

ITD-Conference 2017: Philosophical Perspectives on the ‘Problems’ of Transdisciplinarity

2017-12-15 Gregor Schmieg and Esther Meyer contributed with their talks to the session on Philosophical Perspectives on the ‘Problems’ of Transdisciplinarity

Leuphana University Lüneburg and the Network for Transdisciplinary Research of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences co-organized the International Transdisciplinary Conference 2017 - Intercultural Endeavours, that took place at the new Zentralgebäude at Leuphana University Lüneburg between September 11th and 15th.

Gregor Schmieg and Esther Meyer contributed with their talks to the session on *Philosophical Perspectives on the ‘Problems’ of Transdisciplinarity*.

As Klein (2014) has noted, the “discourse of problem solving” is a time-honored way of characterizing transdisciplinary research and practice; however, the notion of problem can all too easily be taken for granted. This session focused on investigating what it means to talk about problems within transdisciplinarity. Using philosophical tools of diagnoses, analysis, and critique, the contributors in this session evaluated the notions of problem and problematic, offering insights that emphasize epistemology and reflexivity and recommendations that respect the complexity of transdisciplinarity.

Esther gave a talk on discursive contextualizations of problems in transdisciplinary sustainability science aiming to find explanations for reproducing patterns of *problem* understandings in the research field. With her discourse analytical PhD project she wants to open up for a theoretical discussion and substantive elaboration on how *problems* can be conceptualized in td sustainability research.

Gregor contextualized the td research field and its focus on *problems* within the broader historical context of modernity. By linking td’s problem orientation to the general role normativity plays in scientific approaches – pointed out by Nietzsche – Gregor sketched out a critical perspective on td research as a more than merely scientific endeavour.

Another contributor was Jan C. Schmidt, associated to *Darmstadt University of Applied*

Sciences, Department of Social Sciences, Unit of Social, Culture and Technology Studies, and member of the strategic board of *ITd Conference 2017* representing, among others, the *td net*.

The session, including a discussion, in the very well-filled seminar room, was moderated by Michael O'Rourke, *Michigan State University, Department of Philosophy*, Director of the *Toolbox Project*, that investigates philosophical approaches to facilitating interdisciplinary research (<http://toolbox-project.org/>).

The CCP perspectives got positive and helpful feedback from within the community of transdisciplinary sustainability science.

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