

ist und dass allzuoft nicht wissenschaftliche Kriterien, sondern ganz andere Interessen bei Berufungsverfahren mitspielen.

Transparenz schaffen

Die geforderte Mitbestimmung von StudentInnen, AssistentInnen und PrivatdozentInnen bei Berufungen würde an den Mehrheitsverhältnissen in den Entscheidungsgremien kaum rütteln. Aber sie würde Transparenz schaffen, so dass die bestimmenden Kriterien und Interessen offengelegt werden müssten. Und sie würden ermöglichen, dass die von den StudentInnen notwendig zu leistende Kritik und Hinterfragung der bisherigen Erkenntnisse in die Entscheidungsverfahren einfließen würde.

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Resumé:

Les étudiants/-es demandent déjà depuis des années une participation étudiante aux décisions universitaires. Science est recherche de connaissance qui doit rester critique envers elle-même c'est pourquoi elle ne peut pas se développer dans des structures doctrinaires et totalitaires. Les étudiants/-es et les professeurs doivent se confronter et se stimuler entre eux. Dans des structures hiérarchiques cette confrontation n'a aucun sens. Il faut alors plus de transparence qui ne se forme qu'avec la participation des étudiants/-es aux décisions.

(Traduction libre par Christoph Freymond, EHG Zurich, Suisse)

Summary:

Students have demanded participation in university decisions for years. Science as a search for knowledge always has to be critical and therefore can not be carried out within doctrinal structures. Students and teachers have to cooperate and stimulate each other. If this is needed, there is no sense in continuing with hierarchical structures. More transparency in decisionmaking needs the participation of the students.

(Translation by Dominik Zehnder, EHG Zürich, Switzerland)

Formula for Free, Open and Critical Studies

When I started studying at the University of Lund, thirty-five years ago, I met an academic life that was very different from today. You did not have to report in advance to take up a subject; you showed up at the introductory meeting and got to know something about courses and lectures. There was nothing like registration; that started years later and I was part of the minority that protested against this new invention. At an animated meeting in Stora Salen at the Academic Society in Lund I made a speech, claiming that registration was nothing but a first step towards total control of every student. I was proved to be a far truer prophet than I ever believed.

Thus far, students had been able to leave departments as imperceptible as they had been when starting their studies. No-one would miss you. You merely changed to another department. Sensible persons would warn of taking several subjects at the same time. As for me, I used to take three or four in parallel. I took everything from Russian to genetics. It turned out to be many loose ends of threads and many uncompleted studies; but for the dis-

cipline that eventually became mine - which I didn't know existed at that time - history of science and ideas, it was quite a suitable preparation.

My prospective aims were vague and too romantic, something I shared with many of my fellow students. We were convinced we would manage, one way or another. If somebody asked us something as inessential as we wanted "to become" we used to answer: "If nothing else, there is always the possibility of becoming a teacher". They were not just empty words. There were far from enough teachers at that time. Young students with fresh knowledge were welcome. We overestimated our importance and our knowledge far too much. For a short period of time I was working as a teacher in the countryside. I was nineteen, the oldest of my students three years younger. I suppose it was more instructive to me than to my students.

Ideological Climate

With a background like this it is no wonder that I find the situation of today's students hard and cold. They have to decide what they might want to study far in advance. Fortunate or unfortunate fancies can guide them no more

than suddenly arisen interests can.

It is true the situation has improved slightly lately. Several subjects have been given free admission. On the whole there has been a pleasant deformation.

A trend that started off with registration and continued straight as an arrow to a total blockade of the universities has finally been abolished.

At the same time the ideological climate, and perhaps the financial as well, in which the studies are supposed to be carried out has become even more mean. More than ever students coming to university have been fed with the attitude that only what gives an income today or tomorrow is worth the effort. How strong mustn't one be to resist propaganda like this? The opinion that the student attends the university to seek knowledge on his own is not in great favour. Instead the university is described as a number of ready-made training programmes that you just have to take in, one after the other, in the order somebody recommends. Today many students ask the question reserved for school children: Why do I

have to learn this? A student should put this question to himself and reason his way towards an answer.

But how can you do that when knowledge is regarded as a product you eat like fast-food? You buy your education. You become educated - in the passive. You are an object, like the sausage being stuffed.

It is possible to place the reality of the University in a larger context. Economism is growing, spreading from field to field. It is getting worse and worse. Tomorrow's problem, not only at the universities but everywhere, will be to awaken people's curiosity and respect for anything that isn't financially motivated. For the time being every civil servant or industrial clerk walks around with an invisible price label. The label says: That is his salary; that is how much he is worth. Any other kind of value does not exist. The old gradation-list has disappeared, to be replaced with another, just as unrighteous; the monetary-list.

There are lots of things that can't exist without other value-systems at work. To that belongs the necessary virtue of society named solidarity. To that belongs simple sense of duty together with understanding of aesthetic values. To that belongs curiosity about the unexpected and the unknown, the satisfaction of gaining new insights together with others, the pleasure of asking questions that might have no answers, the fascination in confrontation with odd details and giddy connections - all necessary for a good university.

It will be difficult for a school that wants to be something else than just the straightest way to a secure and well-paid employment to survive and develop in a society that suffers from the idiocy of economism; being surrounded by means only and no aims. Who cares about knowledge that can't be invested in profitable activity?

Romantic Dreams

The possibility for the university to protect itself against a trend like this is not impressive. Some of its departments are said to be profitable and will surely manage. But what will happen to the arts and humanities? The results of art students will not feed any bank accounts. Even their role as entertainers are limited when the space is filled with TV-channels. At a closer look we will find that it is not only the problem of humanists.

Only a minor part of science is directly possible to invest. Almost anything that has the name of good scientific work is fairly uneconomical: there is too much questioning, too much discussion, too much criticising, too many ideas in different directions and too many projects that end up as litter.

I believe that not only the humanities but any good science finally has to trust on the counter-currents that always exists and that seems to be generated with every new generation, as to the pure utilitarian way of thinking. After all, there still are some that do not see the meaning of life in a growing pile of money or a comfortable, uncommitted consumption.

Since the sixties Sweden and Europe have not only developed in the direction of narrow-minded profit maximisation but also towards a larger cultural variety. Customs and ideas rubbing against each other might produce a vitality that is the best hot-bed for all kind of cheeky studies on one's own responsibility. We might be heading towards an Europe in splendid isolation but also towards the possibility of a new kind of Hellenism. The youth culture brought by students to universities is not only made of money but also opposition, life-giving disrespect and uneconomical curiosity. It would be splendid if such attitudes could be cultivated not only off-duty but also while studying. If so, there could be more studies of the kind where students look for their own answers to their questions, not only in the standard forms.

Romantic dreams some would say. Perhaps it is not that romantic after all. Nowadays there are a growing number of voices being raised from the rational economic life that express disgust at narrow educations and anxiously-specialised engineers, economist and lawyers. In a rapidly changing world it might not be a vocational training the universities should provide, rather diversified preparation for future economic activity. That might be a formula for free, open and critical university studies.

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(Translation from the Swedish by Karin Källsmyr, KRIS, SCM of Sweden)

Zusammenfassung:

Der Autor bedauert den Verlust der freien Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten des Studienaufbaus. Die Universität bietet den Studierenden nicht mehr die Möglichkeit selbständig Wissen und Kenntnisse sich anzueignen. Die Studien gleichen eher einem Trainings-Programm, das von anderen Leuten vorgeschrieben wird. Das Ziel der Studien ist ein gut bezahlter Job. Doch was ist mit den Geisteswissenschaften, die nicht in dieses Konzept passen? Der Autor schliesst damit, dass sich leise Stimmen aus der Wirtschaft vernehmen lassen, die diese spezialisierten, engen Ausbildungen zu beklagen beginnen.

(Übersetzung von Dominik Zehnder, EHG Zürich, Schweiz)

Resumé:

L'auteur regrette la perte de la possibilité de choisir son chemin d'étude. L'Université ne donne plus aux étudiants/-es la possibilité de se développer soi-même, de s'assimiler son savoir en toute indépendance. On peut comparer les études avec des programmes d'entraînement qui sont prescrits par d'autres. Le but des études est un porte-monnaie bien rempli. Mais qu'est-ce qui se passe avec les études en lettres qui ne se laissent pas assimiler à ces concepts? L'auteur finit son texte en remarquant que la haute société de l'économie se plaint des formations trop spécialisées.

(Traduction libre par Christoph Freymond, EHG Zurich, Suisse)