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ANJA KRAUS (ED.)

Scenarios of Knowledge at Universities in Change

Perspectives of the Humanities, the
Educational and the Cultural Sciences

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Anja Kraus

Introduction: Perspectives of the Humanities, the Educational and the Cultural Sciences on University

This anthology is based on the conference “Education is Relation not Output? – Scenes of Knowledge and Knowledge Acquisition” that took place at Linnæus University in Växjö in May 2016. The convention was motivated by the fact that the perspectives of Humanities such as the Educational and the Cultural Sciences are not always present in the actual discourses on university. From the perspectives of these scientific disciplines, the idea of university and scholarly life means, firstly, *to freely develop the idea of university*. Secondly, it means to *critically examine the conditions for academic work, e.g. in terms of current policy discourses*. Fundamental for this is the idea of university as a society in which everyone is responsible for the shaping of her/his relationships to him-/herself, to others and to the world based on diverse forms of knowledge and knowledge representation. University is thus regarded as a place for social and cultural development that includes academic as well as professional knowledge (Schleiermacher 2017 [1808]). University thus has the task to reflect on itself as a part of society.

To map the concept of university, theoretical as well as methodological foundations have to be laid. The joint concern in this publication is to take the various complementary or conflicting claims of reality of different epistemic communities into account. According to the university’s social mandate, such claims contain ideas about challenges arising in social and environmental fields. By investigating various cultural archives – formal and informal, analogous and digital etc. – multiple, simultaneous, and concurring claims of reality, experience, and meaning can be mapped in order to form the idea of university. These claims are grasped as scenarios of knowledge and knowledge acquisition.

In Tatiana Shchytsova’s contribution, the idea of the university community as based upon non-utilitarian principles is developed. The gratitude ethos is outlined as the *sensus communis* in the students’ and teachers’ cooperative

approaching of truthful knowledge. *Sensus communis* is specified as the responsibility of democratic societies to be concerned about the cultivation of non-utilitarian ethos, genuinely displaying the original interconnection between essential democratic and humanistic elements.

From a historical perspective, the developmental stages from a research university to an institution of higher education in Germany are outlined in Carola Groppe's article. This development starts from the perspective of the German tradition of *Bildung* and free thought at university. The focus, however, lies on the today's (global) policy to remake public research universities to institutions whose sole focus is the teaching of pre-professional and vocational knowledge.

In Anja Kraus' article, contemporary university is modelled departing from a brief outline of the most relevant global challenges. From certain aspects of globalization and interdependence, democracy and technology, the need for sustainable development is delineated. As opposed to current tendencies, the task of university is seen first of all as to provide a "free space of living with ideas" aiming at personal development (Gadamer) and, as Hannah Arendt puts it, in a political sense, aiming to be the "refuge of truth".

Pierangelo Maset's contribution departs from an analysis of the effects of today's digitization and of *Bildung* ciphered out as competencies. As a central theme, the aim is to put the subject's will and motivation into a pre-defined frame, only assessing the degree of adjustment. Maset looks at the *Bildung* today that is more and more governed by the principles of cyberspace, virtual communities and collective intelligence, calling this *Bildung* Black Pedagogy, which oppresses individual and collective initiatives.

The political goal of improving quality in national educational institutions seems to be globally shared. Anja Kraus' contribution shows that there are different historical, cultural and social preconditions for the quality movement in German schools compared with such preconditions in Sweden. The comparison is conducted from a pragmatic-ethnographic perspective, not least with the goal to find a common ground for defining pedagogical quality.

How can political and artistic positions be put into academic teaching from the perspective of embodied knowledge? Departing from the hypothesis of a continuity of a gendered use of space at university, Nanna Lüth's contribution develops a performative approach to situated knowledge. It

hereby refers to Haraway's partial perspective concept. It is shown that, by the tempting view this concept suggests, potentially all forms of knowledge claims can be made available.

From a constructivist perspective, Jean Luc Patry's article deals with the challenge to *teach* humanism and democracy. Beside distinct contents, such teaching also addresses values, critical thinking, social interaction etc. The challenge is thus to involve rationality in values education without neglecting, particularly, emotional concern. Patry presents a didactic tool to present moral dilemma, which he developed over many years and which was implemented to teaching for this purpose.

Växjö, the 27th of April 2017

References:

Schleiermacher, F. (2017 [1808]): Occasional Thoughts on German Universities in the German Sense, in: Menand, L.; Reitter, P.; Wellmon, C. (eds.): *The Rise of the Research University: A Sourcebook*. Chicago: The University of Chicago, 45-66.

About the Freedom of University and Teaching

Tatiana Shchytsova

The Ethos of Gratitude. To the Non-Utilitarian Grounds of University Education¹

The famous text of Immanuel Kant *Der Streit der Fakultäten* (*The Conflict of the Faculties*) could serve as a good introduction to the topic of my paper. In this work, Kant seeks to substantiate a special mission of the Philosophy Faculty, which is defined as a lower faculty due to the fact that it – unlike the higher faculties (which are the Theology Faculty, the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Medicine) – does not work directly in the interests of the state and its official ideology and current practical needs. Opposing such a hierarchy in the faculties, Kant argues that it is the Philosophy Faculty that plays a key role in the development of sciences and, generally speaking, in the pursuit of truth since this faculty is concerned with freedom of thinking. In order to convince his readers (incl. the officials) that the state might and should – in the highest degree – be interested in the Philosophy Faculty, Kant points out a peculiar *meta-pragmatics* of the philosophical tasks which, in his view, have to ensure both the theoretical and practical fruitfulness of the higher faculties. The Philosophy Faculty is identified by him as being responsible for an intellectual meta-perspective which allows for the free critical reconsideration (putting into question) of any given facts and statements presented in theological, legal and medical fields. Thus, he sees the Philosophy Faculty, more precisely, the intellectual meta-position cultivated there, as an ultimate condition of possibility of approaching the truth in the multidisciplinary academic community.

Kant's meditations appear political due to a rather revolutionary (for his time) assumption that the state has to recognize and promote such a value as free, namely critical, thinking. Thus, he envisages an essentially new order of things according to which power and relation to truth relate to each other in such a way that the state power does not pretend to be *the* only instance that approves and legitimizes that which can be considered to be

1 University education is understood here in the most general sense as a sphere of higher education presupposing corresponding institutionalization.