The University and its Critics: Remarks on Anti-academicism and Truth
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The University and its Critics

Remarks on Anti-academicism and Truth

Zum 15. Blankensee-Colloquium hatten Hanna Engelmeier (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main) und Philipp Felsch (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) in das Berliner Haus der Kulturen der Welt eingeladen. Die von ihnen organisierte und durch das Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin unterstützte internationale Konferenz stand unter dem Titel „Antiakademismus". Vom 16. bis 18. März ging es bei den Vorträgen und Diskussionen um die Geschichte und Theorie des Antiakademismus. Nicht zuletzt stand die Frage im Vordergrund, wie es um die Universität heute bestellt ist, das heißt um ihre beeindruckende Erfolgsgeschichte in Zeiten modularisierter Studiengänge, Sonderforschungsbereiche und kompetitiver Exzellenzcluster.

Den Abendvortrag hielt der Philosoph und Soziologe Geoffroy de Lagasnerie, der an der Pariser École Nationale Supérieure d'Arts lehrt. Er ist in jüngster Zeit mit drei Publikationen zur Frage der Universität hervorgetreten: Penser dans un monde mauvais (Presses universitaires des France 2017), Logique de la Creation. Sur l' Université et la vie intellectuelle (Fayard 2011) sowie L'Empire de l'université. Sur Bourdieu et le journalisme (Amsterdam, 2007). In deutscher Übersetzung liegt sein Buch Die Kunst der Revolte – Snowden, Assange, Manning vor (Suhrkamp 2016).

Wir danken dem Autor, dass er uns die aus dem Französischen ins Englische übersetzte Vorlage seines Vortrages zur Publikation auf „Soziopolis" überlassen hat. — Die Red.

1. I would like to begin by emphasizing that for me, and I believe for all of us here,[1] talking about the university — and about the critique of the university in particular — is not an easy thing. It is not a question that is theoretical or abstract, but a question that is concrete, situated, and embodied. To reflect on the university is to reflect on ourselves, on our lives, on the way we write and publish, on the ways in which we construct our relations with the world and intervene in public space, and on the ways we teach. The question of the university and of academic norms is thus, first and foremost, a question of ethics — and this is something we should never forget.

2. I want to start by making the following argument: we never criticize the university enough, and our criticisms of the university are never sufficiently radical. In the first

instance, the necessity of this critique is not primarily epistemological but rather political. The question of the university is a political question, one that concerns questions of public space and the circulation of ideologies. Whenever we want to understand the world we live in, and the ideologies circulating around us, we have a tendency to concentrate on the media. But we often forget that it is the university that holds a quasi-monopoly over the formation of mental attitudes within society — and especially for those in positions of power. A multitude of people continually pass through the university. The discourses it teaches, the categories it inculcates, and the habits it produces indelibly mark the thoughts and practices of those who study there. The academic field greatly influences the *doxa* that reigns at any given moment: it shapes the space of the speakable and the thinkable, the space of possible dissent, the parameters of debate, and our dominant political categories.

It is generally acknowledged that, over the course of the past twenty years, we have witnessed a powerful resurgence of reactionary ideologies, and an accompanying loss of hegemony for leftist thought and critical theory. But we often forget that this political and ideological history has largely been written at the university. As Didier Eribon analyzed in his book on the conservative revolution, the rightward drift of the socialist parties, the renunciation of the language of social classes, of domination and of social conflict, etc., was incubated *in* the university by scholars who created new frames of reference.

It is mainly the university that produces our cultural and ideological intelligentsia. Through its methods of selection, recruitment, accreditation, and teaching, the university determines the composition of a considerable part of those who produce the various discourses circulating within public space.

And it is also, consequently, the university that decides who will *not* produce, who will *not* write, and who will *not* publish. In other words, the university determines both those who *produce* discourse, and those who do *not*. We all know students who have given up careers as researchers and writers because they left the university, because they became disillusioned, because they were not recruited, etc. In other words, the university is surrounded by a cemetery of dead works and assassinated authors. It is, of course, impossible by definition to reflect on what never was, or to evaluate those works that never saw the light of day because of the influence of the university. It is a loss that is unavailable to consciousness. But while it is not quantifiable, it is nonetheless real.

3. The great influence of the university means that the university must be held politically responsible. And this is why the university requires as much attention and scrutiny as

possible, in particular with respect to the way in which it exercises its power and the legitimacy of the norms that support its authority.

But while criticism of the university is indispensable, expressing it is a difficult task, given the university's ambiguous relationship to critique. The university often presents itself as a space of dissent, critique, and experimentation. These values are venerated as the necessary conditions for the advancement of knowledge and critical thinking. But the application of these values is paradoxical. These values are rarely used to mount a critique of academic norms themselves. Instead of cultivating permanent reflexive activity, these notions of critique and experimentation are used to frame the university as a bulwark against censorship and intellectual proscriptions. In other words, the value of "critique" is never used to critique the university itself but, on the contrary, to praise it.

For example, in Jacques Derrida's famous lecture, "The University without Condition", Derrida emphasized the problem of the relationship between thought and censorship. In his lecture, he defines the university as "a place apart", an exceptional space, an institution that ought to embody a unique ethic of questioning and proposition:

"Here then is what I will call the unconditional university or the university without condition: the principal right to say everything, whether it be under the heading of fiction and the experimentation of knowledge, and the right to say it publicly, to publish it."[2]

Because the university supposedly embodies this space of experimentation, it necessarily asserts itself against those forces that would limit the right to pose questions and speak out. Derrida thus posits an opposition between the "university" and the "politico-economic outside".[3] He associates the academic field with the principles of "freedom, autonomy, resistance, disobedience, or dissidence", and he associates "outside forces" with censorship, "limitation," and "constraint". Derrida cites several such negative forces against which the university must assert itself, including state power, political power, economic power, the media, and other forms of ideological, religious, and cultural authority.

This is a long list, yet it is nonetheless incomplete. And, in fact, it is surprising to see Derrida commit such an oversight. For Derrida fails to mention the power of the university, and its academic norms, as forces capable of limiting speech. In this lecture, then, Derrida reproduces one of the most common gestures found within academic texts written about the university: the constant reference to "danger from without", and the idea that what is most threatening to the university is always some external logic pressing upon it from the

outside: the economy, the State, journalism, the market, the bureaucracy, neoliberalism, etc. Pierre Bourdieu performs a similar gesture when he opposes heteronomy in favour of autonomy: dangers are always associated with the outside and, accordingly, the internal logic of the academic, or the autonomous rules of the realm of scholarship,[4] are never themselves called into question.

These interventions by Derrida or Bourdieu constitute formidable epistemological obstacles undermining the interrogation of academic power. They exteriorize forms of censorship and obscure the constrictive effects of academic norms themselves. To proffer an image of the university as a space of freedom is to render its internal forms of censorship invisible. It is to confuse freedom with obedience to powers that are not explicitly identified.

4. It seems to me that if we want to critique the university, we should also be wary of the category of the "anti-academic". If we accept the fact that academic norms are historical products, and the result of relations of force, we should therefore reject any ahistorical definition of academia. The university doesn't have an essence. Yet if we refer to critics of the contemporary university as "anti-academics", this suggests an understanding of current and historically situated academic norms as embodying a sort of universal essence. For to critique these norms is not necessarily to attack the university as such. Rather, it is to critique a certain version of the university on behalf of another possible ideal.

If the university labels any criticism of itself as "anti-academic", it means it is incapable of grasping the historicity and variability of academic norms: it forecloses history and fails to understand that what the academy is now can, at any given moment, cease to be, and what it hasn't been in the past, it can, at any moment, become. The ethics of knowledge that we currently refer to as "anti-academic" may well be adopted in a transformed university and, one day, themselves become "academic".

In place of this academic/anti-academic opposition, we should advocate the idea that different concepts of work and research, different figurations of the author, and thus different representation of the kind of university that are possible confront each other on the cultural field.

5. If we want to undertake a lucid examination of the university, we must break with the habit of conceiving the university as a site of freedom. We must be honest about the nature of the academic field. It is false to claim the university is principally a site of dissidence and experimentation. It is not, and it never has been — and for very good reasons. As legal

scholar Robert Post aptly reminds us in his analyses of academic freedom, academic freedom is not the same thing as free speech. In fact, it is precisely the opposite. The university excludes and censors as a matter of principle. The university's job is to block certain discourses, exclude what is false or misleading, while sorting acceptable utterances in a hierarchical order. Whereas free speech protects freedom and pluralism, the task of the university is to protect scholarship, knowledge, and truth.

It is precisely this role that the university performs when scholars prevent the teaching of creationism, for example. And so when, a few weeks ago, protesters at the University of California at Berkeley prevented a lecture by an extreme right-wing ideologue associated with Donald Trump, this was not a breach of the principle of academic freedom: it is, in fact, its very definition. University authorities at Berkeley were perfectly correct when they said the protests were contrary to the principle of free speech. But the protests were not contrary to the requirements of academic freedom, which precisely assigns the university the role of censoring discourses that are false, violent, or otherwise unacceptable.

A clear understanding of the university can thus only proceed by inverting Derrida's proposition. The university is, as a matter of principle, a place of censorship. We spend almost all our time censoring, evaluating, excluding, ordering, and ranking. Of course, it is important to emphasize that a critique of the university that is based on the assertion that it is a space of censorship does not necessarily mean one is in favor of censorship. There are good forms of censorship, and there are also bad forms of censorship. Conceptualizing the university as a place of censorship is merely the initial condition for rationally analyzing its modes of censorship and interrogating its values, its rationality, and its relevance. While it may sound very nice to say the university is a space of freedom and autonomy, it prevents us from seeing the nature of academic power, which in turn guarantees these powers will remain intact.

6. If the idea of the university as a site of discussion has meaning, then interrogating the mode of censorship that organizes its production of knowledge is not an attack "on the university" but, on the contrary, an exercise of academic reason that merely takes itself as its object.

It is for this reason that, one could argue, "anti-academicism" should be viewed by all of us as the equivalent of an ethical interpellation. It is a discursive space that obliges us to interrogate ourselves: what we are, the reasons why we are who we are, and why we do research as we do. Anti-academicism furnishes us with an occasion to distance ourselves

from ourselves and denaturalize academic norms. It keeps us from falling victim to inertia. It's a force that opens the university to historical transformation.

Personally, I've always been struck by the attitude that perceives anti-academicism as something that should be kept at a distance. In my opinion, anti-academicism must be taken seriously: what, for example, does the critique of specialization, of scholarship, or of so-called "useless" research really mean? What kinds of aspirations are at play within those discourses that critique the growing gap between the academic field and the wider public? What does it mean to denounce esotericism, jargon, bad writing, or sophistication? How should we understand critiques of routine, and of academic austerity?

Questions of this nature are often formulated in a manner that tries to shock and provoke. They are very often articulated in a populist or anti-intellectual register. But at the same time, they also contain questions that should challenge us.

To put it more generally, we should assert that anti-academicism is not something external to the university. It is an interrogation against which all authors must always be measured and to which they must be able to respond. No matter the field, we always inherit institutional models of the scholar's life. These are forms that are imposed upon us and predetermine the modalities through which we live our lives. But we should not accept the fact that our lives will be determined by forms that we never challenge. Academic forms are historical — they are the result of power relations. And because authorship is by definition autonomous, it demands that we always question who we are and what kinds of platforms sustain our lives.

In other words, for an author to fail to assume an anti-academic attitude would be tantamount to basing a rational approach to life on a platform of blind submission to institutional forms, and a gesture that simply accepts the world as it is. As Adorno and Horkheimer often argued, if we do not submit academic institutions to political critique, then we simply accept forms that were constructed by history, and we mechanically contribute to the reproduction of the system.

7. I would like to consider an example that illustrates the necessity of being open to anti-academicism and the importance of letting ourselves be challenged by it. It's a classic example that touches on issues such as the circulation of work and writing and the dissemination of knowledge.

In a famous article on the topic of the contemporary university,[5] Peter Sloterdijk argues that one of the most important phenomena to consider when trying to understand the contemporary academic field is the existence of what he calls a "non-reading pact":

"No academic will deny it: the time has come to complete the theory of the implicit reader with the theory of the implicit non-reader. This situation is more or less evident in the fact that between 98% and 99% of all the texts produced within universities are written with the expectation, justified or not, of a partial or total non-reading of these texts."

When writing a text, the vast majority of researchers address an "implicit non-reader". They publish "without hope of reception". This cannot fail to have serious consequences for contemporary academic ethics.

Remarks such as these are often perceived to be "anti-academic". They are disqualified as populist or anti-intellectual. In France, we also speak of "poujadisme".

Yet there is also something of value here. There is a demand and a preoccupation we should listen to — and perhaps, especially today.

For example, should we not posit a connection between the ever-growing disconnection of American academia from the general public and the rise of conservative or reactionary ideologies in public space and in the media? In a country where someone like Donald Trump was elected, we cannot simply carry on like before. We must interrogate the forms and images of knowledge. When one travels to the United States, there is something shocking about these campuses that are all but reserved for the bourgeoisie and are surrounded by black ghettos and poor white neighbourhoods. The more the university and its research close in on themselves, the more feelings of dispossession and cultural violence the university produces amongst those it excludes. It is as if the walls of the university are telling those outside "this is not for you", or "what we are doing here is against you". Not surprisingly, these excluded populations begin to nurture anti-intellectual passions that fuel an insurrection against what they call the "system" or the "establishment": if the institutions that embody reason and progressivism are exclusionary, this necessarily leads to a rejection of reason and progressivism by those on the outside.

In the same manner, and particularly in a country where Trump was elected, is there not good reason to transform the way we write and the way we conduct research, in an attempt to become more visible and more connected with the "public"?

Of course, my aim here is not merely to denounce the incomprehensibility of academic texts, the fact that they are difficult to read, or condemn restricted circuits of publication and circulation. For there are many ways not to be read, or to be read very little. There are different reasons for creating a restricted public — good and bad reasons alike. In any case, the history of the 20th century does not support the argument that the most advanced works in various fields of knowledge were those that, initially, encountered a limited public. In fact, the reverse is often true: consider, for instance, the work of Lévi-Strauss, Bourdieu, Foucault, etc. or, more recently, *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander on segregation and mass incarceration in the US.

We cannot disregard the importance of questioning the way we do research and our modes of writing and publishing. Because writing is a form of active involvement, every author, as I argued in my last book, *Penser dans un monde mauvais*, must necessarily reflect on the ways his or her practice is potentially complicit with systems of power. It is thus important to interrogate academic research from the perspective of its effects and evaluate the routine forms of a global system of academic production that is becoming increasingly autarkic: what is the use of writing reports or articles and spending months or years working on texts that no one may read? Is this an ethically adequate solution? Nothing could be less certain. This is why it is more interesting to include — in our potential forms of writing, publication, and methods of evaluation — a preoccupation with doing something that offers gains that are worth the cost. Could we not question the way we write? Why, for example, do we value peer-reviewed articles in journals more highly than books?

Whenever we embark on a project, we should pose the following question: will this work do something for somebody somewhere or is it merely another academic game, a form of amusement, or something that wastes resources that could be better used elsewhere? It is worth asking: what is the goal of all of these efforts? Will it be worth the cost? What's the point?

Even Foucault, after all, asked these sorts of questions when he called for a break with what he referred to as "the great brotherhood of useless erudition" — in other words, those individuals who "profess knowledge for nothing" and write books that "are closed up and go to sleep on the shelf as soon as they are printed".[6] He thus declared that his goal when writing was not to satisfy professional historians: "Everything I do, I do to serve a purpose."[7]

8. Even a passing knowledge of intellectual history is sufficient to tell us that there are very

good reasons to critique the university. But this same knowledge of intellectual history also tells us that we should be wary of anti-academicism, as well. One of the central challenges faced by any author is managing this ever-present tension. One must keep a certain distance from the academic power structure, its disciplinary norms, and its institutional orthodoxies, without adopting a position of externality in relation to the university and the research undertaken there. How does one pose radical questions to the university without slipping into a mode of negativity in relation to academic production? How do we critique the university without falling short of academic standards, without undermining rigor? What would it mean to make critical *and* productive use of anti-academicism?

9. Every original author has, at some point in their lives, posed this question to themselves. When we read the narrative trajectories of the great names of the contemporary period, the university almost always appears as an obstacle that has to be overcome in order to produce truly innovative work and to think freely. When we look at authors as diverse as Barthes and Lévi-Strauss, Derrida and Bourdieu, Foucault and Deleuze, etc., we find the same desire to achieve some degree of freedom from academic norms. I'm only offering French examples here because it's my field of expertise, but I'm sure it's possible to find equivalents elsewhere — consider Walter Benjamin, for instance, or Norbert Elias, Richard Hoggart, E.P. Thompson...

Bourdieu claimed to have developed as an author through "a clean break with the vanity of all things academic"[8] and against "institutional power, and especially against the institution of the university and all the violence, imposture, and sanctified stupidity that it concealed — and, behind that institution, against the social order".[9] Michel Foucault wrote that what was "decisive" in his intellectual "formation" was his ability to "shift in relation to his academic education". His principle concern was "not to become a historian of philosophy like his professors."[10] For Foucault, the "most important" authors were those who helped him develop a relationship to knowledge and intellectual activity that was different from that which the university provided as a model. In Foucault's view, Nietzsche, Bataille, and Blanchot "were not philosophers in the institutional sense of the term", and they allowed him to "free himself from the great philosophical machinery that one learns at the university".[11] Gilles Deleuze also attacked the "great academic machine". He often spoke of the way in which "a scholasticism worse than the Middle Ages" reigned at the Sorbonne in the 1950s. Like Foucault, Deleuze drew a sharp contrast between academic philosophy — which, as he put it, constituted a "formidable school of intimidation" in which professors declare themselves the "heads" of a "court of reason" and "prevent people from thinking" — to authors who, inversely, provided him with the means to break out of the academic

apparatus and learn to philosophize. These authors, for Deleuze, embodied an "anti-Sorbonne" that was infinitely more inspiring. (It was, notably, Jean-Paul Sartre that Deleuze often thinks of: "Sartre," as Deleuze put it, "was our outside").[12] And, finally, we might also mention Jacques Derrida. Derrida often asserted that, in his view, the invention of new rules for reading, interpreting, and writing can only develop in a "sort of retreat, or solitude", from academic tradition.[13] Derrida thus thought that the development of his work and the elaboration of his project required a "turning away" from university "belonging": "I was increasingly moving away from a concern for recognition by academic authorities."[14] Derrida did not, for this reason, submit a thesis — and neither did Pierre Bourdieu.

10. The work of authors such as Foucault, Bourdieu, or Derrida have not only redefined academic norms but also the fundamental concepts of a variety of disciplines and our modes of writing in both the social sciences and philosophy. Examples such as these are especially important, insofar as they demonstrate the possibility of establishing a distinction between a rigorous critique of the university and mere anti-intellectualism or anti-academic rhetoric.

There is, to be sure, an anti-intellectual anti-academicism. But anti-academicism is not necessarily a negative thing: there is an anti-academicism deployed on behalf of values like knowledge, reason, scholarship, and philosophy.

I would like to illustrate what could be one such instance of a positive anti-academicism by first discussing the question of academic disciplines. For whenever one critiques the university, one of the fundamental themes, and one of the fundamental projects that we should always take up, again and again, is the question of the disciplinary organization of the production of knowledge. While the university is structured around the idea of disciplines and disciplinary communities, authors like Foucault, Bourdieu, and Derrida always expressed a certain exteriority in relation to disciplinary circuits and even a rejection of disciplinary identities. We could cite, for example, Foucault's declaration in 1967 that he found it "difficult" to classify his research "within philosophy or the humanities". We could also mention Derrida who, in 1992, asserted that his texts belong neither in the literary register nor the philosophical register. And in multiple texts Bourdieu affirmed that he defines his work in relation to the entirety of the social sciences, and he refuses to be confined to sociology, ethnology, or philosophy.

This refusal of disciplinary socialization is not a trivial gesture. It is a powerful statement. It is a declaration of autonomy. It is a matter of refusing to allow one's mental space of

thought to be delimited by the academic institution, by academic titles — and therefore, in fact, by the state. It is an affirmation of one's right to choose one's own interlocutors and one's own mental space: it is a matter of deciding whether the process of interlocution will address a theoretical or political question, rather than an institutional one. It is also a way of giving oneself an autonomous definition of what one does (archaeology, grammatology) instead of subsuming one's activity under a generic category. The refusal of disciplinary socialization is a way of using the value of autonomy, which the university is supposed to protect, against the university itself or against a certain version of it. And perhaps we could find here a possible definition of what could be a positive anti academicism: to use the values of the university against the academic organisation itself, to make a contentious use and perhaps even a kind of revolutionary use of traditional values.

Towards an Ethics of Truth

11. I would like to conclude by concentrating on a more general issue. I believe that if we want to develop a contemporary ethic of knowledge by critiquing the university, we must, above all, deconstruct a very powerful and mystifying rhetoric that establishes an identity between the university and rigor, serious research, or scholarship, and which passes strictly academic norms off as the constraints or norms of "scholarship" or "science". In France, for example — but I know this is true in other countries, too — the term "scientific" is regularly employed as if it were a synonym for "academic". We do not, for instance, speak of academic journals but of "scientific journals"; not of academic articles but of "scientific articles"; not of academic conferences but of "scientific conferences"; and not of academic communities but of "scientific communities". This is true in physics, mathematics, but also in sociology, history, the humanities, etc. Even in other countries, where this identification of "science", and "the university" may not hold, the term "academic" itself connotes positive value. It does not merely denote sites of publication or one's professional identity but, when applied to a text, the term "academic" mechanically endows a text with truth: it is understood to have been produced rigorously or in a scholarly manner and meeting criteria of seriousness and rigor, and this necessarily sets it apart from other discourses circulating in the social world that lack this perceived quality. By identifying "scholarship" with "academic organization", the university is able to equate its critique with the critique of scholarship. The university can thereby shield itself from critique by denouncing any criticism as relativism, dilettantism, etc.

The identification of the university and scholarship, or rigor, or seriousness, leads to a transformation of our very concepts of truth, research, and knowledge. The university is an

institution, and it accordingly imposes a specific framework on research. There are a certain number of values that make academic work possible: discussion with colleagues in one's field, collective work, respect for disciplinary norms, etc. There are also a limited number of established venues for publication, especially when it comes to academic journals. This specific academic organization of production and dissemination of work can, of course, be justified. But instead of seeing it as simply a means of achieving the production of knowledge, it often becomes an end in itself. A fetish of titles and forms prevails in the university. To respect academic limitations becomes a synonym for "doing serious research". Through such obedience, the subject is marked as a part of academic space, and the subject's discourse is coded as a legitimate contribution to scholarly debate. Within the university, in both the social sciences and humanities, a *formal* evaluation of discourse is often substituted for an *internal* and *substantive* evaluation of them. Put differently, the recognition of "truth", or the "scholarly" status of its production, is less a matter of its own characteristics and more about its compatibility with established institutional frameworks.

As William James wrote in "The Ph.D. Octopus", a fetish for academic titles leads to "the transfer of accredited value from essential manhood to an outward badge".[15] Within the university, an evaluation of external signs tends to replace an evaluation of contents, and of individuals. By generalizing James' observation, it is possible to state the following proposition: titles, rhetoric, citations, publication venues, authorial status, habitus, style, etc.: all these elements become the external signs of scholarly veracity, and they grant texts passage into the realm of scholarship, regardless of their content. In any institution, there is a tendency to transfer the value of a discourse from its internal content to the outward signs of institutional conformity, and to confuse the values of objectivity with the value of submission.

12. If the university wants to be a place of truth, of research, it must open up to the plurality of forms, modes of enunciation, and the methods by which truth is produced in the world. Truth can arise both outside the university and in confrontation with it, and it often does so in unforeseen and unrecognized forms. To be "outside" the academic field is not the same as being "outside" research. The great collective mobilizations and social movements of history — such as the workers movement, feminism, the civil rights and postcolonial movements, and the gay, lesbian, and transgender movements — all these movements have greatly transformed academic research and truth, through both their practice and discourse, by offering new perspectives, asking new questions, and constituting new objects of knowledge.

We could, finally, mention one particularly striking example: passages from the *Discourse on Colonialism*, in which Aimé Césaire gives expression to the disgust that the theories of historians, sociologists, or psychologists inspire in him, and in which he denounces their false objectivity, their chauvinism, their racism, their views on primitivism, their insistence on the characteristics of non-Whites, etc. Césaire's discourse is, of course, true, but it is expressed in a non-academic form. But more importantly, the texts he denounced were considered to be scholarly contributions because they conformed to academic norms. And because Césaire's text did not take on the trappings of the academic form, it was considered to be "political" or merely an essay, despite the fact that its internal content contained greater knowledge than the texts it denounced. A question thus arises: who should be given a position within the university? Which discourses should belong to academic space? Who is permitted to speak the truth — Césaire, or the racist anthropologists he denounced? Does the truth come from a manifesto or from those who write academic articles? The answer, of course, is from Césaire!

13. An ethic of works and of truth should thus arise from this affirmation: truth emerges from a plurality of forms, from different ways of looking and seeking, and from different modes of writing, and one must be attentive and open to this diversity.

Pursuing a politics of truth should, therefore, compel us *not* to defend the contemporary academic framework, but rather to dismantle it. It would, perhaps, be interesting to consider whether or not we should be trying to "de-institutionalize" the university, in order to resist its fetishism of academic forms — especially since this fetishism produces a reductionist definition of "serious research", of "rigor", of "quality work", of "scholarship", one which is based on conformity with institutional norms rather than truth.

14. I realize there is reluctance to adopt the ideas I'm advocating here. There is often a sense that to de-institutionalize the university is to risk opening the university's doors to relativism. But, in my opinion, I think it is somewhat strange to say that truth needs to be certified in order to be "true". Truth is truth: it affirms itself. It doesn't have to be certified, it only needs to be recognized. And we need to fight to impose the truth against lies, errors, and ideologies. Accordingly, the value that should be placed at the heart of contemporary research should be autonomy and authenticity. Radicalizing the value of autonomy would lead us toward an appreciation of gestures, and of works in themselves, as opposed to a mode of evaluation that privileges conformity to pre-established rules, norms, etc. This project would be a *productive* anti-academicism. An anti-academicism of knowledge, of the avant-garde, that resists the capture of science, scholarship, or research by the academic

institution.

Translated by Matt MacLellan.

Endnoten

1. I want to thank Philipp Felsch and Hanna Engelmeier very much for their invitation. It's a great honour for me to give the keynote address at this conference.

2. Jacques Derrida, The Future of the Profession or the University without Condition (thanks to the "Humanities" what *could take place* tomorrow), in: Jacques Derrida and the Humanities. A Critical Reader, hrsg. v. Tom Cohen, Cambridge 2001, S. 26.

3. Ebd., S. 25.

4. This version of the English text uses the terms "scholarship" or "research" and "scholarly" or "academic", rather than "science" or "scientific", reflecting the fact that in English, in contrast to French or German, "science" generally refers to the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the formal sciences but not to the humanities. One aspect of relevant terminological differences is briefly addressed below (point 11).

5. Peter Sloterdijk, Plagiat universitaire: le pacte de non-lecture, in: Le Monde, 28.1.2012. [Für eine deutsche Fassung vgl. Peter Sloterdijk, Der Heilige und der Hochstapler. Von der Krise der Wiederholung in der Moderne, o. O. 2012, S. 18; d. Red.]

6. Michel Foucault, Il faut défendre la société. Cours du Collège de France 1976, Paris 1997, S. 6–7. [Für eine deutsche Fassung vgl. Michel Foucault, Vorlesung vom 7. Januar 1976, in: ders., Schriften in vier Bänden – Dites et Ecrits, Bd. III: 1976–1979, hrsg. v. Daniel Defert und François Ewald unter Mitarb. v. Jacques Lagrange, übers. v. Michael Bischoff, Hans-Dieter Gondek, Hermann Kocyba und Jürgen Schröder, Frankfurt am Main 2003, S. 213–231, hier S. 214; d. Red.]

7. Michel Foucault, Entretien avec Michel Foucault, in: ders., Dits et Ecrits, Bd. II, Paris 2001, S. 912.

8. Pierre Bourdieu, Esquisse pour une auto-analyse, Paris 2004, S. 93.

9. Pierre Bourdieu, Choses Dites, Paris 1987, S. 14.

10. Michel Foucault, Entretien avec Michel Foucault, in: ders., Dits et Ecrits, Bd. II, Paris 2001, S. 861–862.

11. Ebd.

12. Gilles Deleuze, Dialogues, Paris 1977, S. 17–20.

13. Jacques Derrida, Ponctuations. Le temps d'une thèse, in: Ders., Du droit à la philosophie, Paris 1990, S. 448.

14. Ebd., S. 453.

15. William James, The Ph.D. Octopus, in: The Harvard Monthly 36 (1903), 1, S. 1–9, hier S. 4.

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