and the authors books and papers you have digested in the course of your studies. Sure, later we all pass through a form of intellectual puberty and develop a hypersensitivity to all our professors' faults. I think back: God there were some really awful teachers, I have witnessed examples of narcissism unchained! Etc. One of my dearest professors upon hearing that Herbert Simon was awarded a Nobel prize in economics actually said "He can't be any good, I haven't read anything he has written." Later in our careers we might have our own Mark Twain moment: "When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years."

OK, time for a quick summary of what I have been rambling on about thus far. It appears that I had the enormous good fortune to have stumbled into what seemed a virtual academic heaven on earth. Following that formative period when I acquired in my scholarly/scientific values together with a box of analytical tools, it was time for *Hänschenklein* to march off into the real world. I was an apprentice turned journeyman sorcerer, a fledgling member of a clan of economists associated with the Yale-MIT axis. Had you asked me at the time what it meant, I would have answered it was really no more that a pedigree, if anything, a signal as to the quality of the people who taught me. Gradually, I learned as I interacted in a professional context with people trained at other places and in other traditions, this Yale-MIT axis signaled belonging to a well-defined clan. Think of *West Side Story*, the gangs of Sharks and Jets, just without the dancing.

The first inkling I had about the influence of where you learned your economics was as an undergraduate during my Council of Economic Advisers time when a fellow intern, a graduate student from UCLA, derisively commented on the fact that I had waited hours to watch the Watergate Hearing for Nixon's chief-of-staff H.R. Haldeman, "queues are inefficient" Subtext: a market should have been created to let a price mechanism allocate the scarce space to the highest bidders. Since he was my first observation, I thought it was the individual effect talking, i.e., he was just a jerk. But then later another UCLA man, a senior professor at the University of Houston when I was an assistant professor there, nonchalantly dismissed a vast swath of applied economic analysis as we interviewed young people at the annual job market, "Nobody believes welfare economics..." I recall my first serious encounter with German ordo-liberalism at the University of Siegen. Hearing so much praise for Walter Eucken and his Freiburg school that inspired the policy architects who brought us the German social-market economy led me to read some of his work. I felt like I was listening to folks speaking German in some remote alpine valley.

The point of these examples is that it was beginning to look to me that how and where you were trained had a major impact on the sorts of questions you asked and the style of argument and the forms of evidence you accepted. Thinking back I expected the sorts of political differences and research strategies would be more-or-less randomly distributed across departments. People, and I stress economists are people, are a heterogeneous bunch, simply put “a mixed bag”. But even allowing for concentration of the one or other paradigm for research, couldn’t we expect serious scholars to outgrow their apprentice years as they would become exposed to inter-university variation? In a statistical sense I interpreted what I observed, namely, knowing where someone had been trained had “too much” explanatory power for what a mature university research economist would think about economics. You could see a definite family resemblance across the clan. What I still don’t really understand was why academic disputes between clans have almost invariably escalated to the intensity of shooting feud between the Hatfields and McCoys. But then again, I’m the sort of guy who is still shocked that people are so rude to each other on twitter. The working hypothesis perhaps is best expressed in the adage, “Academic politics are so vicious because the stakes are so low.”

Time for another short historical break before reflecting on networks or clubs that academics have established.

Economics became an easily identifiable collective pursuit of truth for the first time in the middle of the 18th century at the court of Louis XV at Versailles where the French Physiocrats coalesced into a self-conscious school for the purpose of enlightened economic policy. They actually called themselves *les économistes* and they even had their own journal. Their time on the world stage was brief, the French Revolution scattered the school to the winds, and one member, DuPont de Nemours settled in the United States and his son founded the gunpowder business that ultimately became the DuPont corporation. Incidentally Thomas Jefferson’s idealization of the yeoman farmer and contempt for the mercantile classes was a reflection of his reading Physiocratic texts. In England in the nineteenth century political economy was passionately debated among gentlemen in clubs. Members would read their Hume, Smith, Ricardo and Malthus to join the chatter and contribute to the literary magazines of the time debating economic policy. From about 1935 through 1950 the gradual expansion of mathematical and statistical tools had become such a critical part of the kit of the professional economist that political economy or economics was no longer “clubbable” in the literal sense.

But even before the shift to mathematical and statistical methods had become complete, substitutes for the club were found in the extra-university learned societies, professional associations, and regularly recurring conference groups. All of these networks had established admission procedures to establish whether a potential peer brought the right stuff to the table.

Just as the modern research seminar goes back to the university seminaries of Germany, the *Verein für Socialpolitik* was officially founded at its conference in Eisenach in October 1873 a year after an initial conference a year earlier also in Eisenach on the “*soziale Frage*” (social question). This association brought economists, lawyers and government

statisticians together. Now some twenty-three standing field committees span the scope of economic research in the German language area. Thanks to a retired colleague, Wolfram Fischer, I received an invitation to become a member of the standing committee for the history of economics. For these standing committees one is invited to present a paper and is voted membership. The *Verein* itself used to be the sort of association that members had to propose candidates whose approval then was voted upon.

The very same American students who studied in the German seminaries of economics during the last third of the 19th century, returned to become founding members of the American Economic Society, that unlike the *Verein für Socialpolitik*, which was long to have a sharp anti-Manchester capitalism profile, reached out to their classic liberal colleagues who initially resisted joining forces. From its early years the American Economic Association was a bigger tent than the *Verein für Socialpolitik*.

Two other societies worth mention are the international Econometric Society that was dedicated to the use of mathematical and formal statistical modeling in economics. It was first organized in December 1930 in Cleveland, Ohio with Joseph Schumpeter chairing a meeting of sixteen people who elected Irving Fisher of Yale as its president. The Econometric Society then met officially for the first time the following September in Lausanne. Not quite four decades later dissatisfaction with the scope of mainstream economics that focused excessively on “plenty” and with too little attention to its distribution and almost none to issues of power and politics, the Union of Radical Political Economy was founded in 1968 (This year celebrating its fiftieth anniversary at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst).

In the course of the Allied Social Sciences Meeting every year, field associations organize their panels where the networks of colleagues meet. Of course no list of clubs would be complete without mentioning the Mt. Pelerin Society founded by economists along with historians and philosophers at the invitation of Friedrich Hayek in 1947 and which formed a bedrock of neoliberalism, long before it was fashionable.

As we say, birds of a feather, flock together and the communication among researchers working on similar topics, using similar methods, interested in the same kinds of evidence is necessary for the success of the cooperative endeavor. These networks allow sub-fields to achieve scales impossible to expect in all but the largest and richest university settings. Indeed stepping back and regarding the research output of these professional clubs whose membership spans university, disciplinary, territorial bounds, few of us would want to go back to the high days of the London Political Economy Club or even the early days of the relatively exclusive professional societies requiring formal nomination for membership.

At this point I need to insert a big fat German “*Aber...*” (But...). The clans and clubs of economics (and economics is hardly unique here) have a diversity problem with respect to, I’ll limit myself to the United States here, race, ethnicity, and gender. In the course of my INET funded research, I have examined archived economics departmental records of M.I.T. from the 1970s dealing with the recruitment and subsequent performance of students from traditional black colleges and of women admitted to the program. Something that struck

me was the sheer experimental willingness of this overwhelmingly white, male and politically liberal department to expand the numbers of blacks and women in the economics Ph.D. program. Of course M.I.T., sitting at the apex of the economics graduate programs at that time, was able to recruit easily. But after several years, the realization set in that to avoid the creation of a *Zwei-Klassensystem* (twin tracks) the recruiting pools needed to be equalized and this would require a strategic switch to recruiting aggressively and exclusively from elite undergraduate programs. Having been an observer-participant from a time that I can now witness again in an archival light, I appreciate the dilemma felt by the M.I.T. economics department then between increasing the inclusivity of the clan but only at the cost of an increased risk of failure for precisely those new groups who had been previously overlooked.

Let us shift focus now from entry to the clan to the issue of gender diversity in the clubs or professional networks. [Due to unexpected turbulence, the captain has turned on the fasten seat belt sign.] Last year a dynamite paper originally submitted as a Berkeley senior thesis was published by Alice H. Wu “Gender Stereotyping in Academia: Evidence From Economics Job Market Rumors Forum”. Ms. Wu processed more than a million posts from the anonymous online message board econjobrumors.com. It is as close to systematic eavesdropping around a water cooler that can be done legally. It turns out that the ordered list of the thirty words most uniquely associated with women were (warning: NSFW): [read list very quickly] “hotter, lesbian, bb (internet speak for “baby”), sexism, tits, anal, marrying, feminazi, slut, hot, vagina, boobs, pregnant, pregnancy, cute, marry, levy, gorgeous, horny, crush, beautiful, secretary, dump, shopping, date, nonprofit [?!], intentions, sexy, dated and prostitute”. The analogous men-words included: [read slower] “juicy, keys, adviser, bully, prepare, fought, wharton, austrian, checkers, homo [!], genes, mathematician, advisor, burning, pricing, philly, band, nobel, amusing, greatest, textbook, goals, irate”--with the singular exception of a homophobic slur, not so much to be ashamed of. But even before the publication of Wu’s paper, the active standing Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession of the American Economic Association was addressing issues of sexual harassment and drafting of codes of conduct. *Manels* (i.e., panels consisting of only men) still occur quite regularly at professional meetings but the outcry cannot be overheard. Let us just say, the situation regarding the issue of gender falls seriously short of the Platonic community of scholars, but it is not hopeless. I say this as a member of Yale’s first four-year coeducational class — looking back a half-century the differences for the better are truly striking.

I see the shortfall in meeting the criterion of inclusivity less to be found either the race or gender fronts where important corners have been turned. The greater problem seems to me to be one of a relentless trend in which we observe the homogenization of particular methods and approaches to the exclusion of others. For a five-year old with a hammer, everything looks like a nail.

Today’s heterodoxy can improve the quality of the flow in the mainstream as well as vice-versa. Loyalty to the clan is only a virtue to the extent that your clan is up to good. Besides the obligation to expose one’s future students to a wide-range of views, as good as we feel

and as justly we might think that we can adequately summarize “the other side”, we Hatfields are probably a poor substitute for the real McCoy.

Calls for broadening the curriculum clashes with the budgetary realities force faculties to choose a balance between breadth and depth in the coverage of fields and methods. But my decades in this business have led me to conclude that we have less to fear from the tragic constellation of beer budgets and champagne tastes than we have to fear from the narcissistic gene of scholars, present company excluded of course (I want to be able to eat lunch in Dahlem in the future!). That narcissistic gene leads even top scholars to attempt to clone themselves into entire faculties. My hope is that a pragmatic tolerance and taste for diversity in paradigms can trickle down from senior to junior and through all levels of instruction.

In their modern clubs scholars find kindred spirits, it is there scholars can find honest peer review. So what could possibly go wrong? Well here is where we need a second, a vertical dimension to understand what is happening. In a race for status, gatekeepers and judges play an important role. The old question necessarily arises, who will guard the guards? Can we be confident that the norms of the Platonic community of scholars will be able to weather the winds of rivalry for the zero-sum game of status or of self-interested competition for scarce resources?

One expects economists to talk about money. So let’s talk about it in this context. My father once wisely told me when he thought that I was getting too academically big for my real-world britches: brains don’t hire money, money hires brains. Expressed in terms a Marxist might appreciate: my father apparently believed that the reproduction cycle goes Money—Brains—Money rather than Brains—Money—Brains. Besides putting the horse (money) before the cart (brains), I can only mention *en passant* that large private concentrations of wealth can and have been used to support research programs of a particular political stripe just as an unequal distribution in wealth can and has been used for disproportionate political influence (i.e. violating the essential democratic symmetry of one citizen, one vote / one voice). I’ll just mention the documented ability of the Koch brothers to have funneled enormous funds into George Mason University that had strings attached with respect to faculty hires that no self-respecting faculty member could possibly support.

Before I start foaming at the mouth, I pause to ask my colleagues here this afternoon to reflect on the distance they perceive between the Platonic ideal of an academic community and their personal experience.

A lecture title that signals “reflections” is an open confession that no attempt has been made for rigorous argument. My somewhat random walk defies summary. Still I have been raised to think that it is prudent to leave one’s audience with a nugget to share when they leave in the event that someone should ask what I, the speaker, had to say.

For me (and I am sure for many in this room) the happiest and most productive times were in those moments when I felt firmly embedded within an environment approaching a community of scholars. Academic life has taught me that such communities are mostly

figments of some philosopher's imagination. The work of a scholar, when not the fruit of a monastic life-style, is conducted within clans and clubs. My experiences from a career in university life and listening to the experiences of others have led me to the conclusion that "academic community" is analogous to genius, and when or if ever it really exists, it is extremely rare and probably the result of rather random dependent paths of history rather than the result of conscious human intention. My plea, especially to the undergraduate and graduate students in the room, is not to sink into cynicism once you discover for yourselves that your professors and their professors, that researchers in private or government laboratories, that senior researchers in think-tanks happen to display the shortcomings I have identified in clubs (especially, exclusivity regarding who gets included) and clans (especially, an allegiance where blood is thicker than water). Clubs can open themselves and clans can indeed coexist peacefully and even intermarry. Rival research programs need not have to end in blood feuds like the Hatfields and McCoys. While my pursuit of happiness is found in the pursuit of truth, due diligence demands that all of us sharing that pursuit keep a watchful eye on those serving as the gate-keepers of our clubs.

So much for my reflections. Allow me a few personal words in closing.

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One enters and remains in our imperfect community of scholars, in part on one's own merits but more importantly due to those who trusted that *ex post* merit would justify *ex ante* support. These scholars, near colleagues, friends and family members are too numerous to mention outside of an extended written memoir. But without them the arc of my academic life would have ended far short of Freie Universität Berlin. Fostering the development of latent or raw talent made the difference for me and my hope is that I have played a similar role in the academic lives of others.

I have had the pleasure of working with both colleagues and staffs of the Faculties of Business and Economics and the John-F.-Kennedy Institute. Secretaries like our own Kerstin Brunke have provided that first line of defense known as the front office and they deserve medals for valor. Good cheer and a quite competency have served as a wonderful complement to my management-challenged ways of dealing with the world outside. From the offices of administration in the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences to the bowels of the libraries, I have had a reasonably blessed time. Perhaps we only survive in a *Burgfrieden*, a truce in times of trouble, but I cannot say that I have suffered either severely or disproportionately. At this point of my professional life I am so happy for the continued emotional and intellectual support provided by my wife, the psychiatrist Prof. Isabella Heuser-Collier, whose own *Abschiedsvorlesung* at Berlin's Charité I eagerly await some two years from now.

General Douglas MacArthur immortalized the refrain from an old barracks song in his farewell address to the U.S Congress in April 19, 1951: "Old soldiers never die, they just fade away." In that spirit, beginning this September at Bard College Berlin I shall fade to teaching half-time with an increased emphasis on the history of economics. This will give me significantly more time for transcribing and curating archival artifacts for my blog

Economics in the Rear-view Mirror (www.irwincollier.com). I don't really believe in the prospects of a happy hunting ground in the sky, but as a member of the greater academic community going forward, I find the prospect of my work surviving in a happy virtual cloud in the sky a spur for me to continue my work. I once toyed with the idea of slipping a \$100 bill into the library copy of my M.I.T. Ph.D. dissertation to reward an anonymous anybody who has decided to fish the dissertation from the safe obscurity of the Dewey library stacks (in a program known as "catch and release"). Now the thought occurs to me that perhaps leaving a bitcoin in the cloud somewhere buried in my blog would be a legacy worthy of a scholar of the early 21st century.

I thank you for your attention this afternoon but especially for being with me now at this cusp of my academic life-cycle.