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Abstract

Strategic management is a built-in process for many universities around the world. As part of an encroaching (or perhaps already encroached) facsimile of corporate managerialism, centrally central planned blueprints for success are developed by university managers in the hope of controlling the future. These best laid plans are backed up by all sorts of key performance indicators, measurement systems, reward programmes and so on. The strategic purpose is for a vision of the university to come to be imagined from on high and articulated in the here and now. An unknown future is dragged back into the knowledge of the present, and all these technologies of control are put in place such that this vision becomes tomorrow's reality. The future, it is hubristically believed, can be controlled by the force of managerial power. Research strategy is a core part of this, with academic institutions specifying which areas of research they will support, and honing in the exact outcomes that they expect from academics at an individual level. In this chapter I want to explore a particular dimension of the managerialist turn in academia. Specifically, I will consider the fate of academic freedom in the

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neoliberal university and what this means not just for the future of the university, but also for the future of democracy. Academic freedom has always been closely linked to democracy, especially through Polyani's defence and articulation of it. However, whereas Polyani feared the effects of science being controlled by a totalitarian state, today we are more in danger of academic inquiry being controlled by a totalitarian university. This chapter will consider the pressing issue of academic freedom, following Derrida, through a temporalization that connects an inherited past to a future to come. Academic freedom is less an old reality as much as it is a promise and a commitment. This is a freedom that we have inherited from the democratic tradition of the university and the belief that free inquiry is a central part of social liberty; not just liberty for individual scholars but for society as a whole. This chapter will argue that the neoliberal university is squandering this inheritance, deploying the spoils of knowledge that it has generated in the past for a new set of market- and financially based goals. Where knowledge might once have been thought of as the end, it is now the means to ambitions driven by market and financial rationalities. Despite this managerial recklessness, this chapter will also consider how this inheritance is not yet depleted, and how the values that connect the university with democracy have not (and perhaps cannot) be so easily depleted by the force of management. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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