

Investigating the Transformation of Modern European University Ideals: A Comparative Analysis of Humboldt's and Schleiermacher's Educational Perspectives

Yi Zhang

Hunan International Economics University

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Abstract

This article aims to offer a novel interpretation of the evolution of modern European university perspectives. Some research is founded on comparisons between the two ideas and their associated literature, integrating them into the examination of this significant event in educational history. The main contribution of this academic article seeks to redefine the evolution of modern university education concepts in Europe by comparing the educational philosophies of two seminal figures in German classical education: Humboldt and Schleiermacher. Finally, this academic article suggests examining the perspectives of more educators to gain a clearer understanding of the historical event or trend of the transformation of modern Western university education views.

Keywords

transformation of modern western university education views, Humboldt and Schleiermacher, comparative analysis

การสร้างใหม่การเปลี่ยนแปลงของแนวคิด
มหาวิทยาลัยยุโรปสมัยใหม่:
การวิเคราะห์เปรียบเทียบมุมมองการศึกษาของ
Humboldt และ Schleiermacher

ยี่ จาง

มหาวิทยาลัยเศรษฐกิจนานาชาติหูหนาน

บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อเสนอการตีความใหม่เกี่ยวกับการพัฒนามุมมองของมหาวิทยาลัยยุคใหม่ในยุโรป งานวิจัยบางส่วนมีพื้นฐานจากการเปรียบเทียบความคิดทั้งสองและวรรณกรรมที่เกี่ยวข้อง โดยผสมเข้ากับการตรวจสอบเหตุการณ์สำคัญในประวัติศาสตร์การศึกษา ความคิดหลักของบทความวิชาการนี้คือการกำหนดความหมายใหม่ของการพัฒนา มุมมองการศึกษามหาวิทยาลัยยุคใหม่ในยุโรป โดยการเปรียบเทียบปรัชญา การศึกษาของบุคคลสำคัญสองคนในด้านการศึกษาศาสสิกของเยอรมนี คือ Humboldt และ Schleiermacher สุดท้ายนี้ บทความวิชาการนี้ขอเสนอให้ ตรวจสอบมุมมองของนักการศึกษาเพิ่มเติม เพื่อให้เข้าใจเหตุการณ์หรือ แนวโน้มประวัติศาสตร์ของการเปลี่ยนแปลงมุมมองการศึกษามหาวิทยาลัย ยุคใหม่ในโลกตะวันตกอย่างชัดเจนยิ่งขึ้น

คำสำคัญ

การเปลี่ยนแปลงของมุมมองการศึกษามหาวิทยาลัยตะวันตก สมัยใหม่, Humboldt และ Schleiermacher, การวิเคราะห์เปรียบเทียบ

Introduction

In this section, the researcher, as part of his ongoing academic endeavor, endeavors to redirect the scholarly community's attention towards the history of modern European universities. This effort aims to foster a renewed understanding of the historical development of higher education in Europe, which holds substantial relevance and serves as a valuable reference for the broader global context of higher education today.

During this inquiry, the research was significantly influenced by the educational historical insights presented by Blum (2012, p. 276) and B. Paulson (Higher Education Research Office of Hangzhou University, 1984, p. 38). These scholars posit that the contemporary content and objectives of universities are indeed the progeny of the Enlightenment era. They assert that German classical education, notably the emergence of new humanism, played a pivotal role as a rational catalyst in the evolution of European university paradigms throughout the Enlightenment.

A considerable void remains in elucidating the historical phenomenon or pattern of the evolution of modern European university ideals. Zhang (2023) perceives universities as integral to the apparatus fostering the growth and functioning of the new secular culture post-Renaissance. However, this perspective overlooks the reality that universities are also an embodiment of certain idealized constructs. Consequently, the investigation into the transformation of modern European universities must extend beyond an examination of their societal context; it should also delve into the exploration of their underlying ideals.

Chen's (2006) scholarly inquiry draws a connection between the university perspective within German classical education and the contemporaneous metamorphosis of European university ideals. This transformation is fundamentally viewed as an all-encompassing manifestation of various educational concepts, among which the university perspective in German classical education plays a

significant role. Prominent figures embodying this perspective are Alexander von Humboldt, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, and Johann Gottlieb Fichte. The educational philosophies of the first two, who are both associated with neohumanism, are the focal points of this academic article.

Reverting to the central subject of this article, the idea of a university pertains to the conceptualization of its positioning and function. It endeavors to investigate how universities can enhance their contributions to knowledge innovation, talent development, and social services through strategic positioning and the objectives that stem from it. The essence of the transformation of modern European universities is the shift from medieval institutions that focused on elite humanistic education to those that prioritize mass professional education.

Furthermore, the core inquiry of this article indeed centers on the university education ideals of two emblematic figures in German classical education: Humboldt and Schleiermacher. Humboldt, active during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, was an encyclopedic scholar with expertise spanning philosophy, linguistics, classical studies, and law. He integrated his educational philosophy into the educational reforms of his era. Concurrently, Schleiermacher, a humanistic scholar with a focus on Protestant theology, was deeply influenced by the prevalent Romantic movement in Europe, shaping his intellectual contributions to the field.

The rationale for selecting these two figures is two-pronged: firstly, they exerted a significant influence on the higher education system in Germany and, by extension, across Europe during their time; secondly, as polymaths, their conception of university ideals was informed by a multidisciplinary approach - This means that these concepts are essentially part of a broader comprehensive understanding.

These investigations facilitate an examination of the nexus between the individual philosophies of educators and the broader shifts in educational paradigms, encompassing the evolution of university ideals. A comparative analysis and text analysis of Humboldt's and Schleiermacher's perspectives on universities would enable a critical reassessment of the historical trajectory of modern university ideal transformation in Europe. This approach emphasizes the uncovering of information that is often overlooked. It will re-evaluate the motivations behind the transformation of university ideals and the contributions of these two educators to this process - a novel vantage point that promises to yield fresh insights.

The ensuing section will elucidate the perspectives of Humboldt and Schleiermacher on university education, employing these viewpoints as the foundation for subsequent discourse.

The Foundation of Exploration: Humboldt and Schleiermacher's University Ideal

This section will delineate the university ideals of Humboldt and Schleiermacher individually.

Humboldt's University Ideal

Humboldt conceptualized universities as institutions dedicated solely to academic pursuits. In his own words (1960), he described universities as a "paradise" for scholars in their quest for intellectual fulfillment. Despite this definition, which emphasizes the academic birthright of universities, Humboldt did not confine their purpose to this alone. He posited that universities have dual mandates: to delve into "pure science" - a discipline more abstract and pure than the empirical sciences - and to nurture individuality and morality within an educational framework (1904b). However, in comparison, the former mission is more pronounced. Humboldt (1960) advocated that education should be science-centric, considering science as the cornerstone of a university's identity.

In Humboldt's perspective, the organizational nucleus of a university should be "academia," with all structures orbiting around it. Humboldt (1960) delineated two fundamental organizational principles for universities: freedom and solitude. His conception of university freedom is multifaceted, with a particular emphasis on the transcendence of academic pursuits. This transcendence implies that universities should maintain independence from the immediacies of social life. Humboldt (1960) held this view because "when science seems to have distanced itself somewhat from life, it often bestows the greatest benefits upon it" (Humboldt, 1904a). This stance is intrinsic to Humboldt's scholarly philosophy: that science has an intrinsic value, with practical utility being of secondary importance. (Nipperdey, 1983, p. 57) This aligns with his earlier characterization of the role and purpose of universities: they are inherently dedicated to the pursuit of "pure science." Humboldt appeared to believe that pure scholarship should remain unencumbered by worldly concerns, for it is only in the absence of such interference that it can truly thrive and realize its life-enhancing potential. Wang (2011, p. 25) once encapsulated Humboldt's notion of freedom: it represents a secure operational state that, while encompassing a certain "negative" domain, underscores the capacity for free action and thought. This is clearly manifested in his stance on university academia. Furthermore, Humboldt's notion of freedom adheres to a progression from "individual freedom" to "national personality" and finally to "cosmopolitanism." According to Humboldt (Zhang, 2017), this academic freedom within universities is advantageous not only to individuals but also carries positive implications for society, the nation, and even humanity at large. The other principle, solitude, is seen by Humboldt as an outcome of an academic pursuit. Humboldt's notion of "solitude" and "freedom" is, a reciprocal relationship—solitude mirrors inner spiritual freedom. In the German context, solitude is associated with positive connotations such as creativity and inner strength (Hofstaetter, 1971, p. 75). Solitude here signifies the solitary exploration within a purely academic field, embodying the spirit of innovation and tenacity.

Humboldt's discourse on universities extends well beyond the academic dimensions, offering incisive insights into education as well. He conceptualized the essence of education as a process of "alienation" and a subsequent "return" from it, which inevitably leads to a sense of self-loss in interaction with the external world. However, education should not cause individuals to lose themselves but rather reflect the clarity and warmth of the external world into their inner selves (Westbury et al., 1999, p. 58). Humboldt's vision for university education is multifaceted but consistently grounded in this philosophy. This is why he frequently underscores the spiritual aristocratic temperament or cultivation in his educational views. Humboldt (1967, p. 22) defines cultivation as the complete development of individual talents, encompassing the most holistic and harmonious development of various potentialities. He sees pure science as a medium for cultivating spiritual and moral refinement, underscoring the concept of "general cultivation." Consequently, he opposes the formulation of educational content policies driven by professional and practical ends (Humboldt, 1960; 1999). This stance stems from his enduring belief that education, with its universality and transcendence, enables individuals to attain independent values and free development, conducive to the cultivation of such refinement. Humboldt views cultivation as an internal growth process rather than mere compliance with external objectives, providing a "standard of living" (Brunner et al., 1974, p. 520; Scelsky, 1971, p. 79). More precisely, his concept of cultivation is directed towards the development of personality. Humboldt employs pure science to nurture human cultivation, thereby shaping the personalities of students. Simultaneously, Humboldt underscores the pivotal role of teachers in university education, advocating that their instruction should embody a "unity of teaching and research." This principle is straightforward: it facilitates the transmission of research and promotes it through teaching exchanges. Humboldt (1960; 1999) posits that teachers should act as guides, establishing a teacher-student relationship based on "coexistence for science," fully respecting students' learning autonomy. He cautions against

excessive teacher interference, arguing that authoritative teacher-student relationships could impede students' free development and the school's diverse atmosphere. This contradicts his belief that "everything is crucial to cultivate educators in the most diverse way possible" (Humboldt, 1851, p. 71). From this vantage point, although Humboldt emphasizes the importance of teachers, the core of teaching should genuinely revolve around students. He believes that higher education should focus on cultivating students' abilities, with universities imparting not only knowledge but also the capacity to create it. By "ability to create knowledge," Humboldt (1851, p.71) means "presenting all possible solutions to problems, simply preparing people to find the most clever solutions for themselves, or preferably inventing these solutions solely from appropriate descriptions of all obstacles". However, it should be noted that Humboldt's concept of cultivating students' abilities has certain limitations in content, with a focus on the humanities, closely tied to his advocacy of personality or "cultivation." Nipperdey (1986, p. 148) once remarked, "Humboldt-style universities are universities of philosophers and linguists, focusing on culture rather than nature, and the concepts studied are not based on experiments and experience, but more on synthesis rather than analysis".

Due to the aforementioned viewpoints, Humboldt (1960) maintained a nuanced stance on the relationship between universities and the state. On one hand, he advocated that universities should be an "independent organizational form, separate from all states," arguing that state interference could potentially overshadow the spirit with material concerns, leading to a debasement of high aspirations. On the other hand, Humboldt acknowledged that, for certain unavoidable reasons, the state should exert some influence over university affairs. For instance, he believed that the state should retain control over the appointment of university faculty, as he foresaw the emergence of sectarianism and ideological authoritarianism within universities in the absence of external checks. Humboldt's discourse on the relationship between universities and the state thus centers on the extent of state interference in academic matters, revealing an

ideological tension. According to Dunning (1954), this tension reflects the inherent conflict between the typical individualism of the intellectual class and the Prussian style of individualism. Humboldt's fundamental stance, however, was clear: universities should maintain a degree of independence, with the state's involvement being moderate and measured. While he did not push for absolute independence for universities, he was an ardent supporter of institutional autonomy. Humboldt held dual attitudes towards the state's role as an authority: a critical stance and a hands-off approach. This duality underpinned his demand for absolute autonomy for universities. He championed the concept of a "cultural state" and insisted that the state should refrain from meddling in the educational and research endeavors of universities. Humboldt believed that the autonomy granted by a permissive state represented the optimal arrangement for both entities. He argued that, despite their autonomy, the objectives and interests of the state and universities fundamentally converge, with the benefits and impacts of fulfilling university interests surpassing the scope of the state as an entity (Humboldt, 1960). Moreover, Humboldt thought that the state should not alter the intrinsic nature of universities as purveyors of pure academia for the sake of practical or utilitarian goals. He contended that universities and the pure scholarship they embody serve a societal and state function that transcends immediate utility, echoing the ancient Chinese philosopher Laozi's notion of "useless use." Humboldt's advocacy for the "useless use" of education should be interpreted as the organic contribution made by individuals with refined cultivation to the nation and professional life (Vossler, 1954).

Schleiermacher's University Ideal

In Schleiermacher's exposition on the essence of universities, he too regards them as academic institutions. However, diverging from Humboldt's perspective, Schleiermacher recognizes the existence of various academic institutions, including academic high schools, universities, and academies, and the pivotal role that universities play within the academic community constituted by these entities. It is important to note that Schleiermacher (1960) conceptualizes academic production through the notion of an "academic community," with universities serving as intermediary organizations bridging academic high schools and scientific academies. Consequently, universities should be regarded as functional entities within the academic production of these communities. The transitional role that universities play between academic high schools and scientific academies casts them in a dual institutional capacity. On one hand, they act as the practical hubs for the "university spirit," epitomized by the pursuit of academic inquiry, and on the other hand, they function as advanced specialized schools. Regarding the former, Schleiermacher (1960) concedes that only a select few within universities can fully attain their ideal aspirations, yet the ideal cultivation of universities should be exemplified by these individuals. As for the latter, Schleiermacher (1960) elucidates that by offering a broader segment of the population the opportunity to engage with genuine academic concepts and scientific ethos, and by enabling those individuals to apply these concepts and ethos to their professional endeavors to varying extents, universities can significantly contribute to the advancement of society and the nation.

Schleiermacher's focus on the "scientific spirit" within universities, as previously discussed, leads him to regard the concept of freedom as the linchpin of university organization. He posits that the scientific spirit is an essential component of universities and must be cultivated within their confines to stimulate the scientific spirit in students. Schleiermacher (1960) asserts that this spirit does not arise from compulsion but is born of freedom. Consequently, he articulates

the notion of "university freedom" to delineate the parameters of this freedom comprehensively. In his perspective, the freedom of university students encompasses not only the liberty to engage in intellectual pursuits but also the autonomy to experience a lifestyle conducive to academic and personal growth. This articulation of freedom is intended to foster an environment where the scientific spirit can thrive, unencumbered by undue restrictions, allowing students the space to explore, question, and contribute to the advancement of knowledge.

Schleiermacher (1960) underscored the importance of academic freedom for students and advocated that the educational philosophy of universities should be centered on fostering students' scientific concepts, holistic and relational thinking, as well as their capacity for independent problem research. He posited that "the goal of universities is not learning in the conventional sense, but cognition." This implies that universities should offer an environment that is conducive to freedom, exploration, and discovery, where students can realize their full potential, continually challenge themselves, think independently, and develop their innovative and critical thinking skills. Such an educational approach is designed to better equip students to face future challenges and make significant contributions to their professional lives. Regarding the content of university teaching, Schleiermacher advocated for a free and open-minded approach by teachers in selecting teaching materials, with an emphasis on interdisciplinary and elite content. He endorsed the freedom of teachers to choose their content and to engage in interdisciplinary teaching. While he critiqued the narrowness that can arise from specialized schools, Schleiermacher did not dismiss the importance of students' understanding of practical knowledge. (Schleiermacher, 1960; Chen, 2020) His perspective is grounded in the recognition that specialized schools, while effective in cultivating professional skills, may also lead to a constricted knowledge base among students. Thus, it is essential to expand students' intellectual horizons and encourage their comprehensive development. Additionally, students' grasp of real-world knowledge is vital for their

ability to adapt to society, engage in public affairs, and maximize their potential. Schleiermacher (1960) also held the view that teaching should be the "sacred center" of universities, necessitating a high standard of pedagogical proficiency. He believed that the quality of teaching is the true measure of a university teacher's role. University educators should possess the art of teaching, which transcends mere knowledge transmission to inspire students' intellectual awakening. Schleiermacher placed great emphasis on the philosophical spirit within teaching content. He believed that "only those who understand what the world is and what people are can possess freedom and infinity" (Kantzenbach, 1967, p. 60). This conviction led him to stress the importance of an independent personality and a robust intellect as the wellspring of freedom. Consequently, he maintained that universities should instill in students an understanding of cognitive concepts and initiate a new phase of life - imbued with the spirit of philosophy. To concentrate on nurturing students' philosophical spirit, he proposed that the philosophy department should be preeminent within the university, with other departments occupying a secondary status. Acknowledging the transitional nature of universities, Schleiermacher also believed that they should establish their research institutes. He (1960) saw the creation of academic research institutes as a means to endow universities with the stature of scientific academies, thereby promoting in-depth scholarly inquiry. However, this does not imply that university research institutes are restricted from teaching knowledge that surpasses the general curriculum.

Schleiermacher does not ascribe a public character to universities in his conception of their relationship with the state. He regards universities as private enterprises voluntarily formed by scholars who are inherently driven to pursue scientific inquiry. Consequently, the role of the state is confined to safeguarding and fostering the growth of universities without intruding into their affairs for its ends (Zhang, 2007, p. 25; Schleiermacher, 1960). Nevertheless, this perspective does not suggest that universities are devoid of societal or national impact. The very existence of universities

signifies the evolution and cohesion of both the individual and the collective. Echoing this sentiment in his own words, Schleiermacher (1981, p. 91) articulates, "What is collective must once again become individual; the individual should once again enter the collective." This reflects his belief in the dynamic interplay between individual scholarly pursuits and the collective advancement of knowledge within the university setting.

The next section will compare and contrast the educational perspectives of Humboldt and Schleiermacher.

Comparative Analysis: Humboldt's and Schleiermacher's Educational Perspectives

This section will undertake a comparative analysis of their perspectives on universities, focusing intently on delineating the distinctions between the two approaches.

The similarities between Humboldt and Schleiermacher

From the preceding summaries, it is evident that the university ideals of Humboldt and Schleiermacher, particularly their foundational principles, are fundamentally aligned. Upon careful induction and analysis, the commonalities in their views on universities can be primarily encapsulated as follows.

1. Both individuals stress the importance of universities' independence and autonomy.

Regarding the autonomy of universities, Humboldt characterized them as "an organizational form independent of all states," striving to curb undue state interference to preclude the dominance of political power over academic research and teaching endeavors. Similarly, Schleiermacher advocates for the establishment of an environment within universities that is free, relaxed, exploratory, and conducive to discovery, while also valuing student autonomy—arguing that it is within such an environment that students can optimally realize their potential and develop their

innovative and critical thinking skills. From this standpoint, both thinkers underscore the significance of university independence and the self-governance that it underpins. They maintain that universities can only genuinely fulfill their educational mandates and achieve developmental milestones when endowed with ample independence and autonomy.

2. They both value the scientific spirit and academic freedom of universities.

Both Humboldt's focus on science as the cornerstone of a university and Schleiermacher's conception of the scientific spirit as an essential element within a university, which he sees as a means to evoke the scientific spirit in students, reflect a shared valorization of the scientific ethos within academic institutions. The advocacy for academic freedom by both stems from their emphasis on the scientific spirit - Humboldt posits that the scientific spirit necessitates freedom, while Schleiermacher asserts that it is inherently free. This notion is deeply rooted in a collective German belief: "Scientific achievements in German culture are imbued with a sense of sacredness and represent the highest and purest expressions of those with exceptional abilities, transcending the confines of any system." (Ben-David, 1984, p. 298)

3. Both individuals underscore the teaching function of universities and highlight their elite characteristics.

Humboldt's assertion that "everything is crucial to cultivate educators in the most diverse way possible" and Schleiermacher's conviction that teaching should be the "sacred center" of universities both underscore a student-centered approach to education, with the belief that teaching should be conducive to the holistic development of students. Their perspectives converge on the focus of nurturing certain elitist qualities in students, such as the comprehensive development of their attributes, echoing the humanist advocacy for "perfect education." Moreover, while Humboldt highlights the cultivation of the ability to create knowledge, Schleiermacher

emphasizes the "philosophical spirit." Both of these propositions exhibit a pronounced elitist inclination, suggesting that universities, as institutions of detachment and excellence, should impart knowledge that is detached and pure, rather than descending into mass institutions that teach utilitarian knowledge for secular purposes. This mode of thought diverges from practicality and overlooks the roles that universities, as social institutions, should fulfill, including social service, social stratification, and the maintenance of social stability. (Willins, 1933; Chen, 2004) In this context, Madame de Staël's (1958, p. 6-7) critique of the two is aptly cited: "Indulge in ideals, because there is nothing in real life that meets their imagination."

4. Both emphasize the value of universities to the country or society.

Humboldt highlighted the potent cultural impetus that universities provide to the state, positing their existence as a vital force for cultural advancement. Schleiermacher echoes this view, suggesting that the presence of universities signifies the growth and cohesion of both the individual and the collective. Collectively, they underscore the alignment of universities with societal components and the overarching developmental objectives of society, as well as their pivotal role as a catalyst for progress. This perspective is fundamentally grounded in the notion that "faith and cultural concepts are the basic elements of social order" (Eisenstadt, 1992). It posits that the beliefs and cultural ideals embodied by universities can propel and sustain the evolution of societal order itself.

The Divergent Ideals of Humboldt and Schleiermacher Universities and Their Causes

Based on the preceding exposition, while Humboldt and Schleiermacher are both proponents of neohumanism and share numerous affinities, their specific propositions exhibit certain divergences. These distinctions are articulated in their respective discourses on universities and can be categorized into comparative aspects such as the role and purpose of universities, their organizational perspectives, educational philosophies, and the nexus between universities and the state. The most salient divergence lies in the foundational positioning and mission of universities, which, at the heart of modern university ideology, idealism, and historicity, addresses the fundamental question of what constitutes a university as a university.

1. The disparity between the two individuals concerning their views on university positioning and mission

Regarding the positioning and mission of universities, Humboldt's stance is one of pure idealism, whereas Schleiermacher's approach is best described as realistic idealism. Humboldt envisions universities as entities dedicated solely to the pursuit of academic endeavors, with their core mission being the exploration of "pure science" and the nurturing of individuality and morality. In contrast, Schleiermacher perceives universities as functional entities within the broader academic community, engaged in the production of academic knowledge. Their mission, according to him, is dualfold: to embody the "university spirit" through the advancement of academia and to serve as higher specialized institutions. This perspective implies that universities are not exclusively dedicated to academic pursuits but also have a broader role in specialized higher education.

2. The disparity in organizational perspectives between the two individuals in universities

In the realm of university organizational principles, Humboldt delineates freedom and solitude as the foundational elements of university structure, whereas Schleiermacher posits freedom as the central tenet of university organization. Humboldt's approach not only accentuates the importance of freedom but also incorporates the "loneliness" experienced by university constituents, addressing the internal dynamics among university personnel - a more encompassing perspective than Schleiermacher's. This breadth of consideration stems from the distinct positioning and mission of universities. Humboldt's belief in the pursuit of pure academia within universities naturally extends to the incorporation of solitude as a quality within their organizational framework, acknowledging the inherent isolation that can accompany rigorous academic inquiry.

3. The disparity in their educational philosophies concerning university education

In the domain of university education, Humboldt advocates for a form of pure elitist education, focusing on the holistic development of students, particularly their capacity for knowledge creation, with the exclusive aim of nurturing academic elites. Schleiermacher, however, champions an educational approach that, while still bearing elitist traits, places greater emphasis on tailoring instruction to students' talents. He aims to offer rigorous academic training to those demonstrating potential, equipping them with the depth of knowledge and skills necessary for future scholarly pursuits. Concurrently, for those who may not meet these stringent academic criteria, Schleiermacher's educational philosophy aspires to develop their practical application of knowledge, preparing them to be proficient in their future professional roles.

4. The difference in their views on the relationship between universities and the country

In the discourse concerning the relationship between universities and the state, Humboldt's emphasis is predominantly on the university's standpoint, prioritizing their independence and advocating for the state's involvement to be judiciously measured. Humboldt posits that universities should maintain a degree of autonomy, with the state's interference being confined to a level that is both appropriate and conducive to the universities' spiritual pursuits, encapsulated in the concept of "useless use," which paradoxically holds intrinsic value for the state. Conversely, Schleiermacher, while acknowledging the necessity of public independence for universities, asserts that they should also exert influence on the state. He envisions this influence being exerted through a harmonious alignment between the objectives and values of universities and those of the state, suggesting a symbiotic relationship where both entities contribute to and are shaped by one another. This perspective underscores the idea that universities, despite their pursuit of academic freedom and independence, have a role to play in the broader societal and political landscape.

5. The reasons behind these differences

A more extensive and profound exploration is warranted to understand the specific divergences in their university ideals. Max Weber (1988, p. 194) posits that the concept of ideal types is formative, with its characteristics being intrinsically linked to the cultural significance of the subject under study. The distinct positioning and mission of the two educational philosophies reflect the unique cultural implications they embody. Humboldt regarded universities from an elitist standpoint, seeing them as the embodiment of academia itself. Schleiermacher, on the other hand, placed greater emphasis on the educational attribute as an intergenerational, practical activity. Consequently, Lin (2019) suggests that universities are but a segment of academic institutions and possess a mission that extends beyond academia.

In terms of university organization, Humboldt's rich experience in university work as a scholar has endowed his views with a broader scope. The variances in their perspectives on university education arise from their differing views on the role and purpose of universities, a topic not further elaborated here. The divergence in their discourse on the relationship between universities and the state is rooted in their contrasting views on the state. As previously noted, Humboldt was critical of state intervention and advocated for laissez-faire policies, whereas Schleiermacher emphasized "the agency, sociality, historicity, and transcendence of self-existence" (Zhang, 2014).

Drawing from the comparative analysis, it becomes evident that while there are numerous differences between the two thinkers, they share a high degree of unity in many aspects, especially concerning their core principles. Some underlying logic or ultimate goals exhibit consistency. For instance, the educational objectives of university education reveal a clear historical trend - "German Enlightenment thought tends to be sectarian, moralized, and internalized" (Guo, 2001, p. 23). This insight aids in comprehending the diversity and unity of the logic underpinning the evolution of neohumanism and the broader spectrum of German classical university perspectives. Reflecting on these historical traits can prompt a reevaluation of the conceptual shifts within modern European universities.

The next section will examine emerging views on the desired transformation of contemporary European universities.

Revisiting the Conceptual Transformation of Modern European Universities

In this section, the author will conduct a re-examination of the evolution of the conceptual framework of modern European universities, building upon the comparative analysis from the preceding section. The focus will be on delineating how these transformations have influenced the development of subsequent universities.

European universities before the transformation and the crises they encountered

Before the conceptual transformation of modern European universities, the paradigm was predominantly shaped by early Renaissance-style institutions, which had evolved from medieval schools, particularly seminaries. Although the subsequent religious reformation in Europe introduced some directional shifts within these universities, it did not fundamentally alter their core nature. For an extended period, the epistemological framework in European universities remained characteristic of the Renaissance era. For instance, in the curriculum, the initial focus was on the seven core subjects inherited from the ancient Greek "Seven Liberal Arts," namely grammar, logic, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and music, followed by specialized studies in medicine, law, or theology. Overall, European universities perpetuated the tradition of the academic gardens initiated in ancient Greece, with their educational aims still centered around Aristotle's (1999, p. 1) assertion that "all men by nature desire to know." This tradition is especially evident when considering the etymology of the Latin term "Universitas" - it denotes a community of scholars and their students, an entity organized legally for academic research and instruction. (Lewis & Short, 1966; Ridder-Symoens, 1992; Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2024).

The long-standing relative stasis within Western universities could not persist indefinitely. Post-religious reformation, the conceptual underpinnings of universities began to diverge from the Renaissance style, yet these shifts largely remained within the established framework. For instance, the emergence of nation-states precipitated a model of academic self-governance in universities (Scott, 2006). However, following the upheavals of the 16th century, the power structures of Europe experienced profound transformations, and the architecture of knowledge was likewise reconfigured—the scientific revolution dismantled conventional epistemologies and enshrined concepts such as academic autonomy and a hierarchy of disciplines while burgeoning scientific and artistic knowledge sought to supplant classical scholarship. Consequently, the fabric and trajectory of higher education were in dire need of transformation to align with these evolving trends. The classical knowledge epitomized by Aristotelian thought could no longer solely furnish the universities with their epistemological and methodological anchor—a more mechanistic orientation was on the rise. Concurrently, a burgeoning humanistic ethos was accentuating the creation and propagation of "new knowledge" (emerging scientific and artistic insights) within an open yet structured apparatus.

Reflecting on Toynbee's (1987) historical interpretive framework of "challenge - response," we discern that scholar like Humboldt and Schleiermacher align with this historical current. Their divergent views on the trajectory of university development are, in essence, adaptive strategies to the challenges confronting Renaissance-era institutions. How should this be interpreted? For instance, concerning the positioning and mission of universities, Humboldt championed the continuation of the educational ethos of Renaissance-style universities, advocating a shift from the pursuit of pure classical and theological knowledge to an emphasis on the humanistic spirit inherent in "academia." In this light, Humboldt's concept represents an enhancement that integrates two systems and restructures the focus of knowledge. As previously noted,

Schleiermacher embraced a diversification of university functions, suggesting that universities should not only serve academic research within scholarly institutions but also fulfill the teaching roles of higher specialized schools. This approach was designed to mitigate the impact of disputes between classical and new humanists on the university's identity. Although the strategies employed by the two are distinct, they share a fundamental similarity: they both seek to explore how traditional Renaissance-style universities can evolve within the context of a new era.

The Ideal Transformation of Modern European Universities

The introductory segment of the article already encapsulates a historical actuality: the principal catalysts for the evolution of modern European university concepts were the new humanists. These individuals endeavored to integrate the nascent humanistic ethos into the foundation and governance of universities, all the while circumventing confrontations with traditional humanists and the conservative elements of university knowledge they represent. The Renaissance-style universities and their associated body of knowledge have been previously discussed, and the subsequent discourse will delve deeper into the intrinsic transformation of this concept itself.

As the vanguard of ideological transformation, the new humanists - particularly the Enlightenment scholars of the 18th century from France and Germany - articulated a suite of discourses on the establishment of modern universities. Hence, the 18th century has been aptly dubbed the "era of humanism" (Wolf, 1952, p. 3). German classical education envisioned universities as comprehensive graduate schools, engaged in advanced research and experimentation, and as the progenitors of modern academic freedom standards. The perspectives of Humboldt and Schleiermacher on universities mirror this classical educational trend, exemplified by their emphasis on placing the university's core mission above mere student-centric teaching. Moreover, they extensively incorporated discussions from

their contemporaries, such as in nurturing the comprehensive qualities of students. They embraced Hegel's notion that "education is an art that makes people moral" (Hegel, 1979, p. 151), prompting Humboldt to question the cultivation of students' "cultivation" in this light. What is truly reflected here is a fundamental paradigm shift - the overarching view of universities has transitioned from the Renaissance era's paradigm of knowledge and understanding to that of the Enlightenment era. At its core, the infatuation with tradition, especially the sacred will - be it the reverence for past historical glory in classical knowledge or the adoration of faith in theological studies - characteristic of the Renaissance spirit, has been progressively supplanted by the rationality espoused by the Enlightenment movement. In fact, during the lifetime of these two scholars, a strictly modern university had already come into being - the Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg (MLU) in Prussia, which stands as the first modern university in history to be markedly distinct from a Renaissance-style-institution. The two defining features of MLU - modernization of knowledge and the principle of freedom - are emblematic of the characteristics of modern universities (Paulsen, 2010, p. 79).

The two individuals' role in shaping the transformation of the ideals of modern European universities

It merits emphasis that the perspectives of Humboldt and Schleiermacher on universities are reflective of the broader transformation in European university concepts of their time. While this has been previously addressed, it was primarily from the standpoint of the individual propositions' corresponding relationships. A deeper exploration is warranted to understand the interplay between their views. Initially, it is imperative to elucidate a historical stance: we must not passively sidestep or "suspension" educational knowledge - a Sartrean "pseudo-inferior concept" in comprehension - but instead embrace an active posture to embrace and thoroughly contemplate the value judgments and the knowledge system embedded in their university perspectives. This approach will

reveal that the so-called "spirit of the times" of the Enlightenment is fundamentally grounded in these views. The understanding here is straightforward: for instance, the university views of these two scholars encapsulate progressive ideas characteristic of the Enlightenment era. In their discourse on the societal or national contributions of universities, the notion that universities act as social institutions to foster social productivity and, by extension, societal development, is essentially derived from and adheres to the theoretical narrative of the Enlightenment's overarching historical value and its linear progression.

The evolution of modern European university concepts has been delineated. As previously noted, this conceptual transformation was the genesis of contemporary universities. However, the question arises: How has this transformation influenced the shape of today's universities? This inquiry forms the crux of subsequent discussions. In essence, the current system of knowledge classification within universities largely adheres to the disciplinary taxonomy established during the Enlightenment era. It bears a striking resemblance to the categorization found in Diderot's *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des Sciences, des arts et des métiers*, particularly when examining the university's knowledge system framework. From a value standpoint, the academic freedom promoted by universities today is essentially a perpetuation of the Enlightenment's ethos. Delving into more granular details, the impact of Humboldt and Schleiermacher's university perspectives on the formation of today's universities is primarily evident in Germany's research-oriented university model. However, this does not imply that their university views are without influence on institutions beyond the Germanic sphere. Their impact persists, as exemplified by the adage "Today's education is for tomorrow's world" (Hummel, 1977), which distinctly carries forward their philosophy on teaching and student development within universities.

From a broader macroscopic lens, the German classical education framework, to which both scholars belong, has continued to influence the current configuration of universities despite undergoing significant reforms such as restructuring, secularization, and modernization in the 19th century. This enduring influence is largely attributed to Germany's pioneering role in global higher education. Historical records indicate that "almost all teachers study in Germany" (Menand et al., 2017), underscoring its preeminence. In 1986, The Robbins Report - a document encapsulating prevailing university concepts at the time - articulated the university's mission through four objectives: the imparting of skills; the promotion of the general power of the soul - cultivating not only experts but also cultured individuals; maintaining a balance between research and teaching, recognizing that teaching should be intrinsically linked to the advancement of learning and the quest for truth; and the propagation of common culture and civic standards (Anderson, 2010). These assertions are largely rooted in the educational philosophies of Humboldt and Schleiermacher. Specifically, the emphasis on skill teaching is derived from Humboldt's focus on the capabilities of students. The promotion of the general power of the soul is reflective of the aspirations for student development. The perspective on balancing research and teaching emanates from Humboldt's concept of "the unity of teaching and research." Lastly, the propagation of common culture and civic standards is distinctly influenced by the two scholars' views on the universities' contributions to the nation or society.

Conclusion

This article is dedicated to reconfiguring the historical narrative of the idealistic evolution within modern European universities. To more effectively elucidate this historical phenomenon or trend, the article adopts the university ideals of Humboldt and Schleiermacher as its focal point, positing that this approach can yield novel insights. The following are the conclusions drawn from this article:

1. The commonality of Humboldt and Schleiermacher's ideals in universities

Humboldt and Schleiermacher collectively underscored the significance of institutional independence and academic autonomy within universities. They placed a high premium on the scientific ethos and the principles of academic freedom, while also accentuating the pedagogical role and the cultivation of excellence that define universities.

2. The difference of Humboldt and Schleiermacher's ideals in universities

Despite their alignment on numerous points, the two scholars diverge notably in their conceptualization of the university's positioning and mission, organizational perspectives, educational philosophy, and the nexus between universities and the nation. In essence, Humboldt leans towards a purist idealism, whereas Schleiermacher displays an inclination towards realistic idealism.

3. New Perspectives on the Evolution of University Philosophy

The modern European university philosophy underwent a transformation propelled by new humanists, with Humboldt and Schleiermacher at the forefront. They endeavored to assimilate the burgeoning humanistic ethos into the very fabric and governance of universities, concurrently circumventing tensions with traditional humanists and the conservative factions within the academic community.

4. The impact of Humboldt and Schleiermacher's university philosophy on modern universities after transformation

The perspectives of Humboldt and Schleiermacher have exerted a significant influence on the development of modern universities, particularly in shaping Germany's research-oriented university paradigm. Their educational philosophy continues to exert sway over the current academic classification systems within universities, the advocacy for academic freedom, and the conceptualization of universities' societal and national contributions.

The preceding four conclusions illuminate the enduring legacy of Humboldt and Schleiermacher in the realm of higher education philosophy - their foundational contributions are not only instrumental in delineating the architecture and purpose of universities but also persist in shaping contemporary discourses on academic freedom, research endeavors, and the societal role of universities. Despite variances in their methodological approaches, they collectively champion a university system that embodies both autonomy and societal engagement, fostering a culture dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and societal advancement. This university Ideal has been pivotal in the evolution of modern university ideals across Europe.

Ultimately, this scholarly article proposes an exploration of the viewpoints of a broader array of educators to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the historical events or trends that have shaped the evolution of modern Western university educational perspectives - this examination is advocated from the vantage point of the history of educational thought.

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Author

Yi Zhang
Hunan International Economics University
E-mail: scholarzhangyi@163.com