

**ruehm, rosei, and others:
on master classes and academies**

protocol of a discussion on the pros and cons of a possible advancement or transfer of sfd-programs into university structures: first sfd curatorial committee meeting on 2 june 1993 with marianne gruber, ide hintze, kurt neumann, peter rosei, gerhard rühm, ferdinand schmatz; sfd staff: sonja orator, nathalie prasser, sabine schuster.

hintze:

- (greet those present)
- artmann had to stay in salzburg, bauer in styria; both of them support the idea of developing the sfd organisationally into an academy; both of them would then be willing to make themselves available as teachers, if all-the-year-round courses could be set up;
- (describes the development process of the project from the first studies of sappho on the island of lesbos, via the study of the kerouac school, to the founding of the sfd and the international symposium *on the teachability and learnability of literature* in april '92; reports on the conclusion of an agreement with the publishing company passagen verlag and the foundation of an imprint 'edition schule fuer dichtung in wien'; encourages those present to take responsibility for publishing books, which forms part of the complex of themes comprising a 'school of literature'; the possibilities of publication should be taken advantage of);
- it has taken us less time than expected to progress from theory to practice and from practice to concrete organisational questions; it is by no means too early to start discussing the organisation of an all-the-year-round academy.
- on the historical connection: quote from nietzsche: "anyone (...) who seriously wishes to train themselves as a public speaker, or who intends to enter a school of writers, would be unable to find a master or a school anywhere; it seems that here one has not yet considered the fact that speaking and writing are arts that cannot be acquired without careful guidance and the most painstaking years of apprenticeship."
- the term 'curatorial committee' is temporary; we ought to discuss the relationship that such a committee would have with the sfd.

rosei: of course, the question of the teachability and learnability of literature comes from a *weltanschauung* that is very different to ours. (laughter)

hintze: to what extent can that which refuses to be institutionalised nevertheless become institutionalised? contradiction: literature subverts institutionalisation / the institution of an academy.

ruehm: subversiveness does not depend on the organisational form, but rather on the teachers.

hintze: in his opening lecture (april academy '93), rosei proposed a future academy (the text was sent to all participants).

ruehm: i've read rosei's introductory lecture.

rosei: the question is: should the sfd be left as it is, and parallel to that, an attempt be made to start a second project, one which is institutionalised from the outset?

ruehm: the curriculum essentially depends on the people that one invites, as it does at art universities.

schmatz: that should also be retained.

ruehm: in hamburg, where i teach (university of fine arts), there are two obligatory foundation semesters. during these orientational introductory semesters, the students have the chance to take a look at the individual classes. yet after that, the students are not formally enrolled for any particular class.

schmatz: that is not the case at the university of applied arts in vienna, and it's also a big problem.

ruehm: it's not at schillerplatz (academy of fine arts vienna) either. the teachers of the individual classes there even get angry if a student changes teachers.

- one has to think about the extent to which students should be assigned to one teacher.

- in the case of short-term courses, you have to assign the students to one teacher, but not in the case of longer-term courses.

- the disadvantage of the model in which one student has several teachers parallel to one another is that some students will feel unsettled if every teacher tells them something different.

- if the sfd is to plan year-round courses, then we have to address the question: are there to be semesters? and how many semesters will there be?

schmatz: that was also rosei's question. should the sfd be turned into an academy of poetry?

hintze: we originally created the sfd as a forum, a place in which people could gain experience and develop utopias: in relation to content, form and organization. the kerouac school proceeded in a similar way: first of all summer academies once a year, then operating all-year round, and finally as a regular university faculty with state recognition and funding.

neumann: 'academy' is not a term that is state protected in austria.

ruehm: in hamburg, in the field of study called 'free art', there are two kinds of students: those studying art education and the free art students. for the art students there are three grades: failed, passed and passed with distinction.

- grades were introduced as a result of pressure from the students. after that, the authorities demanded examinations. the student presents his or her work from the last year and has to comment on it. these examinations are recognized by the authorities.

schmatz: is that the equivalent of a degree?

ruehm: yes.

schmatz: i can't imagine that for the sfd.

ruehm: i am only talking about the free art students.

- in the case of the art education students, there are two directions, depending on where they want to teach afterwards. students doing education studies have to take more extensive examinations.

hintze: could that be the kind of work that rosei described in his text?

ruehm: yes. in the event of institutionalisation, there is a chance that future german teachers could study with us.

rosei: of course, the minister expects an extension in the direction of journalism, advertising, etc.

schmatz: that has to develop gradually.

rosei: in the present phase, i am in favour of something more individualised. the respective teachers should decide on the content.

neumann: i am against teaching journalism at a school of poetry. why should we have to take on something from the faculty of journalism as well.

rosei: we should concentrate on what is signified by 'art'.

schmatz: both of them fall under the category 'the art of writing'.

schuster: the minister talks in that way, because he doesn't want to see even more people being educated and then becoming unemployed.

ruehm: no university of art can avoid that.

schmatz: let's get back to the point: expansion or not. it's important to set up satellites, but the core has to be poetry.

ruehm: the art of writing is too narrow for me. i still think the title 'schule fuer dichtung' is very good.

schmatz: i'm not very happy with it.

rosei: verse, 'academy of verse'.

ruehm: that's only another word for poetry.

hintze: on our further development: since there is no legal basis for the foundation of private universities, our financial partners must, of necessity, be the state, which is ideologically easier to justify anyway.

- 1995/96 would be a date to keep in mind: the millenium celebrations and 50 years after 1945. the state is willing to generously support representative projects or pioneer projects. one should appeal to the 'new austrian *gründerzeit*'. we can submit two kinds of application:

- either for setting up and financing an all-the-year-round operation
- or for purchasing or renting of our own premises.

by that time we should know what we want:

- variation 1: a new type of university on the basis of an independent artistic project; scholten (austrian minister for science and art) is responsible for that.
- variation 2: a regular university faculty; busek (austrian minister for education) is responsible for that.
- variation 3: a mixed form made up of 1 and 2; which an inter-ministerial commission would be responsible for.

schmatz: we should go for the scholten direction.

neumann: i would proceed in a more pragmatic way. i would start out from what the sfd has already achieved and then weave into it some directions taken from the program of the "alte schmiede" (a literature and arts association in vienna) and the *wiener vorlesungen* lectures series. in addition, some threads from the work of marianne gruber and the austrian society for literature. moreover: what could fit in from oberhuber? one could start with a kind of program coordination. i have a certain overview of 1994, from which we could draw up a coordinated program for the year. with such a model, one could then approach the various ministers.

rosei: you would at any rate need some kind of permanent faculty, which invited people.

orator: that's much the way we pictured it ourselves: we put together a three-year plan with regular and visiting teachers. its composition is decided by the program-makers or the curatorial committee. this plan is then presented to the minister for financial support. i can well imagine a year-round operation, but not that we simply extend the current blocks over a year. 2 times 10 teachers, and in addition once 4 teachers in the countryside. that would make 24 classes. we have to find a new approach.

ruehm: there really is a difference between whether it's a matter of something short-term or longer-term. short classes, like those at present, have a different content and narrower chances of development than classes that last for semesters.

prasser: the decisive thing when making our decision should not be our relationship to the minister concerned, but rather the form of the project itself. i am in favour of the model of an autonomous artistic project, a new type of university.

schmatz: as kurt already said: we should take the steps that have already been mentioned, first of all in the direction of scholten. how that will then develop, is to be seen.

neumann: i believe it will eventually turn out to be a mixed form.

rosei: the question of who is responsible for us is not so important. the form and content of our project will then indicate whose sphere of responsibility it is.

schmatz: but, when all's said and done, hintze has to negotiate with those responsible. there has to be a minister who is responsible. one cannot work without concrete financial partners. if we move into the area of the university, then the federal ministry will take over the payment of the teachers. in that way, there arises dependency.

orator: there are professors with civil service status and visiting professors. for art universities, professors with civil service status are lethal.

ruehm: in hamburg there are visiting professors, professors with civil service status and lecturers.

rosei: we should stay autonomous and the federal ministry should give us the money. (laughter)

schmatz: that's right.

gruber: we have been discussing the abolition of grades and civil servants for years. it would not be a good idea if that same debate were to be started up yet again, and by us no less. we shouldn't introduce it at all. i wouldn't orient myself to any of the already existing forms. i would try to start anew.

schmatz: then we might end up with something like the publishers' subsidies, where the subsidy is decided anew every year. the project has to be legally secured.

orator: the concept of 'universities of applied sciences' has recently appeared. the universities of applied science do not have to be state-run. they can also be run by registered associations, limited liability companies and such like.

neumann: who is responsible for the universities of applied sciences?

orator: the ministry of science.

ruehm: i have an aversion to the concept of a university of the applied sciences.

schmatz: who's interested in poets? certainly not business.

hintze: oberhuber, as head of the university of applied arts, has supported the sfd from the outset, because he expected that it would provide an impulse. there's also a lot of shit going down at the existing art universities.

artistic projects, or even projects like the literaturhaus, have to re-submit their budgets from year to year. it is actually only the salzburg festival that has a guaranteed, long-term budget. i have tried to explain to scholten that of course a school of poetry, regardless of how it is organised, cannot work on a year-to-year basis. the idea of an academy of literature is new, so the sponsors should likewise think about new models, or at least be ready to discuss them. i have explained to him that we need to be able to make at least three-year contracts. scholten was willing to take up the cause of three-year financing.

neumann: then we are once again back at the famous five-year plans.

gruber: rather take a risk than seek shelter under foreign wings. what would be more important would be to build up a network of possibilities for working, communicating and publishing. a guarantee for publishing students' texts in various literary magazines would be feasible: *lichtungen, manuskripte, protokolle, limes*, etc.

orator: it would be important to draw up a curriculum; and to establish basic courses.

schmatz: but an introduction to the study of metrics, for example, is boring.

prasser: at our teachers' conference, some people were complaining about their students' ignorance and demanding something like a basic course.

schmatz: and who is going to teach that?

orator: something like that could be taught in a foundation semester.

gruber: i would see a foundation semester as something else. at the july academy i already knew two-thirds of the participants. i couldn't repeat the same thing that i did at the september academy. only those who were already in the first course should be allowed to attend the second.

schmatz: which means that ruehm would do two courses.

orator: regular introductory courses should be given by the respective teachers, and certain basic information should be repeated.

schuster: that would be possible with a year-round operation. at other schools of literature it really is done in this way. at the gorki institute and the johannes r. becher institute.

ruehm: it is important who gives these introductions, whether it's reich-ranicki or one of us.

neumann: the faculty should decide what is needed as a foundation.

ruehm: once again that's difficult to say.

gruber: a reading list of the most important authors.

ruehm: who is to decide that? too many names are also only confusing.

schmatz: one should have an admission interview.

ruehm: that is far too complicated.

hintze: we ought to try to organise diversity and plurality. if the teacher wants to have an admission interview and a basic course, then we just organise it like that. if the teacher wants something different, then we will also organize that. it would be important, as far as possible, not to get stuck on one particular track.

schmatz: what do we do about those who are left over?

ruehm: 3 professors, 3 assistants, 3 students form a committee, which decides who is accepted, although the students only have an advisory vote.

orator: people will get depressed as a result of such selection procedures.

rosei: every teacher holds one per year on the subject of his choice.

ruehm: i do a lot of things in hamburg that i don't have to do, and that are not stipulated in the curriculum. it depends on the people in my classes and the main focus of their respective interests. for instance, i didn't teach nude drawing for two semesters, now it's back again.

orator: what are the fixed points?

ruehm: i have a class for free graphic art and artistic grey areas. in a three-week course one should only deal with one subject. the shorter the event (or course period), the more exactly one has to stipulate the topic. the longer it lasts, the less exactly it has to be stipulated.

gruber: some of those who registered for my class in july, have taken time off specially for those two weeks. i don't know if they would also come if they had to stay for a whole year.

ruehm: but that also applies to the teachers. a visiting professor often only comes twice a semester and only for about a week or so.

schmatz: guest lectures are very important.

hintze: there is also the question: do the moments of inspiration tend be more accessible in brief encounters or in long and repeated ones?

rosei: 'consecutive' is a bad expression. consecutive classes are not for poets.

orator: what i meant by that was 'continuing'.

hintze: if we try to get a three-year subsidy: how does that look in practice for you?
(to ruehm) would you have any time at all in the next three years?

ruehm: after '96 it looks good, till then it looks bad.

hintze: twice a year for one week each time?

ruehm: in may and in october/november we have examinations. in september i am on holiday. april would be a good month.

hintze: we are also planning a few so-called separately located projects: in neuberg / muerzzuschlag, in cooperation with the walter buchebner society; and in alma ata, with the foreign-language university there.

ruehm: then we'll have to do something about trotzky.

hintze: in your opinion, who should belong to the board of trustees? at first, i thought there should only be poets on it. just like today. later on, we should take into account more tactical considerations.

schmatz: i would keep it relatively loose, we can take someone on board and then also let them go again.

rosei: i wouldn't take anyone on board that we don't have to take on board. but i did include ernst jandl in the proposal from the very beginning

hintze: oberhuber? he is, after all, our host, and knows, from practical experience, something about the relation between the artistic individual and the artistic academy.

schmatz: would there be any point in that?

hintze: mayroecker and jandl? i would definitely like us to agree to invite them.

schmatz: if we include the two of them, then we would have to call it the 'poetry society'.

hintze: one can definitely notice a certain reserve towards our project.

neumann: that is connected with the fact that jandl is working on a competing project. he would like to make the erich fried society into an academy.¹ the sfd has to have clear aims. not so much with regard to name-dropping, more as far as the content is concerned.

schmatz: one doesn't have to rely on the support of big names.

¹ kurt neumann (written correction on 12 july 1993): "In the meantime realised as error, after talking to jandl"

neumann: the initiative should come from the sfd. afterwards, a board of trustees should be set up, a small circle that is convinced about the cause. otherwise both will begin to unravel from the beginning.

hintze: what do you mean 'both'?

neumann: personnel bolstering and content.

gruber: we are talking about two different things: the sales strategy and the content. the two aren't necessarily the same.

neumann: either we take care of the content first and then enlarge the board of trustees, or vice versa.

hintze: it would, at any rate, be a pity if there were two competing projects in vienna. there was nothing for hundreds of years. and now suddenly there are two in one place. the best minds should work together. i believe we can succeed in that.

schmatz: that's illusion.

neumann: everyone is entitled to their own ideas. it is impossible to bring them together on common ground.

hintze: perhaps i am too young to be able to judge that, but it seems to me that certain patterns from the 1950s are repeating themselves. i wouldn't want ernst jandl to be subjected to the trauma of the wiener gruppe once more. here artmann and ruehm – and he is left out of it again.

ruehm: i value his work a lot and regard him as a good old friend, but i think some of the people that he esteems and curries favour with are assholes.
- the fact that the gav ("grazer autorenversammlung", an austrian writers' association) has become such a literary watering hole is due not least to ernst jandl. i was always against having too many members and that is unfortunately ernst jandl's policy, because he believes that more can be achieved with more members.
- he says and does a lot of good things, he is also very supportive of people who are unpopular. i greatly value that about him, but i don't like his populist side so much.

gruber: to the outside world, the wiener gruppe represented an entity that couldn't be imitated and couldn't be matched.

ruehm: we were very isolated.

hintze: for a long time i had the idea that something could be done within the gav. but only if one dared to make a radical new start. after my proposal for self-dissolution had been rejected in 1989, it became clear to me that it is really only possible in a small group. however, in developing a literature academy there also occurs a certain moment when political technicalities have to be addressed. the sfd project could only begin so successfully, because we spent months doing the political legwork before we went public: discussions, letters, negotiations with the representatives of all the

relevant literary directions and all the organisations working within literature. which is also why we will not be able to avoid doing the same in future.

(all those present agree to tentatively sound out jandl and mayroecker and to invite them to attend a meeting of the curatorial committee.)

orator: the impulses comes from the curatorial committee. the hard work is done by the sfd team.

hintze: since we are working here, i propose that members of the curatorial committee should in future be paid meeting fees and travel expenses.

rosei: not too high, please. (laughter)

schmatz: i don't need any money for meeting. rather, the fees paid for the classes should be higher. if we start having real working meetings then we could request money for it.

rosei: if the amount of work involved increases and i am supposed to elaborate a curriculum, then perhaps.

schmatz: a small circle is more productive. for further developments invited guests should also be involved.

gruber: there has to be a good working atmosphere, one shouldn't have to think twice whether one should say something in this circle or not.

neumann (to hintze): i understand your problem with ernst. you should sit down together with him sometime.

gruber: ernst jandl wants to make the erich fried society into an academy.² that means we have to act quickly.

neumann: no, it doesn't. we just have to be consistent.

ruehm: before we break up: let's put our money where our mouths are:
- are we going to continue at a provisional location, or will there be a permanent location?

hintze: for the 95/96 date there is a real chance of having premises of our own.
- in discussion: moving to the "messepalast", to the "museumsquartier". scholten is in favour, busek is still against it.
- the area around the "kursalon" would of course be ideal: surrounded by greenery, on a river, and nevertheless in the centre of the city; the whole thing belongs to the municipality, huebner is the lessee; we have to find out what the contract situation is like.

² see footnote 1

orator: unger is willing, the minister is willing; we just have to make concrete proposals.

ruehm: the building should at all events be located in the city centre, or on the ring.

rosei: a tangible set of rooms would be more suitable. huebner is too big.

ruehm: the "messepalast" would be very good. the museums are there, the visual arts. that would be an advantage for interdisciplinary work.

rosei: what about the old hospital?

prasser: the faculties of the main university are going to be relocated there.

rosei: we could try it there.

ruehm: one has to have places for people who come from abroad to sleep.

hintze: as in our first concept, in which we spoke of a welcome center for travelling poets?

ruehm: one has to have rooms for visiting professors.

hintze: if it gets as far as concrete negotiations, would you participate? come along with us to the minister? come along with us to the municipal councillor?

ruehm: if i am here, then of course.

hintze: what does the teaching organisation look like?

ruehm: the teachers should decide that for themselves.

hintze: should we award the students certificates?

rosei: yes, of course, certificates of participation. but no reports. i am against reports.

hintze: ginka steinwachs is in favour of certificates of participation. and she also already issued some at the april academy.

ruehm: as in salzburg at the summer academy. one confirms the students' participation and writes a few lines about them.

orator: that would also be a reference for the students.

ruehm: this certificate has to be uniform and pre-printed.

rosei: basically, we've decided on two things today:

1. the development of the sfd into an academy.
2. the person-centred aspect.

the other points, e.g. discussion of the curriculum, we should postpone till the next meeting.

hintze: how sensible is it to introduce professorial chairs? a teaching chair for prose writing, one for poetry, one for performance, one for drama?

ruehm: i don't think it's a good idea at all.

rosei: nor do i, so we're agreed about that.

hintze: of course, for a long time, literature stimulated the development of national languages, of national identity. we could therefore also say that an academy of literature should solely be an academy of the german language, as in leipzig, for instance. however, against the current political background, and particularly that of europe, i believe that we should also continue to work the way we have begun: multilingually, and taking account of several cultures

ruehm: yes, i'm in favour of that.

hintze: and the idea of asking an inger christensen, a jack collom, an allen ginsberg, an anne waldman to join one of our committees?

ruehm: that is difficult, and won't be practicable.

ruehm: now about spelling. i will not take part if, in your publications, you continue to use this horrible capitalised 'i'. "studentInnen", "lehrerInnen". that is an adulteration of the german language and furthermore it is not pronounceable the way it is intended. i am anyway a supporter of consistent lower-case spelling. i am for "studenten/studentinnen". german is the only language in the world that begins its nouns with capitals.

orator: well we could adopt lower-case spelling for the program brochure.

hintze: (to ruehm) will you write a pamphlet about it for us?

ruehm: i am convinced that capitalisation will eventually be abolished. nevertheless, one has to know what was traditionally written in capitals. capital letters are foreign elements and have only been in regulated use since about the 18th century.