

**ROUTES INTO THE
FUTURE**
NEW MAPS FOR THE
SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES



18 > 21 June 2008
* International Colloquium

Teatro Académico Gil Vicente
Auditorium of the Faculty of Law
Auditorium of the University of Coimbra

SESSION IV: The University of the future: is there a place for the Social and Human Sciences?

June 20th, 10:00-12:00

At the present point of paradigmatic transition, the University appears at the centre of a core option between a societal model governed by economicist parameters and logics, subordinate to market imperatives, and a model able to endow with centrality the concepts of citizenship, democracy and culture. The SHS, areas which defy criteria of utility and mercantilization, cannot but be at the heart of this debate. Do recent attempts to render the Social Sciences lucrative present a threat to the freedom of defining research themes, objects and methods, and to the political and economic independence of their results as well? Where the Humanities are concerned, what place will they have in a University and societal model grounded on a concept of knowledge which is materializable and utilitarian? How can the sense of the SHS task be gauged? From a material perspective, quantifiable in marketable results, or exclusively from the immaterial perspective of the construction of citizenship and democracy?

In this context, the challenge facing the SHS is fundamental: are we confronted with the need to relegitimize their very reason for being, in the spectrum of the sciences and in the critical review of the concept of "knowledge" itself, vis-à-vis the University and the public and private funding sources; and, lastly, with regard to the society which interpellates them and is the beneficiary of their scientific production and training? What role can be played by the forms of knowledge issuing from the SHS in the conceiving of an alternative model of university organization, in which the most diverse areas of knowledge, potentialities and missions may exist side by side in a fruitful way and develop in the freedom and autonomy which have always been the assumptions underlying the University's mission?

Valentin Mudimbe | 'And Simonides said: "It is the City that educates Humans."

-On the Soul of Today's University, a Personal Statement.'

Paris-Nanterre (France), Lubumbashi (Congo), Haverford College and Duke (USA), three posts in education and three types of meditation. An ancient Latin statement

summarizes doubts and questions raised from an inter- and trans- cultural background. *Non vitae (scholae) sed scholae (vitae) dicimus.*

António Sousa Ribeiro | “A Ceiling among the Ruins? The Humanities in a University for the 21st Century”

The conference develops a reflection on the present context of the Humanities within the University, equating future pathways potentialised by the reconstruction of the human sciences as a locus of disquietude equipped to disturb disciplinary evidence and to affirm the frontier-like condition as a space producing the articulation of different forms of knowledge.

About the Participants

Chair:

Carlos Fortuna is a Professor at the School of Economics, Coimbra University, and a Researcher at the Centre for Social Studies. He is currently Chair of the Scientific Council of the School of Economics, Coimbra University. His current areas of interest are heritage, cultural tourism and urban modernization and public space and cultural practices. He is the author of, among other titles, *Identidades, Percursos e Paisagens Culturais*, Celta, 1999.

Speakers:

Valentin Mudimbe is Professor of Literature at Duke University. He was made a doctor honoris causa by the University of Paris VII (1997) and by the Catholic University of Louvain (2006). His areas of interest and research are phenomenology and structuralism, mythic narratives and language. Among other publications, he is the author of *Invention of Africa*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1988.

António Sousa Ribeiro is a Professor at the Faculty of Letters, Coimbra University, a researcher at the Centre for Social Studies, where he co-coordinates the Research Group in Comparative Cultural Studies, and Editor of the Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais. His current areas of interest include studies of German-language literatures and cultures, comparative literature, post-colonial studies, translation studies, studies on Modernism and studies on violence. He is the author of *Ser e Estar: Raízes, Percursos e Discursos da Identidade*, Porto: Afrontamento, 2002 (with Maria Irene Ramalho), among other publications.

Comments:

Luíza Cortesão is Emeritus Professor at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Studies, Porto University. She is a specialist in intercultural problematics and Freirean studies, academic excellence, citizenship and adult training. She has written, among other titles, *Ser professor: um ofício em vias de extinção?* Porto: Ed. Afrontamento, 2000.

Elísio Estanque is Associate Professor at the School of Economics, Coimbra University, and a researcher at the Centre for Social Studies. He is a specialist in class studies and social inequality, social and student movements. His current areas of interest cluster around labour relations, employment and Trades Unionism. He is

the author of, among other publications, *Do Activismo à Indiferença - Movimentos Estudantis em Coimbra*. Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2007 (co-author).