From Active Citizenship to World Citizenship:
a proposal for a world university

JAN MASSCHELEIN
Centre for Philosophy of Education, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium
MAARTEN SIMONS
Centre for Educational Policy and Innovation/
Centre for Philosophy of Education, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium

ABSTRACT This article explores how universities can function as spaces where a world citizenship takes shape. First, Kant's distinction between the 'private use of reason' and 'domestic gathering', on the one hand, and the 'public use of reason' and 'public gathering', on the other, is elucidated. This distinction is used, secondly, to argue that the actual university organises 'domestic gatherings'. In the name of excellence, it requires an entrepreneurial ethos of its staff, i.e. an *ethos of obedience* to a permanent quality tribunal, implying a permanent (self-)mobilisation confining the entrepreneur to a domestic gathering and the private use of reason ('private citizens'). Based on this understanding, the third section develops a proposal for a world university inhabited by 'learned individuals' acting as world citizens. It is a habitat in which an experimental and attentive ethos is present and where the public use of reason is 'finding (a) place'. This public use of reason is not just about making things known, but of making them present. The aim of the final section, then, is to make the proposal more specific, based on an exploration of 'public lecturing' as the time and space of public (world) gathering where *things* are made public.

Introduction

Considering current European discourses and initiatives, universities and institutions of higher education are put under pressure to contribute to what is commonly referred to as 'active citizenship' and 'democratic participation'. Indeed, learning citizenship and developing citizenship competencies are regarded as an urgent need in the further development of the European Union to support social and cultural inclusion and strengthen democratic political involvement both at the European level and the level of member states. Although this demand to universities and higher education institutions seems to be legitimate, there is little discussion on what universities actually have to offer regarding these issues. Therefore, we consider it important to reverse the question (see the contributions by Biesta and by Simons & Masschelein in this issue). Instead of asking how universities could meet the demand regarding the promotion and development of active citizenship, this article explores how universities can actually function as spaces where a particular kind of citizenship takes shape.

Underlying this exploration is indeed the assumption that universities have something to offer regarding citizenship, although this may not fit with the type of citizenship competencies they are required to produce today. The thesis we will develop is that universities, due to the specific scope of their teaching and research, can constitute a public of *world citizens* around specific *concerns* as opposed to *possible active* citizens with particular *competencies*. It is important to emphasise that we do not assume that universities today actually do play a role in constituting world citizenship. On the contrary, the way the university takes shape today – that is, the entrepreneurial university in

search of excellence – precisely seems to prevent it becoming a place where people gather around matters of concern as a public of world citizens. Hence, in exploring what the university has to offer regarding citizenship, this article is also a proposal for an alternative idea of the university: a world university (see also Simons & Masschelein, 2009). We do think, nevertheless, that what we are describing actually refers to what is happening in many institutions – albeit increasingly in the margins of the practices and in the shadow of the discourses of the university that seeks to become entrepreneurial.

In order to come to the formulation of our proposal of the world university, the first section of the article frames the challenge regarding the university's role with a short discussion of a typical modern idea of 'the public' and of 'citizenship'. Contrary to common discussions on these matters, we do not put forward von Humboldt's but rather Kant's ideas about these notions. His distinction between the 'private use of reason' and 'domestic gathering', on the one hand, and the 'public use of reason' and 'public gathering', on the other, enables us to formulate an interesting perspective on world citizenship (although Kant himself seems to close off the perspective he opens). This distinction is used in the second section of the article to argue that the entrepreneurial university organises 'domestic or private gatherings'. We will sketch briefly how the entrepreneurial university functions as a habitat governed by a regime that operates not in the name of 'universal reason' but in the name of 'excellence', and that requires an 'entrepreneurial' ethos of its staff. This ethos is an *ethos of obedience* or *submission* to a permanent quality tribunal with regard to the education, research and service function of the university. It implies a permanent (self-)assessment and (self-)mobilisation which confines the figure of the entrepreneur to a *domestic gathering*, the private use of one's reason, and hence turns him/her into a kind of 'private citizen'. Based on this understanding of the current condition of the university, the third section develops a proposal for a world university. This university functions as a place inhabited by 'learned individuals' acting as world citizens. It is a habitat in which an *experimental* and *attentive ethos* is present, and where the public use of reason is literally *finding (a) place*. This public use of reason, as the fourth section shows, is not just about making things known (as 'matters of fact'), but about making them present (as 'matters of concern'). The aim of the final section, then, is to make the proposal more specific, based on an exploration of 'public lecturing' as the time and space of *public (world) gathering* where *things* are made public. It is suggested that a world university is to be conceived as a laboratory, for which, besides the library, the lecture hall constitutes a crucial place, and in which the 'art of making things public' is to be developed and cherished.

From Domestic Gathering to Public Gathering

In his famous essay 'What is Enlightenment?', Kant (1977, p. 55) relates enlightenment to freedom in 'the most innocuous form of all – freedom to make public use of one's reason in all matters'. Kant continues by clarifying that by the public use of one's own reason he means the 'use which anyone may make of it as a *man of learning* [*Gelehrte*] addressing the entire *reading public*' (p. 55, original emphasis).[1] As a man (*sic*) of learning who is addressing 'a public in the truest sense of the word', one considers oneself 'as a member of a complete commonwealth or even a cosmopolitan society [*der Weltbürgergesellschaft*]' (p. 56). Hence, as a man of learning, one is a world citizen who, as Kant says, is not *instructing* pupils, but 'publicly voices his thoughts', 'imparts them to the public' (p. 56). A man of learning (a 'scholar', in the English translation of his text) is 'addressing the real public' (i.e. the world at large, *die Welt*) and speaks 'in his own person' (p. 57). Indeed, learned individuals are putting 'before the public their thoughts', with 'no fear of phantoms' (p. 59).

Kant contrasts this public use of one's own reason with its private use. This is the use which one makes of it when one acts in 'a particular civil post or office' (Kant, 1977, p. 55) that is 'employed by the government for public ends' (p. 56). In that case, one 'acts as part of the machine' (p. 56). And as part of a public institution (a machine with public ends), one speaks 'in someone else's name' (p. 56) and speaking becomes a kind of teaching or instruction. According to Kant, the use one makes of one's reason as part of a social machine or institution (and the main example he gives besides the army and the state is that of the Church) is purely private, since these, however large they may be, are 'never any more than a domestic gathering [*häusliche Versammlung*]' (p. 57).

Let us try to rephrase what Kant is saying here. First of all, Kant is not only distinguishing between the private and public use of one's reason, but also between the public use and the use made for public ends. The public character is, indeed, not related to an institution and its ends (i.e. the location or sphere of the use and/or its declared ends, the service towards a certain community, the nation), but to a *figure* and the *ethos* that characterises that figure. It is the figure of the learned individual or scholar and, as Kant states, *anyone* can be that figure. That figure is a world citizen (*Weltbürger*), but not because he/she is part of a particular community or shares a confined territory (for example, all human beings living on the globe). He/she is a world citizen because and as far as he/she conceives of him-/herself as a member of the world, which he/she calls into being through and *in the use* of his/her own reasoning, through and in the way he/she speaks. The public character of that speech does not refer to a particular domain or sphere, i.e. a domain or sphere with clear limits and laws of operation (which therefore can be conceived as a machine). We could think here not only of the state as machinery, but also of a scientific discipline or a cultural community. The public character instead refers to a certain use of one's capacity to reason, a capacity which, as Kant explains at the beginning of his essay, everybody has, the *only limits* being laziness and cowardice. The public character, thus, has to do with the particular use itself. This particular use is the use when we are not submitting ourselves to the rules of a 'machine' or 'institution', and when we are not addressing an audience that is defined by that institution and its tribunal. Institutions, despite their large audiences, remain domestic gatherings that require a private use of reason. Public use, however, refers to the use when we are addressing the public in its truest sense, i.e. being constituted by anyone who has the capacity for reasoning – that is, 'the public' beyond any machine or institution.

As a result, the figure of the scholar is characterised by an equalising ethos, addressing the other under the assumption of equality, speaking in his/her own name and thus demonstrating an ethos to risk oneself. This is an *experimental ethos* because the scholar exposes him-/herself to the limits (of the institution or machine) and is transforming the issue he/she is speaking about into a public issue – that is, making it public. Kant distinguishes this ethos very clearly from the *ethos of obedience* of the one who is acting as part of a machine, i.e. the figure that obeys the rules and submits him-/herself to the tribunal of a 'domestic gathering' in whose name the machine operates (even if it is a machine with public ends). In our opinion, Kant hereby opens up the possibility to think about a world university inhabited by 'learned individuals' who are or become world citizens in view of their ethos and their use of reason.[2] However, Kant also helps us to approach the current condition of universities in a particular way.

The Entrepreneurial University and Its Ethos of Obedience and Self-Mobilisation

Although in contemporary European policy documents reference is still being made to the modern university in line with, for instance, von Humboldt or Newman, the actual self-understanding of researchers, lecturers and students, as well as the ethos required of them, has changed (see Simons et al, 2007). The modern university is an institution which committed itself to a transcendent idea of 'universal reason', 'humanity' or 'civil service' and had, in fact, the nation state and national culture as its main reference (Readings, 1996).[3] Listening to the current European discourses on the university, the conception of the university that orients itself to a transcendent idea of humanity (including universal reason) or a particular vision of (civil) society, and propagates and safeguards the progress of national culture or civil society through the integration of research, education and public service is no longer embraced. Instead of 'culture', 'humanity' or 'civil society', in policy discourses on universities the orientation is 'excellence':

> Europe needs excellence in its universities, to optimise the processes which underpin the
> knowledge society and meet the target, set out by the European Council in Lisbon, of becoming
> *the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic*
> *growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.* (Commission of the European
> Communities, 2003, p. 2; see also Lisbon European Council, 2000, original emphasis)

Mission statements of today's universities also declare 'excellence in research, education and service' as their all-encompassing and primary target. As a result, 'what' exactly is investigated and

taught, and how it contributes to (national) culture and edification, matters less than the fact that it is investigated and taught 'excellently' (Readings, 1996).

Lacking any external referent, the term 'excellence' refers to the fact that a university is performing functions better than other organisations measured on the basis of a set of quality indicators. Hence, being oriented towards excellence implies that universities judge everything according to a 'permanent quality tribunal' (Simons & Masschelein, 2006). The orientation towards quality (a selection of specific performance indicators) and the implied obsession with excellence therefore is linked up with the 'dictates of comparison and optimisation'; the emphasis is on ongoing comparison with a view to ongoing optimisation (Bröckling, 2002). The development of poles/networks of excellence with regard to research, the elaboration of programmes for excellence in teaching (see, for example, Commission of the European Communities, 2003; SIRIUS [4]) and the competition not only between universities, but also between faculties and research centres, are examples of the application of the above-mentioned dictates. The following statement articulates nicely the current focus on excellence and quality:

> Outstanding quality can only emerge from a terrain with an across-the-board 'culture of
> excellence'. Excellence is never a permanent achievement: it always needs to be challenged. It
> can exist in a few entire universities, but much more widely in individual faculties or teams
> within institutions or networks. (Commission of the European Communities, 2005, p. 5)

As stated by the Flemish Minister for Education: to improve quality and increase excellence is *the* most important societal aim of the university (Vandenbroucke, 2006). And in view of quality being increasingly measured on the basis of various kinds of rankings and quality comparisons (i.e. on the basis of output), a clear message is being sent to the academic world: compare yourselves, be better than the others, increase your performance – i.e. increase the output through more efficient use of the means, or optimise the input–output ratio (Lyotard, 1979). The basic assumption is neatly summarised as follows: 'Excellence emerges from competition … – few universities achieve excellence across a wide spectrum of areas' (Commission of the European Communities, 2006, p. 9).

In a condition of organised competition (through comparisons, rankings, etc.), the main challenge seems to become: How can one live up to the virtue of ongoing 'competitive self-improvement' (see Haahr, 2004)? The answer that is suggested is that this has to be done through the development of an entrepreneurial ethos, the permanent assessment of oneself (and one's university, research centre or teaching) on the basis of the quality indicators in terms of weaknesses and strengths. Confronted increasingly with the dictate of permanent improvement through permanent comparison, European universities and academics are faced with an additional dictate: the dictate of proactive self-adaptation and permanent self-mobilisation (Simons & Masschelein, 2009). It becomes an academic's duty to look for opportunities ('niches') to produce something of excellence. The unique space of the university today is a space that permanently and relentlessly *mobilises* researchers, lecturers and students in view of international excellence (see Commission of the European Communities, 2006). And what seems to guide the search for excellence is fear: fear of low rankings, wrong perceptions, negative assessments. As Boulton & Lucas (2008, p. 7) state in their recent report for the League of European Research Universities: 'As league table follows league table they are pored over obsessively for signs of progress or decline.'

From our brief sketch it becomes clear that, despite its emptiness, excellence has the potential to actually change the academic world at all levels – including the dispositions and ethos of academics. Indeed, the 'university of excellence' that policy makers have in mind is a habitat which demands an entrepreneurial ethos of *obedience* or *submission* to a permanent quality tribunal. The orientation towards excellence clearly includes a reference to a 'global city' (the knowledge society or knowledge economy). However, this city can be conceived of as a 'machine' (in Kant's terminology), populated by 'private citizens'. As entrepreneurial citizens, and guided by the laws and rules of the quality tribunals, they make a private use of their reason (even if the entrepreneurial citizen takes up public functions). The projected 'global city', and its future entrepreneurial university, thus organises a domestic gathering, leading to a domestication of one's citizenship and use of reason (see also the contribution by Biesta in this issue). At this point, and in the face of these private gatherings, we wish to introduce a proposal to rethink the public role of universities. This proposal, however, is not inspired by some ideal or vision of a better world, and

its first aim is not to say what ought to be (done). The proposal wishes to 'slow down' our reasoning and create an opportunity for a slightly different awareness of the problems and situations that are mobilising us today.

A World University and Its Experimental and Attentive Ethos of Slowing Down

A world university can be conceived as a habitat beyond the 'machine of excellence' where 'objects' (i.e. 'matters of fact' or 'matters of need') are transformed into 'things' (i.e. 'matters of concern') (see also the contribution by Simons & Masschelein in this issue). This transformation occurs when the consensual way in which situations and issues are presented (and dealt with) and the way in which needs, demands and emergencies mobilise our reasoning and acting are interrupted (through activities and events, and related to a particular ethos). At that moment, these issues become public issues or affairs – *things made public* (Latour & Weibel, 2005).[5] A world university, then, and to formulate it right from the outset, is a university which is concerned with the world. Being concerned with the world, here, is being concerned with 'things' or with 'affairs' that are public, that call a public into existence, i.e. *res publica*. As Heidegger reminds us:

> [T]he Old High German word 'Thing' means a gathering, and specifically a gathering to deliberate on a matter under discussion, a contested matter. In consequence, the Old German words 'Thing' and 'Ding' become the names for an affair or matter of pertinence. They denote anything that in any way bears upon men, concerns them, and that accordingly is a matter for discourse ... [T]he Romans called a matter for discourse *res*. ... *[R]es publica* means, not the state, but that which, known to everyone, concerns everybody and is therefore deliberated in public. ... [T]hat which concerns man is what is real in *res*. (Heidegger, 1975, pp. 174-175)

Taking into account Heidegger's etymological clarification, a world university can thus be described as a particular space/time constituting a public by gathering around matters of concern.[6] This means that they are making us think, that they obtain the power to make us think. A world university would then be a place of thought, although, of course, it is just one place, not the only one and albeit a particular one. It comes into existence when thought is provoked because our common way of reasoning and acting is slowed down by hearing the phrase 'Bethink that we might be mistaken' or the question 'What are we busy doing?', and when that question is not immediately answered and thus closed off. According to Isabelle Stengers (2005, p. 996), it is precisely this insistent question that can be given the name of 'the world'.

Hearing this question, Stengers argues in line with Deleuze and Dostojevski, is hearing the idiot (and therefore also in itself probably an idiotic thing to do):

> In the ancient Greek sense, an idiot was someone who did not speak the Greek language and was therefore cut off from the civilized community. ... [B]ut Deleuze's idiot ... is the one who always slows the others down, who resists the consensual way in which the situation is presented and in which emergencies mobilize thought or action. This is not because the presentation would be false or because emergencies are believed to be lies, but because, 'there is something more important'. Don't ask him why; the idiot will neither reply nor discuss the issue. The idiot is a presence or ... produces an interstice. There is no point in asking him, 'what is more important?' for he does not know. But his role is not to produce abysmal perplexity, not to create the famous Hegelian night when every cow is black. We know, knowledge there is, but the idiot demands that we slow down, that we don't consider ourselves authorized to believe that we possess the meaning of what we know. (Stengers, 2005, pp. 994-995)

The world university is, therefore, not a university that would be oriented towards a cosmos as a perfect united, common world. It is a space (one amongst others) for hesitation regarding what it means to say 'good' and to define what is 'common'. Clearly, the proposal does not wish to deny the emergencies associated with what is actually done in all kinds of fields and what seems to urge for solutions and responses and to ask for definitions of the good life. The proposal wishes to pay attention, nonetheless, to the idiotic murmuring that there is perhaps something more important. Therefore, a world university is not operating in the name of such a (future) common world (for example, eternal peace [Kant] or communicative rationality [Habermas]). The inhabitants (academics/professors) are not representatives in this sense; they are not speaking 'in the name of',

and thus cannot say 'and so…'. They are not addressing students or the public as those who are in need of guidance or orientation (for example, in need of the light of [universal] reason). They are not experts saying, 'these are the facts, this is the case (and cause), and so…'. At the world university this 'and so…' is precisely *suspended*. In this sense, Stengers (2005) adds, one could say that the world, this idiotic murmur of things, this appearance of 'matters of concern', is an operator of equalisation. Equalisation and not equivalence, because that would imply again a common measure and thus interchangeability of positions – which is precisely what happens when rankings are used, for example. Voices at the world university speak under the assumption of equality – that is, they are not claiming that they are the only ones to be able to explain and understand where others could or cannot explain and understand. Instead, these are voices that *add*; voices that

> can imbue these other voices with the feeling that they do not master the situation they discuss, that the public arena is peopled with shadows of that which does not have a voice, cannot have or does not want to have one. This is a feeling that political good will can so easily obliterate when no answer is given (by the idiot) to the demand: 'Express yourself, express your objections, your proposals, your contribution to the common world that we're building.' (Stengers, 2005, p. 996)

A world university thus appears when something makes 'an interstice in the soil of good reasons' (Stengers, 2005, p. 996) and therefore *makes us think*. This 'making us think' is neither achieved by speaking or acting 'in the name of' (some rational ideal or essential duty), nor by declaring that making people capable of critical thinking is the aim or goal of the university. The university makes it happen in the mode of indeterminacy – that is, in the mode

> of the event from which nothing follows, no 'and so…', but that confronts every one with the question of how they will inherit from it. The event is *a presence* without interaction, causing no transaction, the event does not speak. (Stengers, 2005, p. 996; our italics)

As we said before, this question can be given the name of 'the world' and we have to invent (and to decide) the way in which to deal with it. We have to invent the valid and legitimate reasons precisely 'in the presence' of that which remains deaf to this legitimacy (in the presence of the question or murmur of the idiot, in the presence of 'things made public').

What is important is precisely this idea of 'in the presence of'. We have to invent, but 'in the presence of' – in the presence of that which is giving no answer to the demand 'express yourself'. The point is (and that is what makes a world university) to retain the question, the murmur, and to start to invent in its presence. Proposing the idea of a world university is an invitation to invent a 'habitat', as Stengers (2005, p. 996) calls it, which affords opportunities for an original ethos to risk itself, i.e. an *experimental ethos*. As Latour (2003, p. 53; our translation) states: 'the more scientific, the more one is in an experimental situation, the more one is in uncertainty about the common world'. For this reason, inventing a world university means to invent measures, strategies, practices and exercises that give power to things (to matters) which oblige us to think (and to think about what to do in the face of an idiotic question). These measures, strategies, practices and exercises can actually constrain the protective manoeuvres by which academics can escape the experimental situation that Latour is talking about, escape being exposed and being obliged to think and decide 'in the presence of'. They constrain the protective manoeuvres of immunisation (Masschelein & Simons, 2002).

The example Stengers gives is helpful to indicate clearly what is at stake. Stengers discusses animal experimentation and how to deal with this issue. According to her, in laboratories where experiments are performed on animals, all sorts of rituals and ways of talking and referring to those animals exist: 'The grand tales about the advancement of knowledge, rationality defined against sentimentality and the necessities of method are part of such rites, filling up the interstices through which the "what am I doing" insistently nags' (Stengers, 2005, p. 997). These tales attest to the researchers' need to protect themselves, i.e. to protect themselves from the 'in the presence of'. Of course, researchers need to decide on the legitimacy of an experiment, but, according to Stengers (2005, p. 997), we should try to invent constraints against these protective or immunising manoeuvres: 'forcing the researchers concerned to expose themselves, to decide "in the presence of" those that may turn out to be the victims of their decision'. Thus, the proposal for a world university touches the researcher. The researcher's 'self' is itself being presented as an issue, and

giving its full meaning to the unknown element of the question: 'what would the researcher decide "on her own" if that "his/herself" were actively shed of the kinds of protection current decisions seem to need?' (Stengers, 2005, p. 997). An experiment, therefore, would not only be about applying experimental methods, but also about an experimental ethos, putting oneself to the test, to risk oneself. It would involve an attentive and experimental attitude in the full meaning of the word: exposition to the present and thus accepting to be touched, infected or even intoxicated, accepting to think and become otherwise – without immunising oneself in advance.

How, one could ask, would the academic as 'experimenter' decide if his/her ethos (his/her way of behaving) were thoroughly experimental? An example is living together with animals. We can think of the famous examples of Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey and Biruté Galdikas, who spent large parts of their lives face to face with apes, and managed to make them 'present' and to think and behave 'in the presence of' (see Herzfeld, 2005). The experimental attitude in this sense does not only apply to the sciences, but also to the social sciences and humanities. We could think of the experiments that some educators have set up, as in the case of Fernand Deligny (1999), who actually lived for 20 years on a permanent basis with a group of autistic people and tried to think and write in their presence. Or it is possible to reflect in a similar way on 'laboratory schools', such as the one that Dewey set up in Chicago, which was not intended to implement a structured pedagogical plan, but to facilitate research and experimentation (see Tanner, 1997). Of course, such laboratory schools can function as mere testing grounds for new theories, but they could also operate as places that allow for thinking 'in the presence of'. Moreover, we do not only have to think here of these rather special examples. In a more general way, the experimental ethos that includes an exposition is, in fact, what characterises every genuine 'study' – 'study' (as opposed to learning) here being a way to weaken and loose oneself in front of 'a text' or in front of 'a reality'. The text or reality is not just a playground for one's thoughts and actions, but becomes something to which people are exposed and in the presence of which they have to think. This kind of exposition through research or study is uncomfortable, not just because there are no criteria or there is no tribunal to judge the things one is confronted with (one is outside 'the machine', to use Kant's terminology), but also because one's own position is always at stake.

This does not mean that one's ethos can be transformed in any predictable way by transforming the habitat. As Stengers states:

> The habitat proposes, the being disposes, gives or refuses to give that proposal a signification …
> [W]e don't know what a researcher who today affirms the legitimacy or even the necessity of
> experiments on animals is capable of becoming in an *oikos* that demands that he or she think 'in
> the presence of' the victims of his or her decision. (Stengers, 2005, p. 997)

In any case, the researcher will be present in it. In a similar way, the social scientist or the humanities scholar can confront him-/herself with the 'things' and 'people' he/she is studying, and is forced to think and to risk him-/herself in their presence. Taking up Stengers' idea, the world university would thus invent constraints against the protective immunising manoeuvres. Such constraints are idiotic in that they say: 'we may agree with your arguments, but we have to make sure that you are fully exposed to their consequences' (Stengers, 2005, p. 997). The constraints are therefore to be seen as measures against anaesthesia and immunisation.

The Art of Giving Things the Power to Make Us Think

The world university invents procedures to slow down and to provoke thinking. Provoking thinking is not done simply by declaring that we should think or by celebrating it in ceremonies and rituals, or writing it down in programme texts (although we should certainly also do that). As Stengers (2005) suggests, provoking thinking should be approached as an art that universities have to develop and cherish. This art is precisely the art of 'making things public' (or one could say the art of 'publishing') – that is, the art (the ethos, including the manners and practices) that gives the issue the power to activate our thinking, to become a thing that gathers, a thing made public and calling a public into being. This art is the art of exposition with all its connotations, of being exposed to (thus, not protected by or immunised by devices or procedures). It implies the art of presentation and representation – that is, to make present and to be present oneself in what is presented (i.e. being attentive). This art requires not so much a method, but foremost an

experimental and attentive ethos. The experimental ethos is an ethos to risk oneself and to think 'in the presence of'. What is at stake is not giving up methodological neutrality, for instance. In view of 'making things public', the challenge for researchers and/or lecturers, instead, is the exposition of themselves and the possibility and courage to leave behind the protection that is often offered by a particular use of theory and method. Indeed, as Stengers argues, experimental method is often a ritual of protection. Theory also can work in this way:

> For the power of a theory is to define an issue simply as a case that, as such, is unable to challenge it. That power prevents the representatives of the theory for giving the issue the power to oblige them to think ... the ethos associated with a researcher incapable of giving up the position of spokesperson of a theory or method supposed to make him or her a scientist, is not a matter of 'either that or I stop being a scientist', but rather of the 'oikos' that favoured such a position. (Stengers, 2005, p. 998)

In the social sciences and humanities, there are also mechanisms that prevent scholars from giving their 'subjects' the power to oblige scholars to think. In fact, Stengers refers to Devereux, who links the importance of 'method' in social and behavioural sciences – the sciences that address 'subjects' – to a perceived necessity to protect oneself from an anxiety that is unknown to the physicist or chemist ('What am I busy doing to him or her?') (Devereux, 1967, pp. 97-102). In view of these mechanisms of protection (and the protective use of theory and method), we can think of another habitat for the university, or at least think about some displacements in the current one that foster permanent mobilisation.

The following question has to be addressed: How, and by which artefacts and by which procedures, can we make sure that the murmuring of the idiot, and the silent voice that 'there is something more important', is not so easily forgotten or not taken into account (as the idiot neither objects to nor proposes anything that counts)? It is about an *art to give* the issue around which we gather the *power* to activate thinking. In view of this thinking that belongs to no one, and in which no one is right, Stengers herself refers to the art of magic. Magic here refers to an event or a thing that provokes thinking. It is 'every-thing' that enables us to think and to feel differently. The art of magic is that of triggering events, where a 'becoming able to' is at stake. As a consequence, this art is actually an art of invocation, or even better, convocation: 'a ritual of appealing to a presence' (Stengers, 2005, p. 1002). What is convoked does not say what ought to be done, gives no answer as to decisions to be taken, and offers no prophetic revelation. The efficacy of the ritual is 'that of a presence that transforms each protagonist's relations with his or her knowledge, hopes, fears and memories, and allows the whole to generate what each one would have been unable to produce separately' (Stengers, 2005, p. 1002). The convocation by a thing or issue, then, is what actually calls the world and the public into being. The 'issues', as a kind of magical ritual, 'spark a public into being' – that is, they gather people as equals 'in the presence of' (Marres, 2005, p. 208). The university is one of the places where this can happen, and where it is literally *finding (a) place*. Perhaps the university lecture room is a privileged place where it happens, or at least can happen, given that we master the art of 'making things public' and refuse the protections that immunise teaching and lecturing. Although there are clearly different traditions regarding lecturing and teaching dependent on the university model, we think our description of lecturing applies to many institutions and teaching practices.

Lecturing: making things present

The habitat of the world university is one in which the public lecture could become one of the main practices or procedures, and where the public lecture hall is one of the main architectural devices to 'make things public'. We wish to maintain that the people populating this habitat are, in the first place, 'professors' and 'their public' (audience) or, in Kant's terminology, learned persons or scholars who are making public use of their reason. They are not researchers transmitting knowledge in front of students or learners. One could think, then, of the world university as the place where academics and students are not mobilised, but slowed down by a provocation to think. This provocation *finds its place* by putting a matter on the table and by making its protection (for instance, through a particular use of methods and theories) undone. But this finding place implies as well that teaching is stripped of its protections (by certain teaching methods and didactic devices

that prevent students from being exposed). Teaching, then, is no longer mere instruction and becomes what we would like to call 'lecturing'. Instead of teaching a lesson (about how the world is), lecturing instead becomes a way of opening up a world by making things public – reading things before an audience, exposing them (and being oneself in the presence of these things) to a new generation, making them speak, so to say, and giving them a presence that calls a thinking public into existence. Making things public, then, is not only about making them known (as facts), but making them present and inviting people to explore new ways of relating to them (as concerns). It is about giving things the power to invite students to think, instead of pointing students at the facts that should be known.

In view of the previous ideas, the specificity of the public role of universities resides not in the first place in research (publishing research and informing the public about the results) or in teaching (the transmission of knowledge to a group of students), but mainly with the professor's public speech in lecture halls, auditoria and seminar rooms. And we should certainly not forget the particular architecture of these places. With this thesis we continue with the brilliant study of Friedrich Kittler (1987), who pointed to the practice of lecturing (and listening) as the founding gesture of the (medieval) university. Lecture halls or seminar rooms are often designed to gather people around something, to make things public and allow for a public to come into existence. Perhaps even a tutoring session, where something is put on the table/desk and is being discussed, could function as a public gathering. Despite the diversity in university models, it is during such a public lecture that what is commonly referred to as the university's three 'functions' (research, teaching, public service) are, in fact, integrated. In the public lecture, or during the professor's discussion with a student *in the presence of* a text, this combination literally can *find its place* and time. These occasions are also one of the most important moments where the principal right and even duty of the university to speak out freely about everything takes place. At this point, the old idea that the professor speaks out of love for the truth and for the world starts to make sense again, and professors actually appear as concerned 'truth tellers' or *parrhesiasts* (Foucault, 1989; Derrida, 2001). During the public lecture and discussion, and when people manifest 'presence' (*présence*), there is precisely the magic Stengers refers to.

We all probably know or have known these kinds of lectures or public moments. These are the moments when we feel that something is really happening, and that this happening has something to do with public speech. In public speech, something – and we underline 'some thing' (a text, a picture, a virus, a river, a neuron) – is at stake, and people are provoked to think in its presence. As a consequence, in attending such lectures, we ourselves, and our relations to these 'some things', are at stake and we have to start seeing and thinking for ourselves. Public lectures thus are associated with the emergence of new consciousness, or an overtaking of the self that extends one's own, private affairs by making things into a public affair (see Rancière, 2008). We wish to stress once again that it is not the expert informing us, but the professor who gathers people around a thing and seeks to turn it into a public concern. The professor gives his/her voice to a thing, articulates a matter, puts it on the table and makes it present, and by doing this creates a power that makes us think. For this reason, the professor perhaps is also something of a conduit, a witness and a diplomat, for all these 'roles' have to do with 'making present' and 'making resound' (voices of persons, things, happenings) in a way likely to cause people to have second thoughts (Stengers, 2005). What happens is that people become a concerned public, and hence are forced to think at least about the possibility that their favourite (familiar, evident, or evidence-based) course of action actually is an act of immunisation.

At this point, we wish to reintroduce the figure of the professor. To be a professor, then, means 'to profess', which is not simply to state something, to state how things are and to depict what is.[7] 'To profess' comes from the Latin *profero*, which had different meanings: to present/offer oneself out of free will; to make appear; to suspend (*ex professo* means 'public', 'openly'; *professus* refers to what one has made public; and *professae feminae* are 'public women'). In line with these original meanings, 'to profess' is a mode of speech that adds something to the world, and therefore actually also creates a world leading to an invocation/convocation of thought (Standish, 2008). What the professor is saying thus always implies a declared commitment or attachment (Derrida, 2001). To profess mathematics or literature is not simply to teach mathematics or literature, but it involves a commitment of oneself in a public promise to dedicate or devote oneself (and to have been dedicated or devoted) to the matter. The professor is not just

talking about something, but always also expressing his/her dedication to that 'some thing'. Listening to a professor, then, always includes a kind of obligation towards the matter he/she is speaking about. Clearly, the professor then appears as an enthusiast, and not an expert. In a way, he/she is always a kind of amateur: that is, someone who to a certain extent 'loves' – or at least 'cares' about – what he/she is presenting. The lecture or seminar is, then, the place where one gives something to think about, because one gives also one's own thinking, or demonstrates and shows one's own thoughts. At these moments, one's 'research' or ideas are exposed, and by gathering people around them they no longer belong to anyone, but to everyone (or to no one in particular).

If the public role of the university indeed resides in its possibility to invoke thinking by gathering people around an issue, again the focus is on the art (the ethos) and the habitat. How does one become a professor as discussed in the previous paragraphs? How does one turn a text, a virus or a river into a cause for thinking? How does one design a scene in such a way that thinking proceeds in the presence of the issue or thing? How does one conceive the scene of lecturing, for example, its architecture (the inside and outside of the habitat), its technology of speech, its material way of bringing together those concerned? How does one prevent a lecture from becoming a performance or spectacle, and ensure that it remains a (re)presentation? How does one construct a certain closeness or nearness (both spatially and temporally) in order to be able to think 'in the presence of'? We cannot discuss these questions – on the 'didactics' of the world university – in further detail here. We do wish to stress that perhaps one of the important things to do is to slow down today's student-centred and demand-driven teaching discourses, and the related mobilising discourses on teaching quality and excellence. Instead, we could initiate *thing*-oriented teaching discourses, and search for tools to gather people around specific concerns. We could start by recalling von Humboldt's (1959) statement that the professor is not there for the student, and the student is not there for the professor; at the university both are there for the truth and, from our perspective, have to be concerned with the matter or thing.

Conclusion

The proposal of the world university is a proposal of a space where 'slowing down and think' literally *finds (its) place*. Perhaps the university is not the only place, but one of the places. Of course, one could say that this proposal just repeats a banal or trivial idea: slow down and think.[8] But maybe it is not so easy to make it happen given the actual conditions of pressing mobilisation with regard to the emergencies that are invoked in order to guarantee competitiveness. This proposal of a world university wishes to contrast the entrepreneurs that academics are asked to be today with those who 'stick their noses into what is nobody's business' (Stengers, 2005, p. 999). By making things public, and allowing for public concerns to emerge, the world university would complete or complicate matters in a way that entrepreneurs are possibly no longer able to assimilate. The entrepreneurial version of the common world implies giving voice only to the clearly articulated needs or the clearly defined interests that can mutually counterbalance one another.

The world in our conception has no representatives, no one talks in its name, and therefore the world has no 'stake' in a particular consultative procedure. Its mode of existence is reflected instead in all the artificial manners to be created, whose efficacy is to expose those who have to decide, and to force them to think 'in the presence of'. Therefore, the proposal for a world university

> means opening the possibility of the idiot's murmuring being answered not by the definition of 'what is most important' but by the slowing down without which there can be no creation. We must dare to say that the cosmic idiot's murmur is as indifferent to the argument of urgency, as to any other. It does not deny it; it has only suspended the 'and so…', that we – so full of good will, so enterprising, always ready to talk on everyone's behalf – master. (Stengers, 2005, p. 1003)

Alongside the 'poles of excellence' that seem to be requested today in the entrepreneurial university, the world university could develop and promote 'poles of attention'. Its academic community could appear as a community of people sharing the exposition towards the present. Their speaking together would be no imitation of war with other means. What they share or have

in common is not a language, doctrine or method, but a habitat, an ethos and thoughts invoked by things. Being part of such a community would be edifying for both professors and students because they are invited to bring themselves to the test; it invites people to 'experience', and works as a kind of laboratory of experience and thinking. In sum, the university is not a domestic gathering around private issues, needs and facts, but a public gathering that is called into being through specific practices, producing an event around specific things and through the operation of a specific ethos. The scholar, professor or learned individual develops the ethos of a world citizen. At this point, we wish to stress again that they are not world citizens in view of the global territory they seek to embrace but because of the democratic, equalising operation that is entailed in their speaking; they speak in their own name 'in the presence of' and being confronted with a public. We are not sure whether the 'slow' world citizen meets the qualities of the 'mobilised' active citizen that Europe and its member states are demanding, but this is perhaps what the university and institutions of higher education have to offer.

Notes

[1] The element of it being that a 'reading' public deserves special attention (see also Kittler, 1987; Carpignano, 1999). However, we will not discuss this here since it does not touch upon the main scope of our argument.

[2] However, Kant himself also immediately closed off the opening he made insofar as reasoning finally implies for him a very particular judgmental ethos of obedience. In his 'critical work' (Kant, 1997), and focusing on the universal principles of reason, he actually transforms the public (defined as the world beyond any domestic gathering) into a new kingdom (a new domestic gathering, a new machine): the kingdom of reason, with its proper, unchangeable laws and its own tribunal.

[3] There are clearly different models of the modern university. We will not discuss this here (see the contribution by Zgaga in this issue). We wish to stress, however, that the modern university, despite differences in traditions, orients itself towards an overall idea of humanity or society.

[4] SIRIUS Programma: Excellentie in het hoger onderwijs [SIRIUS Programme: Excellence in higher education]. This programme offers substantial financial support for higher education institutions that want to stimulate excellent bachelor students (i.e. the top 5%).

[5] In 2005, Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel curated an exhibition at the Centre for Art and Media in Karlsruhe, Germany, under the title 'Making Things Public: atmospheres of democracy'. On this occasion they also edited an impressive catalogue with a collection of essays that serves as a background for this section (Latour & Weibel, 2005). We are especially interested in 'The Cosmopolitical Proposal', written by Isabelle Stengers (2005). Stengers explicitly distances herself from Kant's cosmopolitanism as expressed in his proposal for perpetual peace (where the cosmos becomes an Earth finally united). We follow Stengers in her distancing, but we wish to take up the lead towards a different idea of the world which Kant offers in his essay on enlightenment.

[6] We are well aware that a reference to Heidegger in discussing the university's role is morally and politically ambiguous because of his own position as rector. Without discussing this in detail here, the conception of the public role we wish to elaborate is actually a way to rethink the university's democratic role, and is different from Heidegger's 'idea' of the university and position as an academic.

[7] 'Professor' is here to be seen as the name for a figure. It is not a psychological type, a sociological category or a professional role, but refers to certain activities and certain ways of relating to oneself, to others and to the world.

[8] For a different approach to slowness see also the proposals for 'slow science' by Pels (2003) and Boomkes (2008).

References

Boomkens, R. (2008) *Topkitsch en slow science: kritiek van de academische rede.* Amsterdam: Van Gennep.

Boulton, G. & Lucas, C. (2008) *What Are Universities For?* Leuven: League of European Research Universities. http://www.leru.org/?cGFnZT0zMjU=

Bröckling, U. (2002) Diktat des Komparativs: zur Anthropologie des 'unternehmerischen Selbst', in U. Bröckling & E. Horn (Eds) *Anthropologie der Arbeit*, 157-173. Tübingen: Gunter Narr.

Carpignano, P. (1999) The Shape of the Sphere: the public sphere and the materiality of communication, *Constellations*, 6(2), 177-189. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.00134

Commission of the European Communities (2003) *The Role of the Universities in the Europe of Knowledge.* COM (2003) 58, Brussels.

Commission of the European Communities (2005) *Mobilising the Brainpower of Europe: enabling the universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy.* Communication from the Commission, COM(2005) 152 final, 20 April. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities.

Commission of the European Communities (2006) *Delivering on the Modernisation Agenda for Universities: education, research and innovation.* Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, COM(2006) 208 final, 10 May. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities.

Deligny, F. (1999) *A comme Asile/Nous et l'Innocent.* Paris: Dunod.

Derrida, J. (2001) *L'Université sans conditions.* Paris: Galilée.

Devereux, G. (1967) *From Anxiety to Method in the Behavioral Sciences.* The Hague: Mouton.

Foucault, M. (1989) *Parresia: vrijmoedig spreken en waarheid.* Amsterdam: De Balie.

Haahr, J. (2004) Open Co-ordination as Advanced Liberal Government, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 11(2), 209-230. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1350176042000194403

Heidegger, M. (1975) The Thing, in M. Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. A. Hofstadter. New York: Harper Colophon Books. (Original work published 1951.)

Herzfeld, C.S. (2005) What Is It Like to Be Face to Face with a Great Ape? In B. Latour & P. Weibel (Eds) *Making Things Public: atmospheres of democracy*, 388-395. Karlsruhe & Cambridge, MA: Centre for Art and Media & MIT Press.

Kant, I. (1977) An Answer to the Question: 'What is Enlightenment?', in H. Reiss (Ed.) *Kant's Political Writings*, trans. H.B. Nisbet, 54-60. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1784.)

Kant, I. (1997) *Critique of Pure Reason.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1781.)

Kittler, F.A. (1987) *Aufschreibesysteme, 1800-1900.* Munich: Wilhelm Fink.

Latour, B. (2003) *Un Monde pluriel mais commun.* Paris: L'Aube.

Latour, B. & Weibel, P. (Eds) (2005) *Making Things Public: atmospheres of democracy.* Karlsruhe & Cambridge, MA: Centre for Art and Media & MIT Press.

Lisbon European Council (2000) Presidency Conclusions. Lisbon European Council 23 and 24 March 2000. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm

Lyotard, J.-F. (1979) *La Condition postmoderne.* Paris: Éditions de Minuit.

Marres, N. (2005) Issues Spark a Public into Being: a key but often forgotten point of the Lippmann–Dewey Debate, in B. Latour & P. Weibel (Eds) *Making Things Public: atmospheres of democracy*, 208-217. Karlsruhe & Cambridge, MA: Centre for Art and Media & MIT Press.

Masschelein, J. & Simons, M. (2002) An Adequate Education in a Globalised World? A Note on Immunisation against Being-Together, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 36(4), 565-584. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.00297

Pels, D. (2003) *Unhastening Science: autonomy and reflexivity in the social theory of knowledge.* Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Rancière, J. (2008) *Le Spectateur émancipé.* Paris: La Fabrique.

Readings, B. (1996) *The University in Ruins.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Simons, M., Haverhals, B. & Biesta, G. (2007) Introduction: the university revisited, *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 26(5), 395-404. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11217-007-9051-5

Simons, M. & Masschelein, J. (2006) The Permanent Quality Tribunal in Education and the Limits of Education Policy, *Policy Futures in Education*, 4(3), 292-305. http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/pfie.2006.4.3.292

Simons, M. & Masschelein, J. (2009) Towards the Idea of a World University, *Interchange*, 40(1), 1-23. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10780-009-9087-2

Standish, P. (2008) Transparency, Accountability, and the Public Role of Higher Education, in J. Masschelein, M. Simons & G. Kelchtermans (Eds) *Symposium: education as a matter of public concern*. Symposium Proceeding, 29-38. Leuven: Catholic University of Leuven.

Stengers, I. (2005) The Cosmopolitical Proposal, in B. Latour & P. Weibel (Eds) *Making Things Public: atmospheres of democracy*, 994-1003. Karlsruhe & Cambridge, MA: Centre for Art and Media & MIT Press.

Tanner, L.N. (1997) *Dewey's Laboratory School: lessons for today.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Vandenbroucke, F. (2006) De maatschappelijke doelmatigheid van het hoger onderwijs. http://www.vlaanderen.be/servlet/Satellite?c=MIN_Publicatie&cid=1159761635145&lang=NL&lyt=1 141721285950&p=1142511947272&pagename=minister_frank_vandenbroucke%2FMIN_Publicatie%2F Publicatie_met_relatiesMIN&subtype=Toespraak

Von Humboldt, W. (1959) Über die innere und äussere Organisation der Höheren Wissenschaftlichen Anstalten, in E. Anrich (Ed.) *Die Idee der deutschen Universität*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft. (Original work published 1810.)

JAN MASSCHELEIN is Professor of Philosophy of Education at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium. His primary areas of scholarship are educational theory, critical theory and social philosophy. Currently, his research is focused on the public character of education and on 'mapping' and 'walking' as critical research practices. He is the author of many articles and contributions in these fields, including the books *Kommunikatives Handeln und pädagogisches Handeln* (Deutscher Studien Verlag, 1991) and *Alterität, Pluralität, Gerechtigkeit: Randgänge der Pädagogik* (Leuven University Press, 1996; co-authored with M. Wimmer). Together with Maarten Simons, he is the author of *Globale Immunität, oder Eine kleine Kartographie des europäischen Bildungsraums* (Diaphanes, 2005) and co-editor of *The Learning Society from the Perspective of Governmentality* (Blackwell, 2007). He has translated the work of Hannah Arendt and Jacques Rancière into Dutch. *Correspondence*: Jan Masschelein, Centre for Educational Policy and Innovation, Centre for Philosophy of Education, Catholic University of Leuven, B-3000 Leuven, Belgium (jan.masschelein@ped.kuleuven.be).

MAARTEN SIMONS is Professor at the Centre for Educational Policy and Innovation and the Centre for Philosophy of Education, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium. His principal interests are in educational policy, new (global/European) regimes of governance in education, and the public role of (higher) education and teachers/academics. Together with Jan Masschelein, he is the author of *Globale Immunität, oder Eine kleine Kartographie des europäischen Bildungsraums* (Diaphanes, 2005). He is co-editor of *The Learning Society from the Perspective of Governmentality* (Blackwell, 2007) and the 2007 special issue of *Studies in Philosophy and Education* entitled 'The University Revisited: questioning the public role of the university in the European knowledge society', and the author of several articles in journals and edited books. *Correspondence*: Maarten Simons, Centre for Educational Policy and Innovation/Centre for Philosophy of Education, Catholic University of Leuven, B-3000 Leuven, Belgium (maarten.simons@ped.kuleuven.be).