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On Emotions, Knowledge and Educational Institutions: An Explorative Essay

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Educational institutions are impregnated with feelings. There are innumerable examples of this: the student is carried away by exaltation at new insights, the teacher is subject to unfathomable ennui when faced with routine teaching or senseless administrative tasks, the pupil feels growing unease and anxiety as the finals approach. The researcher can be carried forward by the search for truth or fall into despair over fallacious results or lack of recognition. Schools and universities are furthermore places where the emotional flow appears and is regulated in a communal fashion—in classrooms, lecture halls or seminaries, in school yards, in conference dining rooms or in the corridors of institutions. Veneration can create interpersonal ties, just like envy, contempt and indifference can be repellent forces. Emotions contribute to the coherence of institutions, but they can also lead to their disintegration. They affect identity building and the development of the individual's personality. They produce wellbeing but also illness and suffering.

In this essay I formulate some reflections around the theme feelings and education.[1] I will outline some essential features of the research and will argue that a historical approach to the

[1] Well-aware of the frequent distinction between emotion and feeling in the literature on the topic, I use the terms as synonyms in the following.

subject will contribute by adding nuance to and complementing the often one-sided and misleading discussions that have marked the debate both within and outside of academia. In a subsequent part of the text I will concretise my reasoning by discussing one specific phenomenon from the past. I have chosen *the example of love* and will discuss the function it serves in higher education. The focus of the discussion will alternate between the Swedish context and international perspectives.

Even though emotions are corner stones of the educational system they are often left unmentioned.[2] In many cases they are considered irrelevant by-products.[3] But the last decades have witnessed a change in attitude.[4] More and more attention has focused on the importance of emotions. Within disciplines such as pedagogics, psychology and sociology researchers have shown growing interest in the part played by emotions in, for example, learning processes and educational situation. [5] Different ideas about emotions as knowledge in its own right have also been formulated and gained resonance.[6] The empirical research that started in the 1930s—and which among other things discussed students' ways of handling tension when faced with finals—has furthermore expanded in a multitude of new directions.[7] Today more than one thousand studies have been

[2] Se for example O'Loughlin, 1997, p. 404ff for a further account.
[3] Hereto compare for instance the discussion in Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2012, p. 259f.
[4] This change in turn is partly connected to a general development often refered to as the *affecive turn* in the humanities and social sciences. Hereto see for example Ticineto Clough, 2007.
[5] For an overview over research dealing with the role of emotions in academia, see Christenson, Reschly and Wylie 2012.
[6] The perhaps most well-known are Martha Nussbaums ideas on the topic. Se for example Nussbaum, 2001. In this essay I refrain from discussing such ideas further.
[7] For an insight into this research and its approach to the role of emotions in academic student performance see Pekrun, Goetz and Titz, 2002.

published, at least according to a recent estimate.[8] Over the last decennium, several scholarly journals have dedicated voluminous theme issues to the relationship between feelings and education.[9] The subject matter has also been the focus of anthologies, conferences and monographs.[10]

Viewed from one perspective, the newly awakened interest seems understandable and legitimate. Certainly human emotional life's close interrelation with and integration into the knowledge-acquiring process has always been present in pedagogic thinking. Each and every teacher has also, since the emergence of the first educational institutions, experienced and dealt with both his of her own emotions and those of others. At the same time many theories and practices in the field of education—not least during the twentieth century—have lacked elaborated and sufficient thinking about the emotional.[11] When the understanding of the importance of this dimension grows it is easy to be complacent about the development.

But critical questions must still be raised. In fact, even a cursory look at the growing literature reveals controversial issues. For as it turns out, many of the published works appear to be related to management concerns, which have gained an increasingly strong position in the educational policies of the Western world. The research has often—implicitly or explicitly—emphasised an instrumental attitude to emotions. They are seen merely as

[8] Pekrun, 2014, p. 6.
[9] See Schulz and Pekrun, 2007b p. xiii; Day and Chi-Kin Lee, 2011, p. 1. Examples of theme issues are found in *Educational Psychologist* (2002), *Learning and Instruction* (2005) and *Teaching and Teacher Education* (2006).
[10] An important anthology is Schulz and Pekrun, 2007a. Se also Newberry, Gallant and Riley, 2013; Schulz and Zembylas, 2009. Monographs worth mentioning are Boler, 2005; Zembylas, 2005.
[11] This is—to mention three examples—lergely true for the various forms of essentialism and perennialism, as well as partly for the progressivistic understanding of learning and educational institutions.

useful tools in pedagogical reform work.[12] In many cases one has advocated what might be called *emotion management*, techniques that educational authorities, school principals, bureaucrats and teachers can and should use in order to reach their objectives.[13] Frictionless normality, a well-developed ability to conform, constant flexibility and goal-oriented, rational creativity are considered desirable qualities that should be promoted in both teachers and students through emotion management. Notable examples are the pedagogic ideals that have emerged in connection with the notion of so-called emotional intelligence (EI). These gained great influence in many quarters from the mid 1990s and onward while at the same time they were subjected to recurrent criticism.[14] The advocates of pedagogical solutions based on EI thought that people should be provided with special emotional competence, so that they would become responsible and productive members of society.

The interest in the role played by emotions in education is thus often tied to an implicit or explicit wish to streamline and to acquire effective instruments for governing.[15] The growing production of knowledge about the relations between learning, emotions and institutions furthermore appears often to be tied to dreams of economic growth and safeguarded welfare. By gaining greater insight into the importance of emotions for teachers and students researchers, politicians and administrators expect to promote creativity and prepare the way for growing

[12] See fo example the critical discussions in Zembylas and Fendler, 2001, especially p. 320ff; Oplatka, 2009.
[13] In this respect, the educational system is part of an all-embracing change that permeate work and everyday life in most parts of the West. This change has been an object of inquiry in for instance sociology, organisation studies and social psykology. A work in this field that has attracted much attention is Illouz, 2007.
[14] For a historical background and critical perspectives, se Landy, 2005.
[15] This is applies not only to streamlining and governing of pupils, but also to teachers. For further discussions, see the contributions to Schulz and Zembylas, 2009. An overview is also found in Woolfolk Hoy, 2013.

entrepreneurship.[16] Furthermore they claim that a greater focus on emotions makes it possible to create a democratic educational system in which the individuality of each student is recognised and where students are given the opportunity to realise their personal learning potential on their own terms.[17]

Such ideas are linked to the focus on emotions which has put its mark on numerous concrete educational practices throughout the Western world.[18] Not least within the school system the pupils emotional lives are brought to the fore. But when this occurs, it is mainly not trough the explicit expression of feelings, but rather through more second hand discussion and verbal processing of the experienced emotions. In this processes the so-called "safe" or "desirable" emotions have been given priority.[19] It is the mark of these desirable emotions that they can be discussed and handled within the frames of what is socially and discursively accepted. In this manner, emotions gain pedagogic value. Hard-to-deal-with, norm-breaking or destructive emotions, however, are excluded.

These changes have in many countries made education into a place for accumulating"emotional capital", to borrow an expression used in the debate.[20] The "effective school" has become synonymous with the "affective school".[21] There are most likely several driving forces behind this development but, as many commentators point out, the changes reflect processes taking place in society as a whole. [22] The accelerating

[16] For a discussion about the endrepreneurial discourse and ideologies related to it, se Wedin, 2015; Ringarp, 2013; Leffler, 2006.
[17] On education and individualisation, see Hartley, 2008.
[18] See Hartley, 2003.
[19] See Hartley, 2003, p. 15; Zembylas and Fendler, 2001, p. 330
[20] Hartley, 2003, p. 6.
[21] Hartley, 2003, p. 6.
[22] The so called therapeutic turn is a long discussed phenomena dating back to the 1960s and 1970s. Momentous works in this tradition are, among others, Rieff, 1987 (originally published 1966) and Lasch, 1991 (originally published in 1979). Later examples exponents for similar views are, fon in-

consumption culture and fragmentation of the living world as well as often complicated and fragile identity-building processes among the young have been of great importance. The mobilisation of both primary educational system and the university for the purposes of the so-called new economy is also an important aspect.

One reaction to this development has been to apply the brakes and to argue for the return of old-fashioned, highly disciplinary school. Several influential debaters have, in recent years, set the new therapeutically directed pedagogic against an educational system in which personal feelings are given second place to knowledge acquisition and rational argumentation.[23] Often arguments have referred to what is perceived as classic enlightenment and humanism. Opponents are portrayed as typical exponents for of postmodern relativism. This attitude has historical antecedents in the attacks on progressive pedagogics that became increasingly forceful during the post-war era.

In extension to the critique of the emotion-oriented education—which is voiced by the political left as well as by the right—one often encounters ideas about the necessity of directing interest away from the emotional and toward the cognitive.[24] Advocates of such a change think that by doing this we will be able to bring back a healthier, less emotionalised situation, which supposedly existed in the past but has been lost in the epoch of therapeutic pedagogics. By substituting feelings with knowledge we take the first step away from the so-called fuzzy-school.

stance, found in Hoff Sommers and Satel, 2005. For further discussions on the subject, also see the contributions in Imber 2004.

[23] In this genre, the works of Frank Furedi are salient. See Furedi, 2009; Furedi, 2004. Another book attracting significant attention has been Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009. I return to some aspects of this book later on. Swedish examples are the polemical writings of Inger Enkvist. See for example Enkvist, 2002; Enkvist, 2003. Nuanced and elaborating philosophfically oriented discussions are found in Smeyers, Smith and Standish, 2007.

[24] Compare for instance Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009.

Only when the fixation on teachers' and students' inner lives is abandoned for the benefit of traditional knowledge-conveying teaching and respect for authorities can we turn thing around and reverse the ongoing decline.

I think it is important to emphasise two aspects of this argumentation. First, the critique of education focused on emotions implies that it is possible to separate emotion and cognition. The notion of a return to a happy time existing before the appearance of therapeutic theories and practices postulates a dichotomy, according to which the prioritisation of knowledge-oriented activities requires a neutralisation of emotions. This idea often presupposes the existence of historical periods during which emotions were irrelevant in an educational context.

Second, the accounts of how the school was transformed from being a knowledge-transferring social institution to a laboratory for emotional therapy are often unreflective in that they ignore the fact that they themselves clearly also are charged with feelings. A rhetorical analysis of such accounts would without difficulty be able to show how they operate within a melancholic modus, placing a lost Golden Age of the past in nostalgic contrast to contemporary times characterised by decay. The expressed visions of a better education, unencumbered by emotions, are in fact often highly emotional themselves. Respect for the teacher, care for knowledge, fellowship in learning and love of truth are common rhetorical devices that express and bring forth feelings.
These two aspects of the critique of the emotion school and of the therapeutic pedagogy are in my opinion expressed in a double manoeuvre by which emotions are rejected and at the same time allowed back in through the very formulation of the argument. The effect of the manoeuvre is that a very central aspect—emotions' relation to education—is clearly present, but by and large without being subject to reflexion. In my opinion, it would therefore be more profitable to approach the

emotion/education problematic in a different manner: by seeking a perspective in which emotions can be surveyed without the research placing itself in the service of political or administrative interests, and at the same time pursue the investigations with appropriate critical distance to the idea that emotions have no legitimate part to play whatsoever. For feelings are always central in educational institutions.

How do we proceed down the path I have indicated? One way would be to lay bare the emotions that existed in the educational systems of the past. Traditionally, little research has been done on the emotional history of education, and the field today remains largely unexplored. But during the last years interest has grown and there are clear signs that it will grow further.[25] The potential benefits of such growing knowledge of the subject are numerous. By historically elucidating the theme of emotion and education we throw light on the fact that emotions often have served important purposes. We also gain empirical evidence of the ever changing relationship between emotions and the acquisition of knowledge. We can furthermore—by referring to the variety and complexity of the past—contribute to a deepening of today's exchange of ideas.

We find one example of how history can cast light on the present in the feeling of love.[26] In a sense, variants of this feeling have always been closely related to pedagogical theories and praxis.[27] Already in antiquity the connection is obvious. One

[25] Compare Sobe, 2012.

[26] The question of the definition of love and the scholarly discussion—not the least in such fields as feminism and gender studies—about its character, functions and expressions is part of a vast and rapidly growing interdisciplinary field, nowadays often refered to as *love studies*. In the following, I refrain from defining the concept in detail and also from attepts to give any exhaustive accounts of its different historical and contemporary meanings as they are treated in today's research. For an insight into the field, see for example Oord, 2010, p. 1ff.

[27] For an overview over different approaches to the theme of love and pedagogy, see Loremsn, 2011, p. 2ff.

need, for example, merely bring to mind Plato's *Symposium* and the Greeks' various ideas about *eros*, *agape* and *philia* to realise the existence of such a connection. Indeed, the very word philosophy—love of wisdom—points toward a connection between emotions and education. At later times the feeling of love has likewise been of crucial importance in many contexts, from the institutions of learning of the Middle Ages to modernity's elementary schools. At the same time, this feeling has often been suppressed within the various organisations.[28] It has, for example, been conceived as a threat against rational control or bureaucratic impartiality.[29]

An appropriate area of study is the university. For the academy is a place where the interplay between various types of emotions appears both complex and especially important.[30] Reflections on the history of love within the higher educational system are therefore well motivated. But before we get to these reflections it may be fruitful to make a digression and draw comparisons to the elementary school. I will chose an example from Swedish history, an example that certainly is comparable to events taking place in other countries. Educational historian Joakim Landahl has, in a study of the Swedish school focused primarily on the second half of the nineteenth century, pointed out that love played an essential role in the teaching.[31] He describes how modernisation and general education brought on a change in the function played by feelings in educational institutions. Especially after the monitorial system and mutual instruction was abandoned, a historically new emotionalisation took shape in which not least the feeling of love became central.

[28] A good overview over the theme of emotions and organisations is found in Fineman, 2000. For a further discussion of the presence of love in education, see the contributions in Liston and Garison, 2004.
[29] See the discussion in Spicer and Cederström, 2010, especially p. 133ff.
[30] Compare for example Ehn and Löfgren, 2007, p. 103ff.
[31] Landahl, 2015.

With examples from pedagogic literature and contemporary descriptions of schoolwork, Landahl shows how growing emphasis was put on love as an effectual means of guiding students. It now became one of the teacher's primary duties to engraft the students with the right feelings, and the most important feeling was that of love. However, the goal was not to create emotional attraction between teacher and student but rather between student and established authorities such as school, fatherland and God. The subordinate's pure love of the authority was emphasised while the impure manifestations of that same feeling—that is, sins and vices—were combatted. According to Landahl a more emotionally cool period in the history of the school gradually emerged. After the turn of the nineteenth century, love did not have nearly the prominent position it had once had. Not until our time did it again gain importance.

It is not difficult to find resemblances between the nineteenth century use of love for educational purposes and our own time's *emotion management*. In both cases, the feeling is primarily viewed as a pedagogical tool used for instrumental purposes in order to achieve social goals, albeit very different such goals. In other words, emotions function as a tool at the disposal of the authority, a tool that serves the purpose of manipulating and governing. From the same perspective, feelings of love can appear as consciously stimulated illusions that serve to keep people in a state of bondage and false consciousness. Only when the influence of emotions is checked is it possible to achieve a democratic and non-discriminatory system of education, in which the knowledge-seeking subject is autonomous—that is, granted power over his or her own life.

Against this background, it is not surprising that the contemporary critique of the emotion-directed education can also be directed against love. In a thought-provoking and much noticed debate book called *The Dangerous Rise of Therapeutic Education* (2009) the British pedagogues Kathryn Ecclestone

and Dennis Hayes in one section question the idea that feelings of love are interesting and relevant in an educational context.[32] They have in mind not only love of the educational institution, the teacher, the fatherland and God, but also love of seeking knowledge in and of itself. In the therapeutic discourses the student is encouraged to reflect on his or her own feelings of love engendered in the learning process. But according to Ecclestone and Hayes what happens is that the student in the same instance loses sight of knowledge as such. People sink into introspection instead of directing their attention to things outside themselves. They do not realise that one can dislike and even hate the learning process and yet be faithful to the object of learning. According to the authors, the talk of love of the search for knowledge furthermore hides the fact that the process ideally should be characterised by cool neutrality, *disinterestedness*.[33] Otherwise subjective emotions are allowed to dominate over impartially acquired objective facts, and subsequently diminish the possibilities of having a rational and critical discussion.

An important aspect of Ecclestone and Hayes's reasoning in the mentioned passage is that they are discussing higher education. For there is a crucial historical difference between elementary school and the higher education, which must be stressed. As we have noted, modernisation within the educational system appears to have led to a sort of *emotion management* in which love was seen as a pedagogical instrument for making the students disciplined and for shaping them according to society's desiderata. But in the same time period we can observe the expression and effects of a different kind of feeling of love, which would be of crucial importance. This feeling is not absent at lower levels, but it serves an especially important function in academia. For it is, I will claim, clear that the emergence of the modern research university in the 1700s—and not least toward the end of this century—entailed a new emphasis on the love of

[32] Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009, p. 96ff.
[33] Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009, p. 97ff.

the search for knowledge per se. When older ideals and practices rooted in the medieval educational institutions disappear we see more and more clearly affirmative expressions within the academic life and scientific work as goals in themselves. Many of those who express opinions on what the university is and should be strongly emphasise and praise the search for knowledge per se as an end goal. At the same time, all instrumental purposes and exterior motives are rejected as false or at least as being less important. In my opinion, this change stands out as an important key to understanding the entire history of the modern university. Here I can only give an outline of its contours.

The characteristics of the change are disclosed in many contexts. A paradigmatic example is Friedrich Schiller's inaugural lecture as professor in history at the university of Jena. This lecture was held at the end of May 1789 to a crowded auditorium of enthusiastic students, and its subject matter was the so-called universal history.[34] But before Schiller engaged in his theme he, by way of introduction, drew pictures of two academic ideal types that had their counterparts among both students and teachers. He called these types the bread-fed scholar (*der Brotgelehrte*) and the philosophically thinking human (*der philosophische Kopf*) respectively. According to Schiller, the primary difference between them was that they had what might be called different emotional relations to university life. The bread-fed scholar is driven by an exterior purpose, such as economic gain or honour and fame. His emotional gratification is located entirely outside of the study. The acquisition of knowledge, according to Schiller, becomes merely a means to achieve an external goal. The search for truth per se is emotionally entirely irrelevant. Therefore, the bread-fed scholar always looks for shortcuts, for ways to minimise his workload. He breaks up the mass of knowledge, which is in

[34] The following account is based on Schiller, 1970, p. 360ff. About the inagrual lecture, compare Safranski, 2004, p. 310ff.

reality a unity, so as to simplify the use of the material for his own purposes.
The opposite of the bread-fed scholar is the philosophically thinking person. This person, according to Schiller, loves the search for knowledge as such. He is emotionally excited when faced with the learning process, he entirely lacks ulterior motives for the studies and finds his reward in the process itself. Therefore he is a sworn enemy of dogmatism and ingrained ideas. The philosophically thinking person questions and tests because he values truth more than established systems, convention or adaptation to exterior demands. By thinking and questioning he, at the same time, finds a ”intimate community” with all like-minded people.[35] The love of search for knowledge leads to a deep kinship with everyone driven by similar forces.

Schiller's lecture is for several reasons a key text in the history of ideas of the university.[36] Its content, and its enthusiastic reception, make it well suited to stand as an example of the pattern of new attitudes among both students and teachers vis-à-vis higher educations, as several researchers have pointed out.[37] The notions and the spirit that permeate the introduction bear great resemblance to the programme texts for universities that would be written over the next decennia, up until the establishment of the Berlin university in 1810. In Wilhelm von Humboldt's famous memorandum, written before the establishment of a new seat of learning in the Prussian capital, for example, there are references to the emotional fervour that should characterise an ideally functioning institution of education.[38] At several points in the text—which may be

[35] ”innige Gemeinschaft”. Schiller, 1970, p. 363.
[36] Hofstetter, 2001; Ziolkowski, 1990, p. 238 pp; Karlsohn, 2012, especially p 94ff.
[37] See for exaple vom Bruch, 1997, p. 11ff; vom Bruch, 2001, p. 72ff; Rüegg, 2004, p. 23ff.
[38] Humboldt, 2010. A discussion over the role of Humboldt—as a symbol and as a person—in the development of the modern research university (and also reflections on current research regarding this role) is found in Josephson, Karlsohn and Östling, 2014.

considered one of the most important expressions of the principles that would dominate the modern research university—Humboldt emphasises the importance of enthusiasm, affection, and passion for the sciences in their own right. It is true that he does not use the word love, but he draws a picture of the true researcher's personality that bears strong resemblance to Schiller's philosophical person. Furthermore, over the next centuries, versions of this person crop up everywhere in discussions about higher education. He is portrayed repeatedly in descriptions of university life and in academic memoirs. He recurs in the writings of many of the leading, most influential scholars on education and debaters on the university, from Fichte and Newman to Flexner and Helmholtz, and more recently Jaspers, Arendt, Gadamer, Bloom and Nussbaum (to mention just a few). Schiller's philosophical person is still alive today, though now less widespread.

It would be a mistake to think that the idea of a special kind of passion for the search for knowledge is a recent phenomenon, with roots dating back only two hundred years. It makes its appearance much earlier. The classic Greek *philomat* (lover of knowledge) is an early example, which has counterparts in the medieval church-governed institutes of education. Furthermore, in this context St Augustine's distinction between *cupiditas* (the worldly, sensual and material desire object-desiring love) and *caritas* (the consciously chosen love of God) is of great importance.[39] We find yet another example in early modernity, namely Spinoza's idea of an *amor dei intellectualis*, an intellectual love of God. It is without a doubt connected to Schiller's and his contemporaries' idea of a motiveless love of the process of gaining knowledge, untainted by ultimate purposes and ends.[40]

[39] On this distinction, se for instance Arendt, 1996, p. 18ff.

[40] The affinity between Spinozas conception and the emotions cultivated in the modern university has also lead to the emphazising of the intellectual love of God as relevant for the discussion of higher education in our time. Se fpr example Rowland, 2006, p. 110ff.

It is, however —I would claim—only with the establishment of the modern research university that this type of love clearly takes the shape of a link in an over-all structure. The idea of the university as a separate community in which a number of chosen people without ties to external forces or desire for worldly gain cultivate their love of the knowledge process thus has a significant impact.[41] This idea is also important to the academics' self-conception. During the 1800s, this idea often appeared to mirror the older pre-modern ideal of the seeker of knowledge being an independent amateur (lover) without pecuniary interests, independent of patrons or traditional institutions of learning. This ideal is quite apparent in the writings of people such as Schiller and Humboldt. During the inter-war years, a reassessment took place. The researcher is no longer considered unique or exceptional, but, rather, an ordinary worker in a collective. [42] At this time, several historically central reflexions on science saw the light of day. One example is Max Weber's influential lecture "Science as a Vocation" (published 1919) in which the researcher's emotional ties to his own activities are emphasised.[43]

Over the last years, suspicion has been thrown on the concept love of the search for knowledge. Sociology of science, for example, has successfully shown that a wide variety of factors outside of the university—not least material and social—are of greater importance to motivation and ways of acting than was previously realised. The apparently unadulterated love can thus be associated with underlying, hidden motives, for example academics' boundary work in defence of their own power position, economic gain or exalted social position. Researchers and teachers appear, seen through this lens, as driven by the

[41] This cultivation of love is also often associated with the modern german idea of *Bildung* (self-formation) taking shape during the period when the modern research university also emerges. See for example Beiser, 2003, p. 88ff.
[42] See Shapin, 2008, especially p. 47ff.
[43] Weber, 1995.

same forces as people in, for example, business sector or politics.[44]

Against this background, it is tempting to see the expression of love for the search for knowledge that we find in Schiller and those that followed him as an idealising rhetorical veneer of no importance to real historical circumstances. But this would be a mistake. There are good reasons to believe that this emotion plays a concrete, important part in modern educational institutions. The last years' political and administrative attempts to prevent difficult-to-control emotional tensions in academic life are, not least, indicative of this.[45] The ambition to transform the academic profession, from a calling in the Weberian sense into an ordinary jobb, is often linked to a will to weaken researchers' and teachers' traditional emotional ties to their own activities.[46] Instead, the tendency has been to emphasise other types of positive, emotionally charged aspects of academic work: self-realisation, well-being, intimacy, social competence, etc.[47]

Here, I have only offered an outline of what can be developed into a far more nuanced and empirically-based history. An detailed description of love of the modern search for knowledge and the importance of this love in the history of the university remains to be written. But my outline provides a basis which

[44] One of many possible examples of this line of reasoning is found in the sociological tradition originating in the works of Bourdieu. See Pierre Bourdieu, 1988 and compare for instance Martin, 2010.

[45] These atempts are not the least discussed in the debate about the so called de-erotication of the university. Se for example Burch, 1999; Hörisch 2006; Bell and Sinclair, 2014.

[46] For a good overview of the discussion about professionalisation and de-professionalisation, se Hasselberg, 2012, for example p 17ff, p. 44ff. See also Nixon, 2008, especially p. 12ff for another take on the subject.

[47] In this respect, the development at the university level seems only to be a part of an all-embracing emotionalisation of the working life where the traditional virtuse of duty and responsibility doesn't play as important a role as before. Compare Spicer and Cederström, 2010, p. 134f.

makes it possible to say something about what conclusions such a history could lead to, and of how these conclusions can contribute to research in the field.

The normative aspects of the modern research university's practice have been discussed a good deal. Not least Robert Merton, and the sociology of science that he developed in the inter-war period, has been associated with an interest in the normative aspects of university life.[48] The discussion raised by Merton's posited classic scientific norms (such as universalism, organised scepticism and disinterestedness) has been extensive.[49] Critique of these norms have been formulated in various ways, while at the same time, they have been used rhetorically to emphasise the independence and purity of research.

One of the norms that Merton posited was disinterestedness.[50] According to this norm, scientific work should be done and presented without being affected by the researcher's feelings or partiality, subjective preferences or individual inclinations. Science must also be protected from external interests that may affect the results of the knowledge process. Disinterestedness thus entails—to quote physicist and philosopher of science John Ziman—a "detachment from the life world".[51] It introduces the researcher to an abstract existence marked by pure science, an existence "where ordinary human interests have no place", writes Ziman.[52] Where this norm rules, in other words, there seems to be no space for love of the search for knowledge.

Much effort has gone into determining what disinterestedness meant for Merton, and into discussions about the norm's

[48] See for instance Merton, 1973; Ziman, 2004.
[49] For an overview, see Hasselberg, 2014; see also Hasselberg, 2012, p. 29 pp
[50] See for example Merton, 1973, p. 275ff.
[51] Ziman, 2004, p. 39.
[52] Ziman, 2004, p. 39.

adaptability to modern university institutions.[53] Ever since the norms were postulated, different interpretations have competed. According to one not uncommon view, disinterestedness implies an emotional coolness that ideally promotes cognitive aspects at the expense of emotional ones. The modern university is a place dedicated to objective knowledge and rational argument, not subjectively coloured perspectives and irrational feelings. As mentioned above, it was exactly this conviction that led Kathryn Ecclestone and Dennis Hayes to argue that the feeling of love is irrelevant in a university setting. They did not mention Merton by name in *The Dangerous Rise of Therapeutic Education*. But their references to disinterestedness clearly indicate an attachment to the classical norms which Merton emphasised and which many have been judged characteristic of the modern research university.

The problem with views in line with Ecclestones' and Hayes' is that they confuse two levels: the institutional, on the one hand, and the motivational or psychological level, on the other.[54] Merton had warned against this confusion, stressing that disinterestedness is, first and foremost, a "basic institutional element", a "distinctive pattern of institutional control".[55] The norm says nothing about the motivations of the individual. Disinterestedness is, rather, an authoritative norm that regulates a multitude of individual and, accordingly, diverse motivational forces, leading them in a common direction. Disinterestedness prescribes patterns of behaviour and expression that collectively allow us to identity something as science. It does not, however, require restrictions on feelings or emotional self-amputation.

There are thus good reasons for following Merton in differentiating between institutional norms and psychological realities. But I would also maintain that the manner in which these two levels are connected is not yet fully clarified.

[53] For a summary, see Djørup and Kappel, 2013.
[54] Regarding this kind of misstake, se Wunderlich, 1974.
[55] Merton, 1973, p. 275 and p. 276.

Indications of such a connection become clear not least if one takes a historical perspective such as that outlined above. For if the contradiction between love of the search for knowledge and the disinterestedness of modern science were a reality, one might be lead to assume the latter had displaced the former. One would suppose that the emergence of the research university must have allowed the norm of neutral scholarship, untainted by emotional factors, to dominate over the emotional charge of life in academia. But this is not the case. On the contrary, in a sense the two phenomena seem to go together. As we have seen, the modern university and the scientific work that is done there entail a new emphasis on the love of the search for knowledge. To be sure, the norm of disinterestedness was established at the same time.[56] To put it differently: there seems to exist a parallelism between a special sort of emotional passion at the individual level, and a certain kind of impassiveness at the institutional level.

I do not believe that this historical pattern is a coincidence. One explanation for its existence could be that the love of the search for knowledge promoted within the modern university owes it emergence to the norm of disinterestedness. This at least seems plausible if we accept the idea that love—contrary to what is often claimed—is not allways engendered in absolute freedom, through an unproblematic absorption in the loved object. If we instead assume that restrictions and prohibitions may constitute a precondition for its genesis, it becomes possible to see how norms also play a role in its production.[57] Obstacles to the fulfilment of love can of course be a result of fate or result from social conventions, as is the case in innumerable love stories in art and literature. But they can also be raised by organisational structures as rules, principles and codes.[58] Without such

[56] See Dear, 1992; Ziman, 2004, p. 161ff.
[57] Not the least in the freudian tradition has the emergence of love been understood as dependant on obstacles. See for instance Freud, 1924, p. 25f. Also compare Salecl, 1997.
[58] See the discussion i Spicer and Cederström, 2010, p. 149ff.

thresholds and obstacles, the object of love would not—if we adopt this position—become visible. Yet, although the object becomes visible, it remains unattainable. Only thus can it endure and continue to arouse love.

In our case, this logic would entail that the norm of disinterestedness prescribes an institutional restraint on love by suppressing the subjective, spontaneous and explicit expression of it. At the same time, love is reproduced and strengthened through assuming the character of being eternally unfulfilled. It is further enhanced because disinterestedness entails an endless process. Disinterestness stipulates that the university's search for knowledge not be tied to external interests, with their concrete, realisable goals and limited, instrumental purposes. For this reason, the search can never be completed and abandoned. It is a process that always progresses, a process whose end is constantly being postponed.

One possible proof that disinterestedness is a precondition for the emergence of love of the search for knowledge is found in developments over the last few decades. As we recall, during this period, Merton's norms were criticised. As many commentators pointed out, disinterestedness seems to have lost some of its regulatory power, as the boundary between the university and its surroundings has become less self evident.[59] This period was also marked by scepticism towards a non-instrumental relation to the search of knowledge. Not least sociology of science has questioned the idea of such a relation, alluding to ulterior motives and the self- interest of academics. Furthermore, a series of critical contributions to the debate about higher education written over the last decades have concerned the disappearance of the love of knowledge and the spreading apathy within the university. The theme cropped up as early as the 1960s, with students' critique of the mass

[59] There are also some studies suggesting that academic themselves value disinterestedness less than other traditional norms. Se Macfarland and Cheng, 2008.

university. It makes its presence clear in the 1980s and 1990s, for instance during discussions about canon, education and political correctness. Over the last years it has—just to mention one example—been treated in Anthony Kronman's much-debated *Education's End* (2007).[60] In other words, when the norm of disinterestedness is no longer self-evident, we encounter expressions of sorrow over the loss of an object of love and condemnation of a growing indifference.

Continued investigations into the history of emotions in higher education could help elucidate the relations that I have suggested. But already at this stage we see how reflexions on the past can contribute to the present-day discussion. Much would be gained if the current discussion about educational policies would take the direction indicated above. The debate has, to date, often been based on the presumption that we are faced with a definite choice between therapy and subjective feelings, on the one side, and the transfer of objective knowledge on the other. Only when we replace this absolute choice with the insight that both of these sides always interact will it possible to thoroughly reflect on the purpose and meaning of education.

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[60] Kronman, 2007.

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