

ON TRANS- DISCIPLINARITY



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Origins

- Concept originated from Philosophy of Science (Mittelstrass, 1986):
 - Humanities and sciences have become unfathomable
 - Problems which cannot be solved within a given framework
- Idea of a "unity of science(s)"
 - Reasons: unity of nature; cognitive interest; criteria of rationality; ...

Scientific Disciplines

- Borderlines in scientific landscape: reasons in history and epistemology
- "Disciplines"
 - Subject; field of study ?
 - Theoretical paradigm ? Method ?
 - Intended purpose of "episteme" ?
- ⇒ Unifying frameworks of subjects
- Interdisciplinarity
 - Additive, due to increasing specialization and atomization of subjects; not commuting ...
 - Re-establish larger disciplinary orientation

Transdisciplinarity

- Humanities and sciences
 - *Propositional* ("textbook", theory) form
 - *Research* form: **Action** (methodological)
- Transdisciplinarity
 - **Problem orientation** replaces disciplinary constrictions:
Reconstitution of the unity of science
(i.e. of scientific rationality, not systems)
 - Transcending disciplinary borderlines
 - (partial) liberation from historical legacy

Transdisciplinarity

- A research principle in the first place
 - secondly, also a theory principle
- Context of discovery vs. context of justification
- Unity of *language* (\Rightarrow clue to documentation)
 - Meaning constituted by procedures of verification / justification
 - *Practical*, operational unity

Transdisciplinarity

- ... does not just commute between disciplines, and leaves everything as it used to be
- Instead
 - changes subjects
 - abolishes borderlines; alters the disciplinary order itself
 - approaches problems independent of disciplinary constrictions

Scholarly "Primitives" (Actions / Functions)

- Discovering
- Annotating
- Comparing
- Referring
- Sampling
- Illustrating
- Representing

What methods do humanities researchers have in common, and how might our tools reflect this?

(Unsworth, 2000)

Transdisciplinarity in Documentation

- Taking up: Unity of language
- Provide linguistic framework for conceptual modelling and justification
- Identify common generic concepts and relations/properties
 - Event / process / action perspective (!)
- Build generic framework for classification, representation, annotation, linking, ...

