



Universities as interpretive communities

Description

If Thomas Eddison thought that the phonograph â??could keep the voices of the dead alive,â?• then what about those new photoconiers that enable you to feed in stacks of A4 sheets of type and deliver processing via OCR, and re-publishing. Dormant publications on brought back to life for circulation on the Internet.



Here are the proceedings of a conference on interpretive

practices within universities dating back to 1993, waiting for the distribution technologies to catch up. Some of the content will have been published again elsewhere. Skimming the document again, itâ??s a cracker, and may even be ahead of its time, considering what goes on in universities now. But then maybe these themes just go round and around. You can download the full searchable PDF here: [Universities as Interpretive Communities](#). Hereâ??s what we said in the introduction. Iâ??ve updated it a bit here.

Coyne , Richard, Adrian Snodgrass, Tony Fry, Paul Redding, Ray Ison, and Anthony Welch (eds). 1993. *Universities as Interpretive Communities: A Two-Day Conference on Interpretation Theory, Education and Authority*. Sydney: The University of Sydney

The philosophy of interpretation (hermeneutics) presents us with the means of understanding how we understand. At its best, interpretation takes place within the context of critical communities engaged actively in the process of sharing and challenging tacit norms and conventions – undeniably an assumed role of university communities. Dialogue and exchange within interpretive communities provides a way of understanding the role and operations of research, education and practice in the intellectual life of universities. According to this view the development and application of professional expertise is engaging, circumspective and dialogical.

The impetus for a hermeneutical account of understanding has been developed, critiqued and extended by philosophers such as Hans-Georg Gadamer, building on the work of Martin Heidegger. It is sustained by contemporary writers such as Richard Rorty, Richard Bernstein, Stanley Fish, Jacques Derrida, Samuel Weber, Jurgen Habermas and others. In a less direct manner these resonances have extended into the natural sciences through Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, and into computer science through the work of Terry Winograd and Fernando Flores.

The emphasis of hermeneutics, while open, may focus around language, culture, aesthetics, the philosophy of science and the bases of social action. Hermeneutics has provided a locus for questioning in every area of human action. This is the case particularly in those areas that struggle with the warring concepts of rational methodology, objectivity, judgement, self expression and creativity. In the conference we explored the implications of these issues on educational practice, the design of curricula, the conduct of research programmes and the exercise of authority in academic, research and professional communities. The conference also touched on the prevailing context of – crisis of foundations – of Western thought, and the future of universities.

Contents

- **Educating as Engaging in Critical Conversations**, Bevis Yaxley, Department of Education, University of Tasmania
- **Dialogue on Two Worlds – The Practice of Architecture Meets the Study of Hermeneutics**, David Week, Department of Architecture, University of Sydney, and Stephen Loo, Department of Architecture, University of Adelaide
- **What the Closet Undergraduate Saw**, Heuristics, Competencies and Credentialling at Academic Conferences, Dean Kiley, Department of Public Health, University of Sydney
- **The Arrogance of Speaking the Error of the University – A Communication to Whom?** Tony Fry et al, EcoDesign Centre and Department of Fine Arts, University of Sydney
- **Text, Pretext and Context: Morphogenetic Hermeneutics**, Otto Reichard, Practicing Psychiatrist
- **Television and the Horizons of Suspicion – A Research Perspective**, Tony Wilson, School of Literature and Journalism, Deakin University
- **The Scope of Architectural Language**, Stuart Arden, Department of Architecture, University of Tasmania, Tony Radford, Department of Architecture, University of Adelaide
- **Hermeneutics, the University and the Letting-Be of Technology**, Adrian Snodgrass, Department of Architecture, University of Sydney
- **½The Interpretive Position**, Johanna de Groot, Social Work, University of New South Wales
- **Alice’s Adventures in Education – About talking Heads and Blue Stockings**, Mary Harvie, School of Social and Policy Studies in Education, University of Sydney

- **Introduction to an Architectural Hermeneutics**, Stephen Frith, New College Institute of Values Research, University of New South Wales
- **Disciplining Architecture â?? Hermeneutics of the Textual Enterprise**, Stephen Loo, Department of Architecture, University of Adelaide
- **The Power of Home for Women Migrants â?? Reflecting on Orthodoxy**, Challenge and Creative Warriorship, Susan Thompson, School of Town Planning, University of New South Wales
- **The Disintegrated Curriculum â?? Hermeneutics and the Four Modes of Professional Education**, Richard Coyne, Department of Architectural and Design Science, University of Sydney
- **Knowledge â?? You Canâ??t Give It Away**, Ray Ison, Department of Crop Sciences, University of Sydney, David Russell, Centre for the Social Ecology of Waste and Water, Univ. of Western Sydney, Lloyd Fell, Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Research Institute

Notes

- Opening quote from Thomas Eddison is via Kahn, Douglas. 2001. *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, p.214.
- See also Snodgrass, Adrian, and Richard Coyne. 2006. *Interpretation in Architecture: Design as a Way of Thinking*. London: Routledge.
- Also see [The reception of architecture](#), [Interpretive communities](#), and [Hermeneutics and ethics](#).



Category

1. Research related

Tags

1. community
2. Gadamer
3. hermeneutics
4. interpretation
5. universities

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