

FORSCHUNGSNO-TIZBUCH

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SYNCO



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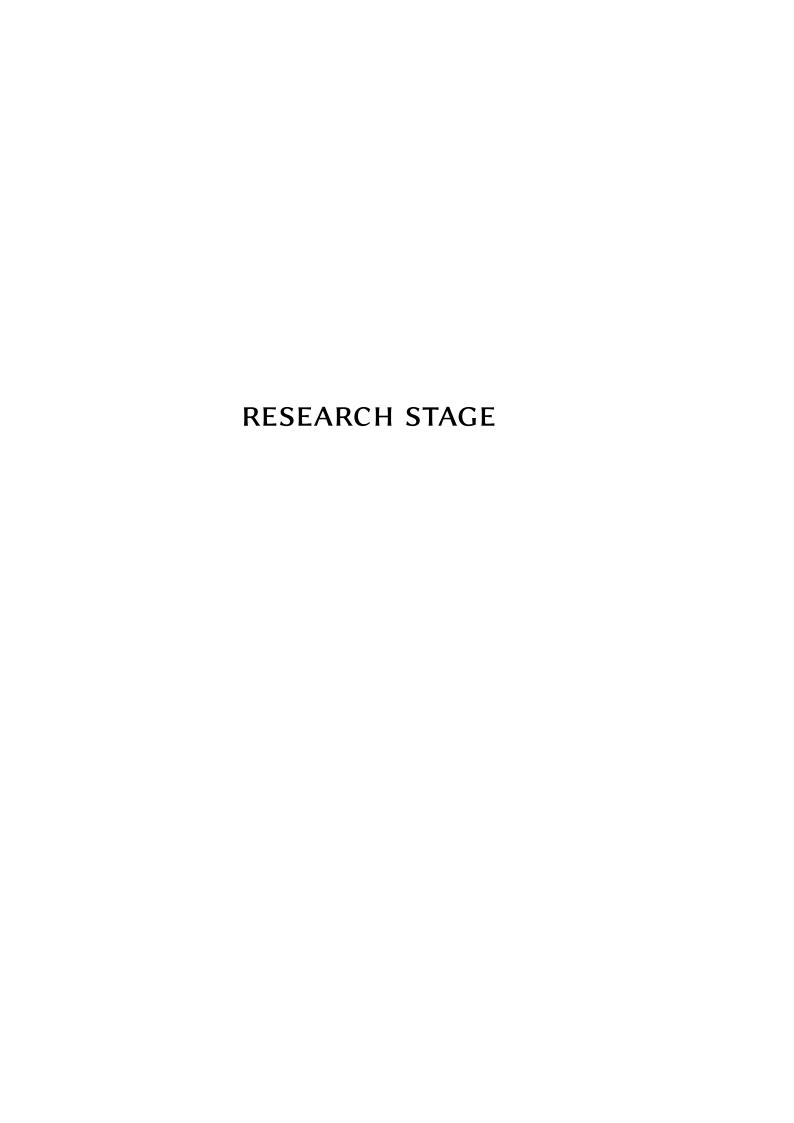
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CONTENTS

RESEARCH STAGE 5	21 st Week 17
at a second and a second a second and a second a second and a second a second and a second a second and a second a second and a second a second and a second and a second a second and a second and a second a second a second a second and a second and a second and a s	04/02/2019 17
16 th Week - Noël 7	05/02/2019 17
01/01/2019 7	06/02/2019 17
02/01/2019 8	07/02/2019 17
03/01/2019 8	08/02/2019 17
04/01/2019 8	09/02/2019 17
05/01/2019 8	10/02/2019 17
06/01/2019 8	
at.	22 nd Week 19
17 th Week 9	11/02/2019 19
07/01/2019 9	12/02/2019 19
08/01/2019 9	13/02/2019 19
09/01/2019 9	14/02/2019 19
10/01/2019 9	15/02/2019 19
11/01/2019 9	16/02/2019 19
12/01/2019 9	17/02/2019 19
13/01/2019 9	
at.	23 rd Week 21
18 th Week 11	18/02/2019 21
14/01/2019 11	19/02/2019 21
15/01/2019 11	20/02/2019 21
16/01/2019 11	21/02/2019 21
17/01/2019 11	22/02/2019 21
18/01/2019 11	23/02/2019 21
19/01/2019 11	24/02/2019 21
20/01/2019 11	
19 th Week 13	PREPARATORY WRITING
21/01/2019 13	STAGE 23
22/01/2019 13	3
23/01/2019 13	24 th Week 25
24/01/2019 13	25/02/2019 25
25/01/2019 13	26/02/2019 25
26/01/2019 13	27/02/2019 25
27/01/2019 13	28/02/2019 25
	01/03/2019 25
20 th Week 15	02/03/2019 25
28/01/2019 15	03/03/2019 25
29/01/2019 15	
30/01/2019 15	25 th Week - Hiver 27
31/01/2019 15	04/03/2019 27
01/02/2019 15	05/03/2019 27
02/02/2019 15	06/03/2019 27
03/02/2019 15	07/03/2019 27

08/03/2019	27	17/04/2019 41
09/03/2019	27	18/04/2019 41
10/03/2019	27	19/04/2019 41
		20/04/2019 41
26 th Week 29)	21/04/2019 41
11/03/2019	29	nd xx/
12/03/2019	29	32nd Week 43
13/03/2019	29	22/04/2019 43
14/03/2019	29	23/04/2019 43
15/03/2019	29	24/04/2019 43
16/03/2019	29	25/04/2019 43
17/03/2019	29	26/04/2019 43
46		27/04/2019 43
27th Week 31		28/04/2019 43
18/03/2019	31	33 rd Week 45
19/03/2019	31	
20/03/2019	31	
21/03/2019	31	30/04/2019 45
22/03/2019	31	01/05/2019 45
23/03/2019	31	02/05/2019 45
24/03/2019	31	03/05/2019 45
Al		04/05/2019 45
28 th Week 33		05/05/2019 45
25/03/2019	33	34 th Week 47
26/03/2019	33	06/05/2019 47
27/03/2019	33	07/05/2019 47
28/03/2019	33	08/05/2019 47
29/03/2019	33	09/05/2019 47
30/03/2019	33	10/05/2019 47
31/03/2019	33	11/05/2019 47
29 th Week 35		12/05/2019 47
01/04/2019	35	
02/04/2019	35	JURY STAGE 49
03/04/2019	35	
04/04/2019	35	35 th Week 51
05/04/2019	35	12/05/2019 51
06/04/2019		13/05/2019 51
07/04/2019	35	14/05/2019 51
30 th Week 37	•	15/05/2019 51
		16/05/2019 51
08/04/2019	37	17/05/2019 51
09/04/2019	37	18/05/2019 51
10/04/2019	37	19/05/2019 51
11/04/2019	37	
12/04/2019	37	
13/04/2019	37	
14/04/2019	37	
WRITING ST	ΓAGE 39	
31 st Week 41		
15/04/2019	41	
16/04/2019	41	



16TH WEEK - NOËL

01/01/2019

I am thinking about how to structure the thesis to limit the reading list to a manageable expression.

I might have a somewhat clear idea of what to put in the first chapter: background on the Cold War and the computer, Simon's place in the context of the creation of the computer, and Simon's history between the computer and artificial intelligence. This part could benefit from relating the computer to artificial intelligence. After all, Simon did write about the computer in his writings, but as far as I am aware, he spoke more about artificial intelligence than about computers per se.

Perhaps, in that sense, it would be worth it to look at all of Simon's explicit writings on the computer ...it seems I would need to read, on top of "Administrative Behavior", his "The Sciences of the Artificial". I would like to limit the amount of books to read for the thesis, but it seems unavoidable to read one book on the history of the computer. Should I fall short of time, it should be Edward's "The Closed World".

As in my previous discussion with Prof. Lenfant, we agreed that introducing the topic of artificial intelligence is more difficult than it appeared at first sight, we might be forced to talk more about the organization of labor rather than artificial intelligence. In fact thinking about it, we should, perhaps, forget about artificial intelligence at this point, and talk about the computer as a social technology.

I am beginning to sense that the biggest challenge at this point really is choosing the corpus. The problem is that if the topic is to broad as to require a vast amount of reading to treat satisfactorily, the thesis will be ambitious but an utter failure. The topic must be adjusted to reduce the reading to an amount that is manageable within the time constraints and that allows a satisfactory treatment of the subject.

Today, I am checking Simon's "Models of Bounded Rationality, Vol 3.", which was published in 1997, just a few years before his death. Vol. 1 dates from 1982. Vol. 2 from 1982 (1984 the softcover edition). It is very likely that the motivation for this collection comes from his receiving the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1978. In other words, there is a 15 year gap between the first volumes and the third. It would be interesting to find out the history behind the motivation for the publication of the third volume, but this would be impossible to undertake at this point.

The following is the description of Vol. 2 from the MIT Press website:

The Nobel Prize in Economics was awarded to Herbert Simon in 1978. At Carnegie-Mellon University he holds the title of Professor of Computer Science and Psychology. These two facts together delineate the range and uniqueness of his contributions in creating meaningful interactions among fields that developed in isolation but that are all concerned with human decision-making and problem-solving processes. In particular, Simon has brought the insights of decision theory, organization theory (especially as it applies to the business firm), behavior modeling, cognitive psychology, and the study of artificial intelligence to bear on economic questions. This has led not only to new conceptual dimensions for theoretical constructions, but also to a new humanizing realism in economics, a way of taking into account and dealing with human behavior and interactions that lie at the root of all economic activity.

The sixty papers and essays contained in these two volumes are grouped under eight sections, each with a brief introductory essay. These are: 8 RESEARCH STAGE

Some Questions of Public Policy, Dynamic Programming Under Uncertainty; Technological Change; The Structure of Economic Systems; The Business Firm as an Organization; The Economics of Information Processing; Economics and Psychology; and Substantive and Procedural Reality.

Most of Simon's papers on classical and neoclassical economic theory are contained in volume one. The second volume collects his papers on behavioral theory, with some overlap between the two volumes. The second edition of Simon's widely read and referenced The Sciences of the Artificial was published by The MIT Press 1981 and is available in both hard-cover and paperback.

From the preface to Vol. 3, it seems to me that Simon had a big say on what papers were chosen for these volumes. He claims that the papers contained therein have historical interest. They constitute, to his judgment, the principal papers in economics. Thus, as we can infer from the introduction to the third volume, since these papers do not get into his published books, taking those aside, these papers constitute the *principal* papers Simon wrote dealing with economics according to his personal appreciation.

Simon claims that the reason the categories used in Vol. 3 doesn't match those of the previous volumes is that his interests changed dramatically. Apparently, vol. 3 includes mostly papers from the 1980s and 1990s, such as formal representation of causal ordering (closely connected with the identification problem) in dynamic systems., the implications for our society of the new information systems that are being generated as products of the rapid deveoplment of computers and electronic communication networks, and the nature of employee and managerial motivation in the byusiness firm, and the implications for economics of the propensity of human beings to identify with the goals of organizations, and the state of economics itself (its changing attituted toward formal theory vis-à-vis empirical research). It is interesting that the topic of the apllication of economics to governmental administration and policy, and rational choice under uncertainty and technological change are hardly represented in this volume.

Use the following guide when comparing the changes in Simon's thought between the two volumes:

Volume 3	Volumes 1 and 2
Simulating Large	Structure of Eco-
Systems	nomic Systems
The Advance of In-	The Economies of
formation Technol-	Information Pro-
ogy	cessing
Motivation and the	The Business Firm
Theory of the Firm	as an Organization
Behavrioral	Economics and Psy-
Economics and	chology
Bounded Rational-	
ity	
	Substantive and Pro-
	cedural Rationality
The Structure of	Causes and Possible
Complex Systems	Worlds

In any case, for now I think we better just finish up the three papers we had begun reading: the one by Hunter Heyck, the two by Simon. Then, we can discuss what to read next, although the papers in Vol. 3 dealing with the impact of communications technologies seem to be next. Likewise, reading "Administrative Behavior" seems to be a must. For now, let's stay clear of books on the computer, for they may not be relevant to Simon's own thinking: I must find out who were Simon's intellectual forefathers in terms of thinking about computing.

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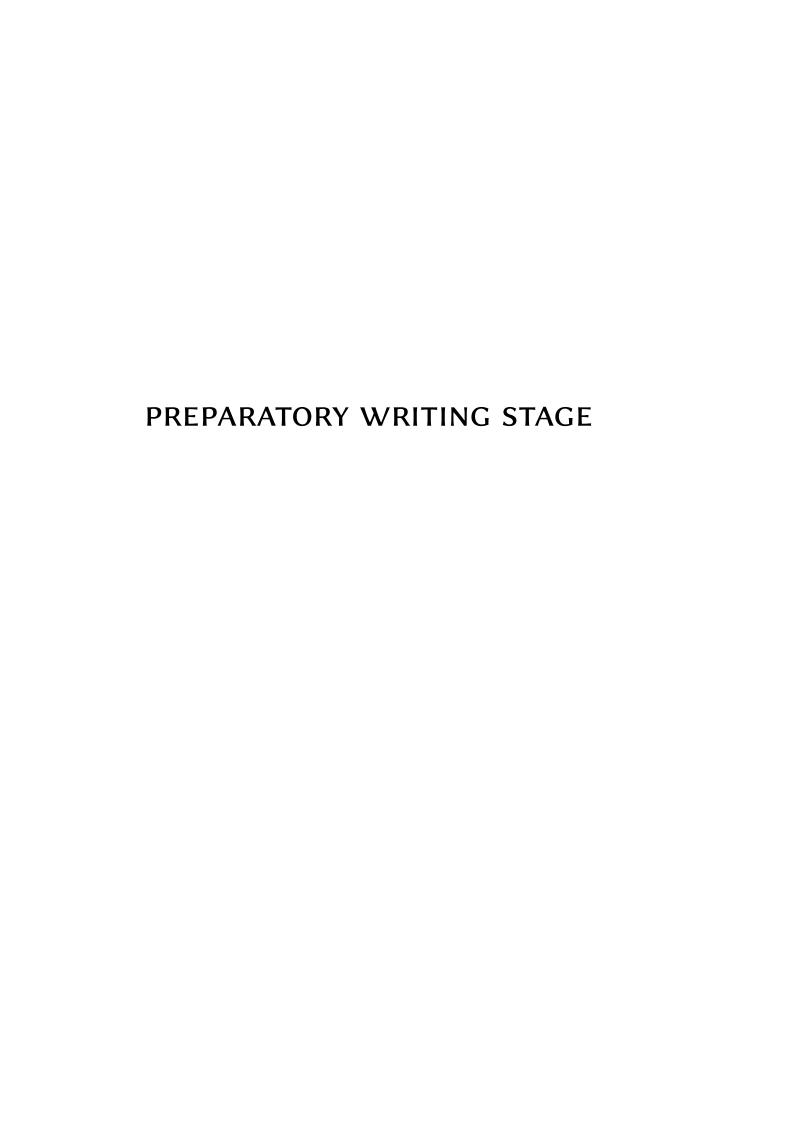
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28^{TH} week

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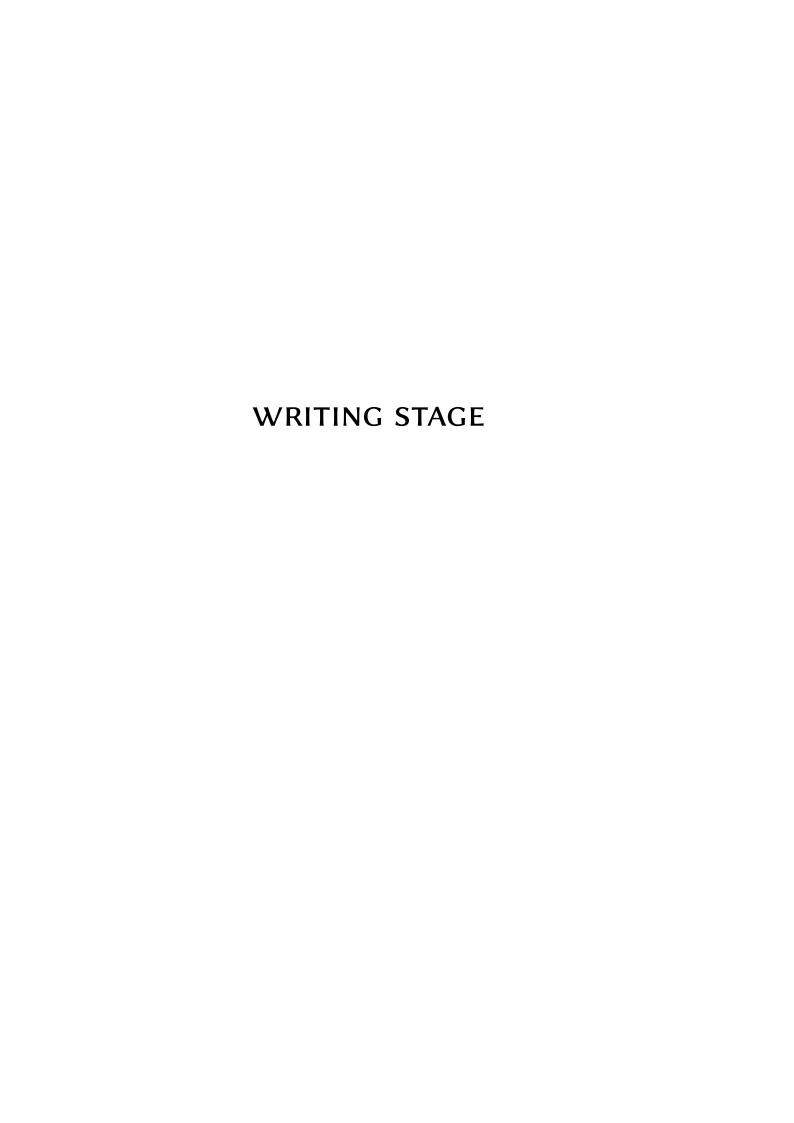
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31ST WEEK

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33^{RD} WEEK

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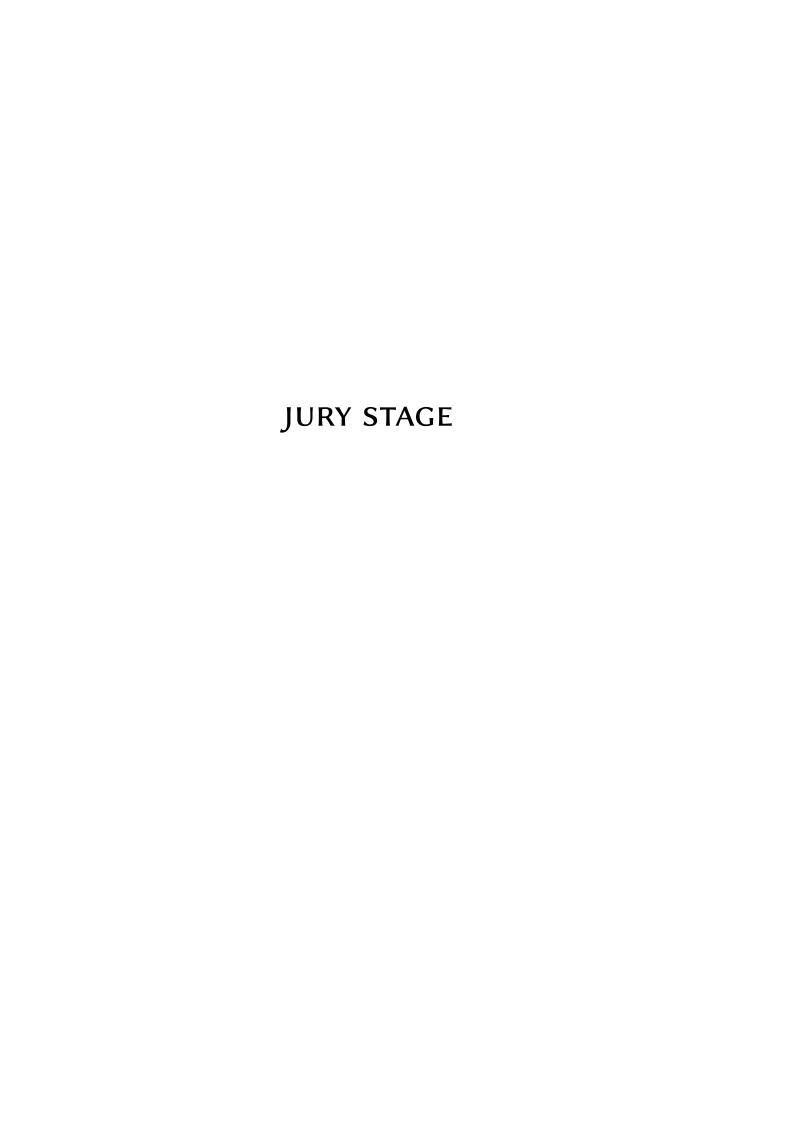
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35^{TH} WEEK

- 12/05/2019
- 13/05/2019
- 14/05/2019
- 15/05/2019
- 16/05/2019
- 17/05/2019
- 18/05/2019
- 19/05/2019