

Research and Teaching: a holy or an unholy alliance?

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Context 1: sociological and policy

- Mass higher education
- Differentiation of mission across institutions
- Knowledge society
- Selectivity in research funding
- Quality audit
- ie, each university has to be 'excellent' in T but not in R
- So: 'teaching universities'

Context 2: philosophical & historical

- Part of the idea of the university that R and T are inseparable
- Assumption that R informs T and (less strongly) that T informs R
- The university is essentially a site of critical knowing; of systematic inquiry
- R and T are but two aspects of such critical inquiry
- The western university tradition: Von Humboldt; USA; UK

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The myth of an idea

- Until recently (1950s), even Oxford was primarily a teaching institution; and on some measures all universities are still primarily teaching institutions.
- On the other hand, research has become the dominant ideology in universities: prestige, identity, economic capital
- Far from supporting each other, R and T are pulling apart; universities in the UK have separate R and L&T strategies;
- Successful researchers buy themselves out of teaching; the reverse doesn't happen.
- Within departments, R and T are in tension: student research-oriented staff for they are often absent, even as academic globetrotters
- Contrasting identities arise for researchers and for teachers.

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Research and teaching: relationships in practice

6 relationships:

- R supports T
- T supports R
- T and R are mutually supportive
- T and R are separate
- T and R are antipathetic, with T dominant
- R and T are antipathetic, with R dominant

All these relationships can be found, within a single university; and many can be found within a single department.

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R supports T

Again, different relationships:

- The academic staff are researchers and see their T as a space in which to project and disseminate their R
- T is an activity in which to imbue students with their values and perspectives of R
- T is an activity in which students come to understand and the latest R by exposure to recent R papers; but the academics are themselves 'doing that R'
- T is an activity in which students assist academic staff with the academics' own R
- T is an activity in which students conduct their own R

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Some questions

When we say that R supports T, is it that:

- the academics are teaching on R that they are currently conducting?
 - or that the academics are teaching on R that they have conducted?
 - or that the academics are teaching on R that other academics in the same U have conducted?
 - or that the academics are teaching on R that other academics somewhere are conducting?
 - or that the academics are teaching on R that other academics somewhere have conducted?
 - and is the R content or process or culture?
- ie the claim that R does or should inform T is inherentlyly ambiguous.

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Nevertheless we shall meet

- T is inherently more complex than R
 - For it involves R in some way but goes beyond it
 - T has its own demands – of promoting learning; of engaging with students; of enabling students to make progress
 - T is now attracting interest in its own right
 - For too long, T has been seen simply as an adjunct of R
 - Now, university teaching is on the point of becoming a new profession
 - So perhaps T and R should be kept apart, conceptually and practically? (and some universities are doing this, separating academic labour.)
- hedifferent forms of

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A holy or an unholy alliance?

- The idea of the university calls for *some* kind of positive relationship between R and T
- They offer a holy alliance in the realisation of *the* university
- But in practice they may form an unholy alliance
- For R may actually damage T (R becoming an ideologue *y*)
- And T may diminish R

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Towards a feasible utopia

- A feasible utopia – we shall probably never see it *but* it is possible
- So what might a new set of relationships between R & T look like – that might be utopian but still is feasible?
- - a set of relationships that enable R and T both to flourish without impeding the other, if not actually support each other (for that latter might be hoping for too much).

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Spaces of the university

- Let us conceive of R and T as spaces in the university
- Two questions: how have R & T been as spaces?
- How might they be?
- The relationship between R & T varies across institutions and disciplines – in practice, one has tended to occlude the other (hide it from view)
- But perhaps more positive relationships might be possible.

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Complex spaces

- Overlapping spaces but visible
- Interacting, liquid spaces
- R and T – themselves complexes of spaces
- T: pedagogical space; curricular space
- R: Research but also
- Scholarly, reflective space
- Engaged space – Research active in the world (Mode 3)
- Intellectual and discursive space

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Supercomplex spaces

- The supercomplex university is a university in which principles are continually interrogated
- The spaces that comprise this university are continually in-the-making.
- Nothing is frozen, or inert or exhibits discursive power/ideology, seeking to dominate (science/religion/bureaucracy/...)
- This is a university that welcomes difference – of thought, of action, of identity
- R&T are continually on the move; new patterns, new shapes, new engagements
- - as the university and society come to new accommodations with each other
- Seeing R&T as clusters of activities can help to reshape and realise a new university in the modern age

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Wisdom – a unifying idea?

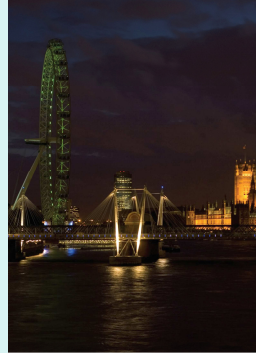
- A number of unifying ideas have been offered: 'learning'; 'inquiry'; 'criticality'; 'scholarship'; 'intellectual love'
- Perhaps 'wisdom'?
- 'Wisdom' – a capacity to step outside of one's immediate frame of reference and bring other perspectives to bear
- Both R and T are paths to wisdom? Both are utopian ideas.
- But, even if this is the case, what then?
- Nothing follows from the observation
- Except that the idea of wisdom offers us a guiding light in moving forward: no one idea/principle but multiple ideas and possibilities to provide multiple perspectives; multiple identities.

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Conclusion

- The university is in need of new thinking
- A new conception of the relationship between R&T can help
- Seeing R&T as liquid shapes
- The university is a set of fluid and expanding shapes, finding new internal and external patterns
- In this way, the university may yet be reborn.

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