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Higher Education & Academic Administration: Current Crises Long Since Foretold

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The current crises in education are indeed acute, though they have been long in the making, with clear analysis and evidence of their development and pending problems over the past 150 years! – evident in this concise chronological bibliography:

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- Randy Schekman, 'How journals like *Nature*, *Cell* and *Science* are damaging science'. *The Guardian* Mon 9. Dec 2013;¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/dec/09/how-journalsnature-science-cell-damage-science>.
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The CENTRAL AIMS OF EDUCATION, especially higher education, I explicate and defend in:

Westphal, Kenneth R., 2012. 'Norm Acquisition, Rational Judgment & Moral Particularism'. *Theory & Research in Education* 10.1:3–25; DOI: 10.1177/1477878512437477.

¹ Randy Schekman is Professor of biochemistry at the University of California, Berkeley; he, James Rothman and Thomas Südhof were jointly awarded the 2013 Nobel Prize for physiology or medicine.

² *Editor's Note* – Ironically and appropriately, given the topic of this article, our Digital Editor is unable to render Cyrillic text on any of the computers in the SERRC office in Toronto. These technical difficulties constitute another reason to read Dr. Westphal's original pdf copy.

³ Ferrini (2015), O'Neill (2015) and Scott (2015) appear in a special issue, titled *per* Ferrini's editorial introduction; *Humanities* is sponsored by the Academia Europaea, now published with open access by MDPI (Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute, Basel); previously published by Cambridge University Press.

⁴ Published by the US National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health: National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI).

———, 2016. ‘Back to the 3 R’s: Rights, Responsibilities & Reasoning’. *SATS – Northern European Journal of Philosophy* 17.1:21–60; DOI: 10.1515/sats-2016-0008.

On CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION for survival, see:

Randall Curren and Ellen Metzger, 2017. *Living Well Now and in the Future: Why Sustainability Matters*. Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press.

Randall Curren and Charles Dorn, forthcoming. *Patriotic Education in a Global Age*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Though the latter title begins nationally, addressing proper patriotism, their thinking, analysis and recommendations are international and cosmopolitan; they write for a very global age in which we are all involved, however (un)wittingly, however (un)willingly, however (un)wisely.

On the necessity of liberal arts education also for technical disciplines, see:

Carnegie Mellon University, College of Engineering, General Education Requirements for [Graduating] Classes 2016 and Later:
<https://engineering.cmu.edu/education/undergraduate-programs/curriculum/general-education/index.html>

On ‘BIBLIOMETRICS’ and journal ‘impact factor’, see:

Brembs, Björn, Katherine Button and Marcus Munafò, 2013. ‘Deep impact: unintended consequences of journal rank’. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 7.291:1–12; DOI: 10.3389/fnhum.2013.00291.

Moustafa, Khaled, 2015. ‘The Disaster of the Impact Factor’. *Science and Engineering Ethics* 21: 139–142; DOI: 10.1007/s11948-014-9517-0.

PloS Medicine Editorial, 2006. ‘The impact factor game. It is time to find a better way to assess the scientific literature’. *PLoS Medicine* 3.6, e291.

Ramin, Sadeghi, and Alireza Sarraf Shirazi, 2012. ‘Comparison between Impact factor, SCImago journal rank indicator and Eigenfactor score of nuclear medicine journals’. *Nuclear Medicine Review* 15.2:132–136; DOI: 10.5603/NMR.2011.00022.

There simply is *no* substitute for informed, considered judgment. All the attempts to circumvent, replace or subvert proper judgments and proper judgment raise the question: who benefits from all the speed-up, distraction and over-load, and how do they benefit? And conversely: who loses out from all the speed-up, distraction and over-load, and how so?

P.S.: AHRENS (1870, *v-x*) Mahnung, uns umfaßend mit der Gesamtheit der Gesellschaft sowie der internationalen bzw. inter-kulturellen Verhältnissen, und nicht nur mit den besonderen Aufgaben unserer Gesellschaftsfraktion bzw. -gruppe, zu beschäftigen, wird nicht durch bloße Ablehnung seiner vielleicht religiösen Auffassung unserer „gesamten göttlich-menschlichen Lebens- und Culturordnung“ (a.a.O, S. ix) entgangen. Seine Mahnung gilt gar ohne Milderung schon hinsichtlich unseres Hanges, den Eigen- bzw.

Fraktionsinteressen Vorrang übers Gemeinwohl beizulegen, ohne sich zu besinnen, daß das Gemeinwohl auch die eigene Teilhabe daran miteinbeschließt. Die übliche Betonung der eng-konzipierten Zweckerationalität verdammt uns zur gegenseitigen, sei's auch unabsichtlichen Beieinträchtigung, am Mindestens durch Tragik der Allmende.

* * *



Herrad von LANDSBERG, 'Septem artes liberales', Hortus deliciarum (1180).
<http://www.plosin.com/work/Hortus.html>

Philosophy, the Queen, sits in the center of the circle. The three heads extending from her crown represent Ethics, Logic and Physics, the three parts of the teaching of philosophy. The streamer held by Philosophy reads: All wisdom comes from God; only the wise can achieve what they desire. Below Philosophy, seated at desks, are Socrates and Plato. The

texts which surround them state that they taught first ethics, then physics, then rhetoric; that they were wise teachers; and that they inquired into nature of all things.

From Philosophy emerge seven streams, three on the right and four on the left. According to the text these are the seven liberal arts, inspired by the Holy Spirit: grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. The ring containing the inner circle reads: I, Godlike Philosophy, control all things with wisdom; I lay out seven arts which are subordinate to me. Arrayed around the circle are the liberal arts. Three correspond to the rivers which emerge from Philosophy on the right and are concerned with language and letters: grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic. Together they comprise the trivium. The four others form the quadrivium, arts which are concerned with the various kinds of harmony: music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy.

Each of the seven arts holds something symbolic, and each is accompanied by a text displayed on the arch above it. Grammar (12:00) holds a book and a whip. The text reads: Through me all can learn what are the words, the syllables, and the letters.

Rhetoric (2:00) holds a tablet and stylus. The text reads: Thanks to me, proud speaker, your speeches will be able to take strength.

Dialectic (4:00) points with a one hand and holds a barking dog's head in the other. The text reads: My arguments are followed with speed, just like the dog's barking.

Music (5:00) holds a harp, and other instruments are nearby. The text reads: I teach my art using a variety of instruments.

Arithmetic (7:00) holds a cord with threaded beads, like a rudimentary abacus. The text reads: I base myself on the numbers and show the proportions between them.

Geometry (9:00) holds a staff and compass. The text reads: It is with exactness that I survey the ground.

Astronomy (11:00) points heavenward and holds in hand a magnifying lens or mirror. The text reads: I hold the names of the celestial bodies and predict the future.

The large ring around the whole scene contains four aphorisms:

What it discovers is remembered;

Philosophy investigates the secrets of the elements and all things;

Philosophy teaches arts by seven branches;

It puts it in writing, in order to convey it to the students.

Below the circle are four men seated at desks, poets or magicians, outside the pale and beyond the influence of Philosophy. According to the text they are guided and taught by impure spirits and they produce is only tales or fables, frivolous poetry, or magic spells. Notice the black birds speaking to them (the antithesis of the white dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit).

Some Observations on the Current State of Research Evaluation in Philosophy K.R. WESTPHAL (2015)

Although many institutions, whether universities or government ministries, have now in effect mandated publication in 'listed' academic journals, such listings by (*e.g.*) Thompson-Reuters is *only* a subscription service, nothing more, altogether regardless of academic standards or scholarly calibre. Significant publications are those which pass stringent peer review by relevant experts. Unfortunately, the trappings of such procedures – including 'international' editorial offices – are all too easy to imitate or dissemble. Furthermore, due to declining standards in graduate training in philosophy (across the Occident), peer reviewing even at reputable journals and presses is deteriorating significantly.

I know that there are 'listed' journals publishing 'research' papers I would not accept from an undergraduate student. I know that there are 'international' journals which publish materials not deserving the slightest notice. I know there are excellent journals and presses – in particular: by the very best German publishers – which are not 'listed' because those publishers simply do not need those listings, nor their expense. I know that there are highly regarded presses which publish very many good, even excellent items, but also publish spates of mediocre books to make money, and have been doing so for decades. These assertions I can document in detail, if ever details be of interest.

The increasingly common procedure to 'rank' individual research publications by the purported 'rank' of their venue – their press or journal – is in principle and in practice fallacious. There simply is no valid inference from any empirically established 'curve' to the putative value of any single (equally putative) 'data point'. Additionally, no press or journal consistently publishes research falling only within one well-defined calibre; there are excellent pieces of research published in unassuming venues, and there is too much mediocre publication by purportedly leading venues.

I also know that constrictions in funding have led to 'streamlining' graduate training within the field of philosophy (and surmise that this is not at all unique to philosophy), so that less time is spent in graduate studies. Additionally, over-specialisation within the field of philosophy has accelerated the production of mutually irrelevant bits of 'research', each restricted to its own narrow orthodoxy, coupled with a severe decline in methodological sophistication and indeed basic research skills and procedures. The declining calibre of graduate training has, inevitably, had an enormous adverse effect on the calibre of 'professional' refereeing for publication, both by journals and by presses.

Now that we have the technical resources for purely electronic publication, at an enormous savings and economy of distribution in comparison to print media, many publishers are doing their utmost to keep their print media profitable, or to make exorbitant profits from much less expensive electronic publication. Both tendencies are countered, to an extent, by newly established, typically open-access electronic journals. These developments are very welcome and important, and many of these new e-journals are by international standards

high-calibre operations. Nevertheless, it will take time for ‘reputation’ to accrue to genuinely deserving e-journals, and (one hopes) to shake out the mediocre or dishonest pretenders.

One final point which merits emphasis is that the notion of ‘monoglot’ scholarship only arose *ca.* 1950, primarily amongst Anglophones, and was sanctioned by law in only one region (the former Soviet Union). Thirty years ago, scholars working on Ancient Greek philosophy were fluent in the main modern European languages and kept abreast of research published in Greek, German, French and English. Now my German colleagues note that often a German monograph appears on a neglected topic in Ancient Greek philosophy, only to suffer neglect by an English book on the same topic published a decade later. The pitfalls of ‘Eurenglish’ (*e.g.* in Brussels) I shall not detail; we simply must return to teaching, facilitating and expecting mastery of multiple languages.

For these and many other reasons, these are very difficult times for scholarship and for the academy. Accordingly, I am all the more committed to maintaining academic excellence. In this connection and in these regards, I wish to underscore that there simply is NO substitute for the expert assessment of individual pieces of research, whether articles, monographs or collections.

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