

**Finding a Transdisciplinary Path:
Philosophizing in the Age of Ethereal Control**

**A Panel with
Kelli Barr, Alexander Mosiak, & Keith W. Brown
CSID – UNT**

**Commensuration and the Metrics of Existence,
Or Metrics is the Measure of All Things**

**Kell Barr
CSID-UNT**

Commensuration is ubiquitous. To an extent profoundly key to human understanding, we are aided by making certain measurements of ourselves and our world.

But how far does commensuration go toward defining human existence?

Through an examination of science and technology policy, this discussion will explore the depths of our commensurative activities in the form of quantitative metrics used to guide policy decision making.

Specifically, the discussion will focus on the following questions:

- How has institutionalized commensuration affected the nature of scientific research?
- What are the political implications of favoring the particular values upon which these metrics are based?
- Does the scientific community, or more broadly, the general public, have any recourse to prevent further non-consideration of these implications?

**Reclaiming Cynicism:
Philosophy Beyond the Academy
Alexander Mosiak
CSID – UNT**

As a primarily academic enterprise, contemporary philosophy tends to obscure or forget its own origin as a dyad of theory and practice; the philosophical practice leading to theory was as essential as the theory itself - they were inseparable. In addition, there are at least two other modes of philosophical practice whose conception of how to practice philosophy differ from that of the academicians, both with higher emphasis on practice as opposed to theory: the Stoic and Epicurean/monastic modes.

The delimitation of these modes is not merely a theoretical pursuit, but one with practical import. From demands for academic 'accountability' due to financial constraints and a need for interdisciplinarity due to vexing environmental issues such as climate change that cut across disciplinary boundaries, academic philosophers might better adapt to rapidly changing conditions through a recognition of the contingency of current methods - and the possibility of new practices.

This recognition is at the core of the philosophy of Cynicism.

**The Philosopher's Labors:
Active Decision vs Passive Choice in the Society of Control
Keith Wayne Brown,
CSID - UNT**

“The philosopher necessarily requires an individual resolve which, originally and as such, makes him a philosopher, an original self-causation, as it were, which is an original act of self-creation. No one can simply fall into philosophy.”

~Edmund Husserl, in *Conversations with Husserl & Fink*

Society is changing. In fact, society is always changing. From generation to generation, the alterations may sometimes seem slight. At other times, the variations may seem quite pronounced, almost severe enough to register as intra-cultural shock to older members of the plurality.

As we transition from disciplinary society—with a concentration on regular exclusive, enclosed spaces—into the society of control—with free floating, ultra-rapid inclusive webs of regulation—we will see the old institutions adopt new strategies to meet the novel demands of being-singular-plural.

Of most interest in this process is coming to understand how personhood (singularity) is just as open to interpretation & evolution as any other human structure. In disciplinary societies, the singular was cast as the individual. The individual is a modern concept that locates personhood as social atom. The literal Latin translation of Greek ATOM is INDIVIDUUM. This social-atom when gathered into an aggregate is called a MASS, and this word also has its links back to modern physics.

In grasping that our contemporary disciplinary enclosures are structured as masses of social atoms working according to the rules of elective-affinity establishing a given field of action, we can contrast the modern person with the pre-modern and the post-modern singularity. The singular before modernity is thought of as some part or organ of a greater body. This is why Thomas Hobbes vision of the body-politic is caught between the pre-modern and modern notion: We see the Leviathan as a great body but it is made up of social-atoms.

The singular after modernity is an always divisible nexus of interconnections constantly routing and rerouting through banks of information. As Deleuze elucidates in his short discussion of Foucault's notions of societies, the era of control is about the individual in connection with the bank.

I will examine pertinent examples of today's disciplined academy attempting to meet the control demands (so-called “accountability”) coming out of the transitional forces within the new society of control.