Networking on the Network
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Part 2

8 Academic Language

As a new graduate student, you face a whole series of institutional problems that are hard to explain to someone who hasn't already mastered the workings of the institution. One problem is endemic to human life in general, namely that you're always entering conversations in the middle. You show up someplace -- a new job, perhaps -- and the people there already have a conversation going on. They probably have quite a few running conversations, and they have probably accumulated a big network of shared background assumptions. Many words have probably acquired specialized local meanings whether the people are aware of it or not. Meanings will have been shaped by long-past events (what anthropologists call "critical incidents") and by political fault-lines that nobody ever needs to mention. Even an innocent word choice can place you on one side of a conflict or another. These phenomena need not be spectacular or pathological, but they are certainly universal, and they can seriously confuse a newcomer.

One way to understand academic language is that this entering-a- conversation-in-the-middle effect is amplified about twenty times relative to any normal setting. That's because academics are paid to say things that are new, which is very hard, so that they are continually torquing their language -- usually for good reasons, but of course not always. As a result, you can be forgiven if you feel like you are walking around in a linguistic minefield. What is worse, the language that you will encounter in academic settings is a kind of capital. That is, the ability to use the language is a valuable commodity. Talking a specialized academic language is what one gets paid to do, or at least it's a precondition of what one gets paid to do, which is hopefully to say something, and so it is understandable if you feel obligated to learn the languages you hear.

As a teacher, I find these things frustrating. I encounter students who feel compelled to learn the latest fashionable jargon whether it serves them or not. Usually I demur. My first question is always: what do you care about? Once we answer that basic question, we can go looking for suitable conversations to join. But graduate students are not stupid, to the contrary, and if Foucauldian vocabulary is valuable capital then they can spot that fact a mile away. They are intimidated by the job market, and they intend to get the capital they will need to get a job. I don't mean to overgeneralize. Everyone is different. Still, I often find myself saying, no, you really don't have to learn to talk that way unless you intend to join a conversation in which everyone else talks that way. But that's not how it seems when you're new and you have to graduate in five years and you don't yet have a differentiated sense of the terrain. Who's really right?

As an example of the train-wrecks that these phenomena can cause, let us consider the famous problem of importing French philosophy to the United States. The French think very highly of philosophy, and they have an exceedingly centralized and hierarchical meritocratic system for identifying and training the best philosophical talent. Even though they take their philosophical training system for granted and even harp on its defects, it nonetheless works very well. True, most of the really famous French philosophers are consigned to the margins of the system. (See Pierre Bourdieu's entertaining preface to the English edition of his "Homo Academicus".) But they exist, which is more than we can say for the other systems. What this means is that French philosophers assume an audience that is widely read and deeply sophisticated, and that will know and recognize all of the precursors of their ideas.

This system may sound bad to American ears, but it works: it enables these authors to get a great deal of intellectual leverage from the background of knowledge that they share with their readers. It is the kind of pressure-cooker that, as Randall Collins suggests in his stupendous book "The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change" (Harvard University Press, 1998), is required for any great philosophy to get done. It is the ongoing-conversation effect multiplied by fifty instead of twenty, and its decline is probably why (so far as anyone can tell) no great philosophy is being written right now. To get an idea of what I mean, have a look at Mark C. Taylor, ed, "Deconstruction in Context: Literature and Philosophy" (University of Chicago Press, 1986). It is a scholarly sourcebook of the precursors of Derrida's method of deconstruction, and it is a revelation. Derrida suddenly seems not like something from another planet but like an incremental advance beyond a whole series of people like Levinas, Bataille, and Blanchot. Now, serious specialized scholars in the United States certainly understand this. But it takes real work to become that serious, and most people, not having been brought up in the French system, will never have the time.

Now pick up some French philosophical texts and move them to another country, such as the United States. It is a notorious fact that some American

scholars have copied the style of a Foucault in a superficial way, and now we're in a position to understand why this causes so much trouble. Academic discourse only works if it's part of a dialogue. In France, philosophical dialogue works because everyone knows the background. Individual authors can develop highly personal writing styles without disrupting the conversation. Some of those writing styles have more of a point than others, and I've chosen Foucault as my example because his own style (prior to the relatively plain language of his last few books) was much less motivated than that of the others. When Americans copy these styles, disaster often results because the conversation is broken. Readers in the American context generally cannot see the language as part of a densely organized dialogue, so the whole thing locks up. The dialogue loses its dynamic, forward-moving quality, and everyone falls into a kind of intellectual autism, a black hole from which nothing can emerge.

This is not to say that Foucault, for example, has had no beneficial impact on American scholarship. Scholars who employ the ideas without copying the style often have useful things to say. An example would be John and Jean Comaroff's multiple-volume anthropological history of the Tswana in northern South Africa, "Of Revelation and Revolution" (University of Chicago Press, 1991 and 1997). Their research is influenced by Foucault, but you wouldn't know it to read their prose, which is somewhat mannered to be sure but for their own reasons and not because they are copying anybody. Instead of falling into a solipsistic vortex of writing style, they have engaged with the ideas and digested them into their own thinking, along with everything else that they have engaged with, which is a lot.

There is one final reason why people in academia, including graduate students, often feel compelled to acquire specialized languages that are not necessarily suited to their own projects: academic languages exhibit network effects. Just as people around the world invest in learning and speaking English because so many other people already speak English, likewise the theoretical vocabulary of a particular author can become the de facto standard of conversation in a certain field. And in case you think this is just an artefact of the fashion- ridden humanities, you should know that mathematics is one of the fields where it happens most furiously. A mathematician who invents a new formalism (what they call "machinery") will be forgotten unless other mathematicians use that formalism to prove theorems of their own. Often a variety of formalisms are available that do generally the same kind of work. Each mathematician has an incentive (not necessarily overriding, especially when the choice of machinery makes a major difference in the results one can obtain, but still significant) to use the same machinery that everyone else is using, precisely for purposes of compatibility. In this way the development of mathematics is path-dependent, with some well-promoted or centrally-networked authors defining the basis of subsequent development in their fields while other authors retire in obscurity. I don't mean to disparage the mathematicians' culture, which is perfectly nice. It's not about anyone's human qualities. Network effects happen whether people are elbowing one another or not.

The same thing is true in many other fields. Once Foucault becomes the vocabulary of choice for talking about the social construction of the body, for example, people will use Foucault-speak for that purpose even though some other author's vocabulary might be better-suited to a particular purpose. And just as newcomers to a field of mathematics frequently sledgehammer a problem with machinery that is too general to reveal the problem's inner logic, likewise newcomers to social theory will use five-star Foucauldian jargon to say things that could be said using the admirably plain language of John Commons or Anselm Strauss. Outsiders will mistake this for academic empty-headedness, and that's sometimes what it is. But at least as often it's more complicated. And the humanities and social sciences get a disproportionately bad reputation for doing it because outsiders haven't the slightest clue what the mathematicians are saying, whereas they think they have a clue what the others are saying.

So that's what happens. As a graduate student, you are walking into the middle of a complicated set of dynamics that nobody ever explains. It's little wonder, then, if you feel compelled to master arbitrary codes that your career seems to depend on. It's that structural situation that I am interested in, not the properties of graduate students themselves.

Because you are not yet in a position to see the inner logic of your professional community, you may find yourself wanting to fasten onto formal aspects of the process: politicking your thesis committee, passing exams, mastering jargons, and so on. You can't ignore that stuff, but you can get it into proportion by focusing your attention on the communities you want to join. Needlessly esoteric academic languages can give you the wrong idea: they portray research as a matter of becoming someone else, rather than becoming a professional version of yourself. They make it seem like becoming a researcher means acquiring someone else's voice, rather than developing

your own. And they exaggerate the degree to which success in research depends on making yourself accountable to other people's agendas, rather than actively seeking out a community of interlocutors whose agendas can be brought into productive dialogue with your own.

The institutions of research are hardly perfect. But I think that their imperfections would be best alleviated not by blowing them up and placing them under the power of some extraneous authority, but rather by systematically teaching graduate students the things that I am saying here. Owning and applying a powerful model of the institutional dynamics around you is where sanity begins, and it is the best way to dissuade people from the misguided strategies that reproduce institutional pathologies rather than dissolving them.

9 How to Get a Job

** Networks and job-hunting*

The world is full of books about getting a job, and most of them are preoccupied with the formal aspects of the process: learning about job openings, filling out the paperwork, giving a job talk, and that sort of thing. Those formal aspects are important, but you will completely misunderstand them unless you understand the substance: relationships and community-building. Get used to a deep intuition: the right way to get a job is to build a network. Once you build a network, formal things like jobs just happen. A network is not only a list of people you happen to know, like points that you score in a video game. A network is a circuit through which things flow: ideas, energy, dialogue, information, favors, and so on. Being in dialogue with the people in your network means that you have identified values that you share with them, so that you say "we" and "us". You have chosen the members of your network precisely because of the values that you share in common, and you have taken the trouble to identify those shared values and to get a running conversation started that is founded on them. And in the process you have changed: you have drawn out and articulated parts of yourself that may not have had any words before. It's still you, but it's a version of you that is defined in part by its relationships to other people. If you have chosen those other people badly then you will be unhappy with your new self. But if you have done your homework and chosen wisely then you will be thrilled to death.

And this is where jobs come from. Among the good things that flow in professional networks are things related to jobs: the official public information about job openings, the inside scoop about job openings, the informal invitations that enable you to meet people before you have to deal with the formalities of job openings, the postdoctoral fellowships that keep you going until you identify the job openings you really want, and so on. If you have really built your network, then it will seem like the most natural thing in the world for this good stuff to flow into your mailbox every day. It takes time and effort to build a network, but this is the payoff. Having a member of your network on the hiring committee makes a big difference. The effort that you've invested in articulating shared values will help that person to articulate to the rest of the committee what the job should be about. The effort that you've invested in communicating your work will help that person to explain you to everyone else. The effort that you've invested in commencing a dialogue with that person will be the first installment on your effort in commencing a dialogue with everyone else in the department. But don't think of it as, "if I get to know this person then maybe I will get this job". That's fake and it doesn't work. Get to know people because you respect them -- because you have some shared interests and values that you want to develop. Then just believe that good things will flow from that, someday, somehow.

Many people refuse to believe all of this. They look at me like I am stupid and they say, "but the job market sucks" or "but it all comes down to power" or "but I'm marginalized because I'm this or that". People who believe such things are setting themselves up to fail; they are rehearsing their excuse. Yes, the job market is real; yes, power is real; yes, discrimination is real. But if you believe that those gigantic abstractions are the fundamental and immutable reality of the world, then you will make that belief true in your own life. In encouraging you to work from a more positive set of beliefs, I am not saying that your failure to get a job, if that's what ends up happening, is your own fault. But I *am* saying that your lack of a job *is* your fault if it's something that you chose, and if you go around saying, "such-and-such gigantic abstraction means that I'll never be able to get a job", then you are choosing not to get a job. Here is the truth: no matter how bad the job market is, no matter how bad the power deal is, no matter how much discrimination there is, the thing to do about the problem is to follow my advice and build yourself a professional network. Lots of people out there share your values, including people whose lives and backgrounds are otherwise completely different from yours. You need to find those people and establish relationships with them.

** Job announcements*

Now that I've gotten my lectures out of the way, how do you get a job? Let's assume that you have been building your network, and that you have been presenting papers at conferences, and that you have been making your work available on the Web, and that you have engaged in other activities that make you and your work visible in your field. Let's assume, in other words, that you have done the first 90% of the work. The last 10% of the work is the formal part, and it starts with the job advertisement. Given that you know so many people and hear so much useful information by e-mail, you probably know about most of the jobs before they are advertised. But you won't know about all of them, so join professional societies and study their job-posting bulletin boards, which might be published in the society's newsletter. Or look in a publication such as the _Chronicle of Higher Education_ that publishes large numbers of job ads. (The _Chronicle_ works as a business matter because affirmative action laws require universities to publicize jobs widely. This is good.) It is a good idea to study these ads a year before you go on the market, just to get a sense of them.

When you do read the ads, you will find that most of them are written in Martian: the people seem to want someone whose skills come from a completely different disciplinary background from yours. This is not a cause for panic. One reason to build a professional network is that you will learn to speak different languages. When speaking with a person who speaks Martian, try to explain yourself in Martian as well as you honestly can. Of course you won't really be speaking fluent Martian, but you'll be meeting your interlocutor halfway. (The secret to speaking Martian, by the way, is not to use a lot of Martian words that you don't identify with. Instead, articulate in plain language, on an intuitive, everyday level, the key insights of the Martian worldview, and then frame your ideas in relation to that. You'll be speaking Martian without the jargon, and the Martians will like it.) Having thus built a network that includes people whose language is different from yours, you will be less shocked when it's finally time to go on the job market. You'll have come up with ways to explain yourself and your work in Martian, and you will know how to apply for a job ad on Mars. Of course, you will have to decide whether you *want* to work on Mars, but the time to decide that is after you have a sheaf of job offers in your hand.

Which jobs should you apply for? All of them. Having impossibly many interviews or offers is an easy problem to solve. Your real choice is how much effort to put into applying for each of the available jobs. It is possible to expend a huge effort applying for a job, and so you need a sense of priorities. If you have built a network then it should be easy to figure out what your priorities are. Most likely the jobs you most want will be in the departments where you already know people. Find out about those jobs far enough in advance that you can buy your friend a social beverage, say the magic words, "can I ask your advice?", and ask about the real deal with the job. Should I apply? How do the politics work? Is there a strong consensus about the definition of the job, or are there factions, or is it genuinely open? Which members of the department will I most need to connect with? What else should I know? What should I emphasize in writing the cover letter on my applications? Are you on the search committee? Who else is on it? Don't bother asking your friend about internal candidates for the job, however, since you can't do anything about them and you'll just waste time with obsession and gossip. Remember that your friend just has one point of view. Your friend might be misinformed or preoccupied with some minor grievance, or may simply not be perceptive. Ultimately you have to use your judgement about what to believe.

You can learn more details about the available jobs in other ways. Your friends and thesis committee members have their own networks, and can pass along reputations and other useful information. You should certainly look at the department's Web site. Get a list of the faculty, figure out which ones are closest intellectually to yourself, and hit the library. Individual faculty may have their own home pages, but online materials are less important than published books and articles.

** Applying*

Now it is time to apply. I will explain how to apply for a faculty position at a research university because that is what I know, but I expect that the broad outlines of my explanation will apply elsewhere. Some positions require application forms, but most job ads will simply specify what you should send: a cover letter, a vita, publications, recommendations, and that sort of thing. If the ad specifies a deadline, you should certainly try to make the deadline. But even if the deadline has gone by, apply anyway or at least ask whether applications are still being accepted. They want the best candidate they can get, so they will probably not insist on formalities.

The most important part of your application is your cover letter. If nobody has explained the purpose of

the cover letter, by all means ask. The customs vary, so I cannot give detailed instructions. The general idea, however, is that you write a formal letter, two or three pages, to the chair of the department's search committee. (If the job ad does not provide this person's name, call the department office and ask for it.) Start by saying that you are writing to apply for the job that was advertised in such-and-such a venue. State precisely what job you're applying for (e.g., "the assistant professor position in bovine orthodontia in the Department of Veterinary Dentistry at the University of the Witwatersrand", being careful to spell everything correctly and extra careful that you don't mistakenly mention the name of another school that you happen to be applying to). If you have discussed the job with any members of the department, say so. If the job ad specifies formal requirements for the job (e.g., having a PhD), then be certain to state that you satisfy the requirements (assuming that you do). Then tell your story. Expect to throw this letter out and rewrite it at least three or four times. Really. Don't get lazy and just send out the first draft because it seems good enough. Assume that your first couple of drafts stink and need fundamental rethinking. Get feedback from your committee members and close professional friends.

Your goal in this letter, as in the entire process, is to articulate a clear case for the fit between yourself and the department where you are applying. The raw materials for this story are the research that you have done, the larger-scale research agenda that your dissertation was part of, the kind of job you are looking for, the attributes of the department that make it a good place for you to pursue your research agenda, your teaching experience and specific details of your commitment to teaching, and the particular individuals in the department whose work is related to your own. It needs to be the best honest version of your story; don't spin or exaggerate anything, because it's wrong and you'll get caught. When applying to your top five choices, strategize each letter pretty much from scratch; then draw on the best pieces of those letters as you prepare a more generic letter that you can vary slightly for the other places. When applying to research-oriented universities, emphasize research but also discuss teaching; when applying to teaching-oriented schools, emphasize both and then expand on the real-world challenges and opportunities that graduating students in your field will face -- and how your specific background and skills make you the right choice for a department that wants to take the lead in this new environment. Emphasize the future as well as the past. Your letter must be extremely well-written. The prose should be clear and vigorous without being bombastic or arrogant, calm and polite without being obsequious or weak. Get rid of commonplaces, cliches, empty formulas, shallow fashion-following, fake boasting, and emotional manipulation. Moderate the jargon. Get to the point. Get a good writer to copyedit it for you. Format it in a professional-looking way. And print the final version on good paper. Your letter should be your best representation of yourself and your plans for your career.

Many people find this letter difficult because they are caught up in a mental state of being desperate for a job. "I'll take anything!", they are thinking, and so they feel driven to write a letter that conforms to (their fantasies about) what the people want, rather than a letter that genuinely tries to articulate the two-way fit between themselves and the department that they are applying to. For example, if the job ad specifies that the applicant should be able to teach topic X, these desperate people might tell some twisted story about how they can teach X, even when it's not true. This is not a good idea. Of course you are not going to present a unilateral, take-it-or-leave-it kind of deal to the people. Rather, you are going to draw on your experience of talking to different people in your network. All this time you have been coming up with lots of different honest ways of explaining yourself, and in your cover letter you should explain yourself in the honest way that is the closest fit to the people who are reading your letter. Maybe it will not feel like a precise fit, but it's better to be honest and confident and persuasive than to make something up. If you really believe what you are saying, then that will come through in your letter. You don't know whether the specifications in the job ad are set in stone. For all you know, they wrote that ad without thinking very hard about it, and in fact the job is still basically undefined. When you come along, sounding much more interesting and up-to-date than their boring ad, they will want you rather than the hundred clones who conformed to the boring expectations they had set up. This is the truth: if there's no honest story about you that fits precisely with the specifications in the ad, then your best strategy is to tell the honest story about yourself that fits best, even if it doesn't fit perfectly, and then let it go. If it's going to happen then it will happen.

In applying for a job, you may find yourself preparing a vita for the first time. A vita is the research world's equivalent of a resume. It starts with your name and contact information, and then it details your educational history, publications, teaching experience, and other professional involvements. A vita differs from a resume in an important way: whereas resumes in the corporate world are filled with puffed-up language that hypes the individual's past job

experience, a vita is more like a database entry -- just the facts. You are going to explain your background and future plans in your letter, not in your vita. The format of a vita is not especially standardized, but you can look at your thesis advisor's vita and model yours on that. In any event, make it neat and professional. And do not include items that aren't related to your professional persona, for example information on your personal life (e.g., family or hobbies), personal references (as opposed to researchers who can write about your professional work), seminar or class papers (as opposed to conference and journal papers), or technical reports in which you are not primary or second author.

Applications for research and teaching jobs also require letters of recommendation from established researchers who know your work. Practices differ; in most cases your recommenders will send their letters direct to the department that you're applying to, but some schools want you to arrange for letters at the time you apply, where others prefer to be given recommenders names so they can solicit letters only from candidates who they are considering seriously. If the job ad does not explain what they want, go ahead and ask your recommenders to send the letters. Asking someone to write a letter for you is a serious matter. The ideal letter-writer has two properties: (a) knows you and your work (and in a positive way), and (b) is known to the people who will be reading the letter (and in a positive way). If your field is relatively fragmented, or if you have not been doing your networking, then those two properties might trade off. Most departments will want roughly four recommendation letters for an entry-level job. (For high-level full-professor jobs, as many as twelve letters might be required.) Line up your letter-writers a few months before you send in your job applications.

When it does come time for your letter-writers to write their letters, you should try to make their lives easier. First of all, you should tell them precisely whom they should to send the letter to (as with your application letter, this should ideally be the chair of the search committee), and the deadline, and the complete address. (This seems obvious, but when the time comes you will have a million things to do. I'm tell you so you don't get sloppy.) Also make sure that they have an up-to-date stack of your papers (including the ones you wrote for their courses), chapters from your thesis, your vita, and other raw material. I also recommend that you offer them a set of bullet points that they can draw on -- for example, a concise statement of the intellectual accomplishments of your thesis, the topic of the research that you're planning post-thesis, your teaching history, and the activities that illustrate your potential for intellectual leadership. Don't try to evaluate your work; just provide them with the factual basis that they'll need to supply their own evaluations. If they don't want the bullets then don't push it.

Practices for writing the letters themselves are fairly personal and vary a great deal. Don't worry about what the letters contain; you will probably never see them (at least those are the rules), and you probably can't do anything about them anyway. But to provide some kind of intuition, let me explain how I write such letters myself -- it's the method that I learned from the guy who supervised my master's thesis. First of all, I definitely ask for a set of bullets from students, and I am struck that I must often ask two or three times until I get the bullets I need. Many students, even very good ones, haven't rehearsed their voices enough to be able to explain their own intellectual accomplishments. This is not good. Once I do get the necessary bullets, I come up with everything positive that I can honestly say about the person. This is where the bullet points come in: I use them to provide evidence for my positive statements, and I use them to help me think of more honestly positive things to say. This method makes letter-writing more convenient from a moral perspective, since I don't have to struggle with my conscience about providing negative evaluations. I try to organize each letter around a single headline -- the most important of the candidate's positive attributes -- while trying to make sure that I cover everything positive that I can come up with. If a student has weaknesses, I simply don't mention them, figuring that a letter that makes no mention of the student's ideas, hard work, personality, or whatever will speak as loudly as one that says bad things on those topics. The people who read the letters, all of whom write such letters all the time, will see what I am doing, and they will interpret accordingly.

I will admit that some people have more sophisticated approaches to letters than I do; they have reverse-engineered the bureaucratic processes in their heads, and they design their letters based on a finely-detailed understanding of the bureaucratic process, including the precise questions that the people who read the letter are going to be asking themselves. (I explain this further in Section 11.) I don't have that kind of savoir-faire.

Once you do apply for a job, you may also find that your network contacts will volunteer to put in an informal good word for you. This usually means that they will send a simple e-mail message to their friend in the department where you're applying, saying "this person is smart and I think would make a good match

for your department". There is nothing wrong with offering to send these back-channel messages, and you should normally accept. The main exception is if you do not trust either the sincerity or the judgement of the person doing the offering.

** Interviews*

Next you will be invited to job interviews. If you apply for lots of jobs, including jobs that you don't really want, then you will get lots of practice at job interviews. This is good. It would be dishonest to interview at a place where you would never go in a million years. But don't turn down job interviews at marginal places unless you really are overwhelmed with better interviews.

When you do get invited to an interview, you might panic. If so then there are things you can do about it. Get advice. Give practice talks -- several of them, until you can give the talk in your sleep. Have your friends sit you down for practice interview conversations, like they'd have with people they were interviewing for real. Then know that you can do the whole thing on autopilot if necessary. But also maintain your routine. Keep making progress on your dissertation.

When you go for a job interview, attitude is important. Do not think of the interview as primarily a way to get a job. That short-term approach will make you act desperate. Instead, look at the interview as an opportunity to establish or deepen long-term professional relationships with the people in the department. You need to be thrilled to meet everyone and find out what they care about. Some of the people will be in completely different research areas from you, but even they will turn out to be connected to you in unexpected ways. Be open to that and think long-term. That way you will be relaxed, and you will feel more comfortable asking them questions as well as answering theirs.

The fundamental principle of an interview for a research-related job is that you need to be able to establish a point of commonality with everyone you meet. Remember how I said that a professional network is based on the articulation of shared values? This is similar, except that you have to do it on your feet. One more reason to develop your network is the practice that it will give you at articulating points of commonality with people, and this is where that skill will be most handy. In the old days, a job interview meant establishing this sort of connection with complete strangers -- believe it or not, it was often hard to obtain a simple list of the department faculty. Now we have the Web, and most job candidates show up for interviews having memorized the faculty and their research interests. You should too. You should also learn in advance about the resources of the university as they pertain to your research interests; this can mean surfing the Web, asking friends, or placing calls to the library and archives. Also find out about relevant research units in other departments. That way you can answer the question (both for them and for yourself) of why there is a good match between you. But realize that the real work is going to be done interactionally: you will meet with the people, you will converse with them, and the main product of each conversation should be one very clear reason to believe that you and that person will have something to talk about in the future.

More concretely, job interviews usually come in three parts: the public presentation, individual conversations, and socializing. At a research-oriented institution, the public presentation is simply a well-practiced research talk, methodologically airtight, organized around a single visionary argument, and aimed at a broad nonspecialist audience. You might be terrified, in which case you will be especially happy that you practiced your talk. Don't get lazy and prepare it at the last minute. This is your whole career we're talking about.

The question period after your talk is especially important. You will probably get some of the standard questions that challenge you to fill in seeming holes in the argument, and your history of networking with diverse people and internalizing their perceptions of your work will help you deliver the crisp, non-defensive answers that the audience needs. But you may also encounter questions that seem completely random. You will find yourself answering a question that appears to have nothing to do with your talk, as if the questioner were too lazy to understand your talk and were instead asking you to address some personal hobby-horse. When this happens, it helps if you understand what's really going on. You are not being abused, and the questioner is not self-absorbed. Instead, the questioner wants to know if the two of you share any potential conversation topics. The real form of the question is, "I'm interested in this, so tell me how your talk relates to that". If you draw a blank, adopt a faintly quizzical but basically delighted tone and say, "that's interesting; tell me more". Then look for a point of connection in the response. Your goal in answering questions, and in all of your interactions with the people, is *not* to show how smart you are -- your written work and your talk have taken care of that -- but to show that you are an interesting person to converse with. Blasting people with the firehose of

your overbearing brilliance is not the right approach at this point. What you're looking for is a point of contact, just a single way to make a connection between your interests and those of the questioner. You needn't pretend to understand things that you don't understand, and you needn't chase down every implication of every question. Just open up a single topic that builds a bridge between your interests and theirs. Once again you will be happy that you've attended conferences and had plenty of chance to explain your research to people who don't share all of your premises; the job talk isn't the best time to discover just how completely people can misunderstand your work.

A job interview typically also includes one-on-one conversations with faculty and students. These conversations are usually less stringent than in the corporate world, but you should certainly have strong answers ready for the standard interview questions: "Why do you want to work here?", "What do you have to offer?", "What are your research plans?", "What is your teaching philosophy?", and so on. (To get a sense of how hard-core corporate interviewing works, see Martin Yate, "Hiring the Best: A Manager's Guide to Effective Interviewing". To learn how to answer the questions, see "Martin Yate, Knock 'em Dead".) For the most part, though, your goal in these conversations is the same as with the questioners after your talks: come away from each conversation with a point of intellectual contact between the two of you. It helps if you have a guess about this point of contact going in, and this is where your homework helps. You have more flexibility in these conversations because they need not be focused narrowly on your research projects. They can include the person's background, cultural and political aspects of the department, the students, and other things that you want to know about. Sometimes the interviewer will have an agenda that they want to cover, in which case you should go along with that, at least at first. But otherwise you should gently take control of the conversation. Find opportunities to tell relevant information about your career, your work with students, and so on. Do not conceive of this stuff as advertising. Do not strain to say flattering things about yourself, as if you were reciting the selling points of a product. Instead, focus on finding something professionally in common -- one thing -- between yourself and your interviewer. Don't be surprised if the people interviewing you have not read your file and know little about you. Your candidacy was probably approved by a committee, and it is a logistical challenge to get your file to everyone in the department. So be prepared to explain yourself to people from scratch.

When I say "take control of the conversation", I don't mean that you should dominate the conversation by talking a lot. Instead, alternate between telling facts about your professional life that might provide points of contact and asking questions that are likely to elicit the kinds of raw material you need to identify the commonalities you're looking for. This may seem daunting at first, especially if you are talking with someone whose work seems completely unrelated to yours. But if you just get started, and get practice at it, then you will find it a lot easier. Because your interviewers will talk to one another, you should not repeat the same information to everyone. Instead, consciously try to have a different conversation with each person. For example, with at least a couple of your interviewers you should display knowledge of, or at least a sincere curiosity about, the department's curriculum. A good way to start that conversation is to ask how course assignments work. Also make sure you tell someone your research agenda for the next several years. They don't know whether your brilliant dissertation was your own work, or whether you simply transcribed the ideas of your advisor. So frame your future work in a way that builds on the accomplishments of your dissertation while clearly moving into new territory. This will be hard because you're probably still in the depths of the dissertation. So take time out to think about this before you arrive. Try to convey a concrete sense that you can set up a pipeline that produces refereed journal articles as its output.

In general, try to portray yourself (truthfully) as someone who is already functioning like an assistant professor. You need to be publishing, networking, speaking, and teaching, and you need to have plans for growth and development in each of those areas. The result should be a sort of business plan for your next several years of work, the result of which will be highly-visible refereed publications that bring glory to you and your department. If you can explain that business plan to the people who are interviewing you, then they will have a clear idea what they are getting. In particular, people who work in different research areas from your own may have a hard time understanding how your work is important, and this is a prime opportunity to explain how your work should be evaluated.

During the interview, you should not talk about topics that are better postponed until you get an offer. This includes salary and benefits, and it especially includes topics such as course reductions for research that may make you look less than completely thrilled about your teaching responsibilities. See the discussion of negotiation below for more details about that phase of

the process. During the interview, however, it probably *is* useful to open the topic of what people would expect from you if you want to work there. You might approach this topic either very directly (i.e., "if I came to work here, what would be expected of me?") or very indirectly (e.g., by sensing what happens with each individual as you try to articulate points of commonality with them). Use your judgement. Try to discern whether everyone has the same expectations for you, or whether the expectations conflict. For example, you might find yourself in the middle of a tug-of-war between factions, each of which wants you to join their projects and ally yourself with their political agendas. This kind of conflict is not necessarily unmanageable, but you do want to know about it.

The final component of the interview is socializing. This might take the form of a reception, or of a meal with some number of the faculty and students. The socializing is really just socializing. So tone down the intellectual intensity and socialize. It's still a test, of course, but it's a test of whether you can tone down the intensity. Use common sense. Do not drink alcohol. Do not talk about deep personal things. Do not assume that everybody is your close and trustworthy friend, just because they are being friendly and polite. Do not say anything bad about anyone. Do not get wild and crazy like it's a party. Do not try to engage in politics, because you won't be any good at it. Just socialize. Get people to talk about themselves. If you have kids, then by all means ask the people about their kids. Find out about daycare and rent and culture if that's what you need to know.

A common mistake during a job interview is to focus your attention on the faculty and ignore everyone else. You need to listen to the students. Are they smart? Mature? Demoralized? Excited about their work? Engaged in a rebellion? Just punching the clock until they get their credential? What are their complaints? What agendas do they bring to the hiring process? Are you only hearing from the activists and complainers, or are you hearing representative views? Try to talk with a group of students without any faculty present. Very often the most vocal segment of students, who may or may not represent a majority, have definite ideas about what sort of faculty are needed -- basically, faculty who can teach the things that they want to learn and that the current faculty can't teach. If you can teach those things then by all means get conversation going on that topic. If not then elicit a broader range of issues and concerns to discover whether that particular topic is the only important one. In addition, graduate students will often have elaborate views about the politics of their department. You can listen to these views as anthropological data, but in practice students' political analyses are wildly uneven in quality; some are very astute -- these are smart people, after all -- but in other cases they just don't have enough information to develop informed ideas. So listen to them, but don't automatically believe or act on what you hear from them.

** Big picture*

Those are the mechanics; now back to the big picture. Being a job candidate is inherently strange. In one sense it is flattering: all of these interesting and busy people are focusing their attention on you and your work. It is an important way to get feedback and thus build your professional voice. It is an important way to get a sense of proportion about the professional world. To really understand it, look at it from the point of view of the people who are interviewing you. By far the most valuable commodity that any academic department possesses is job slots. Things like money and office space (which is the second most valuable commodity) are relatively fixed, or else they are in the control of deans and provosts. But who gets hired is almost totally under the control of the faculty, and it is absolutely fundamental to the future workings of the department. It stands to reason that people might fight about it, or that they will be looking for allies or compromises or least worst alternatives. All of this political action will be going on under the surface, and you will be oblivious to most of it. Of course, if you have a friend in the department then you will have learned some of it. But most of it will be too complicated or subtle or taboo for anyone to explain to you.

So here is the paradox: while you are in town for your interview, you are the most important person in the whole world, and yet you cannot know just *how* you are important. It's like being an anthropologist: you sail ashore on an island somewhere, with maybe a couple of names of contacts and a year spent studying the language from tapes. You really don't know the culture that well, and yet suddenly there you are. You are fascinating to them, and they are fascinating to you, but the substance of this fascination is hazy. You are *meaningful* to them -- that is, the culture and politics of the place has assigned you a meaning -- but you don't know what your meaning is. You might be seen as a savior, or an invader, or as a source of cargo from the First World, or as so-and-so's candidate, or as a snooty person from the Big School on the east coast. Most likely different people will perceive you differently, and their perceptions will be shaped by their relationships to one another. On the whole, however, the good news is that nobody will expect you

to understand the culture and politics. Don't go around saying things that could trample on land mines and you'll be fine. Listen both intellectually and intuitively to the people as they talk. Get them to talk about their history of relations with one another. When they tell you something about that history, listen to their vocabulary and use their words to ask them more questions. Smile and nod and don't get drawn into topics that you don't know anything about. Go ahead and express your own concerns, e.g., "from what you're saying, should I worry that maybe I, given my background as such-and-such and my interest in such-and-such, will be treated as a outsider and not a full member of the group?". That works fine. What won't work is expressing opinions about this strange culture, when you just washed up on the shore this morning.

Here is another way to think about the politics of the academic job interview. Think about the faculty members in the department where you are interviewing, and arrange them along a spectrum. At one end are the people whose research interests are closest to yours, and at the other end are the people whose research interests are furthest away from yours. As a broad generalization, faculty want to hire people whose interests are closer to their own. And the faculty decide who to hire by majority vote. These facts define your task. With the faculty whose interests are closest to yours, your job is to develop a deep bond of professional solidarity. Once they hire you, they may not be able to hire any more friends for a long time, so they need to be persuaded that you will be a good collaborator. With the people whose interests are furthest from yours, your job is simply not to get them mad at you. Find a single point of contact with them, establish friendly relations, and leave it at that. The most crucial people are the ones in the middle -- the faculty whose research areas are somewhat related to yours. These are the swing votes, and you must win them over. Read their work. Ask your contacts what they care about. Then, when you're on the airplane, think deeply about the values and directions that you share with each of them, and develop a sense that you are intellectually on the same team. Of course, in the end people will vote for you because you are the best candidate for the job; no amount of politicking will change that, and your basic approach to the interview should not be political. Even so, the best way to help people appreciate the quality of your work is to converse with them in their own language.

A topic that often preoccupies job candidates is the "culture" of the department they are joining. Junior people are often afraid that they will be isolated in their departments, or that they will have to contend with a general atmosphere of nastiness. These concerns can be valid, but they are often overblown. First of all, in looking at a department you should try not to reify an abstraction called "the culture". The department is made of individuals, and you will have dealings with them individually. Departments do often have customs and practices, but those things do not define life in the department in general. You should also get fears of intellectual isolation in perspective. It is better, of course, if you find yourself working in a department with other people who share your intellectual worldview. But you should also be investing considerable effort in building an intellectual network outside of your department. If you don't have a network, then isolation is a valid fear. If you do have a network, though, then you can draw on your network for intellectual rapport, comments on draft papers, and things like that. And over the long haul, as you become more prominent through your publishing and networking, you can look for an opportunity to move into a job where you fit more perfectly.

** Negotiating*

The point of all this, of course, is to get job offers. Know that you do not have a legally binding job offer until you have a paper letter in your hand that offers you the job and states the title, salary, and starting date. Do not tell anybody that you have a job, do not reject any options elsewhere, and do not resign from the job that you currently have until you have this letter in your hand. A letter that says "this offer is contingent upon final approval by the Provost, the Academic Council, and the President" is not a legally binding job offer until you get written or e-mailed word of that approval.

The official job offer letter, however, is only one step in a complicated process whose details vary a lot depending on the field and on the personalities of the people involved. The first and most momentous step is that the department votes to recommend you for the job. When this happens you will receive an informal message from someone in the department, and there will be much rejoicing. This is *not* a legally binding job offer. When you receive this message, the correct answer is not "yes" but rather "it's a great honor that you want to offer me the job, thank you; let's explore the details". This is called negotiation, and the results of the negotiation will go into the job offer. Negotiating a job offer is a serious matter. The intuition is that you will rarely have as much power as you do right now. Use it, because once you are hired you can be ordered to teach courses you don't want to teach, serve on committees that you don't want to serve on, conduct your research in lab space that you don't

like, and so forth. So long as your negotiations with the department remain open, you will have their undivided attention. Be polite. Be business-like. And be prompt, because if you turn down the job then they will want to offer it to someone else. But do take the opportunity to think carefully and get yourself the best offer you can.

Before you get into the details of the negotiation, you should take a moment and exhale. If you're like most people, you've been worrying about whether you would have a job at all. Maybe you're going to be on the street, maybe your children are going to be malnourished, maybe you will have wasted years of your life, etc. Now that a department has announced an interest in hiring you, those anxieties are not going to vanish in an instant. Have a party. Decompress. Tell yourself that the worst case scenario, while not perfect, has just gotten a lot better. A lot of people would give their teeth to have your problems now.

You should also talk with the department chair at an early point to find out their process. Is the formal job-offer letter normally sent before or after the negotiation? What kind of word does the department need from you before they send your file up the hierarchy? For example, your file might not go to the dean until you say that you would accept the terms if offered. What approvals are needed from that point, and what precedents are there for files being rejected? Does the chair have to get the file to a committee by a certain date? Does this mean that you have to complete the negotiation by a certain date? At some point you might have to force the chair to walk your file through the hierarchy, but don't mention that possibility now. Instead, work together to avoid that sort of crisis, as well as the sorts of misunderstanding that get reported as "I busted a gut to get the terms s/he wanted and now s/he's making extra demands".

Prepare for the negotiation by talking to the three or four members of the department with whom you established the best rapport, hopefully including the most politically astute. Call them on the phone and say, "you're probably aware that the department wants to offer me this job, and I'm hoping to continue our conversation a little bit; is this a good moment?". They've interviewed you; now it's your turn to interview them. Be polite and low-key. Don't be arrogant. Don't get caught digging up dirt, and don't grill anyone like a police detective. Don't waste their time. Stick to the point. But do get your questions answered. If you have practical questions about things like housing costs and community life, ask them -- one of the norms of collegiality is that colleagues help one another out with this sort of practical information. Ask semi-directive questions about the topics that concern you. "What should I know?" "How does tenure work there?" "What is the tenure rate? Can you tell me about cases where people didn't get tenure?" "What is the culture like?" "How does everyone get along?" Then listen to what they say and don't say, and how real they sound.

You should also get advice from your thesis committee members, anyone else who wrote a letter on your behalf, and your friends inside the department that wants to hire you. You should also keep those people fully informed at each step in the negotiating process. When talking to your insider friends, it would be especially helpful to ask them about local practices. What sorts of things have previous new hires negotiated for?

When you proceed to actually negotiate the details of the offer, you should understand what flexibility the department does and does not have. A department in a private university will probably have some flexibility about salary. The key intuition is that you will only get the salary that someone else is willing to offer you. So if you have other offers (and they'll know if you have other offers) then you can explore the issue. A public university will probably have little flexibility about salary. (On the other hand, salaries at public universities are matters of public record, and are sometimes available on the Web if you look hard.) The only common way for an entry-level faculty member in a public university to negotiate about salary is to consider getting hired at one notch in the promotion scale above the bottom. So ask the question, "how does the promotion ladder work there?". Oftentimes they will have Assistant Professor I, II, III, and IV, or whatever. So maybe you want to be Assistant Professor II instead of I. But then maybe you don't, because an Assistant Professor II might come up for tenure a couple of years earlier than an Assistant Professor I, and you probably want to delay your tenure case as long as possible so that you can amass a publication record. So salary is probably not a major negotiation issue. If you do want to negotiate salary, the gist of the problem is for you and your prospective chair to formulate arguments that will persuade the dean, whose decision it is. If nothing else, this is good practice: once you start work, you will spend a lot of your time working with your colleagues to formulate arguments that will persuade the dean.

As to the other issues, distinguish in your mind between items that cost money and items that do not cost money but that make the chair's life harder. As far as the money is concerned, you should figure that the

chair has a "pot" of somewhere less than $10,000 to spend on extras for you during your first year. (That's for a research university. I don't know about industry or more teaching-centered schools. The amount also depends a lot on the field. Scientists need a lot of capital to work, but entry-level historians aren't in a position to negotiate for much of anything.) So you are effectively deciding how to allocate that money. First find out what comes with the offer for free. That might sound like, "I assume the offer comes with basics like an office with a computer in it". This is a smart thing to say, because you don't want your computer to trade off against other items. Do the same with technical support for your computer, and then do it with library access and moving expenses. Then figure out what else you want for your first year, such as a laboratory space, a lighter teaching load while you get your research started, or an assistant. You might also get someone on your thesis committee to explain the concept of "summer salary" to you. You need to get a research program started, and you should ask the chair for whatever you will need to hit the ground running. Much of your first year will be spent writing grant proposals, and you need the resources up-front that will let you start doing research and win the research grants you will need. It is in the department's interest for you to succeed in this, but the department will not necessarily know what your needs are. So figure them out and negotiate for them. As an entry level faculty member you should not invest your ego in getting a huge amount of stuff from the negotiation. Just find the optimum trade-off.

Your other area of negotiation does not cost money, but it does make the chair's life harder. I'm talking about teaching and committee assignments. Much of the chair's job is to fit together a whole batch of puzzle pieces so that courses get taught and committee work gets done, among other things, and you are a puzzle piece. You want to get assigned to teach courses that you will be good at teaching. You also want to be confident that you will be assigned the same course for several years, so that the massive effort of preparing the course will be amortized, and so that you can focus more on research in the crucial few years after you get your research program under way. So try to negotiate at least some of your first year's courses. This may not be possible at all if it violates local customs, but you can ask. Consider being assigned to teach a graduate seminar in your research area, ideally toward the end of your first year, so that you can recruit graduate students to your projects. You should also negotiate your first-year committee assignments. Some departments kill their junior faculty's careers by assigning them difficult administrative responsibilities. Find out whether you're dealing with a department that has a history of this. You can't negotiate your courses or committee assignments beyond the first year, but you can at least get yourself positioned. The key intuition for committee work is to define an area of committee work that you really care about, and get assigned to that. That area might not even have a name yet. Avoid the undergraduate and graduate program committees, which involve heavy lifting. Organizing the department seminar is a very good idea. It is usually not a popular job, but it will give you a public role and help with your networking.

One last item. While you're negotiating your job offer(s), you need to ask yourself a hard question: will my dissertation really be done (and that means completely done, printed, signed, and into the library) by the start date of the job? The reason I ask is that not having your dissertation done when you start a new job is a bad idea. For one thing, the job itself might be contingent on your having a PhD. But even if they let you start the job without the dissertation finished, you will probably regret it. You'll tell yourself, "I'll get back to the dissertation once I overcome the enormous blast of work at the beginning of the new job", but then reality will hit. That initial blast of work will never end. And even if it does end, you'll have lost your current immersion in the dissertation, and it'll take you months to get back up to speed. Meanwhile, the tenure clock is ticking, and all the time you've spent on your dissertation is time that you're not spending on grant proposals, research projects, and refereed journal papers. My point is that you must be realistic about when your dissertation will be done. It has already taken longer than you thought, and the rest of it will take longer than you thought as well. You've got a committee of professors looking for problems with it, you've got trips to the library ahead of you, and you've got details to pin down. It's an issue.

If you do worry that you might not finish the dissertation on time, the job negotiation is the right time to face the problem. You can say this: "Let's talk for a moment about my dissertation. It's coming along very well and I'm pretty confident that it'll be done on time. But if something bad happens and it's not done on July 1st (or whatever the official start date of the job is), what happens?". Your interlocutor's tone of voice will immediately drop into that troubled-and-worried range that you have been trying to avoid during the cheerful interview process, and you will have a scary conversation about rules and contingencies. Don't panic. Remember that these people have just gotten done persuading themselves that you are the best person for the job. They aren't going to blow you off just because you asked the question. But they have students that need teaching,

committee work that needs doing, and all the rest of it, and their lives will become measurably harder if you blow it. The best outcome is if you can get an option, written into your offer, to postpone your start date by a semester. Or, if you're especially lucky, they might bring you on as a postdoc for a year with the job offer still in effect afterwards on the condition that you finish the dissertation. Or you might get an ultimatum to finish it or else. In any case you'll know where you stand. You certainly don't want them saying, "There's a chance that the dissertation won't be done", so do emphasize that the conversation is hypothetical. But if things drag on, don't kid yourself about the reality of the situation.

Once you finish negotiating with the department, your job offer will probably need to be approved by the university's internal hierarchy. Actually, these approvals might happen before the negotiation; the point is that the department itself does not have the authority to offer you a job. The hierarchy's approval process does sometimes go wrong: either the so-called Committee on Academic Personnel doesn't think you have enough publications, or they are overloaded with other people's cases, or the department failed to get your file to them on time. This is why you shouldn't abandon any other options until you have an offer letter in your hand. It is also why you should ensure that your department has everything it could possibly need to defend the idea of hiring you: publications, recommendation letters, chapters of your half-finished book, a copy of your book contract with the publisher, teaching evaluations, everything. If you wrote more papers after the interview (and you should have), definitely send them along. Unpublished papers count too, provided they're ready to circulate. And make sure the department has exhaustive and up-to-date contact information for you, in case a bureaucratic emergency arises.

Finally you will get written job offers, hopefully including ones that you want. The really hard part comes when you have more than one. If the offers all arrive at the same time then you are lucky -- you just have to pick one. But if the job offers arrive at different times then you will find yourself under a great deal of pressure. You might get an offer from your fifth-choice department, and they might give you three weeks to decide, and then two weeks along your first-choice department is still dawdling. What do you do? Well, first you communicate with everyone. Tell your first-choice school that you have another offer that comes with time pressure. If they want you then they will speed it up. Even worse is when your fifth-choice job offer is about to time out, and you have no other job offers in hand, but your first choice department says that they can 99% guarantee you a job offer if you can just wait another week. This is a tough one, because if that first-choice job doesn't come through then you're on the street. So what do you do? Well, hopefully you have prepared for this amazingly common situation by having a one-year postdoc or visiting position in your pocket as a fall-back. But let's say you haven't. Then you should try to delay the fifth-choice people another week, and if you can't delay them then you should take their job, figuring that maybe you'll move somewhere else once you become established. Why? Because that so-called 99% guarantee from your first-choice department is probably more like 50%. It's in their interest to delude themselves about how likely they are to offer you a job because they lose nothing if they're wrong.

** Getting advice*

When looking for a job, and especially when negotiating a job offer, you will probably be asking for a great deal of advice -- maybe more serious advice than you have ever gotten in your life. It will therefore be helpful to think about the general problem of getting advice. You should get advice from a wide variety of people. The reason for this is straightforward: in giving advice, people tend to overgeneralize from their own experience. Few people are excellent advice-givers; the real distinction is between people who can get a little distance on their own experience and people who can't. You should try to determine each person's strengths and weaknesses as an advice-giver, and try to adjust accordingly.

One way to interpret various advice-givers' strengths and weaknesses is in terms of their structural location. Relying only on your thesis committee will give you advisors steeped in one culture. They will probably advise you as if where you are going resembles the culture in which you've been trained. The advice you will get from assistant professors is almost always useless; very junior people are often unable to attend the most important meetings, and they are generally too anxious about their own positions to help you much people are generalizing from their experience. Practices vary from one field to another, and so the advice you get will also vary depending on the advice-giver's field. For example, a field that is oversupplied with well-qualified job candidates will probably have different practices than one where qualified candidates are rare. Most people are unaware of the degree of variation among fields, and so they may not realize that their experience doesn't generalize.

It's especially important to attend to the distinctions between junior and senior people. For junior people,

the experience of negotiating an offer is still fresh in mind. As such, their advice is more likely to reflect current practice. Senior people, by contrast, probably travel and network a great deal, so they can be useful as sources of intelligence, but they may not have negotiated an offer for decades. Things have generally gotten more competitive since the 1970's, and so it is common for senior people to have an excessively sunny outlook. At the same time, junior people often have an excessively cynical outlook. Some people take these polar attitudes to an extreme, and you should ignore any advice you get from people (mostly senior) who think academe is all about the disinterested pursuit of truth, as well as from people (mostly junior) who think it's all politics. People with mature outlooks fall into the realistic middle between these extremes, and you should consciously identify those mature individuals and make friends with them.

** Conclusion*

That, then, is how to get a job. If you are reading this as a new graduate student, it probably sounds completely foreign. "How could I ever do all of that, when right now I'm just focused on the insane reading list I have to study for my qualifying exams?" It's a good question, but the answer is that everything comes in its time. Read this article again when you are writing your first conference paper on your research, and then read it again once a year. You will be impressed with how different it seems from year to year, and how much more sense the institutions will make once you start to become part of them.

10 Advising Others

Once you get a job, and probably long before, your status in the community will quietly shift: you'll no longer be the disoriented student at the bottom of the totem pole, and others will be coming to you for advice. That's particularly true if you've been building a network, organizing professional activities, and projecting a sense of purpose in your career. Perhaps you are not yet anyone's official dissertation advisor, but you are an advisor in an informal sense, with a chance to do good and a risk of doing harm. You need to see the situation coming, because being in a position to give advice can evoke strange reactions. If you have any latent tendencies to be an empire-builder, power freak, meddler, or know-it-all, now is when they will come out. It will take a little time before you get comfortable with the role, so in the meantime here are some concepts and rules.

* Figure out whether you are being asked for advice at all. Often people who have troubling situations just want to talk about them, either to sort out the situation emotionally or just to rant. Maybe you're just supposed to sit there and say nothing, which if you're like me will be good for you. It is very common to hallucinate that you are being asked for advice when you are not. Giving unwanted advice is a serious and widespread character defect. It is a good practice, therefore, to ask "do you want advice?" or "are you asking for advice?". Don't make it sound like you are bursting with advice that you can't wait to spill out. If the answer is "no", shrug and say "okay" and be done with it. Regardless of the answer, the situation will be clarified in both of your minds.

* Decide in advance whether you are qualified to give people advice about personal matters, or just about professional matters. Most people are terrible at the former. In either case, be clear in your own mind whether the matter is personal, professional, or a combination of both. People's situations usually have both aspects, especially early in their careers before they have themselves all established and compartmentalized, so you may have to say things like, "well, that's a personal aspect of the situation that I can't really help with".

* Understand the different structural situations that might cause the person to need advice. The hardest and most important case is when the person is just entering into a new institutional setting (such as the early years of graduate school) or else making the transition to a very different location within the institution (such as when starting their first faculty job). In that case, what's really needed is a general orientation to an unfamiliar landscape. You're inside and they're outside, and they're still clueless. Your major obstacle is that you've forgotten what that clueless feeling is like. Try to remember, though, because your job is to provide the person with a way of looking at things. Try to explain, concisely and in plain language, the logic of the world they're entering, so they can see what's going on around them. Provide a sense of proportion. "Is this situation normal?" "Can this be done?" Another possibility, very different and much easier, is that the person understands the unwritten rules of the institution just fine, and needs advice simply because you know particular facts. Perhaps you are acquainted with particular individuals and can provide advice about dealing with them. Explain what those individuals care about, what concerns they are likely to have, what misperceptions are liable to set them off, what agendas they have going on, and so forth. Yet another possibility is that you're being asked for guidance, either step-by-step

instructions or an intuitive sense of proportion, on a specific process that you have been through, such as organizing a workshop. Figure out what kind of advice you are being asked for, confirm your understanding with the person, and then advise accordingly.

* Realize the limits of your expertise. Learn to say "I don't know" without feeling insecure. Practice phrases like "I'm at the edge of my expertise here, and you might want to talk to X or Y who has done more of this than I have". Learn to detect the feeling inside yourself when you cease knowing what you're talking about and start making things up instead. Notice how good it feels to know what you're talking about, and how good it feels to refrain from making things up.

* Clarify the situation. Make sure you've got the facts before you start issuing directions. The person you're advising may not even be clear as to the nature of the situation, and you may well find yourself turning up important facts that completely change the picture. This is particularly true when you're being asked to help impose order on chaos, as for example when the question is "What should I do with my life?". Understand whether the crucial facts are about the person asking for help, about some public situation such as a bureaucratic process, about third parties, about technical machinery, or whatever. Some situations are clearer than others, and when the situation is unclear you should settle down to extended elicitation of facts. Decide whether you should be asking directive questions (that is, questions that presuppose that you know what the real issue is) or semi-directive questions (that is, questions that are fairly vague and are really aimed at getting the person talking so that you can listen to their language and the way they're talking). An example of a directive question is, "have you registered for the course?"; an example of a semi-directive question is, "how did you decide to take the course?". Sometimes it's useful for the person to wander around exploring different aspects of the situation, and sometimes it's not. It's up to you to discern the difference.

* Find out what's behind the question. People often don't know how to ask their question, or because they don't understand their situation they are asking the wrong question. If a graduate student asks you how to start a journal, for example, you can probably guess that the question is wrong. Even when the question is right, you usually want to know what motivated it. So unless the question is really clear-cut, don't launch into an answer until you have elicited the broader background that motivated it. Maybe your advice will be to ask other questions.

* If the person is having trouble with a decision, find out if they know what they want to do with their life. I've mentioned that "what should I do with my life?" involves imposing order on chaos, and you can hardly believe how true this is until you start talking to people about it. Some people tolerate the chaos perfectly well, and they are happy pursuing what interests them from day to day or year to year. Other people, however, live in a constant state of distress because of it, and those people need help. When people can't decide what to write their term papers about, for example, I find that they are actually uncertain what their life is about. Just ask them: "what do you want to do with your life?". They will probably shrug and giggle. They have no idea. I believe that someone who is living in that kind of chaos is incapable of learning, and so I regularly turn conversations about term paper topics into conversations about career plans. I don't require anyone to make any irreversible commitments, but I do urge them to come up with a tentative plan that they can explore through their term paper. The same principle applies to many other decisions. Now, some people don't want a plan for their lives, and insist on living in state of permanent chaos. That's their right, but it's also my right to tell those people nicely that I don't know how to help them.

* Cultivate your powers of finding things interesting. If you are like most of us, you will need to learn how to distinguish your own interests from other people's. If someone is looking for direction, the worst thing you can do is to foist your own direction on them. Most such foisting is unconscious: you may not intend to manipulate anyone into following your own path rather than theirs, but if you have sewn yourself into the narrow world of your dissertation then you may not even recognize that other paths exists. Get used to the fact that some people want to make money, and that other people are interested in research methodologies that are quite different from your own, and that still other people are much more interested in theory than you are, or much less. Most people couldn't care less about the research literatures that fascinate you, and that's okay. In advising others, you have an opportunity to expand yourself by searching out and articulating a vision of greatness for someone else's life. You have to start by believing that everyone, including the person you are advising, is capable of making a tremendous contribution to the world. That tremendous contribution is inside them somewhere, it's trying to get out, and if you are advising someone who is looking for direction then your job is to identify that tremendous contribution and get excited about it. Figure out what the person is interested in. Elicit bits and pieces of their interests, then offer various

alternative directions that they could pursue, and ask them which alternatives strike a chord. The process is like tuning a radio: you are going to fiddle with the dial until the person's tremendous-contribution-in-the-making comes through loud and clear. Share that person's excitement, and enthusiastically preach the importance of their vision. Their path won't always be easy, and your articulate and persuasive confidence will help keep them on track. In particular, you can help them by acting as a translator between their world and the professional world that they want to join, explaining their vision to them in professional-sounding language. Sell them their own lives. And whatever you do, don't go around discouraging people, or telling them that they can't cut it. Your question should be "what does this person down-deep care about?", because that is where their greatest contribution will lie. It's not your job to go around trashing people's dreams, because you're not that smart.

* Don't try to tell people what to work on. If someone is looking for help identifying a research topic, your advice should remain on the level of process, not substance. Research topics are extremely personal, and a topic that interests you is not likely to interest anyone else. You can mirror back someone's topic in an interesting way, but you can't devise a topic from scratch. What you can do, however, is to offer a few potential topics as probes into the person's interests. You can say, "okay, just to help me get a sense of your interests, let me just make up a few topics off the top of my head, and you can tell me which ones are more and less interesting, and why". Note that you are deliberately downplaying your own investment in the topics you suggest.

* Try not to offer evaluations. Only rarely will anyone ever ask you, "how good is my writing" or "how good is my research". If you think you are being asked for an objective evaluation like this, stop and think. Either you are really being asked, "should I change careers?", in which case you should explore that question in the thorough way that it deserves, or you are being asked, "what are some specific ways in which I can improve my writing/research?", in which case you can treat the question very narrowly and positively without offering any kind of overall assessment.

* It's not about you. In offering advice to someone else, you may be tempted to use your own experiences as examples. Don't. Stories about your life will not communicate anything useful. If you have learned any lessons from your experiences, then that's great; you can explore how (and whether) those lessons apply to the particulars of the other person's life. But leave your life out of it. This rule only has one exception. Often someone will be distressed because they're going through a crisis that lots of people go through. You can help them feel better by saying, "yeah, I know, I went through that; lots of people do", and leaving it at that -- just a few words.

* Understand which words belong to you and which belong to the person you're advising. For example, if you are serving as a bureaucratic authority (e.g., an instructor in a course) then it is your job to understand and adjudicate the meanings of the relevant bureaucratic words. On the other hand, if the person is telling you about their life, or about a world that you are not a part of, they will often introduce words that you do not control, and whose full meaning you can probably never know. I'm not just talking about five-syllable jargon words, but ordinary simple words that might or might not carry special connotations for particular people. Don't try to take control of such words. Don't presuppose that you know what they mean, and do not try to impose your own meaning upon them. Nothing kills communication faster. Instead, incorporate those words into questions aimed at eliciting a fuller picture of the situation. For example, if the person says, "I want a meaningful job", you have no idea what "meaningful" means to them. But you can ask a question like, "what would a meaningful job be like?", or "who comes to mind that has a job that's meaningful in the way you'd like?". This can get condescending if you do it wrong, but once you have the concept of not legislating what "meaningful" means you'll figure it out.

* Be a mirror. Make clear what you know and don't know. Check your understanding by saying, "let me check my understanding by trying to explain that back to you in my own words", doing so, and saying, "is that right?". This is called active listening, and it accomplishes many things, such as preventing you from saying dumb things, eliciting any further information you might need, and tactfully showing the person how well they are expressing themselves. Own your perceptions and feelings by saying things like, "my sense is ..." and "I perceive you as being unclear on ...". Emphasize the evidentiary basis of your comments by saying things like, "I hardly know you, so what I'm saying is based only on what you've told me and on the impressions I'm getting here". It may sound like a platitude, but it's not. It makes clear that you do not have a magical ability to read anybody's mind, and that you understand your limitations.

* Know your feelings. Let's say that you're listening to someone's problems and you start feeling angry (or

sad, or confused, or itching to get out of there). Although I don't want you to engage in psychoanalysis or start talking about your feelings in a way that would take the focus off the person you're advising, it will be useful if you can notice the feeling and start to identify it. The first step, which is harder than it sounds, is actually becoming aware of the feeling. If you're feeling angry and you start yelling, then that's a good sign that you're acting on the feeling rather than consciously observing it. Once you become consciously aware of the feeling, try to locate where in your body you are feeling it. Is it in your stomach? Your jaw? Take a moment to feel the feeling, and ask yourself whether the feeling is familiar. Is this something you commonly feel? Once you get a fix on the feeling, you can ask yourself some questions about it:

(1) Whose feeling is it? When giving someone advice, it's common to feel that person's feelings instead of your own. Either you are feeling a natural empathy, or else the person is unconsciously trying to shift their own feelings onto you. This is especially common with feelings of confusion, and if you become confused while giving someone advice then you should definitely stop and consider whether it's your own confusion or theirs.

(2) Is the feeling rational? That is, are you angry (sad, frightened, confused, etc) about the actual, real situation that's happening there in the room, or has something about that situation poked an emotional wound that you're carrying around from an unrelated situation? For example, if you are advising someone who is being oppressed, you might start to get angry (or whatever) because you're unconsciously calling up memories of your own unresolved experiences of being oppressed. Feelings from unrelated situations are rarely useful, and you should try to file them and return to the business at hand. Deal with them later on your own time.

(3) Who is the feeling directed toward? You might be angry (or sad, frightened, confused, etc) toward the person you are advising, for example because the person's actual agenda is not to get advice but to manipulate you. If so then you'll have to decide whether to proceed, and how. Or you might be angry (etc) toward some third party that the person is telling you about. In that case you need to file that feeling for later and proceed in a rational, analytical way, since your job is to be useful, not angry.

Once you have identified the feeling in these ways, you will have to decide what to do about it. The point, again, is not to launch into extended psychological discussions. You probably don't have the training for that. You could simply explain that you're having the feeling and what you think is causing it. You can even say that you're mentioning this precisely because you want to stick to rational analysis of the situation. Or you can simply use the feeling as a source of data as you decide how to proceed with the conversation. In any case, the simple act of identifying the feeling will make you less likely to act irrationally on it.

* Take a different approach when advising someone who is distraught. A person who is acutely emotionally upset (failed an exam, might get thrown out of school, whatever) is temporarily incapable of rational thought. That's not their fault, and you shouldn't blame them for it. To the contrary, you should accommodate their situation by not doing or saying anything that demands rational thought from them. Don't try to explain things or solve problems. Don't say "I know how you feel". Just listen for a while. See if you can make yourself into a container where they can put all the junk until they are in a position to process it. When the time comes to put the pieces back together, have them walk through the facts of the situation. Simply saying the facts, without any attempt to evaluate or change them, is the first step to reestablishing rational thought. Concreteness is important. Watch for any tendencies to blur the facts with hazy language, or to speak in abstractions. Watch for attempts to conflate logically unrelated situations into a big ball of distressing emotions. These are defenses against dealing with the reality. Of course, maybe it's not time to deal with reality yet, and that's not for you to decide. But if it's time to reason about the situation, then you can do a service by keeping things on a rational track. Prioritize. Ask questions that will let you distinguish between issues that really need to be decided right now and issues that can wait. Don't get sidetracked worrying about facts that have no bearing on the issues that need to be decided first. Once you've reestablished the rhythms of rational discussion, you can resume applying the rest of the strategies I've presented here.

* Be clear whether the situation calls for you to offer specific instructions. Usually it does not. Everyone has their own path, and you probably can't have enough information to know what course is actually best, given the full context of their life. It is important to understand this, because otherwise you are likely to get yourself too committed to the solution that happens to occur to you. Some people just want reactions, perspectives, options, issues, and reassurance that they're not crazy. They can figure the rest out for themselves. Other people want detailed instructions. You'll have to figure out who wants what.

* If you start to suspect a hidden agenda, stop, and don't continue until you have clarified the situation. Some people want advice so they can blame you if your advice doesn't work. Some people pretend to want advice so they can resist it. Most people with agendas will never admit them, and it probably won't do any good for you to accuse them of anything. But if you determine that your time is not being used in good faith, simply say that you don't know how to help them. And let it go.

* If you find yourself pressuring, manipulating, or arguing, then something has gone wrong. You can state your views, but let go of your desire to control anyone. Other people are responsible for their actions and have to make their own decisions. Trying to control them won't help and will probably cloud their thinking. If their decision affects you then you are not giving advice but negotiating, which is extremely different. If you are actually negotiating then this must be made clear all around. Recruiting someone to join your research group or department, for example, is a kind of negotiation. Likewise, you should realize if you have any conflicts of interest, for example when the topic is whether the student ought to be working for you. Sometimes the conflicts are not obvious, and in that case you should obviously disclose them. But if your interests really aren't affected, then realize that and let go of needing to fix the outcome.

* Giving advice is often iterative. You'll offer advice, but your advice will cause other facts and issues to surface, such as the reasons why your advice won't work. That's fine. Just start another round of clarifying the situation. And once you understand that advice is iterative, you'll be more likely to frame your advice in a conditional way, like "okay, how about if you ..., would that work?".

* Talk in usefully medium-sized units. Don't give long speeches. If your advisee is filling up with comments or resistance as you talk then your talking isn't doing any good anyway. If they seem to want to talk, stop talking, because they aren't listening. By the same token, if your head fills up with things to say while the person is talking, make notes. Then just say the one that's most important. It's okay to say "hang on, I need to keep notes to keep track of this". If you can't get around to saying everything that you want to say, you can always follow up with an e-mail letter if necessary. Or you can just forget it. You don't need to present a complete, seamless picture. Just say enough to get the person thinking on their own again, then stop. You can check understanding with something like "is this making any sense?". This is better than "do you understand?", since it puts the blame on you and doesn't presuppose that you *are* making sense. An even better question is, "do I understand?", since that's a more common problem anyway.

* Get to the point. Don't start into a philosophical speech whose connection to the issue at hand is not going to be revealed until it's almost done. If you do have to explain an abstract concept, say so first: "I guess to explain this I have to introduce an abstract concept, okay?". The person you're advising is focused on their problem, and they don't have the attention span for anything whose relation to the problem has not been made clear. Concisely explain your thought processes.

* Don't ask questions unless you want to know the answers. Don't ask "quiz questions" whose answers you already know. Making someone read your mind teaches all the wrong lessons.

* Practice explaining things. When you see someone pursing their career in an admirably effective way, stop and figure out what they are doing. The concepts in "Networking on the Network" should help. Then pretend that you are explaining the admirably effective strategies you are seeing. Rehearse the actual words that you would use to make these strategies comprehensible to someone who still feels clueless. If you do this consistently then your rehearsals will come back to you automatically some day when it's your turn to give advice. You will also start to notice analogies and patterns among the various admirable strategies you observe, and this will help you to develop your own concepts.

* If you find yourself giving the same advice over and over, write it down. This happens a lot when you're dealing with lots of people who are all in basically the same situation, such as students in your class. Most of them will never ask you for advice, even though most of them need it. By writing your advice down, you save everyone's time and spread the benefits of your wisdom to more people. Then keep adding to your emerging how-to every time a new issue comes up. That's where this article came from. Not only that: every time I see a student feeling bad or getting into trouble, I ask myself whether the necessary advice is in this paper, and if it isn't I add another sentence, paragraph, or section.

11 How to Get Tenure

** Deep tenure*

A professor once told me that getting tenure is like not getting hit by a train. What she meant is that what matters psychologically is the prospect of being denied tenure. Coming up for tenure is extraordinarily stressful for many people, and this stress causes many people to distort their lives and their research in an attempt to second-guess a tenure process that they do not experience as rational. My goal here is to explain the process of getting tenure in a way that relieves the stress and makes such distortions unnecessary.

The first concept you need is deep tenure -- the kind of tenure that derives from an extensive network of relationships within your field. People who are starting out in their first job as a professor often misunderstand their relationships with the other faculty in their department. They are looking for some kind of community among equals, and they are often surprised to find their colleagues investing most of their attention on the outside world. The junior faculty feel that they need to work closely with the senior faculty who will decide their tenure cases, or at least they will invest effort in politicking those senior faculty in an attempt to influence the eventual decision. Much of this effort is misdirected. Of course, senior faculty do exist who ignore junior faculty or treat them callously. But you should understand that a department of a research university is not the sort of village that Tocqueville idealized. Instead, it is more like an alliance of entrepreneurs, each of them moving and shaking in the larger world -- the rest of the university, the professional networks of people whose work is most closely related to their own, the whole of their respective fields, funding agencies, and so on -- as well as within their departments.

Once you understand your department in those terms, the question of tenure changes. Getting tenure in your department is good, but more important is getting deep tenure: a thoroughgoing integration of yourself and your career into your field as a whole. I have already explained most of the process, which is nothing but articulating commonalities, networking, identifying emerging themes, organizing activities, and so on. Once you obtain deep tenure, your university would be foolish to lose you. And if your university does in fact fumble your tenure case, deep tenure means that you are nearly certain to have another good job waiting for you somewhere else. If you put enough effort into networking, and if you shift your psychology away from your department and toward your field as a whole, then the process of getting tenure will be much less distressing. You will be less likely to choose your research topics and express your ideas in an attempt to politick your immediate colleagues. And you will be able to relate to your colleagues as fellow movers and shakers rather than as neighbors in an idealized village. In particular, your independent standing in the field, because of your widespread network, will increase your autonomy and make you less open to manipulation by others.

The best news of all is that getting tenure and getting deep tenure are more or less the same process. Here is how it works. When you come up for tenure, or for any other career review, your tenure case will be decided by people who lack deep knowledge of your research area. Therefore -- and this is a basic mechanism of the university on all levels -- they will necessarily seek out evidence of your research accomplishments other than your own estimate or theirs. One common measure is where and how much you have published in peer reviewed venues such as refereed journals and scholarly publishers. So of course you should publish a lot, with your main emphasis on those kinds of outlets as opposed to nonacademic publications and unrefereed chapters in edited books.

More important than publication, though, will be the letters that your department will get from senior people in your research area. For that reason, your tenure campaign should be very much organized around those people. This means networking, very much as I have described it above, but with a more systematic approach. It couldn't be simpler. Make a list of the twenty people whom your department is most likely to get letters from. These will be senior people whose work is widely known, and who are known themselves as the leading figures in particular areas. Make sure that every important aspect of your work is covered by this list. Then set out to build strong professional relationships with every one of those people in the ways that I have been describing in previous sections. This is easier than it sounds. By the time you come up for tenure, you may have had three or four conversations with each person on your list. That may not sound like much. But if you have been working the process in the right way then that will be plenty. When your tenure case approaches, your university will probably ask you for a list of suggested referees, and you should discuss with your colleagues which names would work best on your list. You can also ask the individuals involved whether they would be willing to write a letter if they are asked. (You don't *have* to ask them, though. They understand perfectly well how the institution works.) The specifics can be complicated here, depending on how your university's

tenure process works. For example, your department might be obligated to write to several people who are not on your list, in which case you might want to restrict your list to the people whom your department finds less obvious. But the relationships with likely letter-writers will be the most important element of your tenure case in any event. And as you do develop relationships with the twenty people on your list, make sure to explain those people to the people in your department who do not know your field well.

** Getting a distinct identity*

Closely related to deep tenure is a second element, which is getting a clear and distinct professional identity. When your university is deciding whether to give you tenure, they want to make sure that they are evaluating you, as opposed to evaluating your thesis advisor or the people you have collaborated with. If you have worked closely with your advisor, or if your dissertation and related work will sound similar to your advisor's work, then you will need to get a distinct identity. Start research projects in different areas from your advisor, explain your work in different language than your advisor uses, and find ways to clearly mark off your work from your advisor's, for example by explaining your new work as a clear step beyond the work that the two of you published together. You don't just want to have different research results than your advisor -- you want a clearly distinct research agenda.

Establishing a distinct professional identity also means limiting the amount of work that you coauthor with your peers and with other people who are more senior than you. This is unfortunate, of course, but the institution needs to evaluate you as an individual. Work that you coauthor with your students is not a problem, since the committees will assume that you were the intellectual leader in the project, and you can coauthor some work with senior members of your department, since they will be able to explain your distinct role to the people who review your file.

To have a clear and distinct identity, finally, you need to be able to explain your research agenda. Your explanation should not sound like anyone else's, and it should convey a clear sense that a great deal of useful research can be done by following that agenda in the future. To explain your agenda in a clear and distinct way does not mean that you should devalue the work of others before you. To the contrary, you should articulate a historical narrative of the research that you are building on, so that everyone can understand precisely how your work is different from what has come before. Giving credit to others should not detract from your own identity.

** Organizing around an emerging theme*

The most basic way of getting a distinct identity is to articulate an emerging theme in your field. In other words, you don't just want to set an agenda for your own research -- you want to catalyze a social movement within your field by organizing activities among the people whose research fits the theme. I have already discussed the basics of this process in Section 6. Now, however, organizing around emerging themes has become crucial to your career. So let me explain the process in more detail.

When you are conducting and writing about your research, and especially when you are writing about how your work complements that of others, you should continually brainstorm emerging themes. Work them out in your notebook, and in your conversations with others in your field, until you find one that works. Let us consider an example. Suppose that you are conducting research on a group of biologists who use the Internet to collaborate in new ways. If you are not thinking clearly, you might assume that the particular group you are studying is unique, and that none of the themes you are identifying in your research are relevant to the research of others. After all, the people you are studying probably *are* unique in many ways. If you have developed the custom of searching for emerging themes, though, and if you are networking and reading other people's work, then you will notice that other researchers are also studying groups who collaborate over the Internet. You might then coin a phrase such as "distributed collective practice" to describe the larger category that your own project shares with these others. More precisely, you might fill your notebook with dozens of phrases, one of which, in this case "distributed collective practice", will sound especially felicitous.

"Distributed collective practice" happens to be a real example of an emerging theme, and you can find the proceedings of a workshop on distributed collective practice by searching the Web with Google. As emerging themes go, "distributed collective practice" is especially well-designed. It has several properties. First of all, it sounds good. It has a nice poetic gallop to it. Just as importantly, each of its words -- "distributed", "collective", and "practice" -- has a meaning for the researchers, so that grouping the three words together combines things that are deeply familiar in a way that is striking and new. The phrase is also quite general. It brings together the community you want -- that is, a community whose members, while diverse, share a substantial number of ideas and values. For example, you may have been studying

biologists in your research, but in devising your emerging theme you have chosen to reach out toward all collective practices, not just biology and not just science. Likewise, you may have have been studying people who collaborate on the Internet, but you have chosen to generalize your emerging theme so that it applies to all distributed activities, not just ones that happen on the Internet. And so on.

Of course, you could have articulated your emerging theme differently. You could have said "Internet knowledge production" or "information technology in science" or "social networks and institutional change". Each of these formulations could very well identify an emerging theme around which a new research community could coalesce. But you chose the formulation that identified the particular community that you found congenial and that was ready to be identified. How did you know that a community was ready to be identified using that particular phrase? Because you know many of the people individually. You have conversed with them, read their work, perhaps participated in joint activities with them. You have worked to articulate commonalities with them, some of which may have grown directly into potential emerging themes for a larger group. You have internalized their thinking to some degree, and you can anticipate to some degree how they will perceive things. Having articulated your best guess at the theme that is emerging in their work, you have also consulted with them in the manner that I described in Section 6.

You should try to generalize your emerging theme as much as possible -- "distributed collective practice" as opposed to "biologists working together on the Internet". This is crucial. In articulating an emerging theme, you are claiming a certain territory, and you might as well claim as much territory as possible. I have already mentioned that your research papers resemble patent applications, and the same thing goes for your emerging themes, whose claims should stretch out in every direction until they collide with the claims that have already been made by others. The point is not that you actually own all of the resesarch in that territory. You are not claiming intellectual property in any official sense. Other people will get credit for the results of their own research within that territory. You are, however, claiming credit for noticing the general theme, articulating its significance, mapping its issues, organizing the people who are working within it, and setting the agenda for future research within it. Having done this, you will be identified as a leader. And being a leader is the best, most reliable way to get deep tenure.

Organizing activities around emerging themes teaches you a deep lesson about the profession of research: it is always changing. Research means doing something new, and the research community, when it is functioning at all, is thoroughly dynamic, always changing, always fluid. In getting tenure, your job is not to break into an existing network. If some existing institution tries to exclude you, ignore it. Your job is to build the new institutions that will organize the research community for a new generation of researchers. It's not hard. You just have to do it.

When you first get a job as a new faculty member, it is common to feel disoriented, like you need to find a niche for yourself in the professional world. My advice is to ignore that feeling. Methodically set about knitting yourself into the research community, getting a distinct professional identity, and organizing around an emerging theme. You'll be so busy, and so productive, that you won't even notice when the feeling of disorientation fades.

** Your department's tenure process*

Having discussed deep tenure on the level of your field as a whole, it is now possible to think clearly about the tenure process within your own department. It is entirely reasonable for you to ask your departmental colleagues what are the criteria for tenure. Go ahead and ask several of them, preferably ones who are both closest to you and central to the department's social networks. When you do this, you will discover the phenomenon of folk theories about tenure. For example, you might be told that you need to publish two books, or that you need to place an article in such-and-such journal, or that writing for nonacademic publications actually counts negatively at tenure time rather than counting as zero or as a slight positive under the heading of service to the community. You might get well-meaning advice to postpone this, that, or the other aspect of your professional life until after you have gotten tenure. You will be torn: half of you will find these folk theories to be ridiculous, which of course they are, and the other half of you will start frantically rearranging your whole career to conform to them. Once you gather these theories and start pondering them, ask around about whether, when, and how they are applied in practice. You may find that every one of your senior colleagues has a different folk theory in mind. Or you may learn that faculty meetings to discuss tenure cases are actually organized around one or more of these folk theories, so that they have become institutionalized. In my view, you should only change your plans slightly to accommodate the folk theories. The most important thing is to publish high-quality research in refereed journals and book

series, the second is to get deep tenure in your field, the third is to build professional relationships with a good majority of the faculty in your department, the fourth is to teach reasonably well, and the fifth is not to stress out about it. That's it.

Whatever you do, ignore the folk theories that you hear from untenured faculty members. Untenured faculty members simply do not have the information that they would need to theorize the process. Don't get into any alcohol-fueled sessions of mutual sharing of uninformed theorizing about tenure. Don't discuss tenure with people who say things like, "there is a hierarchy, and you need to recognize it and be deferent toward it". Don't validate anyone else's negativity. Don't overinterpret stories about the reasons why other people failed to get tenure -- you will probably not be hearing the whole story. And don't take sides in factional politics. Just calmly articulate commonalities with everyone and have pity on people who project their psychological dramas onto the professional world around them. If powerful people in your department try to force you to join their clique rather than someone else's, your answer is always the same: articulate commonalities. They more they lean on you, the more you should work with them to articulate commonalities. Articulating commonalities is always a useful activity. It builds your intellect, and it builds relationships. It cements political alliances without precluding equally strong political alliances with everyone else. And it is perfectly honest.

If you are going about it right, then, the process of getting tenure is basically the same process as building a community for yourself by networking and organizing activities. You should be able to explain clearly to yourself how every action you perform in your daily work life is part of the process of getting tenure, in addition to the more direct and immediate benefits that it provides to you and others. As a faculty member, you will find that your life has more moving parts than it did when you were in graduate school. You will laugh as you look back on all the times you complained about not having enough time to read. The key to managing all of your diverse involvements as a faculty member is to make every action serve multiple purposes. Get assigned to committee work that helps you with your teaching. Do your teaching in a way that helps you get necessary reading done. Organize workshops that help you to write grant proposals. Supervise student projects in ways that fill in pieces of your own research agenda. Travel to meetings where you can do several kinds of business, as well as letting you advertise your work in the field. Don't automatically say yes to everyone who wants you to do work, and don't jump at every opportunity that comes along. Get used to the idea that your networking and organizing activities will cause numerous opportunities to arise, and get used to the feeling of calmly declining opportunities that don't fit with your long-haul plan. This may all sound self-serving, but it's not. If you define your intellectual agenda in an expansive way then lots of people -- students, colleagues, other people in the field -- will be happy to work with you in ways that directly benefit your career. Once you do establish this positive pattern, you will be able to work with everyone on the basis of mutual benefit.

** Departmental politics*

In giving you all of this positive-sounding advice, I do not mean to imply that the tenure process is entirely apolitical. Nothing that involve human beings is apolitical, for the simple reason that politics is the practical art by which people get along. So, for example, remember to consult with your colleagues on everything you do. I have already introduced this concept of consultation back in Section 6, in the context of how to organize a workshop. The principle generalizes, and much of your time as a junior faculty member will be spent consulting with people whose plans may be affected by your plans.

Let us consider a commonplace example. You decide that you are going to be a hero by organizing a seminar series. You do a lot of work to invite speakers, publicize their talks, show them around campus, introduce them to people in your department, tell them about all of the excellent research that you and your colleagues are doing, and so on. From your perpective, you are helping the department by bringing in all of these outstanding people. But other people do not share your understanding. They are not aware of your plans or the reasons behind them. What they see is not a good citizen helping everyone to be better networked in the field. What they see, instead, is an endless, random series of requests for money, room bookings, claims on people's calendars, logistical details, A/V equipment, and so on. They will try to explain this randomness as best they can, most likely by imagining you to be a selfish taker. Instead of being a hero, you have become a goat.

What happened? The answer is that you did not consult. At the very beginning of the process you should have made a list of the people who were affected by your plans, and then you should have run your plans past each of them individually. Get their ideas, concerns, relevant information, good and bad precedents from the time before you arrived, and so on. At a minimum these conversations will cause others to be informed about your plans. More likely you will

also find your plans changing as your colleagues raise good points that you hadn't thought of or heard about. You may even find that your plan is a bad idea, or that someone else is already doing something closely related to it. By consulting with people, you will get more career benefit from the activity than you would have simply by organizing it on your own. Furthermore, nearly all of the potential downsides of the activity will go away. Consultation is intrinsically relationship-building, so it helps you in more generalized ways. It is one more way that you are knitting yourself into the community -- another form of deep tenure.

The principle of consultation generalizes much more widely. For example, you should never raise an issue at a faculty meeting, much less bring a major conference to your campus, without having consulted about it beforehand. With whom? With the people who are most affected by it, and with the people whose central location in social networks will enable them to anticipate responses you will get and what buttons you should avoid pushing. You should not think of consultation as a kind of arbitrary homework, or as an obstacle you are required to jump before you can get the things you want. Consultation is itself the most direct way to get what you want, and its relationship-building benefits are often more important than the benefits of the activities you are trying to organize.

In my opinion, consultation and articulating commonalities are the only two principles you need to participate effectively in the politics of your department. Consult and articulate commonalities with everyone in your department and you will be fine. It will be helpful, though, if you understand some of the pathological patterns that people get into. One of these is mistakenly called "loyalty". It is quite strange. The faculty in a department are basically stuck together on an island. Most of them have tenure, and relatively few of them will ever change jobs. So they have to get along. The right way to get along, as you know by now, is to work continually at articulating commonalities. But some people don't know how to do this, or else they choose to invest their effort in other things. So instead they create a kind of false solidarity. Let us say that one faculty member holds a strong opinion that a certain technology is ineffective. The other members of the department may not care very much about the matter, and so for the sake of "loyalty" they will adopt that strong opinion as well. Through this process, the department will evolve a peculiar belief system that consists of the idiosyncratic beliefs of its members. The effect will be especially striking when a new senior faculty member is hired: everyone will adopt a strange new opinion overnight, corresponding to the idiosyncracies of their new colleague. Please do not join in to such dynamics. Just articulate commonalities with everyone involved. Say "we" and "us" when you explain those commonalities to others, and perhaps your colleagues will develop more constructive ways of signaling their solidarity to one another.

Enough about departmental politics -- what about campus politics? If you want to get tenure at your university, doesn't it make sense to cultivate a widespread network in other departments, and especially among senior administrators? Probably not. The process of getting deep tenure might lead you to network with people who happen to reside in other departments on your campus. Certainly those people might be easier to reach, face-to-face anyway, other things being equal, than people who live on different continents. But if people in other departments don't fit into your campaign for deep tenure then, almost by definition, you have little reason to contact them. The same thing goes doubly for senior administrators. If you are involved in university governance activities then you will probably want to choose specific governance issues that concern you, network around them, identify emerging themes that pertain to governance of the university, organize activities around those themes, and so on. Those activities certainly will bring you into contact with senior administrators. If you really want to be involved in university governance before you get tenure, go ahead. But most people wait until after they get tenure, for obvious reasons.

If you do want to build intellectual networks around campus, here is a very straightforward way to do it: organize panel discussions. The process should make perfect sense to you by now. First, find a few people in other departments whose work relates to yours in some way. You can identify those people by asking your colleagues. Articulate commonalities. Choose one of those commonalities to be the topic of a panel discussion. Consult with everyone involved about both the theme and the logistical details such as time and place. Sign up a half-dozen speakers including yourself, three per panel plus a discussant. Consult about who the best discussants might be. Confirm everyone's participation. Prepare a neat, legible, plain-text e-mail announcement. Put a phrase like "please forward this to everyone who might be interested" at the top. Send the announcement to your department's general-interest mailing list. Ask the other speakers to do the same. Rehearse the daylights out of a simple, low-key fifteen minute presentation of your work. None of this is hard, and yet most campuses have a shortage of people who are willing to do it. It's

probably not crucial to your tenure case, but it can be fun and it can't hurt.

12 Your career

Once you get your dissertation finished and start on a tenure-track job, you probably have forty years ahead of you before retirement. That might seem like a long time. But plenty of people get themselves stuck in negative career patterns that prevent them from making good use of the time. This section sketches several theories of your career. I didn't invent any of these theories; I have heard them all repeated many times, in many forms, to where I am not certain who invented them. I don't necessarily endorse them, but they are all useful in some cases. (If you begin your research career late in life then you will have to adjust each theory accordingly.) At the end of this section, I will present my own theory of your career, which I call iterative alignment.

** Types of creativity*

Creative people, it is said, go through a characteristic trajectory. When they are young, their work reflects an intense, labor-intensive type of energy. They do not have much accumulated knowledge to build on, so their work expresses pure genius instead. Later in life, though, they change gears. They have built up a great deal of momentum, and they use it for larger, longer-term projects.

** The structural theory*

When you are young, you are located on the periphery of the research community. As you go along, however, you build a community around yourself. As the previous generation retires, you find yourself at the center. This gives you the ability to set agendas that you didn't have when you were more peripheral. Of course, if you have a fixed belief that you are peripheral then you will probably never acquire that ability. But if your beliefs are positive and you act on them, then you have a better chance.

** The constraint theory*

This theory is concerned with ratios of risk and reward. When you are a junior faculty member, it says, you should follow fashion, choosing topics whose importance is already well-understood. That way you will get the maximum reward with the minimum risk. When you are in the middle of your career, you should build new institutions, thereby legitimizing the research fashions that the next generation of junior faculty can follow. Instead of catching a wave, you are making waves. And when you are toward the end of your career, you should work on blue-sky topics that will eventually coalesce into new institutions through the work of the mid-career faculty behind you. That is the theory, anyway.

** Formulas for a research program*

Study how various successful researchers evolve their research programs. You will notice patterns. One such pattern pertains to famous researchers' relationships to their advisors. Often an advisor will write an important paper that sketches a new research area in a programmatic way, without developing the full-blown theoretical machinery that is required to generate a large number of results. One of that person's students, however, will perceive the significance of the new idea, and will draw together all of the literature and social networks required to generate the results, thus leading to large numbers of well-cited papers and a successful career.

** The university's theory*

The university as in institution is fueled by the peer review process. You are always being reviewed, and you are always reviewing others in turn. From the university's way of thinking, junior faculty members should be relieved of most reviewing duties. They will probably be drafted to referee journal papers and the like, but it is only after you receive tenure that the most onerous reviewing duties begin. The higher you ascend in the promotion ladder, the more likely you are to end up on committees to review tenure candidates, research programs, teaching programs, and whole departments, laboratories, and universities. Many senior faculty members complain about these burdens, and you should avoid this complaint by actively volunteering yourself for the duties that most interest you. That way you can decline the others.

** The senior faculty's theory*

When you are a new faculty member, senior faculty members often perceive you as raw material for their institution-building activities. You will find yourself being recruited into one activity or another. I have already advised you not to be recruited into anyone else's agenda; go ahead and participate in workshops and other activities if they help you build relationships, but confine your political clique-joining to articulating commonalities with everyone.

In mid-career, senior people will evaluate you in terms of your leadership qualities instead of their own

narrow agendas. So it's a good idea that you didn't join any cliques but organized new research communities instead. The strongest leaders will also be those with the broadest, most capacious intellectual reach, and it is toward the end of your mid-career phase when this breadth will be tested.

Finally, senior people evaluate one another based on their ability to network beyond their own field. It is one thing for a biologist, for example, to network among other biologists. But to have a real effect on the largest institutions (the university, the funding agencies, the corporate world, the public sphere, and so on), a biologist also needs to network with humanists, artists, engineers, social scientists, and administrators of many sorts. And networking, once again, means choosing people strategically, articulating commonalities with them, articulating emerging themes, organizing events, and so on.

** Iterative alignment*

The theories of your career that I have described so far are useful enough. In my experience, however, a more useful theory is the one that I call iterative alignment. To understand it, suppose that you are someone who feels that your current position in the institutions of research doesn't fit with your own intellectual agenda -- "my work isn't welcome", you hear yourself say. Perhaps you are a graduate student whose department's faculty don't care about your research topic. Perhaps you are a new faculty member whose colleagues don't care about your research topic. Perhaps you are a mid-career faculty member in a field whose senior members don't care about your research topic. In each case, the problem is a misalignment between you and the institution. You haven't yet had the opportunity to choose your colleagues and build the institutions that you need to realize fully the potential of your work. Many people overgeneralize from this situation. They say, "it's all about connections, and the insiders have the whole situation rigged to their advantage". This kind of overgeneralization is a big mistake. It wrongly pretends that a temporary situation is permanent, and in so doing it tends to *make* the situation permanent.

How do you fix a problem of misalignment? By this point, it will not surprise you to hear that the solution lies in networking. One purpose of networking, so far as your career is concerned, is to manufacture a closer alignment between you and the institutions around you. If you are a student whose faculty don't care about your research, then indeed you will have to meet them halfway for a while. If you are a junior faculty member in a department where they don't know or care about half of the twenty people in your field who ought to be writing letters for you, make a list of thirty people that includes both your twenty and theirs. In the meantime, build networks. Get lots of interviews and lots of good job offers. Then get a job that is better aligned with your research interests. Notice that it is a two-way street: the process of alignment doesn't just mean forcing the world to fit with your pre-existing research interests. Rather, the process of dialogue, articulating commonalities, and internalizing the ideas of others will change your research agenda, and your networking, organizing, and institution-building activities will help create an institutional niche within which you can be supported in conducting research within that agenda. By iterative alignment, I mean that each step forward in your career improves the alignment by an incremental degree. One step might get you more sympathetic colleagues. Another might create a journal for you to publish your research in. Another might ensure a flow of research funding. Another might build a widespread network of researchers who consider you a leader in their overall movement. And so on. Each increment of alignment, though, happens in the same basic way: networking, articulation of commonalities and emerging themes, and organizing of activities. That is the basic cycle.

A common misunderstanding is that iterative alignment, or the research community generally, requires you to give up your dreams, conforming to someone else's agenda in order to get along. That is not true. Iterative alignment is a two-way street, that is true. You will change, even as you build and rebuild the institution to fit with yourself. But the fact that you are changing does not itself imply that you are conforming to some alien agenda. If you are doing it right then you are changing simply because are growing, having better and better ideas, and realizing more and more of your potential. This is a critically important intuition: every time you spontaneously notice an emerging theme -- that is, every time that you go through the cycle of reading people's research, networking with them, articulating commonalities with them, and notice a theme emerging from all of those conversations -- you are also noticing an aspect of yourself. Someone else who went through the same cycle would probably notice something different -- not because the situation is arbitrary, but because the situation is filled with potentially valuable research directions. When you notice an emerging theme and then organize activities around it, you are knitting yourself into the community. This process of knitting is what iterative alignment is all about. You align yourself and the institution by iteratively, incrementally knitting yourself into it. You should do work that is aligned with who you really are. Why? Because that way you are more likely to notice the

entrepreneurial opportunity that the institutions are presenting to you. If you simply conformed to some arbitrary agenda, then you wouldn't have the same intuitive grasp of the ideas. You would probably get stuck in a low orbit that corresponds to the first, least aligned setting in which you happened to have a job. In this sense, the institution of research are calling forth a certain honesty from you, and you need to have the courage to approach the cycle of iterative alignment in that spirit.

The theory of iterative alignment generalizes everything that I have said already in this article. In producing your dissertation, for example, I argued that you were really producing yourself as a member of the research community. That is an example of iterative alignment: aligning yourself with others by knitting your research topic into the existing literature and the people who wrote it. Articulating an emerging theme and organizing a workshop around it is also an example of iterative alignment. And so is the process of getting deep tenure with your research community. In each case you are choosing carefully the people you want to associate with, and you are using language creatively to articulate commonalities with those people and internalize their ideas. Iterative alignment, then, is a cycle whose details vary depending on where exactly you are located in the institutions at a given moment. And when you achieve perfect alignment, there's a sense in which your life is complete. You have knitted yourself fully into the institutions and communities around you. Your personal agendas align perfectly with the agendas that have been institutionalized for the benefit of others. Your own innovations and accomplishments have been fully incorporated into those others' work. The good you've done is now distributed throughout the people who have come after you. And you can now retire, knowing that you have made your fullest possible contribution to the field.