Towards Nu-Academia

The problems of the modern world become more and more complex. The possibility of not being able to solve them bears growing danger and dramatic consequences. There are too many limitations one faces when sticking to the practices and strategies as we know them. 'Interdisciplinary' was (and still is) the all-around strategy of the past years. The horizon of specific (academic) disciplines is supposed to be too narrow. Cooperation with other disciplines and practices is needed to cope with the ever-growing complexity of problems human societies are facing in the modern world. 'Performativity' is the magic word that promises unexpected solutions. Practice seems to have a strange magic that promises surprising results and new ways. Trust in the known practices and processes is shattered. Everything becomes performance and performative. This tells about a strong need for new strategies. High-ranking among the offered concepts are performative strategies, strategies which produce results that can be measured according to categories of their performance.

The interactive processes and active practices that are meant by the abundant use of the words 'performative' and 'performance' signal towards a dramatic shift of paradigms.

And here comes performatics, the new superscience of interactive practices and processes between everything. Embracing all fields of human existence probably, as well incorporating interactive practices between man and machine, processes between data and machine, thus going beyond borders of organic/non-organic. A holistic approach that promises an understanding of a world that slips out of the hands of mankind's abilities to describe it and finds solutions for the problems that are presented to us by that same world. It reminds of the times when cybernetics was the magic word that made scientists of all academic disciplines dream the dream of a superscience. The question remains what and above all how the new superscience will observe and describe? Is it the aim of performatics to observe dynamics, annotate rules and find repetitive structures? And isn't it that it will miss the very point of the observed practices and processes as, by definition, an academic discipline as we know it always has to keep the distance of the observer? Performatics might be the superscience that allows us to think together the best parts of other academic disciplines and combine the strategies and fields of research of various if not all academic fields. But in the end of the day it sticks to the old paradigm.

The kernel has to be practice. If not, performatics will not differ on structural levels from the approaches of the known academic disciplines and other strategies. The possibility of performatics might be to introduce practice as a strategy of (academic) research and beyond. But then it has to face that thus it shoots itself out of the realm of academic disciplines as we know them. At the same time, only then will performatics meet the mentioned change of paradigms on eye level and be more than just another derivative of all the 'performances' and 'performative' situations that surround us nowadays.

FLORIAN FEIGL