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THE POLITICS OF THE UNIVERSITY¹

Movements of (de-)Identification and the Invention of Public Pedagogic Forms

Our starting thesis is that the university is not the name of an institution. It is the name of a particular *universitas*, that is, an association of scholars and students, which means precisely of people who are not members (not yet, or no longer, members) of a professional, civic, religious, or economic institution, or organization (e.g. guild, religious order, civil service, or administration), people who do not gather around some defined production aim or under some defined rule, but around some “thing”. As we will elaborate later, this association articulates, therefore, a movement of de-identification – *we are no disciples, no pupils, no apprentices, no civil servants, no clergymen, no trainees, no appointed teachers, but students and scholars*. It has an essentially experimental dimension. Experimental in the sense that words, objects, practices, knowledge are disconnected from their sacred and/or regular usage (in the sense of being under a “rule” or “law”) and from all sorts of appropriations, and start provoking thinking, *in public and “in the presence” of these things (words, objects, practices, knowledge) which become common things, or are communized*. The university is the name for the association where *public thinking* takes place, and, as such, it names a movement of de-identification which is at once a movement of communization and of profanation or de-appropriation. As Agamben puts it: “[p]ure, profane, freed from sacred names is that thing that is set free for the common use by people” (Agamben 2005, p. 96). Something becomes de-appropriated or disconnected from particular interests (of social groups, professions, markets, and states), and from particular usages (in the sphere of production and reproduction, or in the sphere of religious practices). This movement of de-identification and profanation is a dangerous movement, for in its attempt to make public thinking possible it disturbs, questions, or disrupts all kinds of stabilizations, fixations, or crystallizations (such as “nature”, “human reason”, “culture”, “the discipline”). A movement has no real beginning and no end; it has no specific cause nor a particular aim. It occurs and “takes/finds place”. It happens in the present, and articulates that present as a gap in between past and future, to use the words of Hannah Arendt, in between what is possible and what is actual (Arendt 1961). This means that students and scholars move in a time of suspension (not of accumulation or re-production), that is the particular time of study and thought or of *scholé* (as “free time” or

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"unproductive time"). The university, as the site of that public movement of de-identification, communization, profanation, and suspension, is potentially dangerous for all those who have particular interests, and who are attached to crystals and everything else that suppresses public thinking in order to safeguard a sustained line between past and future, and between the possible and the actual. Therefore, because of that fear, movements or associations where public thinking takes place are tamed and neutralized. There are overt, straightforward strategies for taming the university: politics (the state) or religion (the church). But there are also less overt attempts to tame the university: granting it the status of an institution (oriented towards an idea, a common future, a glorious past, humanity) is one attempt; creating sacred faculties and celebrating its scientific methodology or mobilizing its inhabitants to produce excellence are other attempts. There is a rich university history, but, as is often the case, it is the history of the victors, of those who manage to tame the disruptive or suspending movement of public thinking. The history of the university as movement is yet to be told.

Clearly, this history would not be the common history of the university, its official inauguration and its timely reforms. This common history of the university is all too often the history of institutionalization in view of strengthening its own self-understanding: the royal history of scholastic philosophy, the victorious history of university faculties, the national history of academic freedom, the progressive history of modern science, the social history of academic service, and the economic history of excellent universities. Instead of focusing on experimental movements and inventions, on margins and attempts which seem to constitute the university from its origins, these histories, in their persist concern to name and celebrate what is sacred, address what has crystallized (using capitals): Philosophy, Faculty, Freedom, Science, Service, and Excellence. The history of experimentation and invention we have in mind would be the history "before", or rather beyond, any such sacred crystallization¹. This history could start, we wish to suggest, from the thesis that what is unique about the university is not one of her institutional characteristics (e.g. being a combination of research, teaching, and service in a single institution, or being oriented towards an idea, e.g., the idea of *Bildung*), but her specific *public pedagogic forms*, which articulate the movement of public study and public thought, which is always, at once, as we suggested above, a movement of de-identification and profanation. In fact, the institutional history of the university actually reads as a story on the de-formation of the university's public form. A public, pedagogic form where something is for common use is indeed dangerous or disruptive for all those who seek to protect specific "private" interests. The sacred history could be regarded as part of the neutralization or taming of the university, that is, attempts to safeguard particular interests and identities, a specific order, and common usages, by looking for institutional features and sacred names. Perhaps today, especially today when facing privatization at every level, we think it is important to tell a short counter-history as a morphology of those experimental movements and inventions aimed at shaping a public, pedagogic form. Perhaps this history prepares for experimentation

and (re-)invention in the present condition. Our concern, thus, is not that of a historian; instead, we draw some sketches for a history of the present, and in order to "live the present otherwise" (Foucault, 1984, p. 790).

THE PROFANATION OF THE BOOK

Universities have been called the most important legacy that the Middle Ages has offered us. Their origin lies in a particular gathering which included a particular pedagogical form. As a particular kind of study and teaching, the university ensured a particular kind of life detached from the immediate demands of the economic and social world, and from the orders of the cathedral schools and monasteries out of which they originated (Verger, 1992; Illich, 1991). The model of this gathering was the medieval association called *universitas*. The term was used to indicate all kinds of associations and, therefore, needed to be specified: the *universitas magistrorum et scholarium* or the *universitas studii*. It is crucial to note that it was not an association of teachers and pupils or masters and apprentices (*operae*), but of masters (later becoming *professors*) and *students*. The first movement of de-identification, thus, can be summarized in the declaration: *We are no pupils, disciples, apprentices, but students*. This declaration involves a de-identification with practices of initiation or preparation to become part of particular social, cultural, vocational, or religious groups. What is affirmed is that time for study is "free time" (*scholé*), that is, time where social, religious or economic concerns are suspended and free to get involved with the text. The university, then, was a new form of *scholé*, of *public study* (outside the seclusion of the monastery cell), and its inhabitants were masters and/or students, for whom the search for truth and knowledge was not a private calling, but a public activity. Its core was a particular form of public lecture that was bound to the birth of the "book-text", which no longer appeared as the symbol of a cosmic and divine reality, but as the materialization of abstractions and concepts, that is, of thoughts (Illich, 1992). A major invention of the medieval university is the written text as optical object (and therefore readable – instead of audible – in the sense we are used to today³). The book-text, indeed, is available for *public study*, and makes *public study* actually possible. The invention of the readable text allows words to become disconnected from a particular usage by a particular group, and, in that sense, they are no longer "sacred". This book-text asks for interpretation and commentary and is no longer a medium of immediate reception. The public lecture was a *collegium*, a reading together and the gathering of a thinking public around a common text. The available book-text includes a profanation, that is, an availability for public use. The public gathered around the text is not just an audience (of listeners), but a reading public. Claiming "We are students", therefore, comes down to saying: we are (independent) readers. This public reading did not require obedience, but a critical-interpreting attitude related to an *amor veritatis* and *amor sciendi* (Verger, 1992). It had no direct use for any profession, but led to the right (and sometimes the duty) to lecture publicly at all European universities (*licentia ubique docendi*).

We cannot go into the fortunes of this medieval invention, and it is clear that right from the beginning it went with all kind of strategies to tame its public form (e.g. by turning the association into a kind of professional guild and by “disciplining” the knowledge and the words, binding them to new rules and “faculties”), and it was bound to a persistent experience of living according to a divine order and its moral law. Obviously, the attempts to neutralize this act of profanation and to tame the perceived religious, social and political dangers of written/readable texts are numerous, but it is a crucial movement in inventing a public, pedagogic form. The words are set free, but they are immediately tamed by the fact that they are bound to new rules and to disciplined usages.

THE PROFANATION OF REASON

The modern university, we contend, originates as the profanation of reason: reason is no longer subjugated to the state or the church, but becomes autonomous. The learned person (*der Gelehrte*) affirms: I am not a civil servant, no clergymen or appointed teacher, but a *scholar*. This movement articulates an attempt to invent a public, pedagogic form beyond the nation state and its civic and juridical framing of human affairs. What is claimed for – as Immanuel Kant articulates very strongly – is a public sphere, where reasoning is a goal in itself and, in view of which, the public sphere that the state claims for itself is only a place for the private use of reason and obedience. What is at stake in this movement is a de-identification with the private use of reason and all sorts of domestication of reason, but at the same time an affirmation of the public use of reason. In his famous essay “What is Enlightenment?” Kant relates the Enlightenment to freedom in “the most innocuous form of all – freedom to make public use of one’s reason in all matters” (Kant 1784/1977, p. 55). Kant continues by clarifying that he means by the public use of one’s own reason, the “use which anyone may make of it as a *man of learning (ein Gelehrter)* addressing the entire *reading public*” (ibid., p. 55). As man of learning, one is a world citizen, who, as Kant says, is not *instructing* pupils, but who “publicly voices his thoughts” and “imparts them to the public” (ibid., 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)” and speaks “in his own person” (ibid., p. 57). Indeed, learned individuals put “before the public their thoughts,” with “no fear of phantoms” (ibid., p. 59). And, as Kant states, *anyone* can be this figure of the scholar, a figure which is characterized by an equalizing ethos, addressing the other under the assumption of equality – that is, the profanation of reason as something everybody can use when not lazy or faint-hearted – and speaking in her own name, so demonstrating an ethos to risk oneself. This is at once an *experimental ethos*, because the scholar exposes herself to the limits (of the institutions of the state and the church) and transforms the issue one is speaking about into a public issue, that is, one makes it public.

However, this publicly voicing of one’s thoughts is limited. As Kant states, as a scholar one addresses a *reading public*. At this point – and this applies to Kant

himself – the public use of reason is tamed by outlining the limits within which the correct use of reason should stay. Kant now starts to address his readers as “judges” (i.e., people who are submitting themselves to a tribunal, in this case, the tribunal of reason). Kant’s attempt to define the “right” use of reason is about the taming of the public use of reason and the neutralization of the university’s public, pedagogic form.

Moreover, other forms of taming arise: the claim that reason (1) has to find its ground in philosophy as the general, foundational “science”; the claim that reason (2) has to be cultivated through the study of national culture and language; and the claim that (3) there is a distinction between norms and facts. When speaking of the modern university, most often reference is made to the German model, which von Humboldt instituted at the University of Berlin, which was widely copied (as well as modified) all over the world, and which still served as a leading model for the post-war expansion of tertiary education in the west. This modern university became in fact an “institution” with the nation state and national culture as its main point of reference (and constituting people as citizens of a nation state) (Readings 1996). What is at stake in this university is the study of culture and language. Culture here is the sum of knowledge that is studied (in research), as well as the cultivation and development of one’s character as a result of that study (in teaching and learning). Hence, the German “research” university is at the same time an institution for *Bildung* or the general edification of “cultivated *subjects*”. Its definition was, in essence, a cultural and non-utilitarian one. Therefore, the modern university (at least in the German tradition) did not aim to train the administrators (functionaries) of the state, but to educate the (enlightened) citizens or “subjects” of a state with its own language and culture. In this context the humanities played a central role in the cultivation of reason, which in itself can be seen as an attempt to tame (discipline and shape) the public use of that reason. “University of reason” or “university of culture” are the sacred names of the related processes of crystallization (Latour 2004).

THE PROFANATION OF CULTURE AND OF TIME

The post-modern university originates from the third movement that claims: *This institution is not the university and we are no generation (no modern subject), but students*. These claims echo the de-identification in 1968 with forms of authority based on culture (and all other forms of paternalism) and with a rigid nation-based and bureaucratically organized academic system. Claiming that the *institution* is not the university, that what it is to be student should not be equated with the object of the institutionalized pedagogy of enlightenment, means that study and teaching content are disconnected from the sacred, modern project of cultivation. It is claiming: *we are no “subjects” of an authoritative cultural and national tradition, we are autonomous subjects, we are autonomous readers*, reading being to construct, to imagine and to improvise our own life and our own world (implying a profanation of the national culture and language, which contributed also in creating the conditions for the

capitalization and economization of knowledge in the universities from the 1970s onwards). Being a student is being part of a movement, and hence the inauguration of a present moment and situation between past and future. The affirmation of being a student becomes at once the affirmation of a revolutionary event and of an enthusiasm that transcends history. The students refuse the university of reason and (national) culture. They refuse either to conceive of themselves as being an immature generation inserted in a tradition, or to become intellectuals as new gatekeepers of culture who speak on behalf of all those who cannot speak for themselves. The affirmation of being a student, here, is the de-identification both with being an immature, powerless child or a mature, authoritative adult. As Readings writes, what matters is “that the narrative of *Bildung* – of simple passage from infancy to adulthood, from dependency to emancipation (the Kantian narrative of enlightenment that characterizes the knowledge process itself in modernity) – has been rejected by the students in the name of an uncertainty” (Readings, 1996, p. 147). What is broken down is the “arrow of time” (pointing to the enlightened future) that was institutionalized in the “university of reason” or the “university of culture” (Latour 2004). What is interrupted is any teleological understanding of being a student under the banner of cultivation or reason. And all other “social positions” for that matter. The public sphere enters the university, the power of collective deliberation and imagination is unleashed, and both past and future are reframed from within that powerful public sphere.

Professors can no longer profess in the name of (their) culture or in the name of the future their knowledge holds for the new generation. And students no longer carry the stamp of the “arrow of time” that the modern university of reason or culture imprinted them with, and they no longer reach for a detached social and political position as intellectual. Being a student is being marked with at once an enthusiasm and an openness and uncertainty. What is invented is a new public, pedagogic form to gather students and professors, and to organize and “live” the university. The involved profanation of culture and institutions opens up a form for students and professors to imagine collectively the future (and past), and to seek time and space for study, for research, for teaching, for public discussion inside or outside the dismantled institutions. Students and professors do not *have* specific interests, but as part of a public sphere they *are* interested and attached to a world beyond national culture, rigid bureaucracy, and institutional logic. Clearly and very quickly, revolutionary enthusiasm is again canalized, movements are institutionalized, student leaders turn out to be candidate politicians (for institutionalized parties), and public attachment becomes reframed in the logic of “service for society”. Moreover, the humanities have contributed to the taming by starting to show that no “autonomous reading” is actually possible. They emphasize context, history, and social background. They “relate” and “de-construct” (they contextualize, historicize, sociologize, situate, demystify, etc.; see e.g., Rancière 2005). Yet, the profanation of the sacred divide between generations, the sacred character of what should be transmitted (knowledge and culture) and the sacred “arrow of time” (time having a defined *telos*, being “progress”) has inaugurated attempts to shape a public, pedagogic form.

PUBLIC PEDAGOGIC FORMS

Before turning to the last movement of de-identification and profanation that we will indicate, in order to offer a last element of our short counter-history of the university, we wish to pause a moment to summarize some important common features of the movement of the university in its various appearances. Indeed, as we have briefly tried to elaborate, notwithstanding the endless variety of attempts for taming, from its invention as *universitas magistrorum et scholarium* (or *universitas studii*) in the Middle Ages onwards, the university includes, as its core, the assembly of students and scholars involved in public study, preoccupied with the search for truth, and partaking in the public communication of truth. These assemblies articulate in particular pedagogic forms which are public forms. These are forms *sui generis*, where a matter is turned into public matter (into a “thing”, or “world”), where a matter is given the power to call a thinking public into being. These are forms that gather together a public of students and professors, that is, of learners and academics turned into public figures. These forms, in fact, materialize the gap between past and future, making public the experimental movement of thought (rather than the re-production of knowledge) and making “things” speak (rather than making them known). They are forms of public thought and public experiments, and they are strictly bound to the presence of the figures of the student and the scholar/professor. The paradigmatic (not exclusive) figures of this pedagogic form are the public lecture⁴ and the seminar.

The public lecture as a public pedagogic form, given by a professor to a more or less large audience of students, is a way to give things the power to make us think, to turn a matter into a matter of concern or a public matter. Giving a public lecture actually turns the figure of the academic into the public figure of the professor. This figure, contrary to conventional wisdom, does not pre-exist the event of the lecture itself. This figure is not a researcher presenting matters of fact and how knowledge about these facts was produced. The professor can be rather described as a concerned truth-teller, a professor “speaks” in her own name, out of love for the truth and for the world, and not out of the submission to a tribunal, be it the tribunal of reason or of the academic disciplines. She displays an experimental ethos of public reasoning that also brings into play these disciplines itself and what they entail as judgments. Professing gives objects the power to make us slow down and stand still and to be with, next to, near to, close to, in touch with, and in the company of those objects that are starting to concern us. In this sense, the professor adds something and does not only offer knowledge; in a way she brings to life and offers a voice to what is not simply speaking out of and for itself. She is making heard things/persons in such a way that we reconsider how we think and relate to them. As for the professor, so also for the students as audience: it does not pre-exist the event, and therefore you could say that the lecture (when it works) makes the audience “happen” (Readings, 1996). People become an audience of students because they are slowed down by a provocation to think, that is, to become attached to the issue at hand, and to question it and to be questioned by it (Stengers, 2005). 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 (cf. Rancière 2008).

The second paradigmatic figure of the public pedagogic form that constitutes the university is the seminar. Similar to the lecture, the seminar is a public gathering. But the number of students is usually much fewer, the arrangement of the room is different, as is the relation between students (who are positioned differently). Roland Barthes (1984) calls the seminar "a pure form of floating", a form that does not destroy anything but that dis-orientates the "law". It traces a space of floating that constantly disrupts, or re- or dis-orientates, the three spaces that are present: the institutional one (fixing the frequency, schedule, location, syllabus); the space of teaching (indicating a transfer between the director of the seminar and the audience) which becomes a horizontal relation between students; and the space of inscription (inscribing the way of gathering). The seminar produces differences: slowly the originality or singularity of the bodies taken one for one appears, the reproduction of roles and affirmations of discourses is broken, and destinations and objectives are "undone". What happens at that point is that something – a text for instance – becomes a matter of interest. In putting a text on the table, discussing the text on an equal basis – institutional positions and personal opinions being suspended – the text becomes real, it turns into some-thing to talk about, a thing to refer to, something that provokes thinking and discussion. The magic of the seminar exactly disappears at the moment that the text no longer is a something, and thinking in public becomes a ritual of exchanging personal opinions and impressions. According to Barthes, it stops being a collective experiment where something is at stake, and turns into a pathetic therapeutic session.

However, today, the challenges for the university as public pedagogic form, as form of public thought, might be more invasive and pervasive than is suggested by Barthes, which brings us to the last movement.

THE PROFANATION OF PRODUCTION AND COMMUNICATION

As we have stated above, from the 1970s onwards we can observe processes of the increasing capitalization and economization of knowledge in the universities. However, these processes affecting the university reflect a more general transformation of our lives into businesses: enterprises that are actually never closed. Even when on vacation, or while sleeping and eating, we are busy producing energy – and as everything else, these have become issues of calculation, of optimal balance. It seems as if life itself has become an enterprise, and we have become entrepreneurial selves and entrepreneurs of the self. Who we are – as an employee, a husband or wife, a friend, a student, a teacher – should now be regarded as the result of a production process that seeks to meet one's own needs or the needs of others. The self, then, is a product, the result of a productive use of human and other resources. As entrepreneurs – that is, the artists of capitalist societies – we now embrace the virtues of flexibility, innovation, and productive creativity. One of the

most valuable production forces of this entrepreneurial self is her learning force; a force that produces new competencies, that adds value to the self, and fuels the accumulation of one's human capital. For this entrepreneurial self, the present is the possible *productive* gap in between past and future – the past being the available resources and the future the estimated returns. For the entrepreneurial self, the past and future are always virtually present in a calculative frame. Time here is productive time, or more precisely, time of investment, that is, a permanent calculation in view of future returns and useful resources. For the entrepreneurial student, the activity of studying – or more precisely, learning as the accumulation of human capital or building credits – is now an act of investment, thinking of rates of return. Therefore, any pedagogy, or any instruction today, comes very close to the provision of incentives – it is through incentives that students become benevolent, and teachers have the impression they still have something to say. For entrepreneurial selves, and certainly students and teachers, time thus is always occupied – a condition articulated today very clearly in the notions of "permanent" or "permanence". Time for the entrepreneurial self is a resource, or even a product, and hence it is something that can and should be managed. Time management becomes indispensable in an age of permanency. It is the managerial art of setting new priorities by calculating possible gains and estimating the needs. That is also what the hidden curriculum of the current organization of education, which stresses individual learning trajectories, modules, choice, and permanent/formative (portfolio) assessment, teaches young people: time is not something you receive, nor something that is given, but a resource that can and should be managed, or something you produce in setting priorities. In that sense, indeed, there is no time, and we have no time. And probably, the same holds true for places and for things.

Entrepreneurial selves do not on occasion enter market places, but actually inhabit markets; the market is their home. Entrepreneurship is the ethos of the market place, and it includes the extraordinary imaginary force to see all outside as a possible new market. Perhaps the current use of the notions "global" or "globalized" articulates that actually there are no places, or that all places are marketized, occupied. A sensitiveness for niches and productive innovation is indispensable in a *globalized world*. And hence students, or teachers – in their entrepreneurial brilliance – are not just producers, but at the same time global marketers; there is no production of new competencies, no construction of identities without market studies, and without marketing the produced self. Entrepreneurship means the self is to be produced, advertized and sold. In other words, employability becomes the challenge in a globalized world, and that is exactly what transformed educational institutions teach young people: get used to managing the ongoing capitalization and marketization of your life. Related to this specific spatial and temporal mindset, every-thing is either a resource or a product, that is, the input or output of a production process. Even more, for the entrepreneur, each product is a new resource, and a possible new input – she understands the art of sampling, recycling, pop-art. Perhaps students today, inhabiting a globalized world, are trained in these arts; they have to be. For

them, in their entrepreneurial imagination, what is available is a resource, and a resource is available. In fact: it is all a *matter of resources*.

Regarding the processes of capitalization and marketization, which transform the time of study into productive time or time of investment, and the commons into resources, we should perhaps refer to a new movement of collective de-identification which is signaled by the slogan of protesting students in Germany: *We are no human capital!*¹⁵ In today's discourses on the university, the term "students" has been replaced by that of "learners" and these have become synonymous with the resources to be exploited, the talents to be mobilized, the object of investment, the guarantee of a country's competitiveness, or, when addressing the possible disobedient component of human capital, the customers to be seduced. Perhaps the de-identification of protesting students should at once be regarded as an affirmation: *we are no human capital, we are no learners, we are students*. And somewhere perhaps we hear a related concern: *we are no entrepreneurs, no knowledge producers, no knowledge transmitters, no innovators, we are professors*. Maybe this articulates indeed a de-identification with the logic of production, the ethos of calculation, choice, and flexibility, and the profanation of the time of investment. It could be regarded as an attempt to break through one's personalized circle of learning or production, which aims at the endless accumulation of credits or research output. What is at stake is the profanation of the (productive) *time* of knowledge production, transmission, and innovation, and the (competitive) *space* of learning environments and human capital circulation and mobilization.

But perhaps, we should acknowledge also another profanation. Despite previous movements of profanation, and despite massification and democratization, the academic community has continued to address its public as a public of *readers*, people with erudition, carriers and representatives of culture or reason. Perhaps today, we are witnessing a profanation of thinking and communication; that is, thinking and speaking become disconnected from cultures, languages, and their spatio-temporal fixations. Just as the movement of the *universitas* was made possible by the invention of the book-text, the invention and appearance of the "screen-text" (in the late 1970s and early 1980s) which changes the text from a pure optical "thing", into a (virtual) interface, has made it possible for the text to become a medium not of disciplining or cultivation, but of communication and communization. To say "We are students" means now: we are communicators and communizers. Indeed, what else does the so-called consumer, network, online student – often criticized or ridiculed by academics who embrace tradition and the idea of cultivation and reason – articulate other than that everyone is able to think, to speak, or to communicate. Of course, this democracy in thought and communication – and the clear message *you, academics, do not have to teach us to think, to speak, to communicate* – could be perceived by the fearful as undermining the very foundations of the university. This message is particularly frightening for those academics who (still) embrace the idea that thinking and communication cannot be disconnected from culture and language, and that writing and reading books are the obligatory passage points to

enter the kingdom of truth. Such a message is specifically a harsh one for those post-modern academics – the last inhabitants of the university of reason or culture – who want to *explain* exactly that, and how we are all captured by language, embedded within cultures, trapped within an endless series of representations and sentenced to an endless construction and reconstruction of reality. Isn't the message here: *stop thinking about the (im)possibility of thinking, stop talking about the (im)possibility of communication, but start thinking and talking about something*. However, once more (part of) the humanities seems to be trying to tame this communication and communization by attempting to refer the words and the things again to their own "proper" meaning, in the context of identity-politics or diversity discourses (once again, they are indicating appropriations). After the spatial turn, that is, the shift from modernization to globalization, (part of) the humanities seek to shape the destiny of humanity again. In the global environment, the concern is no longer about orientation but about position. The discourses concerning identity and diversity articulate this concern. The current focus on cosmopolitanism, that is, the global citizen, could be regarded as the ultimate expression thereof. The global citizen is not Kant's world citizen. The world citizen is the one who transgresses (national) culture and local knowledge and embraces universal reason (she is a traveler in time), while the global citizen transgresses local politics of identity and diversity and incorporates mutual understanding (she is a traveler in space). But both are a tamed version of humanity, not representing humanity on the move without destiny, but representing humanity on a journey to assume, in one way or another, the idea of coming home. This is again a tamed version of the humanities, organized as travel agencies, and, hence, enabling people to leave their homes and know the world, but at the same time concerned with bringing them back home. However, to assume a radical democracy in thought and communication comes down to assuming everyone is able to communicate and think, and consequently experiencing thinking and speaking, thought and language as "pure means" without end or destination, as means to be collectively involved with a matter of concern (Agamben, 2000). Indeed, maybe this profanation of communication inaugurates the invention of new pedagogic forms (cfr., Simons et al, 2011), including also a profanation of production. These forms are to be welcomed, as is any site where students and professors are interested in something and where that thing becomes an issue that gathers a thinking public.

OUR CONCERN: *STUDIA PAEDAGOGICA*

Perhaps today, we should try to find out what helps to make academics become professors (again) and learners become students. We should think again about how to turn a text, a virus, or a river into a cause for thinking. How to design the scene in such a way that thinking proceeds in the presence of the issue or thing? How to conceive of 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 students? How to avoid a lecture or a seminar becoming merely a performance or spectacle, and

to make sure that it remains a public act of truth telling? How to construct a certain closeness or nearness (both spatially and temporally), in order to be able to think “in the presence of”? How to get time and space to become concerned and engaged in collective study? How to use new information and communication technologies to provoke public thinking and collective study and to invent new pedagogic forms? These questions on the “architecture and didactics of the public university” are a major concern for any *studia paedagogica*, but ones which we cannot discuss in further detail here. The counter-history we have offered has constituted an attempt to articulate the unique movement and the public form of the university. As such, we hope it functions as well as an attempt to transform the current gathering around the university itself from a discussion concerning matters of performance (output, indicators, rankings), needs (assessments, satisfaction rates, responsiveness), and resources (available human capital, financial resources), into a gathering around a matter of public concern. Perhaps this counter-history can invite experimentation and (re-)invention of the university as public pedagogic form in the present condition.

NOTES

- ¹ This article integrates ideas that are developed in other texts: Masschelein & Simons (2010, 2011), Simons (2011).
- ² For elements of such a history and some more extensive elaboration see: Masschelein, J. & M. Simons (2010).
- ³ F. Kittler (1987, 2004) has elaborated the idea that the university is an institution for pursuing, processing, storing, (re-)producing, and disseminating ‘knowledge’ that was strongly tied to the invention of the printed book (where students are no longer cheap copy-machines, but can really ‘read’) as the medium through and in which this was possible. Kittler analyses the university primarily as a media system and claims that today through the computer there is a new medium, which allows for a unification of the humanities and natural sciences. Although Kittler explicitly goes into the practice of lecturing and giving seminars, he mainly conceives of these as knowledge-related practices from the viewpoint of ‘media’ (media form the infrastructural basis or quasi-transcendental condition for experience and understanding). We contend, however, that lecturing and giving seminars are (not only media systems or discourse networks but) particular pedagogic forms, which are grammaticalized in particular spatial and temporal architectures (e.g. the lecture hall, the seminar room) and in fact materialize and make public the movement of thought (rather than the production of knowledge).
- ⁴ For the public lecture see more extensively: Masschelein, J. & Simons, M. (2011).
- ⁵ See: http://www.linksruck.de/artikel_421.html

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