

## 4 Some Notes on the University as *Studium*

### A Place of Collective Public Study<sup>1</sup>

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A collectivity at peace in a world at war, our seminar is a suspended site . . . sustained by the world that surrounds it, but also resisting it . . . The seminar says *no* to the totality.

(Barthes, 1984/1986, p. 341)

It is one thing to complain or even mourn about the state of the university, but another to resist this present reality. As Isabelle Stengers (2005a) suggests, such resistance is not about debunking or criticizing, but rather about creating and reclaiming notions that can activate the possible and call for imaginative engagement. Following this suggestion, this chapter intends to be no more than an invitation to reconsider our understanding of the university, (re-)proposing the notion of *studium* as collective public study. The chapter starts from a curiosity for where the university takes place. All too often, we identify the university with the glorious model of the research university originating in Germany. The research university, including its self-understanding as an institution oriented toward a true idea, seems to remain the enlightening horizon for both defining what the university is and should be, and regretting what it no longer is in times of acceleration and capitalization. Perhaps we should consider the possibility of becoming enlightened by another way of looking at what the university is—namely, going back to its origins in the Middle Ages. Back then, the university was not just a sophisticated version of the cathedral school, nor an updated version of the ancient academy. Clearly, the *universitas studii* had a distinctive form. It was a concrete kind of gathering, association, or assembly (that is indeed the meaning of *universitas*) where, in the case of the *universitas studii*, knowledge—previously considered sacred and to be protected—was made public and hence became subject to study. The divine book became a secular book of study. From the very beginning, the university included a very specific form of collective study and was often initiated not by people of wisdom who wanted to share their knowledge, but by students themselves. Or, more precisely, it was established by those who wanted to become students. In that sense, the establishment of a *universitas studii* was rather revolutionary; in one way or

another, collective practices of study broke open existing knowledge circuits and related power hierarchies, and collective thinking created an openness or a future (Masschelein & Simons, 2013).

The *universitas studii* was disconnected from both the religious and civil authorities. It was initiated either by students (e.g., the University of Bologna) or by professors (e.g., the University of Paris). The university, thus, was started by scholars and disciples gathering *outside* the cathedral schools and monasteries, leaving also the scriptoria and the seclusion of the monastery cells to join in public spaces, halls, rooms (sometimes related to religious institutions, but also private houses, or simply public bridges or corners) and becoming “masters” or “professors” and “students”—that is, people who are engaged in “study.” As Emile Durkheim (1938) recalls, these associations articulated a general and intense movement of intellectual concern and thirst for understanding—“*une anxiété intellectuelle, une soif de savoir et de comprendre*” (p. 63). And it was the notion of *study* that was most used to indicate the “pedagogical life” that developed within the space of these associations.<sup>2</sup> Hence these associations were not just about practices of initiation or socialization into particular social, cultural, vocational, or religious groups, and they were not about individual learning activities. The universities were a new form of *scholé*, of *public collective study* (*studii* being the genitive singular of *studium*). And what these associations tried to protect (and later to license) was the right to public study and the right to teach all over Europe (*licentia ubique docendi*)—that is, the right to communicate (make public) or share what is studied outside the encompassing reigns of the church, the state, and the professional guilds (Ferruolo, 1985; Rüegg, 1992). For that reason—and from the very beginning—the *universitas studii* was something to be stabilized, tamed, or neutralized by church or state, or through their powerful alliance. But the gathering of *studium* and the student remained throughout history a possible threat, the mark of revolt, or at least the time and place to open up a future.

Since all study can be said to be collective to some extent in the sense that it is always a *meeting* or encounter with others (texts, things, ideas, etc.), it is important to note that in the proposal of the notion of *studium* as collective public study, “collective” also implies other students. Indeed, although it is doubtful<sup>3</sup> whether the school that Pythagoras founded in Croton (around 530 BC) can really be seen as the start of the university, as Friedrich Kittler (2013) writes, it can be stated that one of its features is also a crucial characteristic of the university: the fact that Pythagoras addressed not one, but many students at the same time (while confronting them with the question of inventing the question themselves).<sup>4</sup> Moreover, it is important not to confound “collective” with “community” (or “society”; see Latour, 1991/1993, p. 4) and to avoid approaching the collective practices starting from the primacy of individual study. It seems indeed that the recent involvement with the issue of study, at least implicitly, takes the individual student or studier in her/his individual relation with a “subject” (book, issue, matter, etc.) as

a point of departure and orientation (e.g., Lewis, 2013). We find the image of a student in her/his study room or wandering through the library, or the image of the master and apprentice in the workshop or studio (*atelier*). This seems to imply that study is in the end always a solitary endeavor. Collective study, then, would only be either a diminished or poor form, or one that supports what remains ultimately individual or personal study (thinking). *Studium*, however, is to be understood as constitutively collective: the making-collective and the collective-in-the-making of students (always including also some things) not as a possibility but as constitutive of that practice of *studium*, equally involving and making (a) public.

In *The Rise and Early Constitution of Universities with a Survey of Medieval Education* (1887), S. S. Laurie writes, “University schools . . . were open to all without restriction as studia publica or generalia, as opposed to more restricted ecclesiastical schools which were under a Rule” (p. 101, italics in original). In the universities,

the masters have no superiors, and are accountable only to the public opinion and the law of the state. There was thus not only free living; there was free teaching and free learning. Doubtless the teachers were at first ecclesiastics if not monks and bound by their vows; but they were living out of community, and were succeeded quickly by men who were not monks.

(p. 102)

He further states that “the growth of lay feeling” constituted one of the specific forces that differentiated university studies from ecclesiastic forms of higher education. Furthermore, Laurie indicates that the first scholars “simply aimed at critically expounding recognized authorities in the interest of social wants” (p. 109), and he refers to the start of the study of medicine in Salerno from 1060 onwards, where even women thought and where everything was “thought *publicly*,” until in 1137 when the first state examinations were instituted (pp. 114–115, italics in original), or to the role of Irnerius in the founding of Bologna and the study of civil law, which he describes as “the beginning of a *movement*” and whose “lectures were public and not in any way connected with a monastic institution” (p. 127, emphasis added).

Saint Jerome (Hieronymus) is patron saint of translators, librarians, and encyclopedists, but also one of the various patron saints of students and scholars (and of the modern artist). He is one of the most popular and iconic motives in the history of Western art. His credo of introspection, his renouncing of the world and embrace of the ascetic life, his solitary search through the desert to look for truth, the sublime isolation of a self-chosen exile—*Ecce homo (solo)*—has raised repeated and continuous interest throughout the ages. Antonella da Messina famously painted him as a student alone in his study room, pictured from the side while he seems to browse a book (*St-Jerome in His Study*, 1460, National Gallery London).

Saint Jerome's posture and condition are paradigmatic and can be found almost without exception in the countless representations of him (see other examples by Jan Van Eyck and Caravaggio). Although the concrete configurations are often different, of course, we almost consistently see him from the side. He is not looking at the painter/viewer; he is alone—at least in the sense that there are no other *accompanying students* apparent; he is in a more or less secluded space (sometimes having some landscape in the background or as horizon, as in the picture by Messina where his study seems to be located within a cathedral, but also opening up to a landscape), with his attention absorbed by some book (or document, text) and his regard/gaze directed toward the pages. Saint Jerome is presented today as the “man who meditated on the law of the Lord day and night” (Ps 1:2), engaged in what is called a *lectio divina* as distinguished from a *lectio scolastica* (The Monastery of Our Lady of the Cenacle, 2014; see also Illich, 1992).

The iconography of Saint Thomas Aquinas, professor in Paris in the earliest years of the university, is maybe not as consistent as that of Saint Jerome, but certainly different. He was called the *doctor communis* and patron saint of students and universities (besides others). For sure, we can find many pictures of him alone (as a human figure), but there are also countless pictures where he is painted within a public context including the context of a *disputatio*, one of the particular pedagogical forms of the early universities. His relationship to the book (present in most of the paintings) is particularly interesting. Indeed, we mostly do not see him absorbed or captivated by the book, but rather as offering an open book to an audience (to the painter/viewer) or having a book in his hand reading it out toward an audience (see, for example, paintings by Benozzo Gozzoli, Francisco Zurbaran, and Francesco Traini). And although parts of the iconography refer to the revelation, the act of presenting and reading or commenting in public (and to a public), the *lectio scolastica*, outside the cathedral schools and the secluded cell, is clearly not only about preaching/teaching or spreading the “truth” but also the attraction of free investigation (*libre examen*; Durkheim, 1938, p. 62), including a methodology based on doubt and possibilities, on the recognition of a contingent reality. It is about a public exposition that always entails risk and which we could consider a “public or collective experiment.”

According to Stengers (2000), commenting on Karl Popper, the strength and particularity of the experimental sciences, starting from the acknowledgment that every experimental fact is an artifact *made* by an “author,” is

that their colleagues are constrained to recognize that they cannot turn the quality of authors into an argument against them, that they cannot localize the flaw that would allow them to affirm that someone who claims to have “made nature speak” has in fact spoken in its place.

(p. 89, see also Ahrens, 2014)

Hence the artifact is to be seen as a risky but successful *meeting or encounter with* the (natural) phenomenon. Those who acknowledge this remain independent in the sense that they are no “slavish followers submitting themselves to the unanimity of a thought. They only admit that the experiment was successful in turning the phenomenon into a *witness* of the way it *has to be described*” (Stengers, 2003, p. 20; my translation and italics). And interestingly, Stengers shows how *scholastic* practice, for which Thomas Aquinas offers us the paradigm, is actually equally experimental in this sense. It is not so radically different from the experimental sciences, as one maybe expects, at least concerning one central element (although, there are of course important differences). The scholastic practice understood “author” and “authority” as notions that belong together: authors are those whose texts have authority; they can be commented upon, but not contradicted. And, as Stengers makes clear, this does not imply a slavish reading practice. On the contrary, in Aquinas’s *Summa Theologica* authors are requested to testify about a certain issue in the form of quotations that were taken out of context and, therefore, in a sense, profanated (their context being suspended). One had to try to get at an agreement between the authors while keeping (mostly) to the literal quotations without a discussion about the intentions of the author. To put it differently: the author has authority, but Thomas makes himself into a kind of judge and treats the author-authority in the status of a witness who is summoned. The author is publicly exposed. Thomas has to presuppose that the witness has spoken truth, and he will have to take into account this testimony, but it is he who actively decides how this testimony is taken into account. So both in the experimental sciences and the *disputatio* we can notice the invention of the means that allows us to see *the world as a summoned witness who is met or encountered (implying that the witness becomes “public company” and is summoned before a public)*, who gives certainty to the one who is speaking in her name. As Kant (1781/1998) states in the preface to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, an experiment is meant “to be instructed by nature not like a pupil, who has recited to him whatever the teacher wants to say, but like an appointed judge who compels witnesses to answer the questions he puts to them” (B xiii).

The form of speech in the lecture and the seminar is not to be seen as a philosophical argument. In “Philosophy and Politics” Hannah Arendt (1990), considering Plato’s (and Socrates’s) relation to the *polis* and the issue of opinion and truth, interestingly remarks,

As soon as the philosopher submitted his truth, the reflection of the eternal, to the polis, it became immediately an opinion among opinions. It lost its distinguishing quality, for there is no visible hallmark that marks off truth from opinion. It is as though the moment the eternal is *brought into the midst of men* it becomes *temporal*, so that the very discussion of it with others already threatens the existence of the realm in which the lovers of wisdom move.

(pp. 78–79, italics mine)

So it is clear that when the discussion becomes a discussion with others in the plural, some relativity enters the scene. Therefore, according to Arendt, Plato not only developed his concept of truth as opposite to opinion but also a “notion of a specifically philosophical form of speech, *dialegesthai*, as the opposite of persuasion and rhetoric” (p. 79). Aristotle opposes rhetoric (the political art of speech) to dialectic (the philosophical art)—which, as Arendt states, in a certain way can be performed *without* a real counterpart, but with one who is imagined or projected, with the dialectic being *the course of arguments* as such. Arendt continues by stating the “chief distinction between persuasion and dialectic is that the former addresses a multitude (*peithein ta pléthē*), whereas dialectic is possible only as dialogue between two” (p. 79). In this line, one could also suggest distinguishing rhetoric and dialectic from the “scholastic” or *pedagogical* art of speech. This art does something that at least to some extent and in some aspect might be close to what Socrates seemed to do *sometimes*: performing unprotected *thinking* and investigating as embodied and embedded activity *in public*, inviting others to join in a movement of thought. “What he actually did was to make *public*, in discourse, the thinking process . . .” (Arendt, 1992, p. 37, italics in original). According to Arendt, Socrates himself (in distinction to Plato) did not oppose the results of talking something through with somebody to *doxa*. *Doxa* is for him the expression of *what appears to me* (“δοκεῖ μοι,” *dokei moi*). This is not the probable as opposed to the one truth, but comprehended the world as *it opens to me*—not I think or I see, but *it* appears to me, “δοκεῖ μοι” (*dokei moi*) being an *impersonal* construction or maybe better a construction involving the third person (“it”). According to Arendt (1990),

It was not, therefore, subjective fantasy and arbitrariness, but also not something absolute and valid for all. The assumption was that the world opens up differently to every man, according to his position in it; and that the “sameness” of the world, its commonness (*koinon*, as the Greeks would say, common to all) or “objectivity” (as we would say from the subjective viewpoint of modern philosophy) resides in the fact that the same world opens up to everyone and that despite all differences between men and their positions in the world—and consequently their *doxai* (opinions)—“both you and I are human.”

(p. 80)

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Wilhelm von Humboldt (1810) states that higher education institutions are conceived as starting from problems that do not have answers yet, so they *remain* in the state of investigation and higher education is “working through problems.” He also writes,

Since the intellectual work within humanity flourishes only as cooperation, namely not merely in that one fills in what another lacks, but in that the successful work of one inspires the others, and that *the general, original power . . . becomes visible to all*, the internal organization of

these institutions must bring forth and sustain a collaboration that is uninterrupted, constantly self-renewing, but unforced and *without specific purpose*.

(italics mine)

Moreover, according to von Humboldt, the university was in a way at least as (if not more) important for the advancement of “science” as the scientific academy (the gathering of colleagues). University professors could contribute to the progress precisely through their public “teaching” activities (*Lehramt*). The free oral speech before an audience provokes a *movement of thought* that operates in/for itself (*selbsttätig*) when we publicly read it. Therefore, lecturing is not at all to be conceived as a break in the “leisure” of study, but rather precisely as its intensification:

If one declares the university as destined only for the teaching and dissemination of science, but the academy to its expansion, one clearly does the former an injustice. Surely, the sciences have been just as much— . . . —expanded by university professors as by the academy members, and these men have arrived at their advances in their field precisely through their teaching. For the free oral lecture before listeners (*der freie mündliche Vortrag vor Zuhörern*), among whom there is always a significant number of minds that think along for themselves, surely spurs on the person who has become used to *this kind of study* as much as the solitary leisure of the writer’s life or the loose association of an academic fellowship. The course of science is evidently quicker and more lively at a university, where it is continuously mulled over in a large number of strong, robust, and youthful minds. In fact, science cannot be truly lectured on as science without again conceiving of it as self-actuating each time, and it would be incomprehensible if people did not in fact in the process often come upon discoveries. Moreover, university teaching is not such an arduous business that it should be regarded as an interruption of the leisure for study rather than an aid to the same . . . . For that reason, one could surely entrust the expansion of the sciences to the universities alone, provided the latter are properly set up, and for that purpose dispense with the academies.

(von Humboldt, 1810)

In her *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*, Arendt (1992) states that, according to Kant, people are *dependent* on others not “merely in their needs and cares but in their highest faculty, the human mind, which will not function outside human society. ‘Company is indispensable for the thinker’” (p. 10). Let us note, in passing, that it is striking that in many fields of thought and investigations, many of the most important works consist in fact to a rather large extent of notes related to lectures or seminars (notes made by “scholars” to prepare them or by others who attended them, with books often

being based on courses). As von Humboldt already suggested, research is therefore not so much moved through the contact with “colleagues”<sup>5</sup> but rather through it being part of what could be called “pedagogical forms” as being the articulations of *studium* engaging a public of students in a collective movement of thought. Which, in the words of von Humboldt, as we have seen, is operating in and for itself in these forms. Inquiry and thinking not only require public exposition afterward (as written publication or “report”) but also precisely *in actu*, and this is what *happens* in the lectures and seminars (when they actually happen), which in return makes something happen to the public. Neither the writing of text nor its reading can simply replace the working of these pedagogical gatherings (think also about the gatherings around blackboards in mathematics and physics), which constitute forms that turn matter into public matter (bringing it *into company* as part of the collective that is always in the making) and gather a public of students and scholars—that is, of learners and researchers turned into public figures. This public does not precede the event of gathering, but emerges in it. This gathering articulates, therefore, a movement of de-identification—*we are no disciples, no civil servants, no clergymen, but students and scholars*. It is a movement also that disturbs, questions, or disrupts all kinds of stabilizations, fixations, or crystallizations (see also Readings [1996] reflections on the “scene of teaching” in the university, pp. 150–165). The movement has no real beginning and no end; it occurs and “takes place” and implies that students and scholars are moving in a time of suspension (i.e., not simply a time of accumulation or reproduction)—that is, the particular time of *studium* or of *scholé* (Masschelein & Simons, 2013).

This is not a plea to replace our modern idea of the university with the classic *universitas*. It is about changing the perspective when speaking about the university today by focusing on the collective and public practices of study (rather than on its functions and institutional context or on leading ideas such as *Bildung*). The focus here is on experimental investigations and thinking done collectively and in public (and not on research done in the seclusion of the individual office or behind closed laboratory doors—which, in fact, don’t really need the university). It means focusing on study within the assembly or *universitas* of students. These forms of university study are experiments in the sense that they always try to truly *meet with* the phenomenon (or text, or image). The phenomenon therefore has to be made present, which implies being in its company and, hence, the recognition that “we are not alone in the world” (Nathan, 2001), which might sound trivial but is in fact something “we” (“humans”) constantly seem to forget. Not being alone also means and implies that there are things, animals, plants, rivers, ghosts, causes, landscapes, ideas, etc., that are our companions in the strong sense that we have to negotiate ways of living together with them. University study includes the attempt to understand what this meeting actually means through description, explanation, and narration. It is not only about knowledge production or transfer but also about putting knowledge and what



one sees and thinks to the test. What happens is that a new world opens up for the students through study, allowing them to confront questions that address notions of that new world. Experimental here refers minimally to the assumption or belief that the outcome is not and cannot be defined in advance, and that the activity of study cannot be some planned, output-driven production process, but always implies a test or attempt. Entering the university and becoming a student, which also includes professors and researchers, means being open to an experimental life. This process is collective in the sense that students become witnesses to these attempts.

The test here does not refer to adequate methodology that guarantees validity and reliability by defining *in advance* what should and should not be taken into account. It means thinking and performing research so that it can be shared, questioned, and challenged without knowing the how and whom in advance. This in effect removes all sorts of *academic* protections (or at least questions these protections). Here the lecture, seminar, and science laboratory—when they actually occur as a collective, unprotected study—are considered examples of a collective experiment. But without a doubt, when we look at what goes on in university gatherings, unhindered by university ideas and ideals, other examples begin to emerge. What happens in these contemporary forms of the *universitas* is that research is returned to the students (and professors), which allows university studies to be truly experimental again instead of merely productive, collective instead of merely protected and privatized. However, these so-called teaching and study activities should not be seen as breaking or interrupting research productivity. To the contrary, as we can read in Humboldt, research in the presence of students is part of the intensification and publication process of research. Students should not be regarded merely as those who stand to be informed by the research (and publications), but should be actually involved from the very beginning. University study occurs in public forms of inquiry; students are involved *in actu*, when studies are performed publicly. It is about gatherings that constitute collective experiments, not about a closed system or machine that would be directed by its ends (outcomes) but a practice driven from behind by questions and issues. It is important to stress that the *universitas studii* always slows things down. Being confronted with knowledge that has been made public (through public presentation and discussion) implies that it is about looking for a way to relate to that knowledge, to think in the presence of a new world that is becoming increasingly real via that very knowledge. What we have is a world that can be named and discussed again so that it becomes a challenge to do justice to that world. Slowing down is very much a consequence of the interruption of the usual ways of thinking, knowing, and acting *within* the actual assembly of students.

The university should be reclaimed as “pedagogical form” or specific pedagogical life within the association of students. University study—*studium*—is not the facilitation and support of personalized learning trajectories (e.g., through so-called collaborative learning practices) or autonomous creative

research paths (e.g., through conferences and offline or online meetings with colleagues). The pedagogical forms are modes of encounter or gathering that are not based on a personalized understanding of subjectivity that would constitute them. They are, on the contrary, forms that are through and through technological (artificial) and that are making something happen that moves and forms those engaged as collective-in-the-making. *Studium* is precisely the moment where knowledge or science leaves the context of disciplined research, the context where we are confronted with the remarks of valuable colleagues and which, as Stengers recalls, always results in the conclusion that the public is not able to take part, but needs experts for rational solutions. *Studium*, on the contrary, is about addressing the public under an equalizing ethos.

*Studium* contributes to *creating a future*, not by producing learning outcomes or knowledge but by putting knowledge and science to the test of the public by gathering a thinking public around it. The future here is associated with a fundamental uncertainty: We don't know what the future will look like (we don't even know what we don't know). We don't know how and to what extent the rational thoughts, necessary abstractions, and possible new facts (sometimes a new nature) that our science and investigations produce will have consequences for our common life, and therefore we have to be vigilant about them. We should take care, *faire attention*. *Studium* is "to regard attentively," as one of the translations of the Latin sounds. "Pedagogical forms" are precisely also this—forms of taking care or regarding (of/for the common world, the future, the new generation)—and therefore, universities should be reclaimed as being first of all care taking, concerned, or regarding *associations* rather than production machines (of knowledge, learning outcomes, impact, innovation). Care can be translated as "paying attention" (*faire attention* in French) in all its different meanings (in English attention relates to "attend," with its different connotations of care—attend a patient, the lamps, a customer—and of being at—attend the church—of being present, of listening to, of going along, and of being prudent). And it is important to emphasize that it is about practices (architectures, rituals, technologies, figures): to "pay" attention (it has a price); in French the verb *faire* is "making." So the university as an association that *regards attentively* and *takes care* of the *common* world and develops practices and technologies that "make" attention (is/can be paid), that empower something of the world so that it makes us think, arrests our attention and moves us, can oblige us, and can make us regard it. This means that university study is not only about producing and distributing knowledge and science (and the methodology to produce it) but also is a very particular way to do so—a way that is arranged so that we can be vigilant about science, *faire attention*, *prendre soin*. That is, in a way in which doing and sharing science becomes a particular part of the *movement of thought* and its history, which as Foucault (2001) said "is the history of the way people begin to *take care of something*, of the way they *become anxious about this or that*" (p. 23, emphasis added).

Taking up some remarks from Stengers (2005b), we could say that pedagogical forms are particular

*modes of gathering*, the achievement of which is that it is no longer I, as subject, as meant to belong to nobody but myself, who thinks and feels . . . . What the gathering achieves could perhaps be compared to what physicists describe as putting “out of equilibrium,” *out of the position* which allows us to speak in terms of psychology, or habits, or stakes. [This is the position, so to say, of the student, also the professor as being a student, being out of position, floating.] Not that we forget about personal stakes but because the gathering makes present— . . . —something, a cause or Thing, *which transforms our relation* to the stakes that have been put up. And this effect is not that of “becoming aware” of something which others already knew, of understanding some truth beyond illusions—her effect is enacting a relation between belonging and becoming, producing belonging as experimentation.

(p. 195, italics mine)

Stengers refers to Whitehead, from whom we can learn to approach these kinds of exposing and transforming gatherings as “individual facts” that depend on the interplay of emerging thoughts and affects. These can only emerge because those who gather have learned how to give the issue around which they gather the power to effectively matter, to make them attached and make them think. These “individual facts” are difficult to define, but we should seek not to define them but to make them happen. If the work of university study indeed resides in its ability to invoke thinking by gathering people around an issue, the focus is thus on the art (the techniques), the artifacts, the architecture, and the habitat. How to turn a text, a virus, or a river into a cause for thinking? How to use screens so that they do not operate “as individually absorbing devices,” but enable the making of a public? (Decuyper, 2015, p. 193). It is about an *art of giving* the issue around which we gather the *power* to activate thinking, of giving it “a presence that transforms each protagonist’s relations with his or her knowledge, hopes, . . . and memories, and allows the whole to generate what each one would have been unable to produce separately” (Stengers, 2005c, p. 1002). To reclaim the university as *universitas studii* is about trying to develop or experiment with old and new techniques and practices in view of designing pedagogical forms that actually slow down, make us vigilant and attentive, and allow us to look for creating futures rather than define them in terms of “outcomes,” as if we are clear about our futures. Instead of an “innovation agenda” or a new “accountability” or “impact regime” for universities, what is needed in the confrontation with new digital technologies and actual learning policies may be a kind of research agenda concentrated around *poles of attention* (instead of poles of excellence) and including a “pedagogy” looking for

*experimentation, invention, and refinement of protocols and architectures for pedagogical forms that foster public collective study.*

As *studium*, we approach the university in the first place as a gathering or assembly that as a *collective-in-the-making* articulates a *movement of public thought* through unique *pedagogical forms* (such as the lecture, the seminar, the laboratory), which, as technical devices, have the *power* to make things public and give them the power to generate a thinking public. As Massumi (2015) clarifies, these technical devices (including texts, images, etc.) do not represent the world but refer to space-time conditions and to visual and auditory (sensual) conditions that allow us to study the world. They are therefore devices to make us think and be-in-form-ation, rather than devices to (re) produce and (re)cognize. It is not about personally owning thought or having knowledge or opinions, but about a movement of thought and about sustaining its unfolding. This, as Massumi adds, requires one to be true not to oneself, but to that movement (p. 69). The object of study is not an object of knowledge to be acquired by individual subjects, but an object that makes us think and that has to be searched for and to be “regarded.” University study is about experimental investigations and thinking done in public. Lectures, seminars, and laboratory exercises are thereby not to be seen as breaking or interrupting research or study activities but as part of their intensification and their publication. The public element is equally important on the side of the one who addresses as on the side of those (always in the plural!) who are addressed and are not addressed “personally” (or in a personalized way—as within the “pastoral” tradition) but *everyone* as anyone and everybody else; they are addressed publicly and collectively. The reaffirmation and reinvention of the *universitas studii* and the reclaiming of the notion of *studium* could offer a future to the university because it does not orient the university to a personal(ized) ideal (e.g., *Bildung*) or an empty signifier (“excellence”) but points to the importance of its pedagogical forms as working through problems in a way that takes care of a shared future and regards or does justice to a shared world.

## Notes

- 1 This chapter is highly indebted to my thinking together with Maarten Simons. Parts have been elaborated and reworked and are included in Masschelein, J. (forthcoming, 2017), *Addressing Societal Challenges: Making University Today*.
- 2 “On disait *Universitas magistrorum et scholarum*, ou bien encore *Universitas studii*; le mot *Studium* était, en effet, le plus employé pour indiquer la vie pédagogique qui se développait au sein de la corporation” (Durkheim, 1938, p. 75).
- 3 It is probably more accurate to see it as one of the main starting points of Plato’s academy, which, as Peter Sloterdijk (2008) suggests, is not only based on Plato’s acquaintance with Socrates but also, and importantly, on his visit to the Pythagoreans in Crotone. However, as Durkheim (1938) stated, the university is not the academy, but as it was invented in the twelfth century, it constituted a totally new kind of educational arrangement—a type of *school* that was unknown before (p. 60).

- 4 “Dort stellt Pythagoras nicht einem Schüler, sondern vielen Schülern (das ist ja das Wesen der Universität) die Frage: Erfinde die Frage selber.” (Kittler, 2013, p. 356).
- 5 Florelle D’Hoest (see elsewhere in this volume) reminded me of these words of Deleuze (1990): “*Les cours ont été toute une partie de ma vie, je les ai faits avec passion. Ce n’est pas du tout comme des conférences, parce qu’ils impliquent une longue durée, et un public relativement constant, quelquefois sur plusieurs années. C’est comme un laboratoire de recherches: on fait cours sur ce qu’on cherche et pas sur ce qu’on sait*” (p. 190).

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