

So, I can say: everything's right, and can stay as it was – thanks for it! And the – as I said, very problematic – issue of “innocence” still looks good and presents itself as good in our world trained and instructed for the con-figuration and representation of “images”, in which only the picture, the *image* is what counts, and how it “looks like”. In conclusion: “how well we are looking indeed in and through them!”

Translated by Emese G. Czintos

Testimonies from the History of University and Philosophy

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The volume *Philosophie und Gestalt der Europäischen Universität* (418 pages, ISBN: 978-3-7728-2430-2) was published by the Frommann-Holzboog Publishing House in 2008 as the 18th volume of the Schellingiana series. The book contains papers by its editors, István M. Fehér and Peter L. Oesterreich, as well as sixteen other valuable studies by Jörg Jantzen, Walter Rüegg, Wilhelm Vossenkuhl, Ernő Kulcsár-Szabó, Mihály Vajda, Günter Zöller, Walter E. Ehrhardt, Jean Grondin, Paul Ziche, István M. Fehér, Damir Barbarić, Ágnes Heller, Reinhard Mehring, Rainer Nicolaysen, Tamás Tóth and Béla Pokol. In this presentation I am not able to give a detailed description on each writing; I would rather focus on those studies, ideas, which are significant and important from the point of view of current university education.

The main subject of the volume according to its title is the history of the university as an institution, the structural changes it underwent in the different ages, university policies, and the programmatic writings of the thinkers clustering round the educational institutions, and the current university-model. Beyond the historical survey I also consider it important to emphasize that the papers in the volume presuppose an organic relationship between the institution, self-understanding, and self-definition of the university as well as philosophical thinking. The expression “the philosophy of the European university” refers to two things: firstly, to the fact that philosophy has considered its task to think about the aspect, aims, and methods of teaching and education since Plato, and, beginning with the Middle Ages, of the university as well. Secondly, it refers to the experience that the changes of paradigm which took place in the history of philosophical thinking – at least until the middle of the 20th century changed the institution of the university as well. Philosophy had a much more significant role in university education and scientific life than nowadays, and this holds true not only in the field of humanities, but also in the relationship between philosophy

and medicine, mathematics, chemistry, natural science, law. This idea is illustrated in the volume by several studies.

First, I should like to mention Mihály Vajda's study which presents Immanuel Kant's writing *Der Streit der Fakultäten*, the title of which it bears. Considering the structure of faculties, Kant questioned the hierarchical differentiation between the three "highest" faculties – theology, law, and medicine – and philosophy, and tried to establish the latter, the science of pure and practical reason, as the basis of the other three. Because Kant thought that the truths of reason are the only way to know the truth, and because the possibilities of cognition and science, as well as the nature of reason are discussed by philosophy, this must be the basis of all scientific cognition. Mihály Vajda observes that Kant had to defend philosophy and the legislation of reason against the "useful" sciences, the sciences taught within the mentioned three "highest" faculties, and against the legislation of the government; he had to prove that only the useful things can be reasonable. The author of the study states that Kant's aim was to institute a reasonable and thus useful society/culture, where both the government and the scientific and moral life obeyed the directions of reason. Vajda realized that "usefulness is reasonable" is a leading slogan nowadays as well, but we cannot interpret the expression in the Kantian sense, for in present day university education usefulness means mainly to train professionals and to refuse tradition, and not at all an intention to construct an organic, living *community* and *culture*.

We encounter similar thoughts in Walter Rüegg's study (*Das Europa der Universitäten*) as well, which speaks about the education and university ideals of the Enlightenment and German idealism. The important representatives of German idealism thought about the essence of science and the core of philosophy, and they interpreted the different fields of science in unity, as a whole. Unfortunately, in our immediate milieu and to the detriment of real erudition, if scientific research is not, higher education is undoubtedly much rather characterized by specialization and division to disciplines. Ernő Kulcsár-Szabó's study (*Zwischen Hermeneutik und Philologie der Kultur*) emphasizes the idea that in the present day, state supported universities humanities exist "withdrawn in themselves", isolated, and poorly financed, all on the ground that they do not operate with "facts", only with "opinions". How far all this is from the university idea of the Enlightenment and of German idealism, as well as from the ideal of the Humboltian Berlin University – which, as the study states, served as a model even for American universities –, is also revealed by the studies which discuss Schelling's ideas on university and education.

Jean Grondin's study (*Wahre Intussuszeption*) draws our attention to something extremely important from the point of view of education at any time. Analyzing from a hermeneutical point of view Schelling's writing on the methods of academic studies, this paper emphasizes the importance of the fact that Schelling seemed to discover a moment of internal change, transformation in the process of both learning and teaching, which Grondin compares to the hermeneutical concept of fusion of horizons. Schelling, as a result of his interest in natural philosophy, described the process of teaching and learning in analogy with chemical phenomena. In contrast with mechanic phenomena, through which objects do not change, he compared learning to chemical processes, where interactions, reactions take place between the components of the objects, and as a result, at the end of the process, the objects are not what they were before. This means that for Schelling sensible learning will result in such an internal transformation in the

personality of the student – and teacher; learning must be more than mechanical accumulation of information, it must be a continuous self construction. Schelling formulated it in this way: let us study to work on ourselves, to be reborn by learning. In the light of Schelling's identity philosophy, we must understand this rebirth as the union between our own subjectivity and the objective world (the knowledge that can be acquired) in a new (renewed) subject. Consequently, learning is a constant, active, dynamic process, in which the unity of ideal and real is permanently recreated in the subject. This is why Grondin compares Schelling's concept to the process of hermeneutical understanding, where the cogniser and the world to be cognized are in a constant play and interaction.

Schelling also conceived the relationship between education and research, as well as the connection between the different branches of science according to his identity theory. Walter E. Ehrhardt, Paul Ziche, and István M. Fehér in their paper emphasize that Schelling perceived the relationship between the different sciences as the elements of a big, unified construction, which are built on the same base, even if they cannot or will not acknowledge it. Schelling named this base "Ur-Wissenschaft", primordial science, which describes the rules of cognition in general, and this is none other than identity philosophy. According to Paul Ziche's study (*Philosophie als Propädeutik und Grundlage akademischer Wissenschaft*), Schelling's writing entitled *Vorlesungen über die Methode des Akademischen Studiums* exactly because of this is doubly important: it is, on the one hand, a propaedeutical introduction, on the other hand, a systematic grounding of his philosophical views.

With respect to the methods of teaching philosophy Ziche also points out that in Schelling's conception teaching philosophy should not be perceived as the transmission of a set of historical facts, but as a living, new science, developing before the students' eyes, which is relevant with respect to the most current problems as well. This thought is related to another statement, namely that the institution of the university is not only the site of teaching, but it must also be a place of research, where the newest scientific results are tackled and debated. The task of university students is not only to attend lectures; study will be really efficient through research. István M. Fehér in his study (*Schelling und die Humboldt'sche Universitätsidee – im Kontext des Idealismus*) expounds on how these Schellingian ideas determined the university environment of the age, the universities of Jena, and especially of Berlin. The University of Berlin conceived by Humbolt was based on the unity of research and learning, on the principle of academic freedom, developed and emphasized by Schelling, and before him by Kant. The latter argued from his philosophical standpoint that the legislation of reason is above political legislation; therefore he defined the faculty of philosophy as the place of freedom. Schelling situated freedom as the unity of ideal and real in the Absolute Ego, and, as it has been mentioned in the previous analysis, he regarded learning/cognition as the continuous uniting of the object and subject. For Schelling academic and scientific freedom meant that science has no need for external reasons, science is cultivated for itself by free subjects. Schelling would have liked students to have great freedom in choosing the material of study, and as we can learn from Paul Ziche's paper, the University of Jena came close to the philosopher's ideal: according to the testimony of English students Jena was the centre of German education and here the new scientific teachings were received most freely and enthusiastically.

If I take another look at my own university environment, I must say that teaching philosophy is not the “place of freedom” here, philosophical thinking exists secluded from other fields of study, especially isolated from natural sciences; moreover, it so much depends on the rules of the market and of the university leadership, that, because the low number of students it is labelled loss-making, almost useless. The unity of science declared by Schelling has collapsed, and though students have the possibility to make research besides studying, the rigid training of professionals leaves little ground for interdisciplinarity.

Also related to present day university education I consider the discussion of two further studies important. One of these is Wilhelm Vossenkuhl’s writing (*The Future of University – quo vadis universitas?*), the main ideas of which are related to the above mentioned problems. The author enlarges upon the fact that universities traditionally had three functions: they developed (research), transmitted (instruction), and evaluated (criticism) knowledge. According to Vossenkuhl in nowadays university education the critical function is lost, and only instruction and research are emphasized. With regard to the big universities there is an international consensus that these institutions operate under the label “higher education”, and their goal is not “higher knowledge, higher research”. The author considers unfortunate that education has substituted the transmission of scientific knowledge for the development of professional knowledge; the result of these processes is rather a quantitative than a qualitative surplus, we read. The quality of education does not depend on the good teaching technique, but on the quality of the information, on good knowledge. High quality education is built on the scientific, that is on relevant, true, justifiable knowledge, and neither can it neglect critical knowledge, because, the author states, this is not generally included in research. Critical approach to knowledge, on the other hand, means independence and intellectual autonomy, and it requires academic freedom. But academic freedom cannot be achieved even nowadays, despite the democratic conditions, because university institutions, though no longer determined by religion or directly by politics, are subject to economic chances and the rules of market competition. Vossenkuhl argues that academic competition favours only the education, but makes critical knowledge impossible; the constant, immediate evaluation of universities is not propitious to scientific research, for often the real value of scientific investigations is revealed only later. The final conclusion of the study is the bold, but at the same time well grounded idea, that the more we evaluate the university, the less we can talk about academic freedom; furthermore, that without independent thinking, without intellectual freedom, it is impossible to attain excellence.

Similar questions are raised by Ágnes Heller’s study entitled *The Aim of Tertiary Education*. Its starting point is that universities strive to train their students “for life”, in other words, to offer them applicable, practical knowledge. The author approaches the problem from two perspectives: on the one hand, she acknowledges that universities must indeed prepare their students “for life”, they must offer them some professional knowledge, considering that the cost of education is high; on the other hand, she points out that without scientific grounding there is neither professional knowledge, nor thinking, for the ability to think is conferred by scientific knowledge. According to Heller, higher education ought to be aimed at general culture – in the sense as the expression appears in Kant. Students should be made interested in general culture instead of narrow professional knowledge. Another important question raised by the

paper is whether the observation that the aim of the university is to educate the elite is acceptable in our democratic age or not. There are some who instantly answer: the real aim of the university is not to instruct the elite, but to offer equal chances to study for everybody. Heller's answer to the question is democratic, and at the same time very practical: the BA level meets the basic demands of democracy, everybody gets the chance to study, the higher educational forms, however, MA and PhD studies are aimed at the education of the elite. She classifies the institutions for elite education in three categories: universities educating the social, cultural, or professional elite. She formulates the question once again from the point of view of a democratic system: which of the enumerated elites should be trained in university education? The answer to this question is in conformity with democratic values: the solution is the variety of university institutions. Besides emphasizing plurality Heller expresses her personal choice as well, according to which the goal should be the education of the cultural elite. She exemplifies her opinion with the history of the *New School of Social Research* in the USA. The character and spirit of this institution is still near to the University of Berlin organized by Humboldt: it gathers the best philosophers, psychologists, social scientists, and it grants freedom to every theory. Coming back to the university models in the age of Kant, Goethe, Fichte, Schelling, Humboldt – and the list could be continued –, we may assume that they were successful exactly because they considered the aim of education to be the training of the cultural elite.

I have highlighted the presented themes because I believe these prove the best that this Schellingiana-volume is not only a series of historical documents regarding the changes of university institutions, but a book which raises timely problems and often offers solutions. It points out the advantages and disadvantages of breaking with traditions in education, and it urges us to reconsider our views on education in general, on higher education, and within this, on the role of philosophy in university education.

Translated by Ágnes Korondi

**Thematizations in Applied Ethics – Feminist Perspectives
(Mihaela Frunză)
– Review –**

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Mihaela Frunză's book, *Tematizări în eticile aplicate – perspective feministe* (Thematizations in Applied Ethics – Feminist Perspectives) published by Limes Publishing House in 2009 (ISBN 978-973-726-440-4) offers us the analysis of some important themes of applied ethics, adopting the perspective of feminist thinking. The