The University Institution as "the Fool"

By chad.habel
Created 06/23/2009 - 11:34

Thought some people might be interested in the following article:

Institutional Heterogeneity and Change: The University as Fool
Donncha Kavanagh

Department of Management and Marketing, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland, d.kavanagh@ucc.ie

While institutional theory has focused on the effect of institutions on individual organizations, this article addresses the relationships between institutions. Using a case history approach, it examines the relationship of one institution, the University, within an institutional complex. The study suggests that the University acts and has a role akin to the Fool in the medieval royal court. The Fool is embedded in a multiplicity of loyal yet agonistic relationships with a collection of 'Sovereign' institutions, such as the Church, the State, the Nation, the Corporation and the Professions. Akin to the Fool, the University's skills at normative narrating, sorting and playing are central to the creation and maintenance of a semiotic nexus and the process of institutionalization and de-institutionalization. In turn, these semiotic resources are utilized in the practice of educating. The article concludes by examining how the metaphor of the Fool provides a way of re-thinking these practices.

Key Words: business schools . education . foolishness . history . institutional theory . learning . university

DOI: 10.1177/1350508409104509

Links:
[1] mailto:d.kavanagh@ucc.ie