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THE POSTMODERN IDEA OF THE UNIVERSITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Postmodernioji universiteto idėja ir atsakomybė

SUMMARY

This article presents some research in the field of the philosophy of education, which considers the concept of the University: its history, its meaning, its function in society and, above all, the place of philosophy in/at the University. The issue is quite tender and almost painful for us, given the reality of the Lithuanian educational system and the lamentable status of the humanities in Lithuanian universities. The present text proposes to look at the academy and at the institution of philosophy, which even today continues to be considered the “key institution of the academy”¹, with Jacques Derrida whose relevance to the field is undisputable.

SANTRAUKA

Straipsnyje, remiantis Michelio Foucault, Jeano Baudrillard'o ir Jacques'o Derrida tekstais, gvildinama aktuali edukacijos filosofijos tema: kas yra universitetas kaip akademinė institucija? Koks yra humanitarinių disciplinų, o ypač filosofijos statusas universitete? Šių apmąstymų tikslas – geriau suprasti mūsų pačių padėtį akademiniam pasaulyje. Postmodernistinis žvilgsnis į universitetą rinkos kontekste gali būti daugiau ar mažiau pesimistiškas arba daugiau ar mažiau tolerantiškas. Universiteto kaip mokymo įstaigos krizė šiandien iškyla kaip prieštaravimas tarp žinojimo ir galios. Toks mokymo modelis straipsnyje interpretuojamas remiantis M. Foucault, kuris išskiria dvi universiteto funkcijas – izoliaciją ir normalizavimą. Universitetas matyti kaip uždaras, „vidinis“ pasaulis, pavaldus tiek išorinės galios spaudimui, tiek ir vidinei „disciplinarinės valdžios kontrolei“. J. Baudrillard'o požiūris kvestionuoja ne tiek santykį tarp žinojimo ir galios, kiek kiekvieną šio santykio terminą atskirai.

Derrida savo požiūrį į universiteto idėją išdėstė daugelyje tekstų. Straipsnyje analizuojamas svarbus Derrida edukacijos filosofijos tekstas „The Principle of Reason: The University in the Eyes of Its Pupils“

RAKTAŽODŽIAI. Galia, žinojimas, universitetas, filosofija, mokymas, atsakomybė.
KEY WORDS. Power, knowledge, University, philosophy, teaching, responsibility.

(„Pakankamo pagrindo principas: universitetas savo mokinių akyse“), skaitytas 1983 m. kaip inauguracinė paskaita Cornellio universitete. Derrida apibrėžia universiteto funkcijas remdamasis aristoteliniu mokymo modeliu. Jis prisimena Kanto pageidavimą, kad universitetas būtų valdomas „proto (*ratio*) idėjos“. Derrida mano, kad siekdami suderinti teorinį ir praktinį (techninį) žinojimą, turime decentruoti „sampratos“ ir „veiksno“, „sampratos“ ir „pritaikymo“ priešpriešą, opoziciją tarp teorijos ir praktikos, tarp teorijos ir technikos. Universitetas yra tam tikra socialinė sistema, kuri vykdo „mokymo politiką“. Sistema yra hermetiška (uždara) ir kartu turi tam tikrą santykį su išorės pasauliu, kurį Derrida prilygina tiltui, po kuriu plyti bedugnė. Ši bedugnė interpretuojama metaforiškai – kaip esanti tarp vidaus ir išorės, tarp teorinio ir praktinio žinojimo. Pats universitetas yra pastatytas ant „bedugnės“: jo „pakankamas pagrindas“ yra nežinomas, nepagrįstas, neįmanomas.

Derrida pažymi, kad šiandien pragmatistinės edukacijos filosofijos „pritaikymo“ samprata yra pakeista „orientacijos“ arba „nukreiptumo“ samprata: mokymas turi būti tinkamai orientuotas. „Nukreiptas mokslas“ yra priešinamas „nesuinteresuotam“ mokslui, kaip kad anksčiau praktika buvo priešinama teorijai. Filosofija kadaise turėjo „nesuinteresuotą“ mokslų privilegiją, ji neva galėjo rūpintis tik žinojimu, tiesa, protu. Šiandien viskas yra sėkmingai pritaikoma per informacines ir komunikacines sistemas. Pritaikomo, veiksmingumo, kartu ir atskaitomumo reikalavimas veikia kaip slopinanti jėga, iš išorės, nors kartu yra ir pačiame universitete.

Derrida reikalauja pripažinti ir apibrėžti „naują atsakomybę“ universiteto pasidavimo informacijos technologijoms akivaizdoje. Atsakomybė, kaip viena svarbiausių etinių sąvokų, yra rizikingas užsiangažavimas: išsilaikyti virš „bedugnės“ (*in between*), peržengus ją, peržengus praktikos ir teorijos, technologijos ir metafizikos priešstatą. Neišvengiamai toks „pamatinis“ dalykas kaip filosofija yra kvestionuojamas ten, kur filosofija studijuojama. Derrida prisimena Kanto įsitikinimą, jog universiteto esmė ir jo autonomijos pagrindas glūdi filosofijos katedroje. Straipsnyje keliamas mokymo ir mokslinių tyrimų santykio klausimas, aptariama universiteto padėtis bei prisimenama VDU kaip humanitarinio universiteto atkūrimo vizija.

The postmodern view of the idea of the University can be more or less pessimistic or more or less tolerant. In both cases, today the crisis of the University as an academic, i.e. teaching and learning, institution shows itself in the form of a sharp contradiction, almost a conflict, between knowledge and power. The very concept of “power”, originating in Michel Foucault’s writings, is placed among the most popular concepts in 20th-century philosophy of education.

In education, power can manifest itself on the part of a teacher, as the teacher’s power in respect to his student, or on the part of the student, as the student’s striving to gain some

pragmatic, useful and efficient, powers as the fruit of his education. Most frequently, however, the relationship between education and power is considered in the situation when both a teacher and a student taken together constitute some educational unit, having, as it may be, a very friendly relationship inside the unit, but experiencing pressure by some force from outside; and usually some men in authority practise their power from outside, to demand obedience to the system whose authority and power they represent.

The subtitle of Foucault’s famous book *Discipline and Punish*, where many see the model of the Modern University presented, is *The Birth of the Prison*.² It

is not for the misuse of power functions inside a learning institution that its prison-likeness comes out most clearly, but for some systems having real power, a strong interest to control and to govern it from outside. Foucault's descriptions are, as may be seen, purely historical and local: it is in France, in a certain period of time, the 17th and 18th centuries, that the authority apparatus or modern disciplinary institutions, some of them being learning institutions, are described. Nevertheless, from these particular pieces of history, a more universal (and still actual) model of an educational institution can easily be reconstructed.

According to this model, the educational institution has two main functions: isolation and normalization. The University is considered a world in itself, a universe. A student is taken from the outer society and put into this specific "place", where he is to gain the traditional complex of knowledge; or rather he is given some compulsory and distinctly separate portions of knowledge. He is bound to adapt to the inner structure of the institution, if not he will not survive. Learning to adapt and to survive is learning the politics of power, but at the same time it is learning normativity. What we get is a power of normative knowledge.

The job of the University is to produce a normal personality, thus imposing a norm on the outer society. Receiving its raw material from society, in return, the University gives it a stock of "normal" persons in an almost mechanical way, like processing sausage-meat

into sausages. The sausages in question are (and are supposed to be by the inner authority of the University) mediocra (what is called "middlebrow"), but by way of paradox, they are meant to be the future "elite", those who are expected to rule over the outer society with all the power and knowledge they have been taught at the University.

In their practical realization in the area of learning, the procedures of power results in the established mass order. The aim of education is normality as uniformity: "So that they might all be like one another".³ The goal attained by controlling procedures exhibits the definitive likeness with the 18th-century idea of *Panopticon*. In the University or schooling institutions, mental as well as physical control proceeds by some anonymous forces of authority. Disciplinary authority succeeds by the simplicity of its means, which are: hierarchical surveillance, normalizing sanction and examination, connecting both.⁴ The disciplinary system is closed and its core is constituted by a punishing machine. The system produces its own laws, and punishes its own inner felonies – crimes which consist of being non-adaptive to its own established rules. "What is specific to the disciplinary penalty is non-observance, that which does not measure up to the rule, that departs from it. The whole indefinite domain of non-conforming is punishable."⁵ This power acts automatically like an integral hierarchical structure, as a kind of pyramid and network: "it is everywhere and always alert, since by its very principle it leaves no zone of

shade and constantly supervises the very individuals who are entrusted with the task of supervising."⁶

In the examination, "the deployment of power and the establishment of truth" go together.⁷ Uniformity manifests itself in a sameness of thought, of knowledge, of obligatory acknowledged and universally confessed truth. In a ceremony of examination, the authority takes the chance to make itself visible to its subjects, at the same time as objectifying them.

Controlling activity is twofold: it aims at those who are obliged to control and at those who are placed under the controlling power. Both groups accommodate themselves to it not feeling and consequently not avoiding it. One cannot change the system of which one is a part. Everything is inside the system and nothing outside. There is no place outside. In Derrida's famous and much discussed words, "there is nothing outside the University", it is to be understood in the sense of the claim that there is nothing that is not caught in the network of power/knowledge relationships that give a certain structure to what we can only know as our academic world⁸. This is the scheme. The picture is quite pessimistic.

Another postmodern thinker, Jean Baudrillard, continues Foucault's historical vision in his *Simulacra and Simulation*, where he describes the crisis of the University in two essays, also locally (in France) and historically (some 30 years ago, in the political context of 1976 and 1977). What is questioned here is not the relations as such between

knowledge and power (authority), but each term of this relation. Where there are no terms is no relation. For knowledge has become a ready-for-use *input/output* accumulation of information and power anonymously died out. What is left is "the ghost of knowledge", "stuffed authority", "the illusion of authority", "an absent, unseen bugbear of control"⁹. (What if somebody checks? But nobody has ever checked?)

The University has become an institution, "where you will not find any content of knowledge, any structure of authority (except archaic feudalism, a certain ruling simulacrum machine with an unclear function and an unnatural survival like a barracks or a theatre)"¹⁰. The machine of institutional power (as in the barracks) and its ritual demonstration (as in the theatre) has become a simulacrum machine vainly producing its methods of control. This second picture is still more pessimistic.

And now let us start contemplating the issue of the University and the status of philosophy in/at the University with Jacques Derrida and his text "The Principle of Reason: The University in the Eyes of its Pupils"¹¹. Originally given as an inaugural address by Derrida as Cornell University's Andrew Dickson White Professor-at-Large in 1983, the text is considered of particular importance for the philosophy of education. It articulates the relationship between academy and philosophy, through notions of understanding, learning, discourse and the like, indicating the place of the humanities in the academy.

Derrida defines the University as “a place where people know how to learn and learn how to know”¹². At least, it *should* be the place. He begins his considerations with an Aristotelian model of learning, for which he feels (and shows) great respect, in the light of which any arguing about a “deconstruction” of the normative rendering of what it means to know, to learn and to teach, seems to be unfair to Derrida’s academic vein. However, those who describe Derrida’s project as the quest for “what is beyond the rationality of the institution of the University” seem to be right.¹³ If it is at all possible to speak about the *raison d’être*, “the reason to be”, “a justification for existence”, of the University, it would be “the desire to know for the sake of knowing, the desire for knowledge with no practical purpose”¹⁴.

The very *raison d’être*, the “principle of reason” or the “law of sufficient reason”, established by Leibniz, is the product of rationalism. Derrida reminds us of Kant’s desire for the University to be ruled by “the idea of rationality”. The idea of the University is grounded (“in terms of a reason which is also a cause, a ground, that is to say also a footing and a foundation, ground to stand on”¹⁵) on rationality as pure theoretical, Aristotelian “disinterested” knowledge.

There is a problem in how to conform theoretical and practical, theoretical and technical in the field of knowledge. In a pragmatist’s view, according to C. S. Peirce, one cannot just subordinate a concept to an act, knowing to

acting; what *is* an application of knowledge is more important than the efficiency of the application¹⁶. Derrida considers this view inadequate, and makes us deconstruct (or rather, decentre) such oppositions as concept/act, concept/application, theoretical view/practice, theory/technique, and the like.¹⁷

And here we can use Foucault’s model. The University is a certain social system executing the policy of teaching. The system is hermetic, closed in on itself and at the same time having a certain relation to the outer world. “The eyes of its pupils” can look and in fact are looking in two directions: inside and outside. Derrida compares the University to a ship, and asks what we see when we are simply in it, “on board”, staying in port, and, on the other hand, what we see when, being “on board”, we are on the open sea (“at large”; here, Derrida is playing with the name of the title of “Professor-at-Large” for which he is welcomed by Cornell University: “at large” also means “free”, by association with academic freedom, and especially “free from prison”), looking out from it for our destination.

The relation of this closed hermetic system to the outer world is what Derrida calls “a matter of life and death”¹⁸. He mentions the geography of Cornell University where he is delivering his lecture. The campus is somehow linked to its neighbourhood by two bridges. The high barriers have recently been built by order of the university authorities to preclude anybody’s thoughts about suicide. Derrida is using one of his favourite metaphors when he

says: "Beneath the bridges linking the university to its surroundings, connecting its inside to its outside, lies the abyss"¹⁹. This is the abyss between inside and outside, the abyss between theoretical (inside) and practical (outside) knowledge. The University itself is placed, established on this "abyss", and placing on the abyss, without a ground, its "Principle of Reason" is unknowable, ungrounded and impossible.

Derrida notices that today, the pragmatist educational notion of "application" of knowledge is replaced by the notion of "orientation" or "oriented", "goal-oriented", "end-oriented research": in short, all teaching should be properly oriented. "Oriented research" is opposed to "disinterested" science in the same way as earlier practice was opposed to theory. However, the opposition does not work.

Philosophy, for which Derrida cares (and so do we all), has once been frightened by "the ghost of praxis"²⁰, one which is "neither present nor absent, neither alive nor dead"²¹. This ghost is still haunting and hunting for philosophy. Practical philosophy is "a philosophy which views itself in the mirror of practice"; it does not want "to remain a philosophy"²², and is not any more, although it *is* a philosophy. In order to remain a philosophy in an Aristotelian sense, it would have the privilege of purely theoretical disinterested science, a privilege that would secure it against the politic of power. And in fact, it once had such a privilege; at least, it is believed that it had. This is the story Derrida tells us:

Once upon a time it was possible to believe that pure mathematics, theoretical physics, philosophy (and, within philosophy, especially metaphysics and ontology) were basic disciplines shielded from power, inaccessible to programming by the pressures of the State or, under cover of the State, by civil society or capital interests.²³

Philosophy's sole concern "would be knowledge, truth, the disinterested exercise of reason". Teaching philosophy would mean teaching all these noble things" under the sole authority of the principle of reason"²⁴. However, it was only a naive fairy-tale that Kant believed. It all happened "once upon a time".

The postmodern model of education is often viewed as based on notions of communication and information. The so-called "information society" is maintained by the constant input of new information, the reordering of already available blocks of information, the sending off of useless information to the "recycling bin", i.e. not throwing out and away but making it useful again when needed. Here, the power consisted not only in having the information but also in blocking it, in putting information on to the cultural market and in taking it out.

Today, everything is successfully made applicable (to trade), through the informational and communicational systems; everything, as Derrida says, beginning with language and semiotics, and ending with literature, poetry and art. You can buy and sell everything, and everything can serve even a military budget.

The compartment of philosophy (...), which Kant thought ought to be kept unavailable to any utilitarian purpose and to the orders of any power whatsoever in its search for truth, can no longer lay claim to such autonomy. What is produced in this field can always be used. And even if it should remain useless in its results, in its productions, it can always serve to keep the masters of discourse busy: the experts, professionals of rhetoric, logic or philosophy who might otherwise be applying their energy elsewhere²⁵.

Or again, philosophical "production" may be applied ideologically. Thus censure and prohibition become unnecessary. In order to withdraw the teaching of some discipline, it is enough to stop supporting it financially. "A State power or forces that it represents no longer need to prohibit research or to censor discourse (...) It is enough that they can limit the means, can regulate support for production, transmission, diffusion"²⁶. Today, the humanities in general and philosophy in particular are the first candidates for such a dismissal. As Derrida writes elsewhere:

Philosophy is everywhere suffering (...) both in its teaching and in its research, from a limit which, even though it does not always take the explicit form of prohibition or censure, nonetheless amounts to that, for the simple reason that the means for supporting teaching and research in philosophy are limited. In liberal-capitalist as well as in socialist or social-democratic societies, not to mention in authoritarian or totalitarian regimes, this limitation is motivated, I am not saying justified, by budgetary balances that give priority to research and training for research that is, often cor-

rectly, labelled useful, profitable and urgent, to so-called end-oriented sciences, and to techno-economic, indeed, scientifico-military imperatives²⁷.

What is significant here is that if this suppressing force is operating, the operation is from without, at the same time being inside the University, very much like the model of controlling power described by Foucault. For outer politico-economic interests require an accountable "norm" of efficiency and adaptability, while inner succeed in constantly pushing the humanities, and philosophy in particular, out of the curricula. Since philosophy, traditionally being the "foundational" and at the same time "disinterested" discipline, still retains a memory of being the only one capable to insist (however weakly) on imposing its own concept of scientific normativity on the academic universe, it is considered dangerous.

Speaking and writing about "the right to philosophy for all" (under this title a book was published in 1990 and a speech was delivered by Derrida at UNESCO in Paris in 1991), Derrida defends the independence of philosophy from science in the name of freedom from all applicability: "Considering what links science to technology, to economy, to politico-economic or politico-military interests, the autonomy of philosophy with respect to science is (...) essential for the practice of a right to philosophy for whoever wants philosophy not to be off limits for anyone"²⁸.

However, Derrida emphasizes the positive importance of the notion of information in regard to the educational

system or institution: "It integrates the basic to the oriented, the purely rational to the technical, thus bearing witness to that original intermingling of the metaphysical and the technical"²⁹. It means that informatization, however inevitable, can serve as an integrative (or rather deconstructive) means to the decentration of well-known oppositions. It also means that the situation is not altogether new: at the beginning these things went together. (The only question is – where was the beginning?)

Therefore, one can hope that such integration would be to the advantage of the so-called fundamental disciplines, first of all, philosophy, as well as for the (well-) being of the educational institution itself (the University). That is why we have to tolerate this situation, or at least conform to it. According to Derrida, the situation demands we accept and refine "new responsibilities in the face of the university's total subjection to the technologies of informatization"³⁰. Such a responsibility cannot be purely "academic". Now reason (rationality, reason, *ratio*) is "end-oriented", oriented to plenty of ends, therefore, Derrida announces "the necessity for a new way of educating students that will prepare them to undertake new analyses in order to evaluate these ends and to choose, when possible, among them all"³¹. One will necessarily question such a foundational discipline as philosophy, and will necessarily question it where it is taught, i.e. at the University.

In one of his interviews, Derrida speaks of the University as "a place of absolute independence in the question-

ing and in the quest for truth, in the face of any power, political, economic, religious, etc. That is the concept of the university, the principle of the unconditional freedom of the University". According to this principle, and by its very history, the University "must not interdict any question, any putting to question, any discourse" within its borders, especially not according to "criteria external to the university"³². The *raison d'être* of the University in fact is the principle of freedom, maintaining it in the relationship between its inside and its outside.

Being like a trace, a *difference*, a principle without grounds, without a beginning, "this freedom, in fact, has never been, and has never existed"³³. However, we can consider it an ideal to come, in dealing with which one is bound with, in a sense, messianic (like Elijah who makes his appearance in the texts of Derrida as Derrida himself³⁴) responsibility, calling or vocation. Thus, a problematic of a responsibility, in Spivak's words, is "caught between an ungraspable call and a setting-to-work"³⁵.

In *The Other Heading*, Derrida speaks of "the responsibility to think, speak and act" in the situations which he calls "aporetics". "Responsibility" is one of the favourite words of Derrida's vocabulary, which serves well to express the aporetic essence of the ethical and political. Derrida defines responsibility as "a certain experience and experiment of the possibility of the impossible: the testing of the aporia from which one may invent the only possible invention, the impossible invention"³⁶. Responsibil-

ity is “the promise and the decision” which “owe their possibility to the test of undecidability which will always remain their condition”³⁷.

Given the picture of the University where moral issues are transformed “into calculations of consensus, statistical normalcy, or the exertion of raw power”³⁸, the notion of responsibility unveils the ethical dimension of the idea of the University. Academic education is bound with responsibility; it implies an acceptance of responsibility and a response. Who is responsible for what? The subject of responsibility is one that belongs to the academic word, to the inside of the University, where the power of normativity has to be overcome for the sake of knowledge, which has become inevitably end-oriented, so that there is a pressing demand for choice; while another power originated from outside requires knowledge to become a marked share, so the one who is responsible has to negotiate between two contradictory injunctions. The object of responsibility would be the way out of the situation in which I cannot rely on a prescription like “there is a norm, there is a rule and you have to do your duty”. It is the invention of the impossible.

I have to *invent* the rule; and there would be no responsibility if I knew the rule (...) There is responsibility only because there are these aporetic structures in which I have to respond to two injunctions, different and incompatible. That’s where responsibility starts, when I *don’t* know what to do. If I knew what to do, well, I would apply the rule, and teach my students to apply the rule. But

would that be ethical? (...) Ethics start when you don’t know what to do, when there is a gap between knowledge and action, and you have to take responsibility for inventing the new rule which doesn’t exist.³⁹

Responsibility consists in making a choice and a decision, a decision to act in a certain way in the face of a difficult situation which has befallen philosophy. The decision of a philosopher would be one of those belonging to *wisdom*, to theoretical knowledge, and, according to Derrida, there is a relation between theory and practice that “between knowledge and action there is an abyss, but that abyss shouldn’t prevent us from trying to know as much as possible before making a decision”⁴⁰.

In taking responsibility, we cannot appeal to the apparently “practical” sciences, such as sociology or political sciences. Such disciplines, according to Derrida, though easily accommodating themselves to the “academic landscape”, however, “never question scientific normativity, beginning with value of objectivity and objectivation, which governs and authorizes their discourse”⁴¹. The questioning is the proper business of philosophy. The University is (should be) “the community of the question”. Derrida suggests that responsibility belongs to philosophy, the destiny of which is always to be standing *in between*. The responsibility of a philosopher arises from the fact that “a philosopher is always someone for whom philosophy is not a *given*, someone who, in essence, must question the essence and the purpose of philosophy”⁴².

Responsibility is quite a risky, perilous engagement, a commitment to staying over the abyss (*in between*), at the same time overcoming it; to bestride the opposition between practice and theory, technical orientation and principle of reason, technology and metaphysics. "Assuming the responsibility for this risk is the responsibility of the philosopher, a responsibility anyone claiming the right to philosophy or to teaching philosophy must assume, a responsibility which is the essence of philosophy and the teaching of philosophy"⁴³. This responsibility, however, "also calls for respecting whatever refuses a certain responsibility"⁴⁴.

Derrida reminds us of Kant's conviction that the essence of the University lies in the department of Philosophy. In his other text, Derrida mentions also Schelling's view of the University, which, contrary to Kant's, considers the University itself an entirely philosophical institution. That is why the University is "a philosophical place but also a place where philosophy will be put into question"⁴⁵. Derrida discusses among other themes "the particular interdisciplinary relation between philosophy and the "humanities". "Philosophy" means here both a discipline that belongs to the "humanities" and that discipline which claims to think, elaborate and criticize the axiomatic of the "humanities", particularly the problem of humanism or the presumed universalism of the "humanities"⁴⁶.

We all remember how the idea of a new Lithuanian University was supposed to be realized in Vytautas

Magnus University in Kaunas. There was a dream of general and/or liberal education at an ideal humanitarian university, which was supposed to aim at resisting the growing tendencies of making a university a "smithy" for trade, designed solely to meet the requirements of political and economic conjunctures, that can be achieved only by putting certain relevant information into the minds of students by force. In the "humanitarian"/"human" vision of a new university, the humanities were brought to the fore as a panacea, universal all-healing medicine against the "rationality" and "instrumentalizing" of the mind, and maybe even against the modern idea of science. Thus a new vision of liberal (humanitarian) education appeared to have been invented as an alternative to the rational principle of reason, or "reason to be", of the University. Was it only incidental that the result has been disappointing?

Baudriallard asks whether such a vision could be just a fiction of a culture easily available to everyone, or otherwise struck nowhere and meant nothing? There is an assumed democracy of knowledge, when the university is ready to give a diploma to everyone, although the diploma does not secure a job. There is in fact a "democracy" ("demos" meaning a mob) of just meeting together in a certain place. (A certain habit of sitting in a university, or in its inner campus, inner space, smoking, develops very quickly.)

Derrida has been thinking about an idea of "philosophy for everyone" (but not to a mob) for many years. It clearly

manifested it self in his involvement in the Group for the Research of the Teaching of Philosophy (GREPH), founded in 1975 and “devoted to asking about the relationship between philosophy and teaching, between the teaching of philosophy and the historical, political, social, and economic conditions in which that teaching takes place”; in Estates General of Philosophy, in the International College of Philosophy (CIPh), founded in 1984 as “a new pedagogical - and thus “political” institution (...) an exemplary place for questioning the forms, structures, and institutions of education and communication – including the university”⁴⁷; and finally, in his numerous texts and interviews. In one of his interviews, Derrida describes this concern as “a matter of keeping the field of tradition open, of making things so that access to philosophy remains open to the greatest number of people”. One must “continue to develop, one must continue to read, the relation to tradition must be as cultivated as possible”. He talks about his “struggle (...) to impart a space for philosophy teaching and for philosophical research”⁴⁸.

The academic scene having become more and more important as the place of the competing power/knowledge interests of political and economic forces (however ghostly they might be), Derrida, since his involvement with the GREPH in 1974, committed himself very seriously to the activity of saving the discipline of philosophy from those powers “that have considered it an esoteric and dangerous subject, a part of the French educational system not worth the

trouble of dealing with or keeping at bay”⁴⁹. Today such an activity becomes an indispensable task for philosophy teachers in Lithuania, where attacks on philosophy as an inefficient discipline have already become ordinary commonplace events in the University and even in its very Faculty of Humanities. For philosophical research and the humanities there is a constantly increasing demand for usefulness. The context of such a demand, a pressing force, is one of economy and politics, and not of educational practice. Now, from governmental institutions (outside power), there stems a drive for “efficiency” and “accountability” of an academic occupation (e.g. a requirement to measure “the amount of knowledge” of a subject in percentages, or to include a representative of a “trade” in a thesis defence committee). Only “efficient” research, productive of commodities suitable for profitable utilization, can hope for financial support (in fact, to survive) from our techno-capitalist society.

In addition, there is no consensus regarding the purpose of the University either outside or inside. Is the University primarily an institution of teaching or of research? The common belief that “strong research contributes to good teaching and is perhaps even indispensable to it”⁵⁰ is probably true in the ideal case of a perfect community - scientific as well as educative in its will to raise worthy disciples, to have “responsible” memory for its heritage⁵¹. The Lithuanian philosopher Antanas Maceina, in his autobiography *Down the Road of Philosophy*, remembers with bitterness

the philosophy professors of his youth, who were “just teachers, having never written anything philosophical and having never even thought anything philosophical”⁵². Meanwhile, it seems clear that nobody but a philosopher can teach philosophy.

In the University, the two functions of education and research meet ; however, both functions belonging to one subject take time and health. All departments require their faculty to be “productive” scholars. The story is told about the famous American psychologist E.L. Thorndike, who was the founder of the modern psychology of education: “One day just before noon he glanced at the clock and remarked, ‘I must give a lecture in five minutes. It would be fifty percent better if I spent this time in preparation. But let’s compute another coefficient of correlation’”⁵³. Five minutes obviously is not enough to make our lectures fifty percent better. Do we, however, consciously and willingly comply with the loss of this fiftypercent?

While perhaps only a naive undergraduate would make the mistake of assuming that a professor is a strong researcher just because he is a strong teacher, research-oriented universities are apt to assume that if someone is a strong researcher he must also be a good

teacher (...) Moreover, while good teaching and strong research both make considerable demands on a professor’s time, universities seldom reward them equally (...) Accomplishments in research weigh far more heavily than ones in teaching.⁵⁴

The system of merits includes the familiar emphasis on the sheer number of publications or on the sort of research that can attract outside funding and which is inevitably valued and modelled on the pattern of the natural sciences. Speaking of the demands of responsibility, Derrida points out the concrete task for those who cannot step outside the system of the University: “The unacceptability of a discourse, the non-certification of a research project, the illegitimacy of a course offering are declared by evaluative actions: studying such evaluations is, it seems to me, one of the tasks most indispensable to the exercise of academic responsibility, most urgent for the maintenance of its dignity”⁵⁵. What we must do is to intervene in the business of the University on the basis of reason.

Today we ought to speak together with Derrida about “the right to philosophy”, the right to philosophy teaching, if not about the “privilege” of philosophy but of the right of philosophy to survive. One should ask for responsibility and wait for the response.

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